



Evaluating 13 scenarios of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in student coursework

Here are thirteen different situations that teachers may find themselves in with students using artificial intelligence (AI) in their IB coursework and some suggestions on how the teacher should respond.

Remember that there are no hard rules when dealing with AI. Educators should use their discretion with each student. If in doubt, refer to the following key principles:

1. Did the student use AI to help them learn? If so, then it is acceptable.
2. Did the student use AI to pretend they did something they did not? Then this is not acceptable.

In other words, if something is fundamentally not the student's own work—according to the teacher—then it should be referenced. If they copied or paraphrased another source, for example, they need to cite the source. And if this means all the work is one long reference then they receive no credit for it when assessed against criteria that require understanding, analysis, evaluation, etc.

As AI develops, it is important that schools provide students with clear guidelines on what ethical use of AI looks like. To help students see AI as a tool for learning, not just a tool for teaching, the IB suggests that schools create an AI policy separate to their academic integrity policy.

It is also suggested that schools develop an AI policy for teachers, outlining acceptable practices in the classroom and in interactions with others. This should ideally focus on positive guidelines that illustrate best practices, helping to build confidence in how teachers can effectively use AI.

It is the school's responsibility to ensure that any student work submitted to the IB is authentically the student's own. While plagiarism can be detected using online tools, identifying AI-generated content, such as purchased essays, requires a deeper understanding of the student's work.

Teachers are in the best position to provide this insight, and the IB only expects teachers to make their best efforts in this area.

#1 A student uses AI for a summary of key points for their essay and suggests references to cite.

This is fundamentally an acceptable way of using AI, however, as a teacher, ensure that the student truly understands the points that are being made.

The student must understand that after reviewing AI-generated content, they must express it in their own thoughts and words. Any content directly sourced from AI must be properly cited—copying and pasting AI-generated material without attribution is not acceptable.

#2 A student uses AI for a summary of counter-positions or alternative viewpoints on a question or issue and explores these further.

Understanding alternative viewpoints is crucial for students. Teachers and supervisors should ensure that students are aware of the role of AI in this process to discover viewpoints and positions that they may not have considered, broadening their understanding. Students can then work with their teacher or school librarian to devise a research approach that builds on the ideas generated by AI, such as conducting focused searches using key terms outlined by AI.

The best approach involves the student using the ideas offered by AI to investigate and understand alternative views, similar to how students would explore counter-positions in textbooks.

It is not acceptable for students to present arguments exactly as presented in a textbook, or as generated by AI.

#3 A student uses AI to find quotes on the essay topic and simply copies them without investigating further.

This is not acceptable. In this case, the student is not using AI to identify sources to investigate but is using AI to replace part of the thinking process. The student should explore the references identified by the AI tool, read and understand them, and then decide what to quote based on their understanding.

If a teacher is unsure if a student has actually read and understood the sources, it is perfectly acceptable to ask the student about these sources to assess their knowledge, not just the conclusions they have drawn.

To reiterate, a student must actively read and engage with the sources and references suggested by AI, not just simply acknowledge that they were found through AI.

#4 A student instructs AI to develop a research question grounded in an IB subject for investigation, with or without elaboration on a topic area.

This is not acceptable. In cases such as this, the student should talk to their teacher, not AI.

Teachers and supervisors should ensure that coursework evolves from the students' genuine interests. Where coursework allows broader focus areas (e.g. the extended essay, reflective project or personal project), students can sometimes find it difficult to narrow down a focus area. In these situations, a student should work with their teacher or supervisor to identify the subject and topic of interest and may then instruct AI to provide examples of research questions in this area.

Students, together with their teachers and supervisors, should then reflect on these questions considering the criteria requirements and amend them to fit their interests, similar to reviewing past essays/projects in a school library for inspiration.

#5 A student uses AI to write an example of this essay for them and uses this as an example or a model answer for their response (translating it into their own words).

This is not acceptable. Think about how you would feel if the student had found an essay online, or borrowed one from a friend and used that work for all the ideas for their essay? Treat this misuse of AI in the same way.

In this situation, the IB suggests conducting a viva or oral quiz to assess the student's understanding of the arguments and content of the essay. If they demonstrate clear understanding, instruct them that good practice is to use AI for general research rather than for specific answers. Emphasise that using AI in this way misses wider learning opportunities, but allow the student to submit the work without penalty.

However, if the student does not display clear understanding of the content, it can be treated as plagiarism.

#6 A student uses AI to generate a paragraph or two for the essay, such as the introduction or summary of an argument, and then uses this as a model for their own content.

As the teacher, try and determine if the student has used AI to replace their own thinking or purely as a reference. Generally, using AI to provide references and examples is acceptable, similar to reviewing sample essays to get a sense of what a good introduction looks like.

The final summarised paragraph should reflect the student's own thinking and final analysis, so be extra vigilant when reviewing this section of the essay.

#7 A student writes an essay, then copies it into AI and asks the tool to rewrite it for them.

Generally speaking, this is not acceptable, and the teacher should mark the original essay. However, this situation requires the teacher's judgement.

If the purpose of the essay was the research and thinking behind it, understanding why the student felt the need to use AI to rewrite can provide a meaningful opportunity to discuss key areas of learning with the student.

The IB requires teachers to be strict with IB assessment tasks, requiring students to submit their original work. Teachers may exercise more discretion in the context of in-class work.

#8 A student writes the essay in one language and then uses AI to translate it into another language for submission.

This is not acceptable for IB summative assessments because the IB certifies that the student has studied the subject in a particular language. Universities and employers are likely to assume that the student can work in this language based on their IB certificate.

The same principles apply to any text in an IB assessment including presentations etc. For school contexts where there is no indication of language, then acceptability depends on the school's views. In the case of language acquisition, then it is not acceptable to use AI translations.

#9 A student uses AI to suggest improvements for grammar and sentence construction but not a wholesale rewrite.

This is generally acceptable unless there are marks for grammar and sentence quality. Access to the original version would be helpful to understand what changes were made. Good practice would be for the student to state somewhere (at least to the teacher) that they have used AI in this way.

If the “coherence of the argument made” is improved by the use of AI, then this would typically fall into the “wholesale rewrite” category—this is an area for teacher discretion.

#10 A student uses AI to “mark” their work and provide feedback for improvement.

This is another case where the teacher’s judgement and context is important. For IB assessments, this use of AI is discouraged because it violates the “one set of written feedback” rule. The IB believes that the teacher is better placed to provide that feedback.

In a non-assessment context, however, using AI for feedback can be a valuable educational tool.

#11 A student asks AI to “reflect” on a topic, process or question and uses this unchanged in their assessment.

This is not acceptable. Reflection requires students to think about the process they have been through, evaluate it, and decide what – for them – has been valuable, and what they can learn from the experience. Using an AI-generated reflection is not appropriate, and teachers and supervisors have a key role in ensuring that students are benefitting from the opportunity to reflect authentically on their own personal learning.

Teachers and supervisors attest to authenticity when they upload work for assessment and submitting an AI-generated reflection would constitute fabrication.

#12 A student tries to hide their use of AI.

This is not acceptable. Ethical use of AI involves being clear and transparent about its use. This means informing the teacher who is authenticating the work for the IB, even if the use of AI does not need referencing.

#13 A student uses AI to generate a template for the structure of their essay.

Using AI to generate a template for the structure of their essay is not considered academic misconduct if the student acknowledges the use of AI when submitting their work for assessment. Think about this in the context of a student using other resources, such as sample essays or textbooks to obtain a framework for their essay.

If the teacher has any doubts or concerns, the IB suggests conducting a viva or oral quiz to assess the student’s understanding of the arguments and the content of the essay.

Advice for teachers

1. It is strongly recommended that teachers instruct students to retain the developmental work (i.e. plans and drafts) that they have produced when working on their assignment. This will allow the students to demonstrate, if requested, the process they undertook to produce the work submitted for assessment.

For example, if they used AI for initial research on the essay topic, students should keep all the information generated. Then, through a version history it can be shown how the work was developed from research and initial content to the creation of independent work.

2. Consider the parallels with familiar situations when considering the impact of AI. Is using AI to obtain an example essay any different from a teacher sharing exemplar work or students finding examples on the internet or in their school library?
3. Trust your instincts, you know your students and will know whether they have produced the work or not.
If there is any doubt about whether the student's work has been produced by AI, the IB suggests conducting a viva or oral quiz to assess the student's own understanding of their work.
4. Teachers do not need to "prove" that artificial intelligence or someone else wrote the student's work. It is reasonable to ask questions to be confident the work is authentically the student's own. The IB will support you in your right not to authenticate student work, and the best approach where there is any doubt is to allow the student to redo the task in controlled conditions.

Remember, a student using AI to support their learning can be beneficial, while using AI instead of learning or to submit work that is not their own is not acceptable.

Advice on Referencing Artificial Intelligence

[Appendix 6: Guidance on the use of artificial intelligence tools of the IB Academic integrity policy](#)

Students should be informed of the following rules:

- If they use the text (or any other product) produced by an AI tool—be that by copying or paraphrasing that text or modifying an image—they must clearly reference the AI tool in the body of their work and add it to the bibliography.
- The in-text citation should contain quotation marks using the referencing style already in use by the school and the citation should also contain the prompt given to the AI tool and the date the AI generated the text.

The same applies to any other material that the student has obtained from other categories of AI—for example, images.

The IB also suggests that students:

- include the prompts they used in their references
- provide a transcript of their use of AI as an annex for their teacher

The purpose of referencing the use of AI is to be transparent about what is the student's own work and what they have taken from elsewhere. Therefore, the focus for the IB is not on "correct citation" of AI but on being transparent.

This also applies if the student has used AI in a way which is not directly used in the text. A short statement after the end of the work describing how AI was used in its creation is sufficient.

Summary table of points

Scenario	Outcome
#1 A student uses AI for a summary of key points for their essay and suggests references to cite.	Acceptable
#2 A student uses AI for a summary of counter-positions or alternative viewpoints on a question or issue and explores these further.	Acceptable
#3 A student uses AI to find quotes on the essay topic and simply copies them without investigating further.	Not acceptable
#4 A student instructs AI to develop a research question grounded in an IB subject for investigation, with or without elaboration on a topic area.	Not acceptable
#5 A student uses AI to write an example of this particular essay for them and uses this as an example or a model answer for their response (translating it into their own words).	Context – but generally not acceptable
#6 A student uses AI to generate a paragraph or two for the essay, such as the introduction or summary of an argument, and then uses this as a model for their own content.	Context – but generally acceptable
#7 A student writes an essay, then copies it into AI and asks the tool to rewrite it for them.	Generally not acceptable – but nuanced
#8 A student writes the essay in one language and then uses AI to translate it into another language for submission.	Not acceptable for IB assessment Probably acceptable in other contexts
#9 A student uses AI to suggest improvements for grammar and sentence construction but not a wholesale rewrite.	Context – but generally acceptable
#10 A student uses AI to “mark” their work and provide feedback for improvement.	Not acceptable for IB assessment Probably acceptable in other contexts
#11 A student asks AI to “reflect” on a topic, process or question and uses this unchanged in their assessment.	Not acceptable
#12 A student tries to hide their use of AI.	Not acceptable, even if their use of AI was correct
#13 A student uses AI to generate a template for the structure of their essay.	Context – but generally acceptable