

GRADES 3–5 · AGES 8–11 · 45 MINUTES · FOUR CORNERS

Should a robot do your homework?

THE PROPOSITION

"A robot that can write your homework should be allowed to do it."

Students meet the idea that an AI can write answers that look right but aren't, and argue about when it is okay to ask a machine for help. Four corners keeps eight-year-olds moving while they practice giving one reason for a view.

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO

- Explain in kid words what an AI homework helper actually does (guesses good-sounding answers from patterns).
- Give one reason for a position and one example.
- Tell the difference between 'help me understand' and 'do it for me.'

VOCABULARY FROM THE FIELD GUIDE

Artificial intelligence (AI) · Hallucination · Verification · Prompt

WHAT'S IN THIS PACK

- Teacher guide: background, vocabulary, agenda, format, positions, questions, roles, rubric.
- Student handouts (photocopy one per student): position organizer, sentence starters, exit ticket.
- Standards: CCSS ELA SL.3.1 / SL.4.1 / SL.5.1 (collaborative discussions); CCSS ELA W.3.1 / W.4.1 / W.5.1 (opinion writing); ISTE Students 2.b (digital citizenship).

PRINT

US Letter, plain paper, duplex. Teacher pages once; student pages one per student. Free to photocopy for classroom and homeschool use. Not for resale.

Background for the teacher

Read this before class. Students get a version of the same facts on their handout; you get the framing and the traps.

Chatbots built on large language models write text by predicting what words usually come next. They are very good at sounding right and not always good at being right. When a chatbot invents a fact, adults call that a hallucination. Kids just need to know: it can be confidently wrong.

The interesting question for this age is not 'is AI bad' but 'what is homework for?' If homework is practice, a robot doing it is like a robot doing your push-ups. If homework is a finished product, the line is fuzzier. Let kids find that line themselves.

Be ready for 'my brother uses it.' That is not a confession to punish; it is a data point to discuss. Ask: did it help him learn, or help him finish?

RUNNING DISCUSSION IN GRADES 3-5

Short rounds, concrete examples, lots of moving. Fairness and friendship are the live wires.

- Keep each speaking turn under 30 seconds and rotate fast. Nobody speaks twice until everyone has spoken once.
- Use bodies, not just words: four corners, stand-if-you-agree, thumbs. Movement keeps the quiet kids in.
- Model changing your mind out loud. "I thought X, then Sam said Y, now I think Z" is the skill.
- Name the AI examples kids already know – the tablet voice assistant, the homework helper, the video app's recommendations.

Vocabulary

Pulled from the Hi, Bot AI concepts field guide (hibot.space/learn/concepts). Read each card aloud, then have the class rewrite it in ten words or fewer.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

Software that performs tasks we used to assume required human judgment.

A broad label for computer systems that recognize patterns, generate text or images, make predictions, or take actions based on data – without a human executing each step by hand. In casual conversation "AI" might mean a chatbot, a photo filter, a warehouse robot, or a stock-trading model. The term is intentionally wide: it describes a family of techniques, not one single product.

WHERE PEOPLE ARGUE

People fight over whether "AI" should mean "anything statistical" or only "systems that approach human-level reasoning." In policy and marketing the word gets stretched; in engineering it usually means a specific model or pipeline.

Hallucination

When a model states something false with full confidence.

A hallucination is a fluent, plausible-sounding output that isn't grounded in fact – fake citations, invented dates, wrong math presented smoothly. The model isn't "lying" in a human sense; it's completing patterns without a built-in truth checker. The fix is verification habits, not hoping the next model version eliminates the behavior entirely.

WHERE PEOPLE ARGUE

Some researchers dislike "hallucination" because it anthropomorphizes a statistical failure mode. Practically, the term stuck because it describes the user experience: the machine sounds sure about something that isn't true.

Verification**Checking outputs against evidence – the habit that makes AI usable.**

Verification means treating model output as a draft: cross-check claims, run code, read sources, ask what would falsify the answer. It's the skill that separates tool use from blind trust. Kids and adults need the same loop – models don't get a pass because they sound confident.

Prompt**The instruction or question you give a model.**

A prompt is whatever you send in: a question, a document to summarize, a role ("act as a tutor"), constraints ("under 200 words"), or examples of the format you want. Better prompts are specific about goal, audience, and what "good" looks like. Vague prompts reliably produce vague answers.

Warm-up

5 minutes.

Ask: 'If a robot did all your push-ups for you, would you get stronger?' Take three answers. Then: 'Is homework more like push-ups or more like a birthday card?' Leave it hanging – that is the debate.

Agenda - 45 minutes

Minutes	Segment	What happens
0-5	Warm-up	Push-ups question. Post the four corner signs while they talk.
5-12	What is the robot doing?	Read the two vocabulary cards aloud (AI, hallucination). Show one made-up 'fact' a chatbot might say about your town. Ask how we'd check it.
12-30	Four corners, three rounds	Statement 1: 'Using the robot for homework is always cheating.' Statement 2: 'It's okay if you check the answer yourself.' Statement 3: 'It's okay if the teacher says yes.' Corners huddle 2 min, report 1 reason, anyone may move.
30-38	Draw the line	As a class, sort six example situations (on the board) into OK / Not OK / It depends. Push for a rule that explains the sort.
38-45	Exit ticket	Students finish the sentence on the handout and draw the line where they think it goes.

How four corners runs

Label the room's corners Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree. Read a statement; students walk to the corner that matches their view and talk with their corner for two minutes, then each corner reports one reason. Re-read the statement and let anyone move. Movement is the discussion.

GROUND RULES – POST THESE

1. Attack ideas, never people. "That claim has a hole" – not "you're wrong."
2. One voice at a time. The listener's job is to be able to repeat what was said.
3. Evidence beats volume. A quiet fact outranks a loud opinion.
4. Changing your mind is winning. Say so out loud when it happens.

The two positions

Starter arguments are scaffolds, not scripts. Strong teams find their own. Assign sides where the format calls for it; students record their real view on the exit ticket.

Yes – let the robot help

Tools are for using. A calculator does math for you and that's allowed.

- Grown-ups use AI at work, so kids should learn to use it too.
- If you read the answer and understand it, you still learned.
- It can explain things a different way when you're stuck.

No – homework is practice

Homework is for your brain, and the robot is using its brain instead.

- You can't get better at something you never do.
- The robot can be wrong and you wouldn't even know.
- It isn't fair to kids who did it themselves.

Discussion questions

OPENING

1. What is homework for?

CORE

1. If the robot's answer is wrong and you copy it, whose mistake is it?
2. Is there a difference between asking a parent for help and asking a robot?
3. What could you ask the robot that would help you learn instead of skip learning?

CLOSING

1. What rule would you make for your own classroom?

Roles

Role	Job
Corner captain	Makes sure everyone in the corner says one reason before reporting.
Reporter	Tells the class the corner's best reason in one sentence.
Mover	Anyone who changes corners explains what changed their mind.

Assessment rubric

Share this before the debate. Judges and self-assessors use the same sheet. 'Meets' is the target; note above or below in the margin.

Criterion	Meets
Takes a position	I said what I think and gave one reason.
Listens	I can repeat what a classmate said before I answer.
Uses an example	I gave a real example from my life or the story.
Stays kind	I disagreed with the idea, not the person.

Exit ticket prompts

1. A robot helping with homework is OK when ____.
2. It is NOT OK when ____.
3. One way to check if the robot is wrong: ____.

Extension

Ask a chatbot (with an adult) a question about your school or town. Find one thing it got wrong. Bring it in and explain how you caught it.

SEND HOME

At dinner: 'When you were a kid, what did you have to do the slow way that's fast now? Was the slow way worth anything?'

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

- CCSS ELA SL.3.1 / SL.4.1 / SL.5.1 (collaborative discussions)
- CCSS ELA W.3.1 / W.4.1 / W.5.1 (opinion writing)
- ISTE Students 2.b (digital citizenship)

More lessons by grade band, and the full AI concepts field guide, at hibot.space/learn/debates. Tell us how it went: hello@hibot.space.

Should a robot do your homework?

"A robot that can write your homework should be allowed to do it."

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Chatbots built on large language models write text by predicting what words usually come next. They are very good at sounding right and not always good at being right. When a chatbot invents a fact, adults call that a hallucination. Kids just need to know: it can be confidently wrong.

The interesting question for this age is not 'is AI bad' but 'what is homework for?' If homework is practice, a robot doing it is like a robot doing your push-ups. If homework is a finished product, the line is fuzzier. Let kids find that line themselves.

Be ready for 'my brother uses it.' That is not a confession to punish; it is a data point to discuss. Ask: did it help him learn, or help him finish?

WORDS WE'LL USE

Artificial intelligence (AI) – Software that performs tasks we used to assume required human judgment.

Hallucination – When a model states something false with full confidence.

Verification – Checking outputs against evidence – the habit that makes AI usable.

Prompt – The instruction or question you give a model.

MARK IT UP

Underline one sentence you agree with. Circle one you doubt. Write one question in the margin. Bring all three to the discussion.

Position organizer

Proposition: "A robot that can write your homework should be allowed to do it."

Name: _____ Side (assigned or chosen): _____

OUR CLAIM, IN ONE SENTENCE

THREE REASONS – AND THE EVIDENCE FOR EACH

Reason 1:

Evidence (a fact, a definition, or a specific example):

Reason 2:

Evidence (a fact, a definition, or a specific example):

Reason 3:

Evidence (a fact, a definition, or a specific example):

WHAT THE OTHER SIDE WILL SAY – AND OUR REPLY

Their best argument:

Our reply:

VOCABULARY I WILL USE CORRECTLY

☐ Artificial intelligence (AI) ☐ Hallucination ☐ Verification ☐ Prompt

Sentence starters

Use these until you don't need them. The goal is to respond to what was actually said.

- I think ___ because ___.
- I agree with ___ and I want to add ___.
- I see it differently. ___
- Can you give an example of ___?
- I changed my mind because ___.

GROUND RULES

1. Attack ideas, never people. "That claim has a hole" – not "you're wrong."
2. One voice at a time. The listener's job is to be able to repeat what was said.
3. Evidence beats volume. A quiet fact outranks a loud opinion.
4. Changing your mind is winning. Say so out loud when it happens.

HOW FOUR CORNERS WORKS

Label the room's corners Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree. Read a statement; students walk to the corner that matches their view and talk with their corner for two minutes, then each corner reports one reason. Re-read the statement and let anyone move. Movement is the discussion.

YOUR ROLE TODAY

Role: _____

Role	Job
Corner captain	Makes sure everyone in the corner says one reason before reporting.
Reporter	Tells the class the corner's best reason in one sentence.
Mover	Anyone who changes corners explains what changed their mind.

LISTENING TALLY

Keep count while others speak. Claims: _____ Evidence: _____ Questions: _____ Vocabulary used: _____
Minds changed: _____

Exit ticket

"A robot that can write your homework should be allowed to do it."

Name: _____ Date: _____

A robot helping with homework is OK when ____.

It is NOT OK when ____.

One way to check if the robot is wrong: ____.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Criterion	Meets looks like	Me today (above / meets / below)
Takes a position	I said what I think and gave one reason.	
Listens	I can repeat what a classmate said before I answer.	
Uses an example	I gave a real example from my life or the story.	
Stays kind	I disagreed with the idea, not the person.	

TAKE IT HOME

At dinner: 'When you were a kid, what did you have to do the slow way that's fast now? Was the slow way worth anything?'