

Incorporating ChatGPT into Your Assignments

Just as spelling checks and predictive text have become accepted, so too will AI writers, so educators should help students responsibly engage with and understand the potential and limitations of these text generators. **Lucinda McKnight, [Times Higher Ed Supplement](#)**

Introduction:

Since ChatGPT was released in November 2022, college faculty and administrators have scrambled to understand the challenges and implications of a tool that is so seemingly adept at generating text in a variety of formats. Academic integrity, assignment design, learning assessment and the overall value of student writing are being scrutinized and re-examined in programs and departments all across the university. While some view tools like this as a threat to the educational enterprise, these tools may also enhance learning in ways that innovative educators are just beginning to explore. Central to the innovation approach is the idea that AI can be a complement to student learning, not a substitute. The ability to critically evaluate and assess text will continue to be an essential academic skill—one that will become increasingly valuable as students encounter more and more AI-generated content. The current version of ChatGPT is the least capable version of the tool that we will likely see as newer iterations become more and more adept at generating text. Faculty should engage with the tool, experiment with it, evaluate the output and explore how it might be used in innovative ways. As educators our choice is simple (but daunting): are faculty and students adversaries or partners in the learning process? As partners, we can help prepare students to engage with this tool in an informed, balanced, and ethical way.

Guiding Questions:

- How might faculty employ ChatGPT as a tool to support student learning in their classes?
- How can assignments be designed (or revised) to incorporate the tool into the learning process?
- Can academic skills that include critical thinking, careful analysis, and evaluation be enhanced with tools like ChatGPT?

Ideas for Incorporating ChatGPT into Your Assignments

1. Have your students use ChatGPT to answer a prompt (perhaps an essay question about a major question or challenge in your discipline) and then comment on the answer provided. They can employ their critical thinking skills to determine the quality and depth of the response. Have them reflect on their learning about the topic based on using ChatGPT, and write down things they learned about the topic from ChatGPT.
2. Ask your students to refine ChatGPT output by using Open AI's [guide to text completion](#) (really a ChatGPT User Manual), or help students develop their prompting skills using [Prompt Engineering](#).

3. Ask students can use ChatGPT to generate a first draft, import it into Word and then use “Track Changes” to document their revision process. They can also generate an outline to begin a writing assignment.
4. Students can ask for multiple responses from ChatGPT and then compare and critique the various responses, or use student groups where each student asks for the same prompt and then have them compare and critique responses.
5. ChatGPT’s output has been described as “competent, but empty”. Have students respond to ChatGPT, by critiquing the text based on that idea.
6. Ask students to respond: When you ask ChatGPT to write an essay about [_____], what key components does the output omit? They can use their responses to critique the output and offer their own suggestions.
7. Employ [Hypothesis](#) to collaboratively annotate and critique ChatGPT output.

References and resources:

[Eight ways to engage with AI writers in higher education](#) (from Times Higher Education).

[New Modes of Learning Enabled by AI Chatbots: Three Methods and Assignments.](#)

[GPT This! a writing assignment in the age of GPT-3 & other Large Language Models](#)

[Educator Considerations for ChatGPT \(from Open AI\)](#)

[Critical AI: Adapting College Writing for the Age of Large Language Models Such as ChatGPT: Some Next Steps for Educators.](#)

[Designing Assignments in the ChatGPT Era \(from Inside Higher Ed\)](#)

[ChatGPT Advice Academics Can Use Now \(from Inside Higher Ed\)](#)

[Will ChatGPT Change the Way You Teach? \(from Chronicle of Higher Education\)](#)

[Update your Course Syllabus for ChatGPT](#) (includes 10 suggestions for incorporating ChatGPT into assignments).

[Don’t Ban ChatGPT in Schools, Teach With It \(from NY Times\)](#)

[Text Completion Guide from OpenAI](#) (creators of ChatGPT)

For more information, or to schedule a consultation, please visit <https://ctl.wustl.edu/request-a-consultation-on-teaching/> or contact Eric Fournier efournier@wustl.edu