Teaching in the AI Era

The recent release of ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI) text generation tool, has raised many questions about the future of education and whether students might use the tool to complete assignments. Below are some suggestions from the TLHub to help you be on the forefront of this tool and its impact on your course. Please note that ChatGPT and other AI chatbots such as Bing AI are emerging tools, and we will continue to provide new and updated resources as we develop our guidance on the intersection of teaching and AI tools.

Quick strategies

- **Explain what unpermitted aid for assignments means for your course.** At Stanford, the use of unpermitted aid to complete course work violates the Honor Code. Depending on the course, unpermitted tools may include AI text generators (e.g., ChatGPT), AI image generators (e.g., Dall-E and Hotpot), and other language tools (e.g., Google Translate). You may also explain what other kinds of aid are or are not permitted (e.g., Hume Center for Writing and Speaking and Grammarly). State your policy in your course syllabus and the Course Policies and Norms form, and then follow up in class with your students.

- **Test it for yourself.** Consider running your course’s assignments through ChatGPT. Discuss your findings with your students and, if ChatGPT’s output is problematic or insufficient to meet your expectations for their work, explain why.

- **Lead a class discussion about AI tools in your field,** such as emerging areas of AI use or creative applications of AI tools. If AI tools are not allowed or allowed in only limited circumstances in your course, explain why.

- **Review your course’s assignments and assessments.** Look for opportunities to require higher-order thinking and personal reflection. Break assignments into parts and lower the stakes for performance. Such assignment or assessment design practices help improve learning but have an added benefit of incentivizing academic honesty and making tools like ChatGPT harder or less relevant to use.

What kinds of content can ChatGPT be used to generate?

*Note: this is not an exhaustive list and may change based on the specifics of your assignments. We highly recommend testing your particular assignments with ChatGPT.*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ChatGPT can be used to generate…</th>
<th>ChatGPT’s output is more reliable when prompts are centered on…</th>
<th>ChatGPT’s output is less reliable when prompts are centered on…</th>
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<td>- Short essays</td>
<td>- General topics (e.g., historical reports, news, theory)</td>
<td>- Personal accounts</td>
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<td>- Basic communications</td>
<td>- Foundational knowledge in your field</td>
<td>- Reports or reflections on experiential learning activities</td>
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<td>- Presentation outlines</td>
<td>- Public data sets</td>
<td>- Analysis of new research or current events (especially 2022 or later)</td>
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<td>- Answers to multiple choice questions</td>
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<td>- Computer programming source code</td>
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<td>- Multiple representations of students’ thinking</td>
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ChatGPT and AI Tools in the Classroom

What are Stanford’s policies around the use of ChatGPT?

Guidance from the Board on Judicial Affairs states that Stanford instructors may set course policies regarding AI use as they choose. The guidance recommends that such policies are stated in the course syllabus and communicated clearly to students.

Does a student’s use of ChatGPT violate the Honor Code?

Sometimes. According to the Honor Code, students commit to not receiving “unpermitted aid” for assignments or examinations. If you do not specify that students can use generative AI tools, then their use would violate the honor code. But because these are emerging tools, it’s important to explicitly clarify with your students whether or not you permit ChatGPT and other AI tools.

How can faculty identify student work that has used ChatGPT?

We strongly encourage you to test your assignments in ChatGPT for the clearest sense of how a ChatGPT output may compare to high-quality student work in your course. Note that ChatGPT does not produce the same output each time a question is posed. Stanford does not currently have approved licenses for plagiarism monitoring tools such as GPTZero (prototype) or Turnitin.

Other common strategies for detecting plagiarism may also be useful, such as looking for a mismatch of styles or language, improper and missing citations, or if a student can’t explain how they arrived at an answer or made choices in producing an assignment.

Are there examples of positive uses of ChatGPT?

Yes. Consider having students research emerging areas of AI use or brainstorm creative applications of AI tools in your field. This will allow students to explore, gain experience with, and discuss the pros and cons of such applications. Follow the QR code for more.

What else should I know before asking my students to use ChatGPT?

ChatGPT currently requires personal information, including an email address and mobile phone number, to sign up and use the chatbot. The site’s privacy policy states that this data can be shared with third-party vendors and other businesses. If you develop assignments that rely on ChatGPT, make sure to offer an alternate assignment for students who do not wish to make an account, or see the adoption process for new technologies.

ChatGPT isn’t always available for users without paid subscriptions. When the app has reached its capacity for processing load, general users are instructed to return later. General users may encounter this more frequently as demand increases.

Learn More
Scan for more information about AI in the classroom.