

19 Ways to Use ChatGPT in Your Classroom

edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-19-ways-to-use-chatgpt-in-your-classroom/2023/01

January 18, 2023



(This is the second post in a three-part series. You can see [Part One here.](#))

The question of the week is:

How do you think artificial intelligence-powered tools like ChatGPT are going to affect K-12 schools, and what are practical strategies teachers can use to respond to them?

Brett Vogelsinger, Gina Parnaby, and TJ Wilson [kicked off the series.](#)

Today, Susan Barber, Andrew Cohen, Elizabeth Matheny, and Amanda Kremnitzer contribute their ideas.

‘ChatGPT Can Be a useful tool’

Susan Barber teaches at Midtown High School in Atlanta, serves as the College Board adviser for AP Literature and on the NCTE Secondary Steering Committee, and works as a teacher consultant. You can find her cheering teachers on at MuchAdoAboutTeaching.com or on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/susangbarber) and [IG](https://www.instagram.com/susangbarber) - @susangbarber:

“Video killed the radio star” was MTV’s first music video when the network launched in 1981 sending deejays into panic mode. Yet, in 2023, MTV has reinvented itself multiple times, and radio still has its place even among streaming services. So when the ChatGPT launched, followed by the onslaught of “The Death of High School English” articles, I had no doubt teachers would adjust and move forward. My initial thoughts were less centered on “catching” students using it but rather on figuring out how to incorporate CHATGPT into teaching and learning.

The first thing I did was ask ChatGPT for classroom uses and got some good ideas:

- **Provide suggestions for grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure.** I copied the introduction paragraph for this post into ChatGPT and prompted it to “improve the writing in this paragraph.” Students can use this to compare their writing with “improved” ChatGPT writing as an option for revision. (For the record, I liked my paragraph better but acknowledge my bias.)
- **Give feedback on essays.** I also tested this by pasting an essay into ChatGPT and asking for feedback. The feedback was basic. I then asked for feedback specifically on the structure of the essay. Again, the response was general but did focus on organization. Students can use this to workshop an essay or as a starting point for peer feedback. Feedback will get more focused as the prompt becomes more focused, but AI feedback will never be as specific as teacher feedback.
- **Generate ideas.** As stated earlier, I used ChatGPT to generate ideas on this topic. Some of the ideas I’m listing here and expanding on and others I threw out altogether. Brainstorming is an important part of the writing process, but ChatGPT can have a place in class for generating ideas.
- **Debate/discussion generation.** I love the idea of asking students to develop a claim or argument, asking ChatGPT to refute the idea, and using the rebuttal as a way to strengthen their original argument. This is a means of feedback focused on content, which could help during the writing and revision process.

- **Create quizzes for reading checks.** With the rise of choice reading in classrooms, ChatGPT can offer individualized self-checks for understanding that can build confidence in readers or serve as a signal for students to seek help if they're having trouble. With the ability for students to generate their own quizzes, students can read at their own pace. I would not use these for grades in my classroom.

The generated list, however, didn't include some ideas that I thought of:

- **Create writing samples for revision.** I've fed many prompts on a variety of subjects to ChatGPT; responses tend to follow certain structural patterns and sound, well, like a computer wrote it. An interesting exercise could be for students to strengthen a ChatGPT response by experimenting with elements of syntax, tone, and different types of diction that are more authentic to their writing voice. Or students could focus on content by adding claims, evidence, or analysis or reorganize the structure. An important part of the activity would be a metacognitive element on the how and why of changes made.
- **Practice scoring.** Along with revising samples, students can score samples generated by ChatGPT. This could be done as a norming process for the class as a whole or in small groups with students discussing their scores and reasoning. The emphasis on this exercise would be less about the "score" a sample is given and more about the discussion around writing the students would be having.
- **Generate writing prompts.** Teachers often struggle with topics for free or quick writes at the beginning of class. Students can use ChatGPT to create prompts on topics of interest to them, saving teachers time and increasing student engagement due to the element of choice.

The larger and more important work for teachers is thinking about the assignments we're ultimately asking our students to do. If they can be easily completed by a computer response, are they worth doing in the first place? While we're parsing all of that out, though, ChatGPT can be a useful tool especially in the writing process.

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Susan Barber
Education Week

‘Endless Possibilities for ChatGPT’

Andrew Cohen is a high school English teacher at International School Bangkok. He and Dave Giles are co-founders of IB English Guys, an educational website and YouTube channel that supports the IB English community:

“Class, I’d like you to read Act 1 of “Hamlet” tonight. Write a multiparagraph response about what motivates Hamlet to exact revenge on his uncle. Be sure to discuss authorial choices and how they shape meaning for the audience.”

While there is definitely a time and place for assignments such as this, teachers must be careful and not “overassign” this type of analytical work. Yes, it’s critical that students learn to break down and interpret key passages from literary masterpieces, but it’s equally important that we as educators acknowledge that ChatGPT can replace some of these standard classroom practices and free up valuable time for more engaging and authentic writing tasks for students.

If we leverage AI to unpack obscure allusions and analyze iambic pentameter, students can instead focus on connecting stories to their own lives. Rather than writing about Gertrude as a mother and her effects on Hamlet, students can let AI take care of that obvious analytical task and instead focus on writing about their own

parents and how they shape their child's identity. Isn't this the purpose of literature—to better understand the human condition so we can better understand ourselves and others?

With this in mind, literature teachers should view ChatGPT as a great equalizer. Consider the nonnative speaker of English who may take hours to write a literary essay, a staple assignment in most literature classes. Sadly, the time spent on this endeavor means these students rarely make it to the most important part of such a task—making connections between the text, themselves, and the world around them. To me, this is the real tragedy, not Hamlet.

Now, I'm not saying that analysis, interpretation, and developing academic writing skills are no longer relevant. Rather, I'm suggesting ChatGPT can streamline the thinking and writing process so valuable classroom time can be spent more wisely. Here are just a few of the endless possibilities for ChatGPT in the English/language arts classroom:

1. Ask ChatGPT to answer a given essay question but have it include scholarly research to justify the response. In fact, command the AI to respond several times. In the time it would have taken students to research one idea, they could have read and evaluated several critical responses from AI to determine how their personal interpretations either confirm or refute ideas in the text.
2. Instruct students to enter original ideas in a simple format and ask ChatGPT to convert those ideas into standard essay format. The student could then analyze and evaluate several responses to further develop their own ideas as well as their understanding of formal academic writing.
3. Allow ChatGPT to help with the revising and editing process. Students can use all that saved time to engage in further discussion and application of key thematic ideas and link to the world around them.
4. Ask ChatGPT to generate a series of outlines to a given question about important concepts from the text. Students could then read, analyze, and evaluate which outline most closely reflects their interpretation of the text as well as the reality of their own lives.
5. Let a student who is new to English enter sophisticated thoughts in their native language and watch the AI translate them into a polished piece of academic English. This may allow students to practice making meaningful connections with their peers, teachers, and the world around them before they have to produce written work on their own.

Clever implementation of some of these ChatGPT strategies may prove effective in eliminating a classic problem teachers complain about—not having enough time with learners to help them understand the relevance of literature and how it fosters greater empathy and understanding of our world. What could be more important than that?

So, teachers, I challenge you to embrace and adapt your classroom practices. Let's go beyond commentaries on passages from "Hamlet." Instead, let AI support students in that endeavor. That will free up precious time allowing students to discuss why "to be or not to be" still matters today and how it enables humans to better understand the complexities of life and death. When teaching literature, surely this is what matters most.

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Education Week

Pluses And Minuses

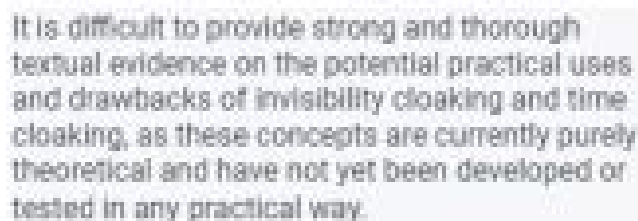
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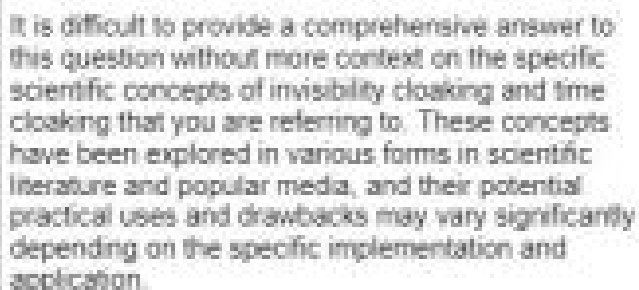
When ChatGPT went live in November 2022, it didn't take long for us to pick up on the heightened anxiety over this new AI tool and the potential impact on writing instruction. As teacher leaders with more than 20 years combined experience teaching high school English, we wanted to test it for ourselves. Right before our holiday break, Amanda and I sat down to explore ChatGPT side by side, and here is what we found:

1. Two users will not generate the same response.

After submitting the exact same prompt (we used a local assessment prompt), we were provided two different written responses. While the nature of both responses was similar, the sentence structure, key vocabulary, and transitions were different. When we requested the tool to add text evidence, the tool provided the same evidence, but embedded it within the response differently. We assume the tool provided the same evidence for both responses (even though they were structurally different) because the tool has a limited bank of texts to cite from. Here's a screenshot of the opening to both of our ChatGPT-generated responses



It is difficult to provide strong and thorough textual evidence on the potential practical uses and drawbacks of invisibility cloaking and time cloaking, as these concepts are currently purely theoretical and have not yet been developed or tested in any practical way.



It is difficult to provide a comprehensive answer to this question without more context on the specific scientific concepts of invisibility cloaking and time cloaking that you are referring to. These concepts have been explored in various forms in scientific literature and popular media, and their potential practical uses and drawbacks may vary significantly depending on the specific implementation and application.

2. While ChatGPT can produce written responses, it may not be able to address your specific prompt or rubric expectations.

It is important for teachers to consider the purpose of their writing assignment. Is it to assess the mastery of a set of standards? Is it to practice a specific skill? Most likely, ChatGPT is not going to demonstrate mastery on the specific "look-fors" teachers have instructed and reviewed with students. Even when we provided the tool with a specific text, the quality of evidence it selected was limited. It also did not directly cite specific text evidence to support the argument.

A team of researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART) Centre have developed a new invisibility cloak that works in visible light and can hide objects big enough to see with the naked eye. The cloak is made from two pieces of calcite crystal, a cheap and easily obtained mineral, stuck together in a specific configuration. Calcite is highly anisotropic, meaning that light coming from one side will exit at a different angle than light entering from another side. By using two different pieces of calcite, the researchers were able to bend light around a solid object placed between the crystals, creating the illusion that the object is not there. However, the cloak works

TEXT A:

The new invisibility cloak developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART) Centre has the potential to bring both benefits and drawbacks to society. One potential benefit is that the cloak is able to conceal objects in visible light, making it potentially more useful than previous cloaking systems that only worked under wavelengths of light that the human eye cannot see or that could only conceal microscopic objects. In addition, the cloak is made from cheap and easily obtained calcite crystals, which suggests that it could potentially be produced at a low cost.

Illustration: the new invisibility cloak after hours

3. Prioritizing formative feedback and time to workshop writing is crucial to build student confidence.

Students will look for and often find an easy way out of doing schoolwork. They are kids after all! However, most students do this when the assignment is out of reach. Be it their skills or their confidence, there is often more that contributes to plagiarism than “I don’t want to do it.” To mitigate this, we need to prioritize the entire writing process. We know that modeling and feedback are high-impact teaching strategies. We can model and guide students through the prewriting and planning process. Provide feedback during the formative process. We can utilize ChatGPT to provide samples to model the revision and editing process.

4. It can save us time.

Teachers are consistently creating new material, and ChatGPT can take on some of that work for us. For example, I have multiple students who require outlines as a supplementary aid. I asked ChatGPT to provide an outline for the specific prompt the student was answering, and it produced a great product! Similarly, as we model our own writing and thinking, we can use ChatGPT to generate a response that may address the prompt but might be missing the specific skills or concepts we’ve explicitly instructed.

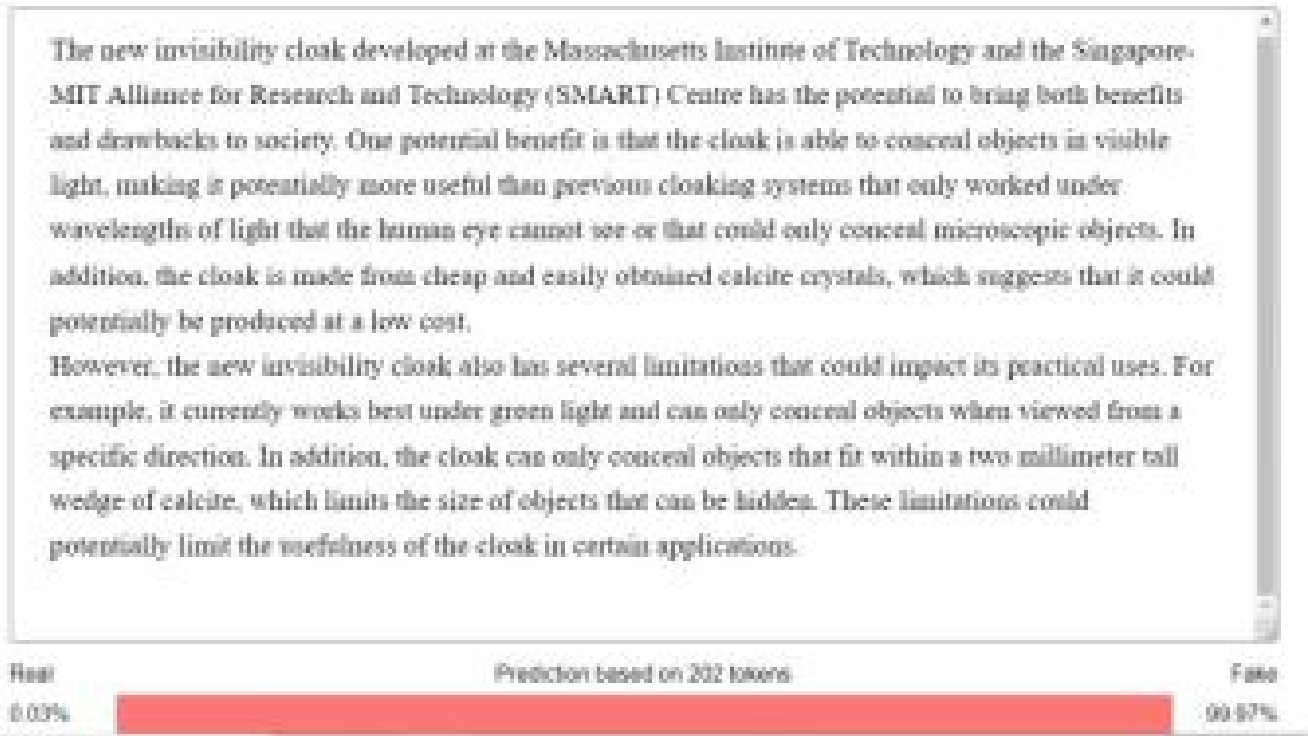
5. AI and digital study tools will never generate a student’s authentic voice.

Writing sounds like the writer! We must show students the difference between these generated responses and authentic writing with a developed voice. This reminds me of a common experience I had early in my career. Students were not completing their assigned reading; they were reading summaries on a popular online study guide. As we were reading *Huckleberry Finn*, I designed a lesson that compared Chapter 19 of the text to the summary provided by a popular online study guide. I asked students to engage with the summary and then engage with the text, side by side. Yes, the summary was more time saving, but the text included rich imagery and characterization about the evolving relationship between Huck and Jim that the summary did not address. Even if students did not eagerly pick up their copy of the text, at least they were aware of the pitfalls of using such resources and the impact on their learning experiences. We can offer students a similar learning experience with responses produced by ChatGPT.

6. The same developer that produced ChatGPT produced a detector for ChatGPT produced responses.

Just as ChatGPT was making waves in classrooms in November and December, [Open AI](#) developers were creating [GPT-2 Output Detector Demo](#). A few other detectors have also gone live since then, including [GPTZero](#). If you have a hunch that the writing was produced by AI, run it through the detector. At the very least, it's an opportunity to talk with the students about what led them to using AI to generate the response and what support they might need to engage with the work on their own. Here's what we saw when we submitted our ChatGPT response through the GPT-2 Output Detector Demo:

This is an online demo of the GPT-2 output detector model, based on the [OpenAI](#) implementation of ROBERTa. Enter some text in the text box, the predicted probabilities will be displayed below. The results start to get reliable after around 50 tokens.



Thanks to Susan, Andrew, Elizabeth, and Amanda for contributing their thoughts!

Consider contributing a question to be answered in a future post. You can send one to me at lferlazzo@educationweek.org. When you send it in, let me know if I can use your real name if it's selected or if you'd prefer remaining anonymous and have a pseudonym in mind.

You can also contact me on Twitter at [@Larryferlazzo](https://twitter.com/Larryferlazzo).

Education Week has published a collection of posts from this blog, along with new material, in an e-book form. It's titled *[Classroom Management Q&As: Expert Strategies for Teaching](#)*.

Just a reminder; you can subscribe and receive updates from this blog via [email](#) (The RSS feed for this blog, and for all EdWeek articles, has been changed by the new redesign—new ones are not yet available). And if you missed any of the highlights from the first 11 years of this blog, you can see a categorized list below.

- [It Was Another Busy School Year. What Resonated for You?](#)
- [How to Best Address Race and Racism in the Classroom](#)
- [Schools Just Let Out, But What Are the Best Ways to Begin the Coming Year?](#)
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- [Teacher Takeaways From the Pandemic: What's Worked? What Hasn't?](#)
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I am also creating a [Twitter list including all contributors to this column.](#)

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