

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

Should the app decide what you watch?

THE PROPOSITION

"Video apps should be allowed to pick the next video for kids."

Recommendation systems are the AI kids meet most. Students figure out what the app is optimizing for, argue whether autoplay should exist for kids, and leave with a rule for their own screens.

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO

- Explain that 'recommended for you' is a computer guessing from what you watched before.
- Identify what the app wants (more watching) versus what you want.
- Take a position and give a reason and an example.

VOCABULARY FROM THE FIELD GUIDE

Automation · Training data · Privacy (when using AI) · Automation bias

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; ISTE Students 2.b / 2.d (digital citizenship, personal data); CSTA 1B-IC-20 (technology and social interaction).

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.

Recommendation systems learn from watch history – yours and millions of others'. They are optimized for a measurable goal, usually time spent or clicks. They are not optimized for 'what's good for a nine-year-old,' though platforms add filters. The app is not evil; it has a goal, and its goal isn't yours.

Kids already sense this ('it keeps showing me the same stuff'). Naming it gives them agency. The debate isn't really about banning autoplay – it's about who should be in charge of the next choice: the kid, the grown-up, or the app.

The privacy angle is simple at this age: the app can only guess because it remembers. Every video watched is a card in its deck.

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.

Automation

Software doing a whole task chain with minimal human steps.

Automation replaces or compresses repetitive human work – invoicing, ticket routing, report generation. AI automation often means models plus rules plus integrations. The design question is not "can it do it?" but "what happens when it misfires, and who is accountable?"

Training data

The examples a model learned from – often the whole internet, licensed corpora, or both.

Training data is the text, images, or logs used during training. Quality, consent, copyright, and representation in that data shape model behavior. When people ask "where did it learn that?", they're asking about training data and fine-tuning – usually opaque for closed models.

WHERE PEOPLE ARGUE

Copyright, consent, and "fair use for training" are active legal and political fights worldwide.

Privacy (when using AI)

What you paste into a model may be stored, logged, or used to improve products.

Privacy in AI use means knowing whether your prompts are retained, reviewed by humans, used for training,

or shared with subprocessors. Enterprise tiers often offer "no training on customer data"; consumer free tiers may not. Treat prompts like email to a third party: don't send secrets you wouldn't want leaked.

Automation bias

Trusting the machine because it's fast and confident – even when it's wrong.

Automation bias is the human tendency to defer to automated recommendations, especially under time pressure. It's why verification matters in copilot settings: the risk isn't only model error, it's humans stopping checks. Training and UI design should keep responsibility visible.

Warm-up

5 minutes.

Ask: 'When you finish a video, what happens?' Then: 'Who chose that next one?' Take guesses. Write 'the app guessed' on the board and ask what it guessed from.

Agenda - 45 minutes

Minutes	Segment	What happens
0-5	Warm-up	'Who picked the next video?' Establish: the app guesses from what you watched.
5-12	What does the app want?	Ask what makes the app 'win.' Land on: you keep watching. Ask whether that's the same as what you want.
12-30	Four corners, three rounds	1: 'Autoplay should be turned off for kids.' 2: 'It's fine if a grown-up set it up.' 3: 'The app knows what I like better than I do.' Huddle, report, move.
30-38	Write a rule	Pairs write one screen rule for a younger sibling. Share three.
38-45	Exit ticket	Complete the handout.

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 app pick

The app knows what I like, and picking is annoying.

- It shows me stuff I'd never find on my own.
- Grown-ups can turn it off if they want.
- Choosing every single video is boring.

No – I should pick

The app wants me to keep watching; I want to stop when I'm done.

- It keeps showing the same kind of thing over and over.
- It only knows me from what I watched, not who I am.
- It's my time, so it should be my choice.

Discussion questions

OPENING

1. What does the app know about you? How?

CORE

1. If the app's goal is 'more watching,' is that good or bad for you? When?
2. Could the app ever guess wrong about you? What would that look like?
3. Who should be in charge of the next video: you, a grown-up, or the app?

CLOSING

1. What's one rule you'd make for your own screen?

Roles

Role	Job
Corner captain	Everyone in the corner gives one reason.
Reporter	Reports the corner's best reason.
Rule writer	Writes the pair's screen rule in one sentence.

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.

Criterion	Meets
Stays kind	I disagreed with the idea, not the person.

Exit ticket prompts

1. The app picks the next video by ____.
2. The app wants _____. I want _____.
3. My screen rule: _____.

Extension

With a grown-up, watch three videos on purpose that are different from what you usually watch. Did the recommendations change? Draw what happened.

SEND HOME

Ask at home: 'Does your phone ever show you something and you wonder why? What do you think it guessed about you?'

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

- CCSS ELA SL.3.1 / SL.4.1 / SL.5.1
- ISTE Students 2.b / 2.d (digital citizenship, personal data)
- CSTA 1B-IC-20 (technology and social interaction)

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 the app decide what you watch?

"Video apps should be allowed to pick the next video for kids."

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Recommendation systems learn from watch history – yours and millions of others'. They are optimized for a measurable goal, usually time spent or clicks. They are not optimized for 'what's good for a nine-year-old,' though platforms add filters. The app is not evil; it has a goal, and its goal isn't yours.

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The privacy angle is simple at this age: the app can only guess because it remembers. Every video watched is a card in its deck.

WORDS WE'LL USE

Automation – Software doing a whole task chain with minimal human steps.

Training data – The examples a model learned from – often the whole internet, licensed corpora, or both.

Privacy (when using AI) – What you paste into a model may be stored, logged, or used to improve products.

Automation bias – Trusting the machine because it's fast and confident – even when it's wrong.

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: "Video apps should be allowed to pick the next video for kids."

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

☐ Automation ☐ Training data ☐ Privacy (when using AI) ☐ Automation bias

Sentence starters

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

- I think ___ because ___.
- One time the app ___.
- I agree with ___, and also ___.
- I moved corners 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	Everyone in the corner gives one reason.
Reporter	Reports the corner's best reason.
Rule writer	Writes the pair's screen rule in one sentence.

LISTENING TALLY

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

Exit ticket

"Video apps should be allowed to pick the next video for kids."

Name: _____ Date: _____

The app picks the next video by ____.

The app wants _____. I want _____.

My screen rule: _____.

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

Ask at home: 'Does your phone ever show you something and you wonder why? What do you think it guessed about you?'