

Analyzing AI-Generated Essays

Why?

In a digital age where AI tools increasingly assist in content creation, understanding the nuances, strengths, and weaknesses of such content is vital. This lesson empowers students to critically evaluate AI-written essays, refining their analytical skills and deepening their understanding of effective essay writing.

Materials Needed

- Computers with internet access
- Whiteboard and markers or other place to record student responses
- Worksheet with guiding questions (optional)

Time needed

30 mins

Objectives

- Students will be able to critique the AI-generated essay and suggest specific improvements.
- Students will be able to dissect and analyze each sentence's contribution to the essay's overall message.
- Students will be able to reflect on the analysis process and articulate new learnings about AI's writing capabilities.

Key Concepts & Vocabulary

- **Artificial Intelligence:** Computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.

Lesson

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
 - a. Introduce the lesson's objective: to critique an AI-generated essay.
 - b. Give a brief overview of how ChatGPT generates content (by using everything it has learned from its training data to make decisions based on a prompt).
2. AI Essay Generation (3 minutes)
 - a. As a class, choose a topic or prompt for the essay.
 - b. Use ChatGPT to generate the essay based on the given topic or prompt.
 - c. Project the essay so all students can read it.
3. Class Dissection (12 minutes)

- a. Distribute the handout with guiding questions or write/project them on the board.
 - b. Read the essay paragraph by paragraph, then sentence by sentence.
 - c. Engage students in discussing and noting down how each sentence contributes to the essay's overall message.
 - d. Guiding Questions might include:
 - i. What is the primary message or argument of this paragraph/sentence?
 - ii. How does this sentence support or deviate from the essay's main point?
 - iii. Are there any ambiguous or unclear statements?
4. Critique and Improvement (7 minutes)
- a. Guide students in critiquing the essay's coherence, structure, and content.
 - b. Encourage them to suggest specific improvements for clarity, argument strength, or content.
5. Reflection (3 minutes)
- a. Individually, or in groups, students should reflect on the following:
 - i. What did you learn about how AI structures essays?
 - ii. How did this activity change or confirm your perspective on AI-generated content?
 - iii. What surprised you the most during this exercise?

Supplemental activity ideas

- **Rewrite and Regenerate:** Once students critique the AI-generated essay, ask them to rewrite certain sections or the entire essay. Then, input their version into ChatGPT and see how the AI expands or revises their work. This iterative process can help students understand the collaborative potential between humans and AI in content creation.
- **Compare and contrast:** provide students with a human-written essay and an AI-generated essay without disclosing which is which. Students can analyze each for content, clarity, persuasiveness, word choice, or other target skill. Then, students should guess which is human-written and which is the AI-generated essay.

Sources to Learn More

- [The basics of how AI works](#), from the Google blog
- [The limitations of AI writing](#)