



Negotiating Reading & AI in Your Classes

Developed by Dr. Jill Parrott
Eastern Kentucky University
Department of English

College Readiness

ACT College Readiness

40%

In 2024, only 40% of test-takers met the ACT's benchmark score of 22 for College Readiness in Reading (out of 36 possible points)

Average Score in 2023

20.1

Scores continue to decrease in recent years, possibly correlated with learning gaps due to COVID-19

Average Score in 2022

20.4

Data Across Genders

20.6

Women taking the ACT scored an average of 20.6 while the men scored 19.6

Points of Interference Between AI & Critical Reading



Cognitive Struggle

One of the most important elements of developing critical reading skills is leaning in to the challenge.



Intellectual Rigor

Using AI to "fill in" understanding can weaken the connection and responsibility students have toward their own learning.



Retention

We internalize knowledge through effort and repetition, a connection broken by outsourcing to AI.



Language Development

AI-generated content is a shortcut, & readers miss out on building fluency, refining language, and developing voice.

Potential Benefits

- AI tools like ChatGPT can explain complex passages, vocabulary, or concepts, helping students better understand difficult texts.
- Summarization tools can help students quickly grasp main ideas and structure their notes, saving time on lengthy readings.
- AI can provide individualized help, offering explanations or resources tailored to a student's needs and learning pace.
- Asking questions or checking understanding with AI can help students monitor their thinking and develop stronger critical reading habits.
- Students with reading challenges, non-native English speakers, or students with disabilities may benefit from AI tools that read text aloud or simplify language.

Potential Drawbacks

- Relying on summaries or simplified explanations may prevent students from engaging deeply with the original text.
- Students may become dependent on AI rather than developing their own reading, analytical, and interpretive skills.
- AI sometimes misinterprets or oversimplifies texts, especially literature or theory, leading to misunderstandings.
- Using AI to generate answers or analyze readings may cross academic integrity lines if it replaces original thought or analysis.
- Struggling with a difficult text is often where learning happens. AI can prematurely smooth that struggle and reduce cognitive growth.

Key Objectives



Identify Your Goals

- Do you want to help students build resilience or improve comprehension?
- Do you want to help them use AI ethically or strategically avoid it?

Tell Your Students

- Explain the values your discipline shares about using AI to help with intellectual tasks.
- Make the invisible visible for them by showing them how to you ethically use AI as an expert.

Develop Strategies

- The following slides contain several ideas for both using AI for reading support and for creating “AI Proof” assignments to discourage using AI to avoid critical reading.

Keep Improving

- Take note of what goes well! Try not to fall back into old patterns by making successes visible (and more likely to be repeated).
- Share successes with your colleagues, as well.

Reading Assignments that Discourage AI Use



While we may not want our students to use AI to avoid the difficult intellectual work of reading long, dense, or challenging materials, simply telling them not to or that “it’s cheating” is ineffective.

We also cannot ignore that our students have almost unlimited access to AI support that could help them summarize, analyze, paraphrase, integrate, apply, and directly quote materials we provide for them or that they’re encountering through an independent research project.

What we CAN do is design reading assignments in ways that help mitigate the risk of AI overuse or dishonesty. Here are some examples.

Document the Process

Potential Prompt: Require students to show their reading and thinking process through pictures/screenshots of annotations or submission hard copy pages with annotations on them. You could also hand out hard copies in class and have them read and annotate there, perhaps even walking through sections together as a class.

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WHY IT WORKS

AI can't create genuine process artifacts or simulate evolving confusion and resolution.

Organize Visually

Potential Prompt: After a reading assignment, have students develop a visual representation of the reading (the entire thing or a part, depending on length, density, and genre). They can submit these individually or share and discuss in small groups, building the social aspect of reading.

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WHY IT WORKS

AI can't reflect a student's personal understanding through visuals.

Write about Difficulties

Potential Prompt: Especially if your students are reading conceptual difficult or dense texts, have them start class with a journal prompt about the difficulties they may have had during reading. This might include things like vocabulary, length, unfamiliarity with the genre, or anything that was a barrier to their complete understanding of the text.

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WHY IT WORKS

AI-generated writing often pretends to have understood everything perfectly.

Do it In Person

Overall, if you really need students to avoid using Artificial Intelligence on a specific assignment—and there are many reasons that might be so—consider giving students time to do that intellectual work in class where AI tools aren't available and students must rely on close reading.

Doing this strategically allows you to reinforce the values of your discipline and our university that students are responsible for their own intellectual work.

AI Reading Assignments that Support Learning



Compare + Evaluate

Potential Prompt: "Choose a paragraph from the reading to summarize in your own words, then paste that same paragraph into an AI tool and ask for a summary. Include both, labeled, in your submission. Finally, write another paragraph analyzing where you agree with AI's interpretation, where you disagree, and why."

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WHY IT WORKS

It encourages the development of critical thinking, interpretation, and meaning-making.

Build Vocabulary

Potential Prompt: “For this, you will use AI to look up unfamiliar vocabulary or paraphrase difficult phrases or sentences, then reflect on how that helped improve understanding the text.

As you read the assigned text, use AI to help with any language that hinders your understanding. Keep a vocabulary + strategy log: What did you ask, what did you get back, and how did that help or not help?”

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WHY IT WORKS

This assignment normalizes support-seeking and reinforces metacognitive awareness.

Develop Questions

Potential Prompt: “For this assignment, you’ll use AI to generate reading questions then respond to or evaluate those questions.

After you read the assignment, ask AI to generate five discussion questions about it. Choose two to answer and one to revise. What made the AI questions effective or weak?”

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WHY IT WORKS

This assignment can help students ask better, more discipline-specific questions.

Reflection:

How have your feelings about using AI for reading support changed and adapted?

Key Takeaways

- 1) We want students to do the intellectual work of reading.
- 2) Artificial intelligence can both hinder and help with that.
- 3) Part of your role can be to help them negotiate their relationship with artificial intelligence support for reading in an ethical way.