

real-world automatons

An **automaton** is a very special sort of machine — when you press a button or wind up a key, other parts of the automaton get pushed into motion. As all the parts whirr and spring into action, it can look like the automaton's moving by itself!

Automatons are all around us, whether they're helping us get work done, or just used for play.

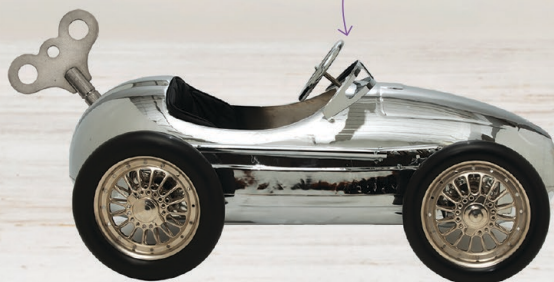
Automaton motion may seem like magic, but it's just everyday **Science**. Just think of the **vending machine**, an everyday example of an automaton. You put in some quarters and press a button, and the machine rumbles, shakes, and drops you a snack.



Ever play with a toy **jack-in-the-box**? Hiding inside that box is a machine that takes a simple motion (turning the handle) and turns it into a completely different motion (the toy's pop) — surprise!



Ever tinkered with a **wind-up toy**? You just turn a key in its back and let go, and it walks or dances or vrooms to life!



One of the most incredible automatons was built almost 250 years ago. It's a mechanical doll called The Writer, and it can actually write an entire sentence!

Automatons and their inventive designs continue to be a moving source of inspiration for tinkerers everywhere!

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