

Can a robot be a person? bicentennial man essay sample

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Can a robot be a person? Or should it be said, can Andrew be a person?

Andrew is simply NDR-114: an androgynous robot designed to handle household chores, child education, servant work, and anything else as ordered by humans, the Martin family. It only got its name when Little Miss stumbled over the word “ android”, and mistaken it as something else and said “ Andrew” instead. As Andrew begins to experience emotions and creative thought, the Martin family soon discovers they own a very different and unique robot. Does Andrew, this unique form of artificial intelligence fit into White’s 10 criteria for a person?

1. Is alive
2. Is aware
3. Feels positive and negative sensations
4. Has a sense of self with emotions
5. Controls its own behavior (can be held responsible)
6. Recognizes other persons and treats them appropriately
7. Is capable of Analytical, Conceptual thought
8. Is able to learn; can retain and recall information
9. Can solve complicated problems with analytical thought
10. Has the capacity for communication that suggests thought

#1 - Is Andrew alive?

<https://assignbuster.com/can-a-robot-be-a-person-bicentennial-man-essay-sample/>

Andrew is definitely alive. Every living thing needs a source of energy in order for it to move, grow, and to survive. Human-persons' source of energy is food and water, and as for Andrew, his source of energy is the outlet. Without the outlet, he would lack energy and shut off, in our terms, die. When Miss (Grace) ordered Andrew to jump out of the window, he did, and he came back injured. If a human-person jumped out the window, he or she would obviously be injured too. But say a dead carcass was thrown out of the window, it would still be dead. Only living things can be injured and actually feel it. Andrew's mind is made up of all the little chips and parts in his "body" and since their system are "turned on", it replaces the heart and lungs.

#2 – Is Andrew aware?

Andrew is definitely aware. He acknowledges everything around him and his "family" members, Sir (Richard Martin), Ma'am (Mrs. Martin), Miss and Little Miss (Amanda). He is aware of his duties and of the laws he must obey. He was aware of equality, when Sir noted that "Andrew is now a member of the family", he knew that everyone in the family should be treated the same. He was not only aware of the physicals surrounding him, he is also aware of the emotions. The second example is Andrew referred to himself as 'one' and he never used 'I' until he achieved his status of 'free'. He understood from reading books to increase his knowledge that people strive to achieve freedom in the world; he strived to achieve that freedom too.

#3 – Does Andrew feel positive and negative sensations?

Andrew definitely feels positive and negative sensations. In the beginning when Andrew accidentally broke Little Miss's glass horse, he felt terrible when she said " I hate you, you ruined everything." He was especially good friends with Little Miss, as a result when she died, he felt the pain, but lacked the ability to express it, because his body wasn't upgraded yet. When Andrew upgrades his body; he then has a central nervous system that allowed him to feel both emotional and physical pain and be able to express it. The biggest negative sensation, but the most desired one of Andrew was to die like any human being would die. He died because he was too old, and that's how he wanted it to be. The funny thing is, he died ' naturally', while Portia died because she had to be unplugged from the life support she was on, sort of in an ' unnatural' way. The only parts of the movie that did not display the ability to feel positive and negative sensations was when he cut his thumb off.

#4 - Does Andrew have a sense of self with emotions?

Andrew definitely has a sense of self. He called himself ' one'; therefore he is aware of himself. He is aware that he is a ' servant'; he always said " one is glad to be in service". In the duration of the movie, he displayed jealousy of another being. He was jealous of Charles, fiance of Little Miss. When Sir and Andrew had their little talks at night, he learned more and more about how things work. He learned that during fertilization, only one sperm makes it and all the other sperms die and he was sad about that. He felt annoyed with the dancing robot; he thought that she was too perky. He also felt love for Portia. On the other hand, when Sir died, he felt pain, sadness and lost.

#5 - Does Andrew control his own behavior (Can be held responsible)

Andrew definitely controls his own behavior. When he broke Little Miss's horse and she yelled at him, he never lost his temper and yelled back. During the entire movie, he never lost his temper and went crazy, he only made actions to solve the problem therefore he would not go crazy. Another example would be when he was cleaning the basement, and he saw the spider web with the spider and he did not kill it, he knew that he shouldn't kill or hurt another living thing. As for the time when Miss ordered him to jump out of the window, he did not try to throw her out the window or something, he did not take revenge or anything, he just moved on.

#6 - Does Andrew recognize other persons and treats them appropriately?

Andrew definitely does recognize other persons and treats them appropriately. When Andrew was first turned on he knew that the family was human and that a wall is a wall. Whatever the family orders him to do; he does, even if it means jumping out the window of a 3-story building. And as much as Miss tries to ignore Andrew, he still remains to treat her with respect. He treats the family the way they deserve to be treated. He also recognized the little dog that Little Miss gave him and treated that with care, because it was a gift from her. He also recognized that the dancing robot could not feel pain, feel anger, or feel different and that's why he "opened" her up and changed things around a bit.

#7 & 9 - Is Andrew capable of analytical and conceptual thought and can solve complicated problems with analytical and conceptual thought?

<https://assignbuster.com/can-a-robot-be-a-person-bicentennial-man-essay-sample/>

Andrew is definitely capable of analytical and conceptual thought and can solve complicated problems with analytical thought. Analytical and conceptual thought is perceived as intelligence. His intelligence is different from ours, in a mechanical, robot-like way. When Sir and Ma'am we're playing chess, he analyzed what was happening on the board and in his head he found the solution for either Sir or Ma'am to win. Andrew was able to design a horse for Little Miss, and that was just the beginning, he then carved all these amazing works of art out of wood scraps. Another example would be when he could not express the pain he felt when Sir died; he then studied more and more about the human body. He created a central nervous system in which functions the same way biological organs of a human-person, with the help of Rupert. That proves Andrew is capable of analytical and conceptual thought and can solve complicated problems. When Andrew started to learn and understand more about freedom and how there were others just like him somewhere in the world, he decided to ask Sir for freedom and be able to go searching for his kind.

#8 – Is Andrew able to learn and can retain and recall information?

Andrew is definitely able to learn and can retain and recall information. At first he could not respond to goodnight, until Sir explained the way saying goodnight to one another works. He was able to retain and recall that goodnight doesn't need to be repeated 5 times. Andrew learned many jokes from Sir, he repeats what he says and that shows how he can retain and recall information. He also has the ability to recall information and express it visually. He recorded Little Miss's wedding and played it back when Sir

wanted to see it again. By observing the glass horse, Andrew could make a duplicate of it, but just not out of glass. This proves he learned the shape of the mammal, and he retained it and when he wanted to carve Little Miss a new one, he recalled what the mammal looked like.

#10 - Does Andrew have the capacity for communication that suggests thought?

Andrew definitely has the capacity for communication that suggests thought. There are endless examples throughout the movie that shows that Andrew is able to communicate thoughts. When he broke the glass horse, he carved one out of wood and gave it to Little Miss, that's his way of apologizing. In time Andrew's education and curious mind leads him away from Sir and Little Miss. Anxious to become free, he tells Sir how he wants to live on his own, support himself, and find others like himself. He wanted to be human, he wanted to express sadness, he wanted to express his love to those he loved, and he wanted to be a complete man. He could not have completed this project on his own. When Andrew wanted to explain his ideas to Rupert, he used diagrams. This proves he can not only communicate with his mouth, he can use visuals too, to aid in expressing his thoughts.

Andrew should definitely be considered as a person. He fits into White's criteria and has been proven with examples that he has traits of a person. Andrew's curiosity and anxiousness to become free, had set him free to live on his own and support himself. When he returned, he discovers his heart and mind both captured by Little Miss' grand daughter, Portia who resembles

Little Miss in when she was young. It is his growing emotion for Portia that encourages Andrew to cover the lines between human and machine. He wanted to die like human-person die. He did not want to live forever; he wanted to die because of his aging. He got his wish. He started off as a simple household robot: an androgynous robot then ended off as the first Bicentennial Man.