



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2019 Volume I: Digital Lives

Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Creation Story

Guide for Curriculum Unit 19.01.05
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My unit will align with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* for Advanced Placement Literature students, although it could be adapted to other texts that pose the same question: Will we be cautious in creating technology, or will our creations ultimately harm us? Many dystopian futures feature violent revolts on humans from mistreated robots. These stories resonate because they mirror past brutality against African slaves, proposals to purify humanity in the Eugenics Movement, and recent mistreatment of immigrants. When we create more beautiful, more intelligent, and more talented humanoid entities to think for us, to entice us, and to comfort us, how will we view ourselves? Our virtual assistants have female voices. Does this amplify biased views of gender? If we treat our virtual assistants as slaves, will this increase our hatred towards other humans? Will our lives become completely irrelevant? In this unit, students will research the current state of robotics, and draw comparisons between our modern creations and the moral and technological warning in *Frankenstein*, encouraging students to think about the technology they use, feel agency in determining its future, and strive towards creating tools for a more humane world.

(Developed for Advanced Placement Literature and Composition, grade 12; recommended for English Literatures, grades 11-12)

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