

Title: *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*

by Philip K. Dick (Published in 1968)

Approved for use in Grades 11-12

By 2021, the World War has killed millions, driving entire species into extinction and sending mankind off-planet. Those who remain covet any living creature, and for people who can't afford one, companies built incredibly realistic simulacra: horses, birds, cats, sheep. They've even built humans. Immigrants to Mars receive androids so sophisticated they are indistinguishable from true men or women. Fearful of the havoc these artificial humans can wreak, the government bans them from Earth. Driven into hiding, unauthorized androids live among human beings, undetected. Rick Deckard, an officially sanctioned bounty hunter, is commissioned to find rogue androids and "retire" them. But when cornered, androids fight back—with lethal force.

Rationale:

According to its Wikipedia entry, "*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*" influenced generations of science fiction writers, becoming a founding document of the new wave science fiction movement as well as a basic model for its cyberpunk heirs." It has inspired films and media of all kinds as well as scholarly study. Dick's writing style demonstrates how simple vocabulary and short sentences can convey complex ideas, rounded characters, and convincing settings. This novel is well known as a classic of the science fiction genre, but it could equally be read as a noir detective story due to its portrayal of the hard-boiled detective, dark urban landscapes, and mystery-driven plot.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

- Benesch, Klaus (1999). "Technology, Art, and the Cybernetic Body: The Cyborg As Cultural Other in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*". *Amerikastudien*. 44 (3): 379–392. [JSTOR 41157479](#).
- Butler, Andrew M. (1991). "Reality versus Transience: An Examination of Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*". In Merrifield, Jeff (ed.). *Philip K. Dick: A Celebration (Programme Book)*. Epping Forest College, Loughton: Connections.
- Galvan, Jill (1997). "Entering the Posthuman Collective in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*". *Science-Fiction Studies*. 24 (3): 413–429. [JSTOR 4240644](#).
- McCarthy, Patrick A. (1999–2000). "Do Androids Dream of Magic Flutes?". *Paradoxa*. 5 (13–14): 344–352.
- Niv, Tal (2014). "[The Return of a Terrifying and Wonderful Creation On Our Future and Our Present](#)". [Haaretz](#). (Hebrew) Critical analysis of the 2014 edition of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
- Vint, Sherryl (2007). "Speciesism and Species Being in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*". *Mosaic*. 40 (1): 111–26.

Noted Distinction:

- 1968 – Nebula Award nominee
- 1998 – Locus Poll Award, All-Time Best SF Novel before 1990 (Place: 51)

Readability

- Lexile Score: 490
- Readability Level: n/a

Learning Resources Guidelines

- The film meets the [Learning Resources Guidelines](#) and [Board Policy](#).

Approval:

Submitted to Committee: August 2023

Approved for Adoption:

* Resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any Teacher-Librarian to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online. Contact the Teacher-

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Librarian for guidance.

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep explores themes of humanity, morality, and love. It includes discussions of ethics (the androids are explicitly being used as slaves), emotions (Rick and his wife's use of the "mood organ" to dial up feelings), and the nature of reality—this last being one of the author's favorite concepts to write about. Its diction may be simple, but it should not be mistaken for an easy read, and this contrast makes it a perfect choice for the classroom where its depths can be explored at length.

Connection to the Curriculum:

Students in Science Fiction study the various ages of sci-fi writing, and this text is an influential and thought-provoking example of 1960s style. In addition to being open to literary study of its themes, motifs, characters, setting, etc., it also pairs well with several films, giving students the opportunity to explore how ideas can be adapted to various media.

Standard Alignment: *(Type which standard number then link to specific standard document on OPI website.)*

[RL.11-12.2](#)

[RL.11-12.3](#)

[RL.11-12.7](#)

[RL.11-12.10](#)

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

This text is primarily used in the Science Fiction elective course.

There is a 1982 adaptation of this text (*Blade Runner*) which pairs very well with a reading of the novel.

The 1927 film *Metropolis* also pairs well with this film due to its exploration of closely related themes and the portrayal of a human-like robot.