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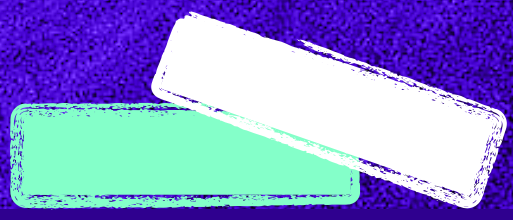
AI IN THE CLASSROOM

a practical guide
for educators



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Artificial intelligence isn't just a futuristic idea anymore. It's here, reshaping classrooms, lesson plans, and the very role of educators worldwide. Tools can now adjust to each student's pace, help with grading, and even answer questions. But how can teachers use AI wisely and keep it helpful, not harmful?

This guide is designed to provide educators with the basics of AI. It includes tips on safe and sensible use of AI, explains how to write better prompts, and shares a range of handy tools and resources for educators looking to incorporate AI into their work.

GETTING STARTED– IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY

Understanding a few key terms will help you navigate AI tools with confidence.

AI (Artificial Intelligence): A branch of computer science focused on systems that can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and language understanding.

Generative AI: A type of AI that creates new content, like text, images, video or music.

LLM (Large Language Model): An advanced AI model trained on large amounts of text to understand and generate human-like language.

Hallucination: When an AI gives information that is incorrect or misleading.

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

Take these actionable steps to begin your exploration into AI.

01

Create free accounts on popular platforms

02

Join or create a community of practice

03

Follow trusted creators and educators

01. Create free accounts: Experiment with popular AI platforms (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude) to experience their capabilities firsthand.

02. Join or create a community of practice: Collaborate with peers in your educational field to share insights, challenges, and practical AI applications.

03. Follow trusted creators and educators: Curate a shortlist of educators or content creators on platforms like LinkedIn or YouTube who align with your learning style.

We'll share specific creator recommendations later in this guide!

SAFE AND SENSIBLE AI USE

Using AI can be exciting, but staying safe is key! These simple rules will help you avoid mistakes, protect privacy, and set a good example for learners.

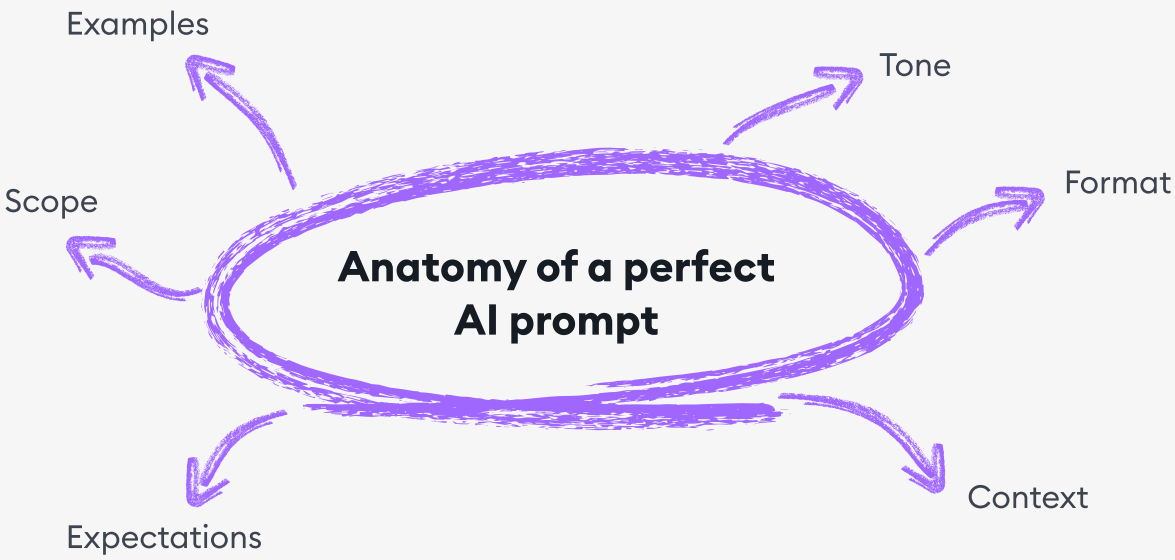
Safe and sensible AI use

• Review Terms & Conditions	• Verify facts
• Protect sensitive data	• Provide human review
• Avoid suspicious downloads/access	• Model accountability

- **Review Terms & Conditions:** Always check how a tool stores data, who can access it, and who owns AI-generated outputs. Why? Generative AI platforms may claim rights to your prompts or creations.
- **Protect sensitive data:** Never upload private student information, proprietary content, or confidential details. Why? AI tools can retain and potentially leak this data.
- **Avoid suspicious downloads/access:** Stick to reputable platforms. Why? Malicious tools could compromise your device or accounts.
- **Verify facts:** Treat LLM outputs as starting points, not truth. Why? Misleading information is common, and errors can spread quickly.

- **Provide human review:** Always fact-check, edit, and contextualize AI-generated materials. Why? AI lacks human judgment and subject-matter expertise.
- **Model accountability:** Use AI transparently and critically. Why? Learners will mirror your standards for responsible tech use.

GOOD PROMPTING



A good AI prompt should always be as specific as possible. Provide as much detail as possible on things like tone, format, context, scope, and expectations for what you want to produce. Whenever possible, include examples (either in text or a file) that demonstrate things like the style, language, and format of what you want to produce.

If you are using an LLM like ChatGPT, another strategy is to actually ask ChatGPT to help you write your prompt. You can describe what you want, then ask ChatGPT to create the best possible prompt to achieve your desired outcome.

As you become more experienced with AI tools, you will find that you get better at crafting prompts that produce the results you want. But at first, you may need to try a few different ways of prompting, or provide updates and corrections, to refine the output.

USEFUL AI TOOLS FOR CREATING EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

There's a vast selection of AI tools available. Here are a few to help you get started, though you may come across others that align better with your needs.

01 02 03 04

Large Language Models (LLMs)

LLMs are great for a variety of writing tasks including:

- Writing from scratch (computer code as well as words)
- Summarizing text, documents, video, and audio
- Brainstorming (creating lists and having discussions)
- Being a critical peer who can provide a feedback
- Analyzing data (ChatGPT and Claude can analyze data from a CSV file or spreadsheet) and even draw graphs

ChatGPT

Claude

Google Gemini

01 02 03 04

Image Creation

AI image creation is useful for producing both specific images directly related to a subject and general image content for your teaching materials and presentations.

ChatGPT and Gemini can both generate images by clicking or prompting them to create images. Design tools like Canva have also introduced AI image creation within their design suites.

Midjourney

Adobe Firefly

Leonardo AI

01 02 03 04

Specific Education Creation

There are numerous companies providing education specific AI tools for a range of different levels, subjects, domains, and locations. However, many are just pretty wrappers for ChatGPT, delivering the same content you could get at a lower cost directly from ChatGPT.

You should always check what the point of difference for an education focussed AI tool is, and whenever possible test it first with a free trial.

Quizizz – a tool for generating quizzes and other learning activities

Educator Lab - a tool for creating lesson plans and worksheets

Lesson Creator - a tool for creating AI lesson plans, PowerPoints and worksheets

iSpring Suite AI - a tool for creating courses and quizzes with a cloud-based AI assistant.

01 02 03 04

AI Research Tools

AI research tools can help you find and summarize studies related to your educational field, as well as research about education itself.

Chat GPT and Gemini both have Deep Research modes available on their paid plans, but there are also many other AI-powered research platforms that perform search and summarization.

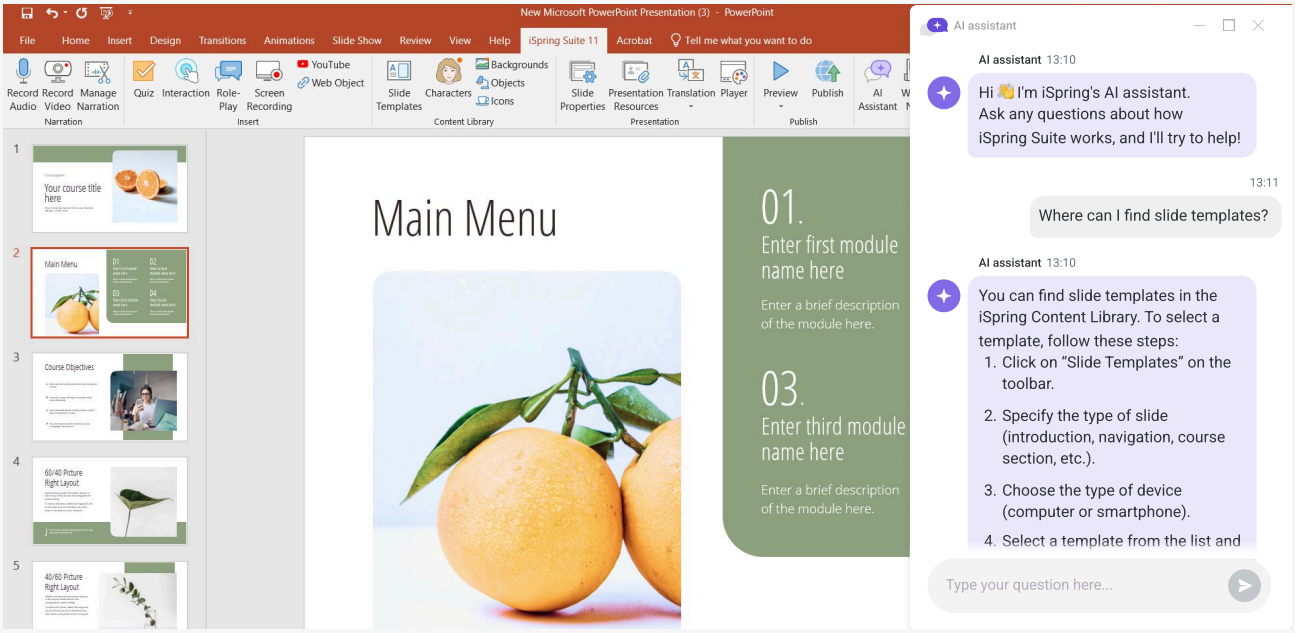
Perplexity - a research-focused LLM. Whilst it can be used for general searching, it can also be directed to focus only on academic research articles when responding to a prompt or a question.

SciSpace provides a range of AI-powered research tools, including literature search and summarization tools. It will take a research question and perform a literature search, then produce a summary response. It also has a“chat with paper” function that lets you ask the AI questions about a research paper.

Semantic Scholar - a literature search tool similar to Google Scholar, but with enhanced AI features, better filters, and AI summaries.

iSpring Suite: the only eLearning tool you need (PowerPoint + AI + cloud)

iSpring Suite is an authoring tool that allows you to create online courses, quizzes, and role-play simulations right in PowerPoint.



Integrated seamlessly with Microsoft PowerPoint it allows using Microsoft Copilot, an AI assistant, to enhance your content with AI-powered writing and design suggestions

Plus, iSpring Suite includes a built-in AI chatbot that acts as your 24/7 support assistant. Whether you need quick answers about the tool's interface, step-by-step guides for advanced features, or access to detailed help articles, the AI chatbot provides instant help, making your course creation process smoother and more efficient.

iSpring Suite also has an online counterpart, iSpring Cloud AI, that enables you to create scrollable courses in your browser with no downloads or installations. To build a course, you just need to copy and paste text, insert images and videos, and add a quiz. Or, there's an even easier way to craft your content: with the built-in AI assistant that handles all the work for you. This smart assistant will write text for your course, correct spelling errors, create a course outline, generate questions for quizzes, and much more.

DESIGNING AI-RESILIENT AND AI-INTEGRATED ASSESSMENTS

As AI becomes more embedded in education, traditional assessment methods are under pressure to evolve. Traditional assessments like take-home essays and reports are now vulnerable to AI assistance, making it harder to evaluate authentic student work.

Educators need to shift focus from assessing the final product to evaluating the process – how students think, create, and revise. This can be achieved through a combination of AI-resilient assessments and AI-integrated assessments.

AI-resilient assessments

While a student determined to take shortcuts or use AI may still do so, think about ways to adapt assessments to make this harder without diminishing their value, and perhaps even enhancing it. Consider the following strategies:

AI-resilient assessment

- Create contextualised or highly personalized tasks
- Use process-based submissions or “proof of work”
- Incorporate short oral presentations, in-class discussions, or structured verbal presentations of submitted work

- **Create contextualised or highly personalized tasks** that make generic AI-generated responses insufficient. Tailoring assignments to specific contexts or individual experiences raises the bar for AI shortcuts.

- **Use process-based submissions or “proof of work”.** Require students to show their thinking through drafts, notes, brainstorming logs, or, if AI is integrated, prompt histories. This approach tracks how ideas evolve over time. Although AI can assist, the iterative process will still require learner input to adapt at each iteration and at present AI tends to provide either increasingly generic or repetitive responses.
- **Incorporate short oral presentations, in-class discussions, or viva-style defences of submitted work.** These formats can reveal whether students truly understand what they’ve submitted and allow for spontaneous, human interaction - something AI can’t rehearse for them–something AI cannot replicate or rehearse. However, it’s important to recognize that these methods may disadvantage certain neurodiverse individuals, non-native speakers, and those less confident and skilled in public speaking.

Returning to pen-and-paper exams might seem like a simple solution, but it risks narrowing the scope of learning and assessment. Traditional exams tend to test memory and time-pressured writing, leaving little room for critical thinking, creativity, and real-world application.

They can also disadvantage students with learning differences. Instead of reverting to outdated methods, education should evolve to assess how students use tools like AI thoughtfully and ethically, better preparing them for the realities of modern work and life.

AI-integrated assessments

To harness AI’s potential in education, assessments should prioritize critical thinking and ethical reasoning. Here’s how to transform AI from a "cheat tool" into an opportunity for deeper understanding:

AI-integrated assessments

- Use "open-AI" tasks
- Ask students to reflect on AI use
- Design assignments based on real-world challenges
- Ask students to compare an AI answer with their own
- Include AI in assessment rubrics
- Use peer review for AI-assisted work
- Combine human and AI analysis tasks

- **Use "open-AI" tasks** where students are permitted or encouraged to use AI, but must document and justify their use.
- **Ask students to reflect on AI use:** What did they prompt? What did they keep, discard, or change in the AI-generated content?
- **Design assignments based on real-world challenges:** (e.g., “Solve this problem using AI tools”) to shift the focus to problem-solving and tool literacy.
- **Ask students to compare an AI answer with their own:** Which is clearer, more accurate or more ethical?
- **Include AI in assessment rubrics,** such as how effectively students evaluate, refine, or integrate AI outputs into their work..
- **Use peer review for AI-assisted work** to foster dialogue around tool use and learning value.
- **Combine human and AI analysis tasks:** Assign tasks where students compare their own interpretations or solutions with AI-generated ones.

Building a culture of transparent and ethical AI use starts with classroom expectations and modelling. Emphasize that academic integrity in the AI era is about *transparency, intentionality, and reflection.*

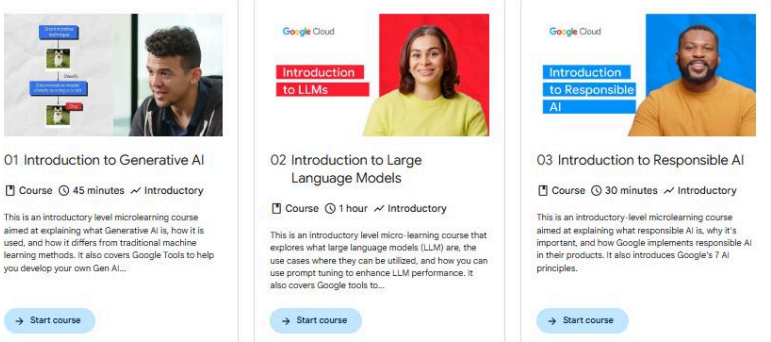
- Discuss AI use explicitly in your classroom policies and expectations.
- Promote critical awareness of AI limitations, including biases, hallucinations, lack of source verification.
- Model responsible use yourself, showing when and how AI can support educational tasks.

Reframe assessment not as a trap to catch misuse, but as an opportunity to teach students to be thoughtful, adaptive learners in an AI-rich world.

USEFUL RESOURCES AND PEOPLE TO FOLLOW

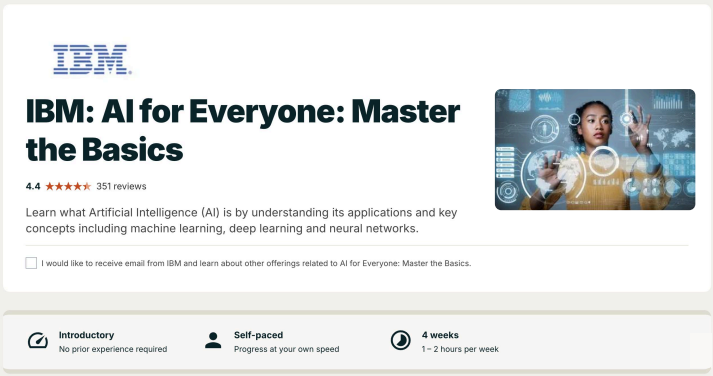
Free AI courses from Google

Google provides several free short courses on generative AI and response AI use.



Free IBM AI Basics Course

Available periodically on the edX platform, this course provides an introduction to AI concepts, methods, uses, and ethics. It is free to view but requires payment for graded assessment and a completion certificate.



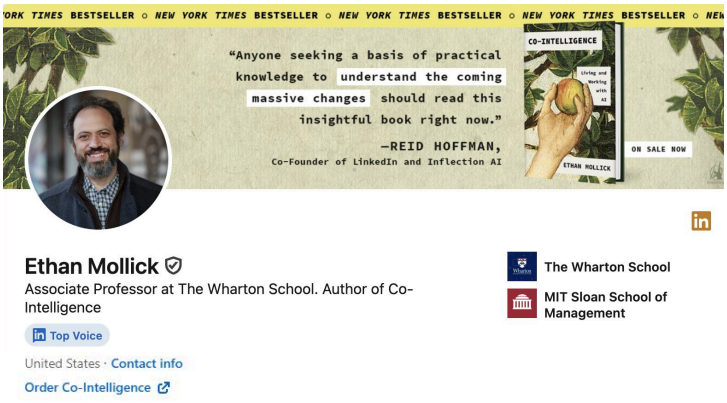
AI for Education

AI for Education is a support organization which provides a range of free and paid resources and training for teachers and schools.

Ethan Mollick

Ethan Mollick is an academic and researcher who regularly shares insights and research on AI on LinkedIn and via his website and email newsletter, One Useful Thing.

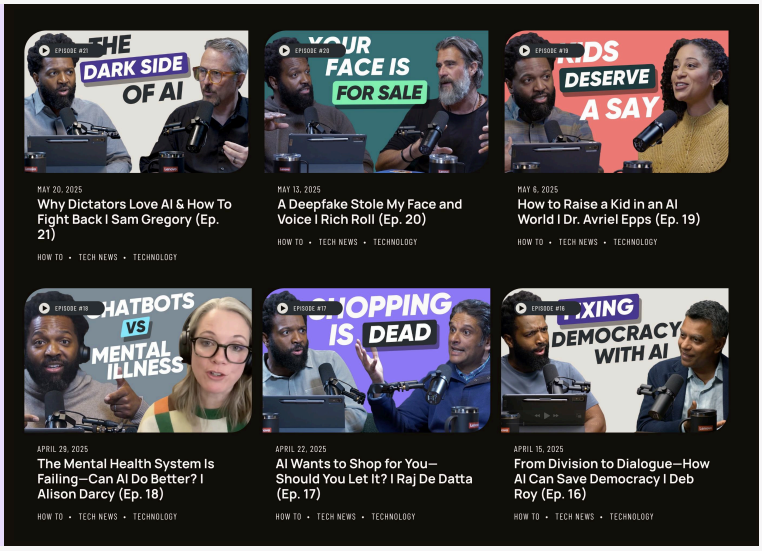
https://www.oneusefulthing.org/



Life with Machines Podcast

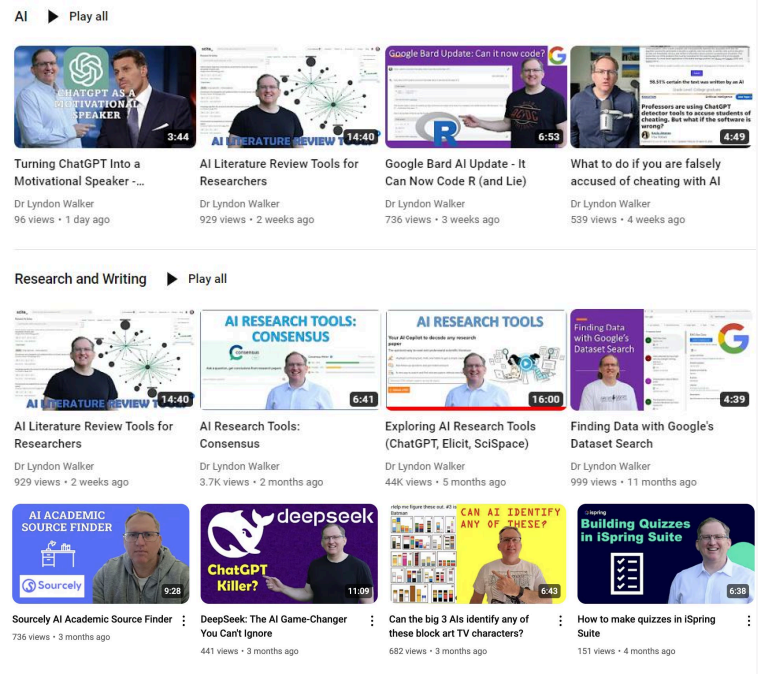
The Life with Machines podcast explores a wide range of AI related topics, often focussing on deep issues like ethics, philosophy, and how AI impacts society.

Available on all major podcast platforms



Dr Lyndon Walker

Dr Lyndon Walker, the author of this guide, provides a wide range of AI and data-related videos on his YouTube channel. His content includes reviews and demonstrations of AI research and education tools, as well as discussions on important topics like what to do if you are falsely accused of cheating with AI.



WRAP UP

Artificial intelligence is transforming education, offering tools to personalize learning, streamline tasks, and inspire innovation, but its success depends on how wisely educators use it. By staying informed, modelling accountability, and fostering critical thinking, educators can leverage AI as a collaborative partner that prepares students for a future where technology enhances human creativity and judgment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Dr. Lyndon Walker is an experienced AI and education researcher with over 20 years of lecturing experience. He holds a PhD in Statistics and Sociology from the University of Auckland and serves as Senior Education Researcher at the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). His teaching has earned prestigious recognition, including an Australian Government OLT Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning, Swinburne University's Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching, and multiple student-voted Lecturer of the Year awards.
Beyond academia, he shares his expertise in AI and statistics on YouTube, plays guitar, and competes in powerlifting.

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