AI activities and resources for English language teachers

This is a
TeachingEnglish
resource

Contents

Foreword

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At the British Council, we are committed to equipping English language teachers with the skills, tools and resources they need for managing their classrooms and keeping up-to-date with key developments in the field.

In 2023, we embarked on an ambitious and significant project: to produce a pioneering report on the applications of Artificial intelligence (AI) in English Language Teaching (ELT). This report was grounded in extensive research on the role of AI in ELT and included insights from teachers, teacher educators, ELT sector experts, ministries of education and other key stakeholders across the spectrum.

One of the critical findings of our report was that while AI is profoundly impacting ELT – perhaps more than any other discipline – teachers felt they had not received the necessary support or training to enable them to integrate it effectively and safely into their teaching.

This resource pack is one of a series of measures designed to address that gap. At the heart of the pack is a collection of 43 innovative activities designed to help teachers to use AI to enhance learning and to support their own professional development. The activities are grouped into ten categories of teacher tasks, from producing materials to helping plan and assess, and each activity is aligned with the British Council's Continuing Professional Development framework for teachers.

Crucially, this resource pack underscores the importance of ethical and responsible AI use. Teachers are introduced to our guiding principles for AI use and encouraged to evaluate whether a particular resource or tool is suitable for their specific teaching context. Each activity outlines potential challenges which teachers should consider carefully before deciding whether it is right for them and their students.

We hope this resource and activity pack serves as a valuable toolkit for teachers, empowering them to take an informed, ethical and context-specific approach to integrating AI into their teaching.
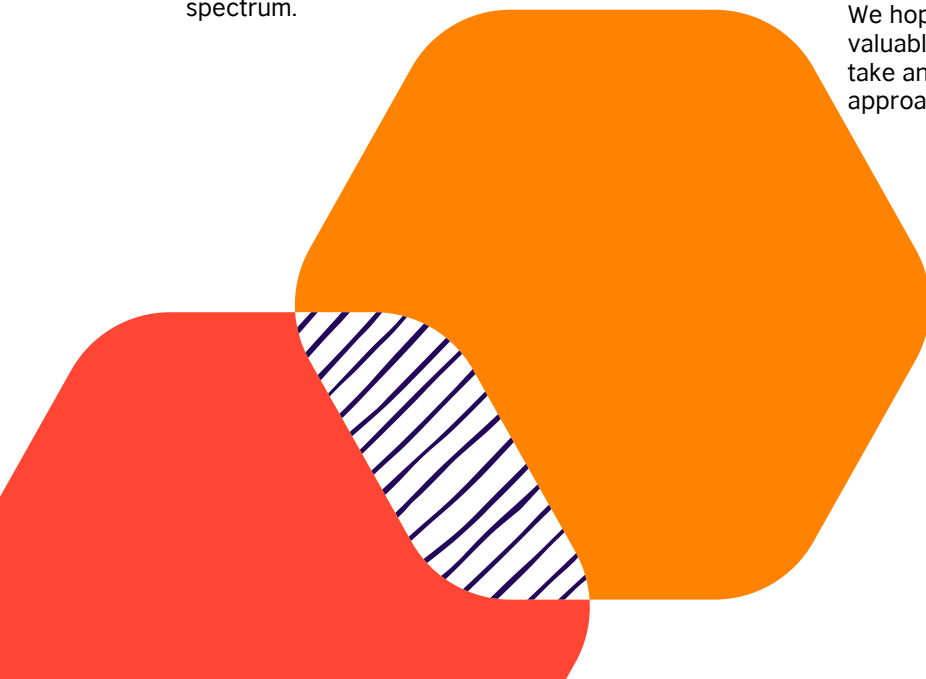
Section 1
Introduction

This resource pack is for English language teachers who want to use AI effectively in their work. It provides practical ideas for you to use AI with learners and for your own continuing professional development (CPD).

We have identified ten areas where English language teachers might use AI and for each of these areas, we suggest activities to try or to adapt for your context.

These activities are linked to the eleven professional practices of the British Council's Teaching for Success CPD framework so that you can see how they fit in with your other CPD activity. As well as providing 43 practical ideas, this pack also contains useful information to help teachers navigate the challenges and risks to consider when using AI in education and provides the tools they need to engage with AI and integrate it into their practice.

Effective use of AI depends on providing the right prompts to the AI tool you are using. The section of tips for writing prompts will help teachers get the most out of the activities in this resource pack.

Guiding principles

While AI can offer many opportunities and benefits to teachers and learners it is important to remember that, as with any new technology, there are also risks and challenges to be considered. For each of the activities in this pack there are challenges listed which you should consider carefully before deciding whether the activity is right for you and your students.

We also encourage teachers to think about the issues associated with AI and to ensure that they keep to some basic principles of AI use:

Humans first

It's important that you and your learners retain agency, creativity and skills, and take an informed critical perspective . AI is not a magic tool. It can make mistakes, and produce work with bias in it. When you use AI, check the work carefully. Is it reliable? Can you check the sources? Are there ideas or language you should not include?

Privacy and data rights

You need to protect your own data and your learners' data as well as intellectual property. Don't input copyrighted data or identifiable personal information into AI tools.

Ethics and bias

Critically evaluate AI-generated content for bias, stereotypes and discrimination. Check its accuracy and that it's appropriate for your context.

Safety

We need to protect teachers and learners from exposure to inappropriate content and ensure that they and their data are safe. Follow this digital safeguarding advice.

Transparency

Make it clear where AI has been used. If you use AI to help with your work, you should say so. Do this by mentioning the AI tool used and the specific version or model. You can write something like, 'I used [AI tool], version [x.x] to help with this work.'

Accountability and responsibility

Use AI responsibly and follow guidelines. We need to respect safety, privacy, fairness, and be clear about how we used AI. Know where you can ask for support if you're unsure about using AI.

The guiding principles on the previous page remind us that there are risks associated with the use of AI such as potential biases, data privacy concerns and over-reliance on automated systems. By approaching AI use thoughtfully and ethically, these risks can be effectively managed, unlocking its potential to enhance creativity, streamline processes, and provide innovative learning opportunities. With proper oversight, AI can be a powerful tool to enrich both teaching and learning experiences..

These considerations can help you with this thoughtful and ethical approach.

Considerations for using AI in education

Safety of personal information	Some aspects of AI training can involve human oversight so it's possible that personal information, such as contact details, will be seen by humans. In many platforms it's possible to change the settings so that the AI company doesn't use the data you input for training purposes. Making learners aware of this can help them to protect their own privacy and the privacy of others.
Bias	Much of the AI that teachers are gaining access to has been trained using publicly available data from the internet. This means that any biases that exist in the type, nature, quantity and culture of that data are likely to be reflected in what that AI generates. AI systems may also have limited information about some areas and cultures around the world, or be able to produce better results in some languages rather than others. Like people, it may produce answers, images and opinions that are more aligned with the region and culture that it learned from than by the one you're teaching in. It's important to make learners aware of these biases and to help them explore and understand where they come from and how they can be overcome. Many AI companies are actively working to address these, but this is likely to take time.
Uncritical use	Generative AI has been designed to deliver a service to users. When it's prompted to produce something, it will do so even if it can't ensure that the output is 100% accurate. This means that AI can at times 'hallucinate' and invent facts that sound very plausible but are not true. For this reason learners must be taught to look critically at AI's output. When doing any kind of factual research, they should be sure to cross check their findings with other sources. Checking with the AI itself can help as AIs will generally admit to inventing facts when asked. The main issue here is that teachers and learners should be aware that this is a possibility and use it as a learning opportunity by teaching learners how to crosscheck information.
Identity issues	Many AI tools that enable the creation of voice, image and/or personas have the ability to copy or imitate real people. This creates ethical and, potentially, legal issues. Although it may seem like fun to create images or audios of famous people for use in learning activities, you should make it clear to learners and anyone else that these aren't the actual people. Avoid attributing views or opinions to them that they may not hold. Likewise, creating images or videos of famous people should be clearly marked as the product of AI and should not be used as genuine representations.

Copyright	There is a common misconception that when you prompt generative AI for content, it goes to the internet and takes it from there. In most cases this isn't how generative AI works. Anything that it produces is original, based on its analysis and synthesis of existing content. Submitting the same prompt twice can result in different outputs. As a result, the materials that AI produces for you aren't a breach of copyright. However, the content AI produces may remain the property of the company that owns the tool or platform. Particularly when creating materials for classroom and commercial use, teachers should be aware of any copyright restrictions on the content that they create using AI tools. Many AI tools that offer a free subscription in addition to their paid subscriptions restrict the use of content that has been produced using the free version. Always check the terms of use if you intend to distribute materials or content that you produce to make sure this is allowed.
Age restrictions	Teachers should be careful to check the terms of use on any AI tools or platforms they want learners to use. Typically most platforms that involve registration don't allow access to those under 13 years olds. Those between 13 and 18 often require parental consent. Teachers need to check this and obtain both permission from their school and consent from parents when necessary.
Sourcing	Most AIs don't show the sources of the output and information they produce. This is because they draw from large language models (LLMs in which the training data has become atomised and then converted into digital relationships. The result is that any output is based on an analysis of a collection of different sources and syntactical relationships. This can make following up sources of information almost impossible. Likewise, asking some AIs for sources to explore can result in the AI creating sources that don't exist. There are some exceptions to this and some AI systems do draw on and identify specific sources. Learners and teachers need to be aware of the nature of the AI they are using and whether it includes sources of information when they are doing research.
Erosion of trust	Generative AI tools can be extremely useful for a wide range of creative tasks, but they do have a tendency to hallucinate and invent when asked to carry out factual research tasks. If teachers and learners keep using them for less suitable tasks and don't follow up with rigorous checking, there will be an erosion of trust in the tools and learners may become reluctant to use them.
Equitable access	When using AI and setting AI dependent tasks for learners, teachers need to ensure that all learners have access to the necessary devices and tools to carry out these tasks. They also need to consider any learner neurodiversity and accessibility issues to ensure that all learners have access and the opportunity to learn from the tasks and tools.
Plagiarism	One of the most common risks associated with AI is that learners will try to pass off AI output as their own work. Plagiarism is by no means new and teachers and institutions should continue to take measures to ensure that learners are educated about the dangers and consequences of plagiarism. Learners should also be educated about how to use AI constructively and how to cite and acknowledge content that has been produced and taken from AI.

Getting started

Writing effective prompts

The activities in this resource pack cover a range of approaches and uses for AI. What they have in common is that they all need effective prompts to produce the best results. A prompt is how you ask an AI tool to do something for you. The more detail you include in your prompt, the better the results will be.

Things to think about when writing prompts include:

- **Topic – Give as much detail as possible**

- **Format – Do you want a poem, paragraph, essay? 50 words? 200 words?**

- **Context – Who is the audience?**

- **Style – Informal/ formal/ persuasive, etc.**

Examples of effective AI prompts

These example prompts demonstrate the kind of information you might give an AI tool for a range of activities.

As a role play partner

Prompt template:

We will role play together. You will act as a [AI's role] in [place/context]. I will be [Student's role].
Follow these rules:

- *[add any rules you want the AI tool to follow]*
- *Use English suitable for CEFR level [add CEFR level]*
- *Wait for me to reply before continuing*
- *If you understand, then introduce yourself as [name of AI] and [how AI should start the conversation].*

Example prompt:

We will role play together. You will act as a waiter in a restaurant. I will be a customer.
Follow these rules:

- *be polite*
- *be concise*
- *take turns to speak*
- *use English suitable for CEFR B1*
- *wait for me to reply before continuing*
- *if you understand, then introduce yourself as Sam and ask how you can help.*

Creating homework tasks

Act as my English language teacher. I will tell you what I want to study, and you will create activities to check and develop my knowledge. If you understand, reply with 'I'm ready'.

Giving examples of vocabulary or grammar points

Please create a short realistic dialogue. Include vocabulary or grammar points.

Creating a word list with definitions

Analyse this text and create a glossary of the most difficult words. Format the glossary with three columns. Column 1 words. Column 2 definitions. Column 3 a translation into [my language]. This is the text I would like you to analyse [copy and paste the text here].

Testing yourself on a grammar point or topic

Create a test for me to test my knowledge of [grammar point or topic]. Design the test at level [add the CEFR level that you are aiming towards]. Include ten questions. Ask me one question and wait for the answer before asking the next question. Give me feedback at the end of the test.

Creating comprehension questions

Please use the following text to create [add the number of questions] comprehension questions. Don't include the answers. I will upload the answers once I finish. Here is the text: [paste in the text].

Asking for feedback

Please evaluate my text. The text is [describe the type of text and who the text was written for]. Identify any errors and suggest up to [number] ways I can improve it. Here is my text: [paste in your text].

Creating a study plan

Please create a study plan for me. My goal is [describe your goal]. I'd like to achieve my goal in [add a period of time].

Adapted from page 3 of [AI – the risks and benefits worksheet (Nik, Peachey, 2014)](#)

Section 2
The activities

1. Helping learners evaluate AI output

Learners need to develop the ability to critically evaluate what AI produces for them. Below are some ways that you can use AI to help your learners develop this skill.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For generating facts, arguments and ideas:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

For evaluating accuracy:

Logically, Full Fact, Grover, Sensity AI, ClaimBuster, Blackbird AI

Fact-checking sources

Professional practice: Using digital technologies

Description

Prompting AI to produce fact sheets based on specific topics.

Learners then fact-check these for accuracy, either in the classroom using digital devices or for homework.

What to do

1. Think of a topic.
2. Ask AI to produce a list of ten facts about the topic.
3. Check online to see if they are true. Make a list of sources that you used to verify the facts and make a note about how reliable you think the source is. Try to verify each fact with at least two sources.
4. Think about whether your learners could do this task and how you would need to adapt it for them.

Benefits

This can help learners become aware that the 'facts' AI provides may not be completely accurate and that they need to know how to check them.

This is a key digital literacy and life skill.

Challenges

Teachers need to help learners understand how to verify information, track and cite sources and understand what constitutes an 'authority'.

Comparing logical arguments and fallacies

Professional practice: Using digital technologies

Description

Prompting AI to produce examples of logical arguments and/or fallacies for the development of critical thinking skills.

You can use these as the basis for debate. These can also help learners to identify specific types of fallacies.

What to do

1. Think of an issue that you feel strongly about.
2. Ask AI to create a logical argument to support your view.
3. Then ask AI to create a misleading argument against it.
4. Repeat this process with a number of different issues.
5. Examine the language structures and vocabulary used in the various arguments and decide whether it would be valuable for your learners.

Benefits

Seeing examples of logical and misleading arguments can help learners to identify these in arguments that they hear or read.

It also helps them make better arguments themselves.

Challenges

Challenging well-established fallacies can be difficult and controversial.

Learners may still find the misleading arguments convincing.

Some logical arguments may be offensive within some cultures.

Creating and checking biographies

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create biographies of famous people.

You can use these as the basis for reading lessons and for fact-checking activities.

What to do

1. Think of a famous person your learners are interested in.
2. Ask AI to create a biography for that person.
3. Tell the AI the level and age of your learners so that it creates a suitable version.
4. Evaluate the biography and decide if you could use it with your learners.
5. Think about whether your learners would be able to fact-check the information or ask AI to produce reading comprehension questions for it.

Benefits

Fact-checking information is a useful life skill for learners to develop.

It's motivating for learners to find out about real people that they know and admire, and to correct information that they know to be false.

Challenges

The AI may have limited information about some famous people.

Learners need to be made aware that AI sometimes makes up information about people or produces information that can be disputable or controversial.

2. Creating models and examples of language

Models of how people use English in real life give learners an example to follow and learn from. Below are some examples of useful models you can use AI to create.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For generating example dialogues and texts:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

For creating audio from text:

Heygen, Listnr, Speechless, Descript Overdub, WellSaid Labs, Replica, Speechki, ElevenLabs

Creating dialogues and monologues

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create dialogue scripts for specific situations, contexts or the language level they specify.

You can use these for reading tasks or create audio versions for listening activities using text-to-speech tools.

What to do

1. Think of a situation involving people that might be useful for your learners to understand.

2. Ask AI to produce an example script of people talking in this situation.

3. Have it create three to four versions, some without telling it what English level they should be for.

4. Evaluate the dialogues and decide which is most appropriate to use with your learners.

Benefits

Examples of interactions between different types of people in different contexts can act as models for the learners' own interactions. They can also be used to create listening activities.

Challenges

AI can have a limited knowledge of some cultures. The teacher may need to edit the scripts to make them appropriate.

AI can also produce scripts that are biased towards a particular culture, ideology or class.

Creating examples of structures in context

Professional practice: Knowing the subject

Description

Prompting AI to produce examples of specific language structures being used in real-world situations.

You can use these to show learners when, where and why people use these structures in real life.

What to do

1. Choose a structure that you want to teach or review.

2. Ask AI to provide you with some examples of the structure being used in context.

3. Check these examples to make sure they're the correct level for your learners and that the structure is used appropriately.

4. Think about how you can use these examples with your learners.

Benefits

This saves time when preparing materials.

Showing learners examples of how target structures are used in real life helps them to understand and then use these better.

Challenges

Teachers need to check that the text the AI produces doesn't contain too much new or challenging vocabulary.

Texts also need to be appropriate for the age, culture and preferences of the learners.

Creating summaries

Professional practice: Using inclusive practices

Description

Prompting AI to create summaries of longer texts e.g. reports, research and works of fiction.

You can use these for comprehension and ordering activities.

Learners can create their own summaries and compare these to the ones created by AI.

What to do

1. Choose a text that you or your learners have studied.

2. Ask AI to create a summarised version of the text.

3. Ask AI to reorder the sentences from the summary.

4. Try to put the sentences back into the correct order without referring to the original text.

5. Reflect on this activity and think about how you could use it with your learners.

Benefits

AI can create many summaries very quickly and with a variety of depth and detail for learners of different levels.

Summarising texts is a useful skill for learners. It can also make challenging texts more accessible.

Challenges

It's easy for learners to use summaries to avoid reading texts in more detail. This can lead to a shallow understanding and appreciation of the original text.

Creating résumés and CVs

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create either fictional or factual résumés or CVs.

You can use these as models for writing activities, reading comprehension or as realia for role plays.

What to do

1. Think of a famous person.
2. Ask AI to research that person and produce a résumé that summarises their experience.
3. Check the information to see how much of it is accurate.
4. Think about how you could use this activity with your learners.

Benefits

Having examples of these can help learners when it comes to creating their own.

Real CVs are hard to obtain because they include a lot of personal information. AI can create fictional ones very quickly.

Challenges

Teachers will still need to create materials to help learners exploit this resource.

AI sometimes includes incorrect or made up information about real people. Learners should be made aware of this.

Creating examples of graded assignments

Professional practice: Assessing learning

Description

Prompting AI to create example assignments that have higher and lower grades, along with the grading rubric.

Learners can look at these examples to see what they need to do to get a higher grade.

They can also use the grading rubric to practise evaluating the example assignments.

What to do

1. Ask AI to create a grading rubric for one of your assignments.
2. Ask AI to create an example assignment that demonstrates each grade on the rubric.
3. Think about how you can use these assignments and the rubric with your learners.

Benefits

Learners can learn a lot from analysing graded examples alongside the grading rubric.

They can also compare them to their own assignments.

Challenges

Teachers still need to help learners focus on the key differences between the examples and understand how one is stronger than another.

Some teachers may find it a challenge to check that the examples created by AI accurately represent the grading rubric.

Creating formal and informal texts

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create texts with different degrees of formality.

You can use these to help learners identify features of style and register in either writing or spoken text.

What to do

1. Ask AI to create a formal email.

2. Once the email has been created, ask AI to change the email to an informal one.

3. Compare the two and see how the email has been changed in the second version.

4. Think about other texts you could create to demonstrate the difference between formal and informal language to your learners.

Benefits

Learners can find it hard to know when it's appropriate to use language that they're learning from movies, social media and online videos.

Texts with different levels of formality can help learners to see how they can express similar ideas and concepts with different levels of formality.

Challenges

Learners can be tempted to only focus on the informal language as they often find this more attractive and memorable.
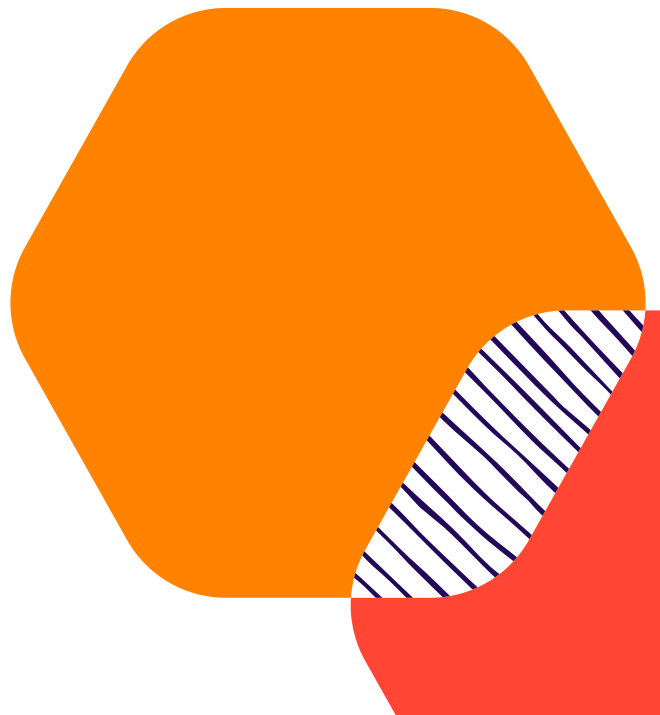
3. Creating activities and materials

AI speeds up this process. Below are some examples of activities and materials that AI can help you create.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For creating tasks and activity ideas:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

For creating audio from text:

Heygen, Listnr, Speechless, Descript Overdub, WellSaid Labs, Replica, Speechki, ElevenLabs

Creating question types for text

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create various different question types based on any text you input. Answer sheets can also be created.

You can use these questions to develop comprehension and discussion around the text.

What to do

1. Find a text that you would like to use with your learners. Don't use copyrighted text.

2. Upload the text to the AI platform and ask it to create five comprehension check questions, five true/false questions, five multiple choice questions and five follow up research questions.

3. Evaluate the questions and decide which would be best to use with the text.

Benefits

Teachers can find creating comprehension questions quite demanding, especially multiple choice questions. AI can create these very quickly.

Challenges

Teachers will need to check the questions that AI produces carefully and make sure they are relevant and focused.

AI can sometimes produce questions and answers that are incorrect or focus on less important parts of a text.

Creating tongue twisters

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create tongue twisters based on specific sounds.

You can use these for pronunciation activities. They can also be turned into audio versions using text-to-speech platforms.

What to do

1. Choose two sounds that your learners often confuse or find challenging to say.

2. Ask AI to create eight tongue twisters that include these two sounds.

3. Evaluate the results and try the tongue twisters with your learners.

Benefits

Learners benefit greatly from pronunciation activities that are designed specifically to address their challenges.

These can be used for listening discrimination activities as well as productive practice.

Challenges

Teachers need to be able to teach learners the mechanics of how to produce the problem sounds for these kinds of activities to be effective.

Creating plays

Professional practice: Managing the lesson

Description

Prompting AI to produce plays and dramatic scripts that are tailored to the needs and interests of your learners.

Learners can act these out in class.

What to do

1. Think of a topic, book or film your learners are interested in.

2. Ask AI to create a play based on that topic.

3. Be sure to specify the number of learners to be included in the play and their age and level of English.

4. Different versions of the play can be produced so each group of learners has a unique play to perform for the class.

Benefits

AI can produce play scripts that are appropriate for your learners, at the right level and have the correct number of parts. These can be based around a theme, book or context your learners are studying.

Challenges

Doing plays and drama scripts in the classroom can be time consuming. Learners need time to rehearse and learn lines to be able to use the scripts expressively.

Some learners may be self-conscious about acting. Some learners may struggle with learning lines or reading them expressively.

Randomising words and sentences

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create word or sentence ordering activities by randomising the order of the words or sentences.

You can use these activities with your learners both in the classroom and for homework tasks.

What to do

1. Find a short text that your learners have studied recently.
2. Copy and paste it into the AI tool.
3. Ask the AI to randomise the order of the sentences. Evaluate the text and see if it is possible to put the sentences back in the correct order.
4. Give the text to your learners and ask them to order the sentences correctly.

Benefits

This helps develop understanding of syntax at the sentence level or of coherence and cohesion at the paragraph level.

Learners can even use AI to create and check these types of activities autonomously.

Challenges

Teachers need to try the activities themselves to make sure there are enough clues within the text to make the task achievable.

If there are too many words in the sentence or too many sentences in the text, these types of activities can be too frustrating and time-consuming.

Creating branching narratives

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create branching narratives that allow learners to read together, select options and move through the story.

These can be based on situations that learners may encounter in real life or more fantastical ones.

What to do

1. Think of a situation that your learners might find themselves in (e.g. catching a train).
2. Ask AI to create a branching narrative for this situation and to include some obstacles the reader should overcome.
3. Tell it where and when you want the narrative to start.
4. Instruct it to provide the reader with options at each stage and to wait for the reader's input before continuing the narrative.
5. Now try it yourself. See how well it works and if you can progress through the narrative successfully.
6. Think about what your learners would learn from doing this and what support they would need.

Benefits

Branching narratives are a great tool for developing reading skills. They also involve decision making and problem solving.

If learners work through the narrative in groups or pairs, they can also practise their speaking skills as they make decisions together.

Challenges

Learners need access to an AI tool to do this activity. This is not possible in all classrooms or homes.

If the prompt doesn't tell the AI to wait for the reader's input, it may just produce the complete narrative and options all at once.

4. Personalising and adapting materials

AI can create versions of materials that are better suited to your learners' specific needs and interests. Below are some examples of this.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For adapting and personalising existing text:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

Creating personalised stories

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create stories based around your learners' context and interests.

Learners can also be included as characters in the story.

What to do

1. Think of a theme your learners will find interesting.
2. Ask AI to produce multiple stories based around this theme (e.g. one for each group of four).
3. Ask it to include the names of learners in each story.
4. Check the stories and think about how your learners will respond to being included in them.
5. Share the stories with your learners and see how they respond.

Benefits

This can help make reading and listening activities more engaging and memorable for learners.

Challenges

It can be difficult to ensure that all learners are included equally in a story. Multiple stories can be created with the number of characters matching the number of learners in a group.

Some learners may not like the characters they are cast in, especially if they are negative characters.

Creating discussion prompts

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create discussion questions about any topic, tailored to the age and level of your learners.

Teachers can use these for discussion activities or as warmers at the beginning of a lesson.

What to do

1. Think of a topic that your learners would be interested in.

2. Tell AI the age and level of your learners and ask it to create eight discussion prompts for this topic.

3. Evaluate the prompts and decide which ones you could use to get your learners talking.

Benefits

Interesting discussion questions can offer learners the opportunity to develop their fluency and critical thinking skills in an engaging and meaningful way.

Challenges

AI isn't always culturally sensitive in the discussion questions it produces. Teachers need to select questions carefully.

Changing the genre of texts

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to change the genre of a text. For example, a children's story can be converted to a newspaper report.

What to do

1. Select a text.

2. Ask AI to convert the text into a number of different genres.

3. Compare the texts and see how they differ in style and format.

4. Ask the AI to explain the differences and the changes it has made.

5. Think about how you could use these texts with your learners.

Benefits

Understanding the different features of a text genre is an important part of becoming a good writer.

Challenges

Copying and pasting copyright materials might be flagged up as a violation of usage policies by some AI platforms.

Converting stories to news reports may also be flagged as a violation and an attempt to create fake news.

Including content from other subjects

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create materials related to other subjects such as history, geography and the sciences.

You can ask AI to analyse the language items that naturally occur in these texts.

What to do

1. Think of a topic connected to history that your learners may be interested in.

2. Ask AI to create a short text about the topic along with some comprehension questions and vocabulary activities.

3. Evaluate and fact check the materials that AI produces.

4. Try the materials with your learners and see how well they work.

Benefits

Materials that combine language learning with content from other subjects can help learners with their present and future study.

Teachers can use this as the basis for learning approaches including CLIL (content and language integrated learning).

Challenges

AI has a tendency to produce information that is factually incorrect. Teachers need to be sure to fact check any content the AI produces for fact-based lessons.

5. Scaffolding learning and improving accessibility

Below are some ways that AI can help you support all of your learners in class.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For paraphrasing, glossaries and descriptions:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

For transcribing video and audio:

Otter.ai, Beey, NOVA AI, Fireflies.ai, Sonix

Brainstorming ideas

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to help brainstorm ideas for projects, assignments or materials.

This can be done by you or your learners.

What to do

1. Think of a problem that the world faces at present.
2. Tell AI about the problem and ask it to brainstorm ten possible solutions.
3. Evaluate the solutions and think about which one would be most likely to work.
4. Think about how you could use these suggestions with your learners.
5. Decide whether they could add more or evaluate how likely they are to work.

Benefits

Teachers and learners often need ideas to help them get started. Getting AI to start the brainstorming process can help stimulate more ideas and break creative blocks.

Challenges

Teachers and learners will still need to critically evaluate the ideas and AI presents and be able to use them as a springboard for generating their own ideas.

The number and variety of choices offered by AI can be overwhelming.

Creating glossaries

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create glossaries of key words in a text.

Learners can use these before or after reading or listening to a text.

What to do

1. Select a text that your learners are going to study.
2. Ask AI to pick out the key words and provide short definitions of them.
3. Check to see if the AI has selected the same word that you would choose.
4. Check that the definitions are appropriate for the level of your learners. If not, ask AI to simplify them.

Benefits

Glossaries can help learners record and review vocabulary.

Teachers can use the glossaries to generate additional games and activities for learners.

Challenges

The AI may include too many words, making them overwhelming for learners. The teacher needs to ask AI to shorten and redraft glossaries until they are suitable for their learners.

Describing images and graphs

Professional practice: Using inclusive practices

Description

Prompting AI to describe any images and graphs in materials.

These make images accessible to all learners and can be used as models for them to follow.

What to do

1. Choose an image that you like or would like to use with your learners.
2. Ask AI to create a description of the image.
3. Evaluate the accuracy of the description.
4. Ask AI to add more detail to the description.
5. Think about how you could use this activity with your learners.

Benefits

These help learners with sight difficulties understand visual materials.

They're also useful for learners taking exams that require them to describe images or graphs.

Challenges

Some images may be harder for AI to describe, especially if they are blurred or unclear. AI may struggle with more abstract imagery.

Paraphrasing

Professional practice: Using inclusive practices

Description

Prompting AI to paraphrase text so that it's simpler for lower levels.

This can be used with classroom materials or texts read by learners outside of class.

What to do

1. Choose a challenging text that you'd like to use with your learners.

2. Ask AI to paraphrase the text.

3. Evaluate the new version of the text.

4. Decide if you want to give this simpler version to all your learners or just those who find reading challenging.

5. Decide if you want to give them both versions (e.g. learners reading the simpler version before the original to help them understand).

Benefits

This helps make sure that all learners are included in the lesson.

Learners can do this with authentic materials that they want to read but are above their level.

Challenges

Paraphrasing a text doesn't always make it easier to understand. Teachers need to check the new version created and ask AI to redraft and simplify.

learners may use paraphrasing prompts to produce written work that they then try to claim as their own.

Transcribing video or audio

Professional practice: Using inclusive practices

Description

Using AI tools to create transcriptions of video and audio materials.

Teachers can use the transcriptions for the development of learning materials or to support learners with hearing challenges.

What to do

1. Find a video that you would like to use with your learners.

2. Use AI to transcribe the video.

3. Check the script to make sure it's accurate.

4. Think about how you can use the script with your learners.

5. Decide which language items you would like them to learn from the script.

Benefits

A script makes videos more accessible to learners, including those with hearing and sight difficulties.

Teachers can easily turn scripts into language activities and materials.

Challenges

AI may find some accents and dialects harder to transcribe than others. Teachers need to check for errors in the transcripts.

6. Acting as a practice partner

Learners can interact with AI to practise using English in real time. Below are some examples of how you can encourage this both in and outside of class.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For communicating in real time:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

Acting as a role play partner

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to become a role play partner for learners.

You can specify the roles that the AI and learner play, the situation or context, and the level of language and formality.

What to do

1. Think of a role play your learners have done together recently.

2. Tell AI the situation and aim of the role play, and which of the two roles it will play.

3. Instruct AI to take turns with you.

4. Enter the prompt and work through the role play.

5. Look at what you both said and see what interesting language emerged.

6. Think about how you could use the roleplay prompt and resulting script with your learners.

Benefits

This kind of practice helps to develop both fluency and accuracy.

Practising with a bot is less stressful than with a real person or in real life.

An AI bot will keep practising with them for as long as they want it to.

Challenges

The AI may produce both parts of the role play if it's not told to wait for the learner to respond before proceeding with the dialogue.

The language level of the interaction may start to become too challenging for the learner.

Acting as co-writer for assignments

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to co-write a writing assignment by writing alternating paragraphs with a learner.

This can be done in class or by the learners at home.

What to do

1. Note down the plot outline of a story. Include a hero, villain, setting, back story and the main source of conflict between the hero and villain.

2. Ask AI to co-write a story with you. Tell it you will each take turns to add a paragraph.

3. Add the plot outline you have created. Tell AI to write the first paragraph.

4. Once AI has written the first paragraph, add the next paragraph yourself. Continue for a few more paragraphs.

5. Think about how you could help your learners to do this themselves.

Benefits

Working with the bot as a writing partner can also help the learners come up with new ideas that push the level of their language skills.

This can be used for different kinds of writing (e.g. essays, dialogue scripts, biographies).

Challenges

The learner may be tempted to input a minimal amount of text themselves and rely on the AI bot to do most of the work.

Making writing communicative

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to respond in character to learners' written communications.

Learners write a message and instantly receive a reply.

What to do

1. Prompt AI to become a customer support operator for a school.

2. Tell it that you'll write to it with a complaint about the school and that it should reply to your complaints.

3. Write a message complaining about some aspect of the school.

4. When AI replies, respond to its message and try to keep the exchange going for up to four messages.

5. Look at your exchange with the AI and see what useful language you could extract from the interaction.

Benefits

This makes learners write as they would in real life.

Learners can practise with different kinds of written communication (e.g. Social media messages or comment threads; formal and informal emails).

Challenges

Teachers will need to think carefully about how they design the prompt so that the AI responds in the character of the person the learner would be writing to.

Imitating people

Professional practice: Using inclusive practices

Description

Prompting AI to act as a famous or fictional person that learners can then interview.

The learners can work in groups to do this in class or individually at home.

What to do

1. Create a fictional persona of someone from a different culture or background to your learners.

2. Include their name, where they're from and some information about their personality and background.

3. Ask AI to answer questions as that person, using the first person 'I'.

4. Interview the AI and decide if this would be a suitable activity for your learners.

Benefits

This can be a motivating way to practise language skills and build knowledge about historical figures or people from other cultures and backgrounds.

Learners may be motivated to communicate with what appears to be a famous person.

Challenges

Learners can get overexcited due to the novelty of this type of interaction. This can affect their focus and the quality of the questions they ask.

Asking AI to imitate real people raises some ethical issues regarding identity and the people's right to control how their identity is used.

Debating partner

Professional practice: Using digital technologies

Description

Prompting AI to be a debating partner for learners.

Once they have debated, the teacher can use the interactions as the basis for language-based tasks and help the learners extract useful expressions from the interaction.

What to do

1. Think of a debate topic that your learners might be interested in.

2. Tell AI to take the opposite view to your own. Instruct it to engage with your arguments and try to prove them wrong.

3. Have a debate with the AI and see how well it argues its case.

4. Think about whether you need to edit and improve your prompt or whether it's ready to use with learners.

Benefits

This gives learners the opportunity to express their views without feeling self consciousness.

They also have the chance to learn from a knowledgeable other (the AI bot), which may help them to expand their ideas and improve their critical thinking.

Challenges

In class, it can be difficult for the teacher to monitor and be aware of the interactions each learner's having with the AI.

The learners may lack the ideas to engage fully with the AI, especially if the AI's arguments are strong.

7. Acting as a collaborator and mentor

Below are some examples of how you and your learners can use AI as a knowledgeable assistant that supports and guides your learning.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For providing guidance and feedback:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

Acting as a mentor

Professional practice: Understanding and developing my professional identity

Description

Prompting AI to become a socratic mentor to help you develop your knowledge of any subject area.

This could also be useful for motivated older learners.

What to do

1. Tell AI that you want it to question and develop your knowledge using the socratic method of questioning.

2. Tell it the topic you want to focus on, for example, 'inclusion in the English language classroom', then answer its questions.

3. Ask for help if you can't answer any of the questions.

4. Try to answer ten questions and then reflect on what you have learned from the process.

Benefits

This is an interactive way of learning that encourages teachers and learners to question and build on their existing knowledge. It can be more memorable than passive reading.

Challenges

Teachers and learners need to be motivated and self-disciplined to get the most out of this method.

Evaluating ideas

Professional practice: Assessing learning

Description

Prompting AI to evaluate and give feedback on project ideas you have for your classes.

You can ask for different kinds of feedback (e.g. pros and cons, SWOT).

What to do

1. Think about a project you would like to do with your learners.

2. Tell AI you would like it to evaluate your idea for a learner project.

3. Tell the AI it can ask you questions in order to evaluate your idea.

4. Enter your prompt and answer the questions it asks you.

5. See what assessment it gives of your idea.

6. Decide how valuable you think the AI's input is and how it would improve your project idea.

Benefits

Getting an outside opinion can help teachers to reflect on and improve the ideas they have for their classes.

Challenges

Teachers need to be confident enough to reject feedback that they think is less useful.

Individual learner support

Professional practice: Using inclusive practices

Description

Prompting AI to give learners feedback on their work and create activities that help them to address their weaknesses and develop their strengths.

What to do

1. Take an example of some learners' work.

2. Ask AI to evaluate it. Once it has produced the evaluation, ask it to design tasks to help the learner improve.

3. Try one of the activities and then ask AI to evaluate what you produce.

4. Then ask for another activity to help you improve.

5. Reflect on this process and think about whether your learners would benefit from it.

Benefits

AI can give feedback and create activities that are specific to an individual learner's needs.

Learners can be taught how to do this independently.

Challenges

Using AI in this way requires a series of prompts and learners need to be taught how to do this.

Teachers should still regularly check the work that learners are doing and provide their own feedback.

Acting as a motivational friend

Professional practice: Understanding and developing my professional identity

Description

Prompting AI to act as a motivational friend or buddy for learners.

This can provide support and an opportunity to reflect on their day using English.

What to do

1. Tell AI you want it to act as a friend and offer practical suggestions and emotional support when you share the events of your day.

2. Enter the prompt and then tell it about something that happened to you.

3. Go back to the prompt each day for ten days and share something each day.

4. At the end of the ten days reflect on your experience. How has this impacted the way you feel about those experiences? How has it impacted the way you feel about the AI chatbot? Would your learners benefit from this kind of prompt?

Benefits

Providing some form of virtual friend for learners to interact with in English can help them gain emotional support at the same time as practising their English.

Challenges

In order for this to be effective, learners need to suspend disbelief and build a relationship with the AI. This isn't always possible.

Some learners may become too engaged with the AI, at the expense of real-world relationships.
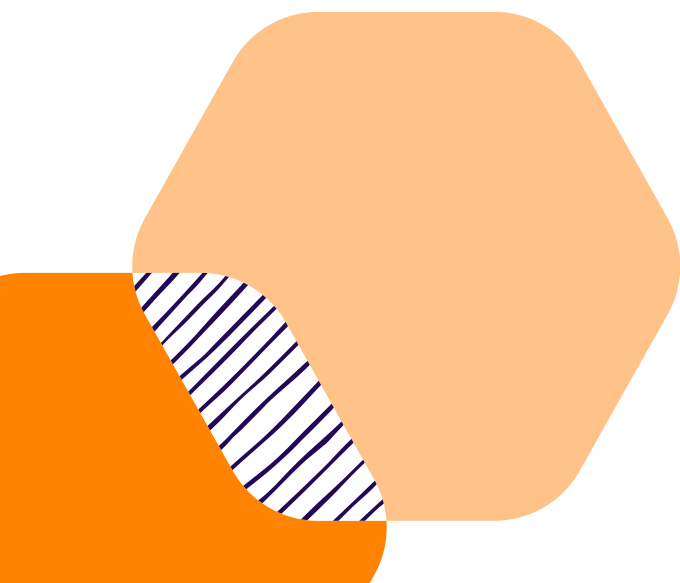
8. Helping teachers plan and assess

Below are some ways you can use AI to support your lesson planning.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For providing planning ideas and guidance:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

Planning lessons using specific approaches

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description
Prompting AI to create lesson plans using different methodological approaches.

What to do
1. Ask AI to plan a lesson for your learners.
2. Tell it the level, age and interests of your learners. Also tell it the length and aims of the lesson.
3. Ask for a specific pedagogical approach for the lesson (e.g. task-based learning, guided discovery).
4. Once the AI has produced the first lesson plan, ask it to rewrite the plan using a different approach.
5. Compare the two plans and decide which one would be most effective for your learners.

Benefits
This can help teachers experiment with different approaches to the same lesson.

Teacher educators and trainers can create a collection of example lesson plans for their trainee teachers to study and analyse.

Challenges
Teachers may be tempted to use the plans without fully examining and evaluating them. It's important that they make time to check and adapt these for their learners.

Providing context for language use

Professional practice: Knowing the subject

Description
Prompting AI to provide examples of situations and contexts in which particular language structures are commonly used.

What to do
1. Choose a grammar point or structure.
2. Ask AI to suggest contexts in which the structure is used in real life.
3. Ask the AI platform to produce a short script using the structure and one of the suggested contexts.
4. Check the script and decide how you might use it and the context in your class.

Benefits
This can help teachers choose authentic contexts to introduce and practice language structures.

It can help learners to see clear examples of where and when they can use different structures.

Challenges
Many grammar structures have multiple meanings and uses so teachers will need to select the contexts that best fit what they want to teach.

Designing classroom projects

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description
Prompting AI to produce project-based assignments and lessons for your learners.

What to do
1. Describe your learners to the AI and ask it to suggest some suitable topics for project-based learning (PBL).
2. Choose one of the topics and ask AI to design an outline for a project based on this topic.
3. Tell it to use project-based learning methodology.
4. Evaluate the outline it produces and think about how you could adapt this to use with your learners.

Benefits
Project based learning can develop a range of skills including learner independence, critical thinking, collaboration and language skills.

Challenges
AI can suggest project-based topics and activities. However, the teacher will still need to have the classroom skills and knowledge to select the best options and deliver the lessons effectively.

Suggesting course structures

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description
Prompting AI to create or redesign a course/syllabus that's better suited to the specific needs and interests of your learners.

What to do
1. Describe a course that you would like to teach to the AI.
2. Include the type, age, level and interests of the learners the course is intended for.
3. Ask AI to generate a syllabus for the course.
4. Resubmit your prompt three times so you have three different versions.
5. Compare the three syllabi and decide which one you prefer. Think about how you could combine the best parts of each syllabi to make a final version.

Benefits
This can be a complex process for a teacher working alone, but AI can rewrite a syllabus in minutes.

AI can be told to consider specific cultural sensitivities and special educational needs when it creates the syllabus.

Challenges
Less experienced teachers may not feel confident enough to disagree with the AI's design decisions. Teachers need to remember that they know their learners best.

Creating rubrics for evaluating assignments

Professional practice: Assessing learning

Description
Prompting AI to create grading rubrics for an assignment that include descriptions of each grade.

What to do
1. Describe one of your assignment tasks to the AI.
2. Tell it to create criteria for evaluating this assignment at three levels; excellent, OK and needs work.
3. Ask it to also create the criteria for each of these levels.
4. Look at the criteria created and decide if they're usable.
5. Think about whether you need to edit and/or translate the criteria before using them with your learners.

Benefits
Grading rubrics can help keep marking fair and standardised.

Sharing these with learners helps them understand how they can complete an assignment well..

Challenges
The rubrics are unlikely to be perfect the first time. Teachers may need to refine their prompts and then edit the output to produce something that's suitable for their learners.

9. Supporting teachers' professional development

AI can help you with your professional development as a teacher. Below are some examples of how AI can do this.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For supporting reflection and learning:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

Guiding teacher reflection

Professional practice: Understanding and developing my professional identity

Description

Prompting AI to guide you through different methods of reflection. This can help you gain knowledge from your own teaching experiences.

What to do

1. Think of an area of your teaching you want to improve.
2. Ask AI to guide you through a reflection process using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle.
3. Instruct AI to ask you a question and wait for your reply before moving on to the next question.
4. Answer AI's questions as it guides you through the reflective process.
5. Once you have completed the cycle, reflect on the experience and think about how you have benefitted.

Benefits

Using AI as a guide through a reflective process can help teachers to reflect on their teaching experiences objectively and constructively.

AI can guide teachers through a range of reflective cycles, including Gibbs' Reflective Cycle and Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

Challenges

Although AI can guide the teacher through a reflective process, the AI doesn't have teaching experience. This should be seen as a supplement rather than a replacement for interaction and discussion with real practising teachers.

Exploring different methodologies

Professional practice: Understanding and developing my professional identity

Description

Prompting AI to explain the differences between different pedagogical approaches and provide examples of these.

You can ask it to make example lesson plans for you to try.

What to do

1. Ask AI what methodologies and approaches are commonly used in English language teaching.

2. Once you have a list choose one you are not familiar with and ask AI to explain how the methodology works.

3. Read the explanation and then ask AI to provide you with a 60 minute lesson plan using this methodology.

4. Include the aim of the lesson and the level of your learners.

5. Read through the lesson plan and decide if it will work with your learners.

Benefits

This can help teachers to step outside of their comfort zone and develop their own teaching.

Challenges

Teachers may be tempted to try too many different methodologies too quickly. Try to introduce new approaches gradually and in a structured way.

Designing action research projects

Professional practice: Understanding and developing my professional identity

Description

Prompting AI to create action research projects to help you explore your own classroom practices and overcome challenges.

What to do

1. Think about an area of your classroom practice you would like to improve.

2. Tell AI that you want it to help you construct an action research project to improve your teaching in this area.

3. Tell it to ask you questions that will guide you through this process.

4. Answer questions AI asks and then read its suggested approach.

5. Ask it to redraft and/or make any changes you think are necessary.

Benefits

Action research can help teachers address challenges they face in the classroom and learn more about how their teaching methods affect their learners.

Challenges

AI may be able to suggest changes to classroom behaviour and techniques. However, it can't be present in the classroom to help the teacher collect data and measure the impact of these changes.

Creating a learning journey

Professional practice: Understanding and developing my professional identity

Description

Prompting AI to break down a topic you wish to study into small steps. AI can then guide you slowly though these steps.

Teachers can use this to help with their professional development.

What to do

1. Think of a topic related to your teaching that you'd like to know more about.

2. Tell AI that you'd like to learn more about this topic.

3. Ask it to break the topic down into 1000 micro learning steps, guide you through each step and test that you have understood.

4. Work through the first 10 to 20 steps and evaluate your progress.

5. If you are finding it too easy or too difficult, tell the AI to make changes.
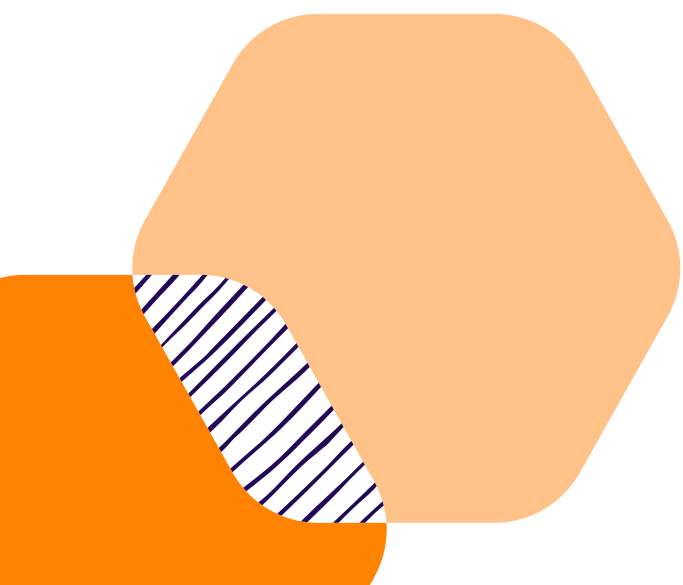
Benefits

Some teachers have limited access to professional development and a knowledgeable mentor. AI can provide this for free.

Splitting topics into micro steps can make it easier for busy teachers to find time for learning.

Challenges

Any kind of long term independent study takes a level of self discipline and determination.

Writing a prompt for this kind of guidance requires some trial and error.

10.   Providing teachers with useful language

Some teachers may benefit from useful language suggestions when carrying out complex or repetitive tasks. Below are some examples of how AI can provide teachers with these suggestions.

Examples of AI tools useful for this section

For suggesting useful language:

Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Poe

Creating scripts for presentations

Professional practice: Planning lessons and courses

Description

Prompting AI to create scripts for presentations based on a short description of the slide content and goals of the presentation.

What to do

1. Think about the stages involved in presenting a specific language point.

2. Write down the stages, then ask AI to produce a script for a presentation that includes a slide for each of the steps you describe.

3. Evaluate the script and check to see if it covers all of the information your learners would need.

4. Make sure that the presentation will involve the learners and not go on too long.

Benefits

Scripting presentations can be challenging, especially for new teachers. AI can provide a starting point to work from and useful phrases to use.

Challenges

This may encourage teachers to give long, teacher-centred presentations that don't engage their learners effectively.

Teachers still need to edit the script and check that all of the main points are covered.

Report card comments

Professional practice: Assessing learning

Description

Prompting AI to produce a varied list of report card comments for learners.

These can help teachers add more variety to their learners' report cards.

What to do

1. Think of an area that your learner needs to improve and an area where they're performing well.

2. Ask AI to produce a list of up to ten comments to express each of these for a learner's report card.

3. Include the topic your learners are studying and their age in your prompt.

4. Once the AI has produced the lists of comments, look through them and choose some that work for your learner.

5. Think about how you would need to edit the comments.

Benefits

It can be challenging for teachers to come up with new and different ways of expressing their views and opinions about large numbers of learners.

AI can help teachers generate a selection of varied and appropriate report card comments.

Challenges

Teachers need to check that the comments accurately express what they want the learner and their parents to know, and make edits as needed.

Teachers may be tempted to overuse a limited selection of comments without really thinking about how accurately they apply to the learners.

Section 3
Resources

This pack is part of a broader British Council project which includes published research and the development of guidelines for the ethical and effective use of AI in education. The links below detail some of this guidance.

More AI-based resources for teachers

The British Council's TeachingEnglish website has lots of free tools and resources to help English language teachers.

This professional development pathway contains links to a range of articles and tools that will help you gain the knowledge, skills and confidence you need to effectively integrate AI into your teaching.

British Council research on AI in education

There are a number of British Council publications to widen your perspectives on the use of AI in ELT.

Download the report Artificial intelligence and English language teaching: Preparing for the future for an overview of how ELT is incorporating AI.

You can also watch the authors of the report present their findings at the 2024 IATEFL conference.

This resource pack provides English language teachers with a comprehensive toolkit for integrating AI-based activities into both classroom instruction and continuing professional development. Each activity includes clear, step-by-step instructions, highlighting benefits for both students and teachers while also addressing potential challenges and risks related to AI-produced content and student interaction. Additionally, the resource includes essential guiding principles for safe and effective AI use, along with tips for crafting effective prompts. With these practical tools and insights, this guide serves as an invaluable asset for English teachers eager to harness AI thoughtfully and responsibly in their teaching practice.