

Famous Sci-Fi Authors

Science fiction has been a popular genre for many decades. Stories are based around futuristic technology. Some famous stories may not appear to be science fiction at first.

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was written in 1818. In it, a scientist brings a man back to life. It was based on technology that wasn't available in Georgian times. The science still hasn't been discovered today. Almost everything about the story is futuristic. This makes it a great science fiction story. It is set in an alternative England where science was far more advanced.

Journey to the Centre of the Earth by Jules Verne

Journey to the Centre of the Earth is a classic Victorian novel. Jules Verne wrote it in 1864 and introduced the mystery of time travel.

In the story, the protagonists travel to the centre of a volcano. Inside, they find themselves lost in the mists of time. They find strange lands hidden within the Earth. This set the scene for other authors to do the same.

The War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells

H.G. Wells published *War of the Worlds* in 1898. It was one of the earliest stories to consider aliens coming to Earth to destroy it. In the story, the Martians were the alien race who tried to claim the planet for themselves. Some people were concerned about how aggressive the extraterrestrials were. The concept of aliens having superior weapons is still popular today. The Martians have appeared in *Superman* and *Avengers* comics as well as *Sherlock Holmes* books.

I, Robot by Isaac Asimov

Robots have been popular in science fiction since the late 1800s. Isaac Asimov took them to a new level. He wrote a series of short stories called *I, Robot*. It was published in 1950. Asimov introduced the Three Laws of Robotics in one of these stories.



A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws.

Asimov was concerned that robots may rise up to destroy humanity. These laws became extremely popular with science fiction writers. They still dictate how robots act with humans in nearly all science fiction since.

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Which book was published in 1950?
2. Who wrote about an adventure into a volcano?
3. In which era was Frankenstein written?
4. When was Journey to the Centre of the Earth written?
5. Which story was one of the first to include angry aliens?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

S

Why was Frankenstein science fiction?

I

Why did Isaac Asimov write the Laws of Robotics?

S

Why might some older stories not seem to be science fiction?

S

Which book was published first?

V

Find a word which means “better than the rest”.