

# World's Greatest Robot

by W.M. Akers



"I want it to have six heads," said Carlos.

"No," said Marisol. "It has two heads. One breathes fire, and one sprays water. That way, if he starts a fire he shouldn't, he can put it out-much safer."

"What about his arms? I'm thinking his right hand should be a chainsaw, and his left should be a hammer. And maybe there should be a claw sticking out of his chest."

"Are you nuts? What's he going to do with a chainsaw and a hammer?"

"Saw stuff. Hammer stuff."

"I think he'll be much better with plain old ordinary hands."

Carlos looked at his sister like she had just grown five extra heads. "Ordinary hands? We don't want ordinary *anything*. We're going to build the best robot the universe has ever seen."

They were sitting outside of school, waiting for their mother to pick them up. While kids

around them played, ran and screamed, Carlos and Marisol hunched over a notebook. Its cover said "TOP SECRET", and one look at the inside made the need for secrecy clear. Each page was doodled carefully with rockets, laser guns, cannons and slingshots, like the blueprints for a superweapon. There were plans for robot arms, robot legs, robot bodies and robot heads-with eight pages alone devoted to various designs for robot eyes. Should it have laser eyes or X-ray eyes? Heat-ray eyes or ice-blaster eyes? The children were going to have to decide.

These are the sorts of decisions faced by children whose parents buy them a "Build Your Own Robot Kit." Carlos first noticed the ad for the kit in the back of a comic book. He immediately began asking his parents to buy it for him.

"Please, please, please, please, please?" he asked. "This can count for my birthday and Christmas and Easter and Halloween and-"

"No," said his father. "You don't need to build a robot."

Carlos begged for weeks, but got nowhere. Then, one day, he had an idea.

"Dad," he said. "I want you to get me that robot kit."

"I know," said his father.

"But not just for me!"

"Oh?"

"For me and Marisol. We can design it together. As brother and sister."

Fathers like when their sons and daughters do things together. He agreed to order the kit. And since that day, Carlos and Marisol had done nothing but work on their plans. It was not going well.

"This robot is going to be ugly," Marisol would say. "It has too many rocket launchers."

"You can never have enough rocket launchers!" Carlos would shout.

"What if it gets hot in the sun?"

"Robots don't get hot."

"But what if it goes to the beach? We should give it an umbrella."

"Robots don't need umbrellas. They need flamethrowers and tank treads and grenade catapults and..."

"It could get sunburned."

"Fine," said Carlos. He erased the fifth rocket launcher and replaced it with an umbrella. "I guess that's okay. Nobody wants a sunburnt robot."

For weeks, they had been compromising, until they had a robot that was part warrior, part leisure machine. Next to the machine guns was a window box, where Marisol insisted the robot would want to grow herbs and flowers. In between the laser eyes was a unicorn horn, which she thought looked pretty. And above the flamethrower was something she called a "rainbow cannon."

"What's a rainbow cannon?" Carlos asked.

"Duh," she said. "It shoots rainbows."

The robot kit was arriving that day. All that remained was the hands. Finally they settled on a chainsaw and a flyswatter, because "nobody likes flies," said Marisol.

Carlos closed the notebook. "We're finished," he said, as their mother's car pulled into the parking lot. "Can you believe it?"

"This robot is going to be amazing," said Marisol. "Now we just have to build it."

"That's going to be the hard part. Like, really hard. I've never built a robot before."

"It'll be worth it. It's going to shoot so many rainbows."

Carlos and Marisol burst through the front door, ready to start building.

"Where is it?!" Carlos shouted. He searched the living room for a ten-foot tall box of flamethrower parts and unicorn horns, but didn't see anything. "Where is it?"

"Silly goose," said Marisol. "It's probably outside. Something this big couldn't fit in the living room."

But the backyard was empty too. So was the kitchen, the garage, the basement and the living room. There was no ten-foot tall cardboard box anywhere. Had the postman been delayed?

"Mom," said Carlos. "Did the mail come?"

"Yep," said Mom, stirring a pitcher of pink lemonade. "It's on the coffee table. I think there's a package for you."

She was right. There was a package—a six-inch cardboard box with "Build Your Own Robot!" written on it in sad little letters.

Carlos opened it slowly, and inside found a few metal rods and wheels, and plans to build something that looked like a cockroach, but uglier. "This robot is terrible," he said. "Where are the rocket launchers? Where are the chainsaws? Where are the tank treads?"

"It doesn't even have a rainbow cannon," said Marisol.

Carlos was about to throw the kit away when Marisol grabbed his wrist.

"Wait," she said. "It may not be as good as our robot, but it's still a robot. Let's build it together."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are Carlos and Marisol planning to build?

- A. a chainsaw
- B. a robot
- C. a rocket launcher
- D. a rainbow cannon

2. Where does the story mostly take place?

- A. in their mother's car
- B. in a robot factory
- C. in Carlos and Marisol's backyard
- D. outside of Carlos and Marisol's school

3. Carlos and Marisol have lots of ideas for their robot. Which details from the passage support this statement?

- A. They filled a notebook with sketches and plans for robot parts, with eight pages of designs for robot eyes.
- B. Carlos begged his father for the "Build Your Own Robot Kit" for weeks.
- C. Carlos and Marisol keep their robot plans in a notebook that says "TOP SECRET" on the cover.
- D. Carlos and Marisol finished designing the robot the same day that the "Build Your Own Robot Kit" arrived.

4. How do Carlos and Marisol make decisions about the design of the robot?

- A. Carlos makes all the decisions. Marisol only gives her opinion.
- B. They always agree on the designs since they like the same things.
- C. They ignore each other's opinions and agree to only the designs they like.
- D. They agree to designs the other person suggests even if they do not like the design.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. a brother and sister who fight over a robot
- B. a brother and sister who like comic books
- C. a brother and sister who design a robot together
- D. two friends who design a robot together

6. Read the following sentences: "There was a package—a six-inch cardboard box with "Build Your Own Robot!" written on it in **sad** little letters. Carlos opened it slowly, and inside found a few metal rods and wheels, and plans to build something that looked like a cockroach, but uglier. 'This robot is terrible,' he said."

Why does the author describe the letters on the package as "**sad**"?

- A. to say that the letters on the package have feelings
- B. to show how Carlos feels about the small package
- C. to show that the package got wet when it was delivered
- D. because the person who wrote the letters was sad

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Carlos wants the robot to have a hammer and a chainsaw for hands, \_\_\_\_\_ Marisol thinks the robot should have ordinary hands.

- A. but
- B. so
- C. like
- D. after

8. Where do Carlos and Marisol find the package?

9. Why does Marisol think the package will be outside?

10. Why are Marisol and Carlos disappointed in the "Build Your Own Robot Kit"?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is a meaning of the word **compromise**?

- A. a person's partner in marriage
- B. the object of lively attention
- C. to find a way between extremes

2. What is another meaning of the word **compromise**?

- A. the goal one tries for
- B. to cause impairment of
- C. a small vacation house

**Please use each answer choice only once. Choose the one word that best completes the sentence.**

3. Brilliant and \_\_\_\_\_, he knew how to make a few simple word changes and turn any church song into an effective union song.

- A. compromising
- B. compromiser
- C. compromises
- D. uncompromising
- E. compromised
- F. compromise

4. Describe the major \_\_\_\_\_ of the Convention.

- A. compromising
- B. compromiser
- C. compromises
- D. uncompromising
- E. compromised
- F. compromise

5. For weeks, they had been \_\_\_\_\_, until they had a robot that was part warrior, part leisure machine.
- A. compromising
  - B. compromiser
  - C. compromises
  - D. uncompromising
  - E. compromised
  - F. compromise
6. There was Henry Clay of Kentucky, known as the "Great \_\_\_\_\_."
- A. compromising
  - B. compromiser
  - C. compromises
  - D. uncompromising
  - E. compromised
  - F. compromise
7. What \_\_\_\_\_ could possibly solve this problem?
- A. compromising
  - B. compromiser
  - C. compromises
  - D. uncompromising
  - E. compromised
  - F. compromise
8. I must have sounded very definite because he \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. compromising
  - B. compromiser
  - C. compromises
  - D. uncompromising
  - E. compromised
  - F. compromise
9. Please write your own sentence using the word **compromise**.
10. What would you like to remember about the meaning of the word **compromise** so that you can use it when you write or speak?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is a meaning of the word **decision**?

- A. a choice or judgement
- B. a stage in an action
- C. an official position

2. What is another meaning of the word **decision**?

- A. any specific behavior
- B. firmness of conviction
- C. a quiet, secluded place

**Please use each answer choice only once. Choose the one word that best completes the sentence.**

3. I \_\_\_\_\_ to leave the cute part out of the report.

- A. decides
- B. decide
- C. decision
- D. decisions
- E. decided
- F. deciding
- G. decisive

4. Smart shoppers \_\_\_\_\_ how much money they will spend before they go to a store.

- A. decides
- B. decide
- C. decision
- D. decisions
- E. decided
- F. deciding
- G. decisive

5. They were exciting \_\_\_\_\_, though, and while she knew she ought to cut it out, she always felt, for a moment, like she was in control of her life.

- A. decides
- B. decide
- C. decision
- D. decisions
- E. decided
- F. deciding
- G. decisive

6. It was a difficult \_\_\_\_\_, but Katherine's dance career was gaining momentum.

- A. decides
- B. decide
- C. decision
- D. decisions
- E. decided
- F. deciding
- G. decisive

7. Then she peered closely, \_\_\_\_\_ just where to make the first cut.

- A. decides
- B. decide
- C. decision
- D. decisions
- E. decided
- F. deciding
- G. decisive

8. Then your brain \_\_\_\_\_ what to think of the smell.

- A. decides
- B. decide
- C. decision
- D. decisions
- E. decided
- F. deciding
- G. decisive

9. If you are a \_\_\_\_\_ person, you are willing to commit yourself to a decision or a goal.

- A. decides
- B. decide
- C. decision
- D. decisions
- E. decided
- F. deciding
- G. decisive

10. Please write your own sentence using the word **decision**.

11. What would you like to remember about the meaning of the word **decision** so that you can use it when you write or speak?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is a meaning of the word **design**?

- A. to mark out and exhibit
- B. a perceptual structure
- C. a basis for comparison

2. What is another meaning of the word **design**?

- A. cost or expense
- B. a female monarch
- C. make a design of

**Please use each answer choice only once. Choose the one word that best completes the sentence.**

3. They carved \_\_\_\_\_ on their canoes and on wooden boxes.

- A. designers
- B. designer
- C. redesign
- D. design
- E. designs
- F. designing
- G. designed

4. Brand names and \_\_\_\_\_ labels are not always indicators of quality.

- A. designers
- B. designer
- C. redesign
- D. design
- E. designs
- F. designing
- G. designed

5. Today I worked on a new \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. designers
- B. designer
- C. redesign
- D. design
- E. designs
- F. designing
- G. designed

6. They are \_\_\_\_\_ to stop more quickly.

- A. designers
- B. designer
- C. redesign
- D. design
- E. designs
- F. designing
- G. designed

7. Some engineers are \_\_\_\_\_ hearts and muscles.

- A. designers
- B. designer
- C. redesign
- D. design
- E. designs
- F. designing
- G. designed

8. She'd even agreed to consider having him \_\_\_\_\_ her rings.

- A. designers
- B. designer
- C. redesign
- D. design
- E. designs
- F. designing
- G. designed

9. Almost all roller coaster \_\_\_\_\_ build a track that brings you back down.

- A. designers
- B. designer
- C. redesign
- D. design
- E. designs
- F. designing
- G. designed

10. Please write your own sentence using the word **design**.

11. What would you like to remember about the meaning of the word **design** so that you can use it when you write or speak?