
Collaboration of SBSHS
Faculty - 2024 AI Institute

Ethical AI Use in Academic Writing

An assignment-specific guide

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Introduction

Disclaimer: AI is an exceptionally helpful tool that all can use but it is not (and should not) be viewed as a replacement for a student's critical thinking and writing skills.

Welcome to the era of artificial intelligence (AI) where technology transforms the way we approach academic writing. As a community college student, you're navigating a diverse array of subjects and assignments, and leveraging AI tools can greatly enhance your writing process. This guide is designed to introduce you to practical ways in which AI can support and improve your academic writing skills.

In this guide, we will explore how AI can assist you in various stages of the writing process, from brainstorming ideas to refining your final draft. Whether you're drafting a research paper, essay, or lab report, AI tools can offer valuable insights, save time, and enhance the overall quality of your work.

Essays

How can a student effectively use AI to help with essays:

- Brainstorming
 - Students that must select or formulate a topic might be able to use AI to their advantage:
 - Students can feed AI keywords from the course/semester,
 - These keywords can also be with personal interests in the subject matter.
 - Take note of the expected (or perhaps unexpected) themes that arise from the AI.
 - Students can use their critical thinking skills to determine what would work best for the parameters of the essay/paper.
 - Students that have selected a topic and begin writing but run up against a wall/writer's block:
 - Ask Generative AI to write a short (perhaps add word limit) paragraph that is descriptive of the chosen topic.
 - This paragraph may serve to jumpstart ideas for students, or
 - Get the student to think of the topic in a way that maybe wasn't clear to them before.
 - Researching opportunities:
 - Instead of free researching online, have students utilize AI to their benefit.
 - Ask an AI service to give you research ideas from your research question.
 - These ideas may look like studies and books/articles that the student can look into – basically have AI almost as a curator of the information ahead of time to give a “preview” of research to guide the student.

Essays

- Structure

- Utilize AI to help students visualize where the essay/paper is going.
- Have the students add what the structure of the paper looks like with their topic and have AI brainstorm the argument, outline the main points, create interesting subsections, and point to potential evidence (further, human research would be needed).
- Input the essay topic and the main argument the student is leaning toward with the paper and ask AI if it can help you refine the scope of the question.

- Editing/Polishing

- If student is using an AI that is connected to the internet, feed statements of fact into the generator and ask it to confirm or double check the information presented in the paper.
- Citation formation (APA, MLA, Chicago-style, etc.) can be checked by asking AI to help put a book or article into proper citation style – this might include asking it for in-text citations, bibliographical citations, or even for footnotes.
- Input specific sentences that seem long, unclear, or convoluted and ask it to come up with various ways to state the claims made in the sentence – perhaps making it into multiple sentences or fewer. This should also help cut down on paraphrasing citations and unintended plagiarism.

Discussion Boards

Below are a few ways AI can support students in their online discussions:

- Topic Exploration: Students could use AI to brainstorm and explore various aspects of the topic the class is discussing, specifically as a way to initiate their first discussion post.
- Argument Building: Students could use AI to help structure and refine arguments. Input initial thoughts and let AI suggest additional points, counterarguments, or evidence to strengthen position.
- Creative Writing: If the discussion allows for creative input, students could use AI to help craft engaging and thoughtful responses.
- Language Enhancement: Students could use AI to improve the clarity and sophistication of their writing. Input draft posts to receive suggestions for grammar, style, and vocabulary enhancements.

Remember that the goal is to use generative AI as a tool to enhance learning and contribute meaningfully to class discussions. It should complement students' own insights and understanding of the subject matter, rather than replace them. Rather than relegating AI as a tool or resource, students should perceive AI as a creative partner, keeping in mind that AI is not a substitute for critical thinking but a catalyst for it.

Presentations

Students could try a modified version of the initial presentation prompt in AI. For example:

“I am a college student. What instructions can you give me about how to ethically use AI for a 5-minute classroom presentation I must give on a topic?”

Here is what AI may tell you:

AI can be a great tool to boost your upcoming presentation but remember to use it responsibly. It can quickly summarize a lot of information and key points.

Remember, you create, write, and edit the output for accuracy and to keep your presentation within the 5-minute limit. Always cite your sources, including any AI-generated content. Treat it like any other reference.

Beware of Bias: AI can inherit biases from its training data. Fact-check everything and verify information to ensure accuracy. Rehearse with your AI-generated slides to stay within the 5-minute limit and deliver smoothly.

Presentations

Focus on your Delivery: Use the extra time gained by using AI to practice your delivery and consider adding interactive elements (polls, quizzes) if appropriate. Look for platforms like Pixabay or Pexels that use AI to find high-quality royalty-free images and videos to enhance your presentation. Make sure the visuals are relevant and complement your message.

Remember: AI is a helpful assistant, but you're the presenter! You're responsible for the content and delivery. Make it your own and show your understanding of the topic.

AI is a sidekick, not a superhero. You are still responsible for the content and delivery of your presentation. Use AI strategically to save time and get creative, but always maintain control over the message and ensure it's delivered with your own unique voice.

Proofreading + Grammar

Using AI to check grammar can significantly enhance your writing process. However, it is important to approach the use of AI as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for critical thinking and originality. Your perspective is unique, and it deserves to be heard!

Start by drafting your assignment, focusing on expressing your unique viewpoints and analyses.

Once you have a draft, you may use AI platforms such as Grammarly to review your work for grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, and stylistic consistency. Engage actively with the suggestions AI gives you, viewing them as helpful insights to refine your writing. Make intentional decisions about which revisions to adopt based on your understanding of the subject matter and your intended message—you should not blindly accept suggested revisions. Remember, AI is here to complement your writing abilities, not overshadow them. It can't read your mind and know exactly what you were trying to communicate! Your individual perspective and insights are key to producing substantive assignments in social and behavioral sciences.

Proofreading + Grammar

Bring AI into your writing process with a discerning and reflective approach. Following grammar checks, carefully review your revised draft with a focus on the clarity and coherence of your arguments.

While AI can assist in refining your work and identifying surface-level errors, it cannot replace the deep engagement required to develop the thoughtful analyses and interpretations that are expected in these types of assignments.

Maintain emphasis on your voice and perspective throughout the writing process. Ensure that your ideas remain central, using AI to enhance the clarity of your thoughts while preserving the integrity of your distinctive insights.

When incorporating AI suggestions, you should adjust your text within your original document rather than copying and pasting from an external software. Avoid pasting AI-“generated” content into a Word document, as programs like TurnItIn tend to flag them as plagiarism even if you wrote the content that AI made suggestions on.

By employing AI carefully as a grammar checking tool, you can bolster your writing abilities and build confidence in your skills.

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