



AI Literacy

Understanding AI with a Critical Eye

*Lessons for upper elementary students
aged 8-11*



AI Awareness

*Lessons for upper elementary students
aged 8-11*

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AI Awareness – Teacher/Parent Guide



Learning Objectives

By the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

1. Define what AI is and describe how it works using data and patterns.
2. Recognize that AI is not a person and does not have thoughts, feelings, or emotions.
3. Describe how AI learns and gets better over time.
4. Explain how AI makes decisions and how these decisions depend on the data it learns from.
5. Identify helpful ways AI is used in everyday life.
6. Practice safe and responsible behavior when using AI-powered tools.

Learning Rationale

Artificial Intelligence is all around us—from voice assistants to online games to learning tools. As students grow up in a world powered by AI, it's vital that they:



Build awareness of AI in their surroundings.



Develop critical thinking about what AI can and cannot do.



Practice digital safety skills and make responsible choices.



Grow confidence in digital literacy and how to ask for help when unsure about technology.

This digital pack uses Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies—like perspective-taking, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and advocating for oneself—to help students explore AI in a way that's personal, developmentally appropriate, and empowering.



AI Awareness – Teacher/Parent Guide

Introduction for the Teacher/Parent

These lessons are designed for upper elementary students (ages 8–11) and can be used in classrooms, homeschool settings, or small groups. Each lesson includes a short student-friendly reading, student learning objectives, and a variety of activities.

The lessons are:

- **Flexible** – Each can be taught in one sitting or stretched across multiple sessions with journal prompts, partner activities, or extensions.
- **Purposeful** – Focused on helping students understand what AI is, how it works, where it shows up in their lives, and how to think critically about it.
- **Developmentally Aligned** – Encourages students to ask thoughtful questions, recognize the difference between people and machines, and make safe, responsible choices when using technology.

You don't need to be a technology expert to teach these lessons. The goal is to help students build AI awareness through curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking. As children grow up surrounded by artificial intelligence, these lessons equip them with the tools they need to navigate digital life with confidence, caution, and care.

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- **Pre-Assessment** – Checking what students already know about AI.
- **Lesson 1: What Is AI and How Does It Work?** – Students learn what AI is, how it works using data and patterns.
- **Lesson 2: AI Is Not a Person and Doesn't Have Feelings** – Students explore the difference between real people and AI tools, especially in emotional situations.
- **Lesson 3: How AI Makes Decisions** – Students discover that AI makes decisions based on training data—and that biased or limited data leads to poor results.
- **Lesson 4: Ways AI Can Help** – Students identify how AI can be helpful in real life, from tools that make life easier to programs that support learning.
- **Lesson 5: Being Careful with AI** – Students learn why they should use caution, question AI's advice, and always talk to a trusted adult when unsure.
- **Post-Assessment** – Reflecting on what students have learned.



AI AWARENESS PRE-ASSESSMENT

Teacher/Parent Lesson Plan



Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

By the end of the pre-assessment activity, students will:

- Demonstrate their initial understanding of what AI is.
- Recognize or identify examples of AI they might use in daily life.
- Express their current beliefs about whether AI can have feelings or is a person.
- Show their understanding of AI's role (e.g., helper, tool, entertainment).
- Begin reflecting on how they interact with AI (e.g., Siri, Alexa, games).

Learning Rationale

The pre-assessment is not a test—it's a way to understand what children already know and what misconceptions they may have about AI.

This starting point will:

- Guide instruction – Teachers/parents can adjust explanations and examples based on student understanding.
- Highlight misconceptions early – Many young learners think AI is alive, has feelings, or can make independent decisions like humans.
- Encourage student voice – Students get to share their own experiences with technology, making lessons more relatable.
- Track growth – Comparing pre- and post-assessments will show how their knowledge and thinking have changed.

Because AI can feel abstract to children, these smiley-face rating scales help them express their ideas without the pressure of “right” or “wrong” answers.



AI AWARENESS PRE-ASSESSMENT

Teacher/Parent Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan

- 1 Read each statement aloud slowly and point to the response icons (smiley, thinking face, and an upset/confused face).
 - Make sure students understand that they are showing how much they agree or know about the statement.
 - Encourage honesty—there are no “correct” answers at this stage.
- 2 Clarify the format: Students can circle or color the box that matches their answer. If doing in a group, you can have them point to a face on the page or a large visual in the room.
- 3 Optional discussion:
 - After each statement, you may ask for brief examples but avoid correcting them yet—just listen and note answers.
 - Keep it light and exploratory. The goal is to learn what they think, not to teach in this step.
- 4 Record insights: Consider jotting down brief notes of their responses so you can look back during the post-assessment to see changes in understanding.
- 5 Set the tone: Let students know that by the end of the lessons, they’ll have learned new things about AI, and it’s perfectly fine if their answers change later.

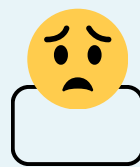
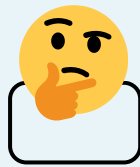


AI AWARENESS PRE-ASSESSMENT

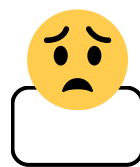
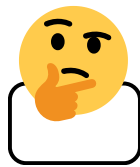
For each statement below, rate how well you understand the idea by choosing one of the following:

- I understand this well 😊
- I am not sure if I understand this 🤔
- I don't understand this well 😞

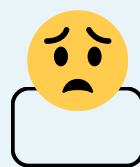
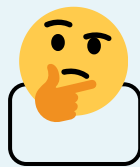
I know what AI (artificial intelligence) is.



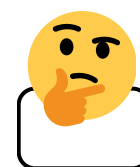
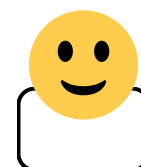
I can give examples of things that use AI.



I know that AI doesn't have real feelings like a human.



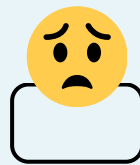
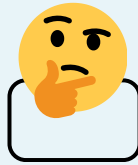
I know AI doesn't always makes correct & right decisions.



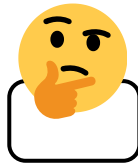


AI AWARENESS PRE-ASSESSMENT

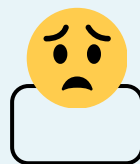
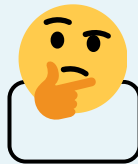
I can explain that AI learns from data and patterns.



I understand that AI was created by people.



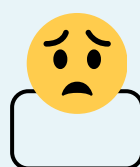
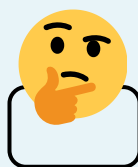
I know some ways AI helps people in everyday life.



I think it's okay to ask an adult if an AI gives me strange or confusing advice.



I know that AI doesn't always makes fair and right choices.





WHAT IS AI? & HOW DOES IT WORK?

Teacher/Parent Lesson Plan



Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain what AI (Artificial Intelligence) means in their own words.
- Understand that AI is made by people and works by learning from data and patterns.
- Recognize that AI is not alive or born—it is a tool created by humans.
- Identify real-world examples of AI in daily life (e.g., search engines, voice assistants, video suggestions).
- Begin to describe how AI “learns” through repeated examples and instructions.

Learning Rationale

Upper elementary students are increasingly interacting with AI—often without realizing it. From YouTube recommendations to voice-to-text features, AI is already shaping their digital experiences.

This lesson:

- Gives students foundational AI literacy through simple, concrete definitions and relatable examples.
- Introduces the concept of learning from data—AI doesn’t “think” like a human, but it can recognize patterns when it is trained with enough examples.
- Encourages critical thinking about the difference between smart technology and living beings.
- Lays the groundwork for future lessons on decision-making, safety, and emotional understanding.

By making AI less mysterious and more understandable, students will build curiosity and a healthy awareness of how this invisible technology works around them.



WHAT IS AI? & HOW DOES IT WORK?

Teacher/Parent Lesson Plan

Preparation

- Review the student lesson text on “What is AI & How Does It Work?.”
- Prepare drawing materials or digital tools if using virtual platforms.
- (Optional) Bring in or show examples of tools or services that use AI and those that don’t (e.g., smart speaker vs. basic calculator).

Lesson Plan

- 1** Read the Introduction
 - Read or have students read the introductory page out loud.
 - Emphasize the main idea: AI is not magic or a brain—it’s a tool that follows instructions and learns from patterns.
 - Let students share aloud, in journals, or with a partner at the end of the activity.
- 2** Activity 1: Where is AI?
 - Prompt students to look around their environment (home or classroom).
 - Ask: “What things might be using AI right now?”
 - Have students draw items in the picture frames provided.
 - Discuss responses as a group or pair-share.
- 3** Activity 2: What AI Is... and What It’s Not
 - Use the worksheet so students can determine the true vs. false statements about AI.
 - Go through the answers with students so they know the correct information.
 - Give students time to discuss the question with a partner or with you.
- 4** Activity 3: AI or Not?
 - Go through the activity with students so they understand they need to select “human” or “AI” for each scenario.
 - Afterwards, you can have a class discussion, answering:
 - Which responses felt more personal or emotional?
 - Were you surprised by how human the AI sounded?



WHAT IS AI? & HOW DOES IT WORK?



Learning Goals for this lesson:

- I can say what AI is.
- I can explain that AI learns from data and patterns.
- I know that AI is made by people, not born like humans.



Let's Learn about AI.

Have you ever talked to Siri or Alexa? Or maybe you've seen YouTube recommend videos just for you? That's AI in action!

AI stands for Artificial Intelligence. That's a fancy way of saying smart machines that can learn things and help people.

But AI doesn't have a brain like we do. It doesn't think or feel. It just follows rules and learns from patterns.

For example, if you show an AI 100 pictures of cats, it might start to learn what a cat looks like. It doesn't know what a cat is — it just finds patterns (like whiskers, tails, and pointy ears).

People give AI a lot of data (that means information like pictures, words, or sounds). The AI uses that data to get better at tasks — like recognizing voices, sorting photos, or helping you search the internet.

It is important to remember:

- AI is not magic — it's math and code.
- AI is made by people.
- AI learns from patterns in data — not from feelings.

And just like people, AI can sometimes make mistakes — especially if it's learning from bad or confusing information.



Reflection Question:

If AI can learn from patterns but doesn't have feelings or a brain, what's something you can do that AI can't? Why do you think that matters?

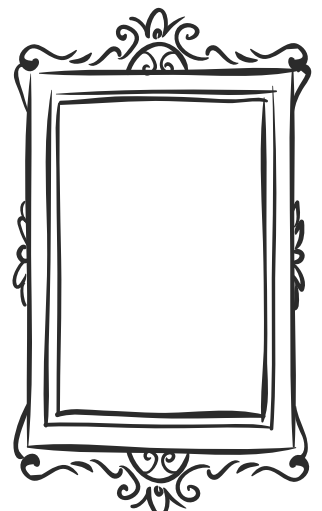
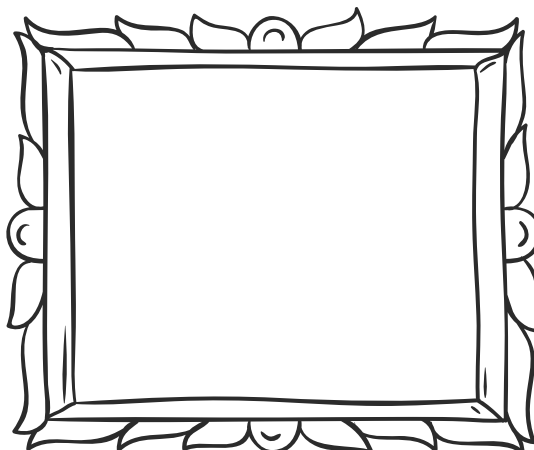
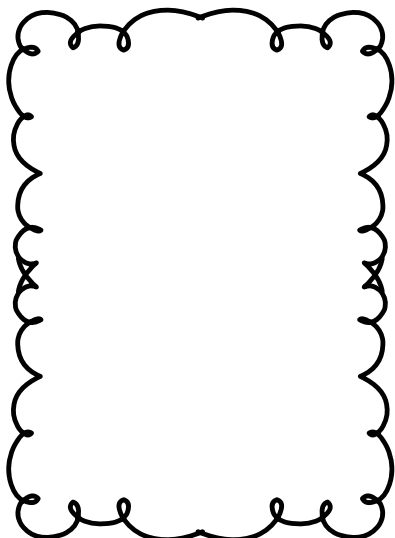
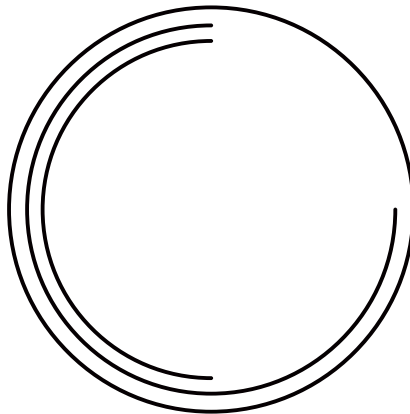
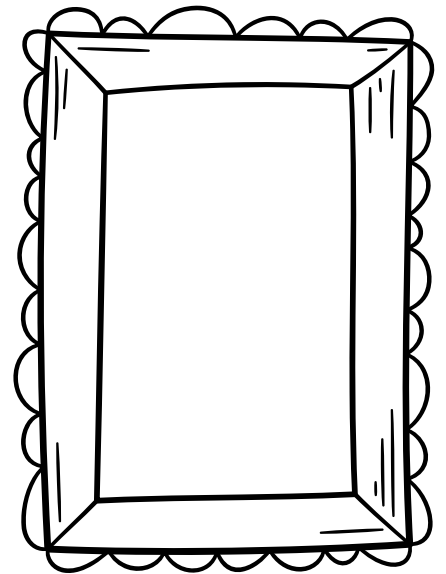
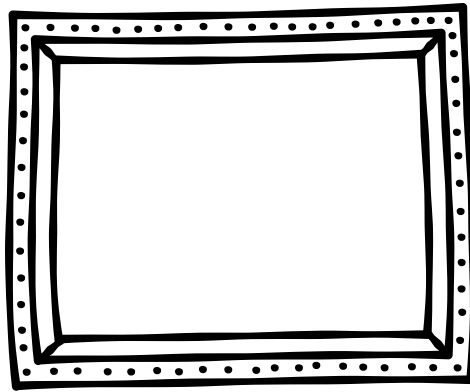
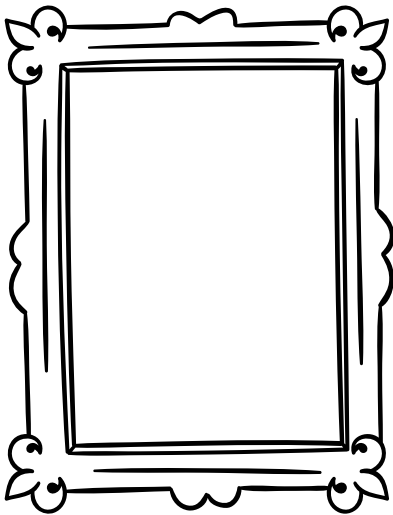


WHAT IS AI? & HOW DOES IT WORK?



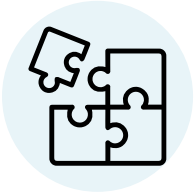
Activity 1: Where is AI?

Look around your space. Can you spot anything that might be using Artificial Intelligence (AI)? In the frames, draw or name things you see that might be using AI. (*Hint: Think about voice assistants, apps, smart tools, or anything that helps make decisions.*)





WHAT IS AI? & HOW DOES IT WORK?



Activity 2: What is AI?

AI is all around us — but sometimes people get confused about what it really is! Below are some ideas people have about AI. Read each sentence and decide if it describes something that AI is or is not.

AI can recognize patterns in images, text, or sound.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI
AI gets smarter the same way people do—through feelings and personal growth.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI
AI can be trained to give helpful answers using data from books, websites, and conversations.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI
AI has thoughts, dreams, and its own opinions about the world.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI
AI gets better by learning from patterns.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI
AI makes decisions based on how it feels that day.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI
AI can be biased if the data it learns from isn't fair or balanced.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI
AI is exactly like a person, just inside a computer.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI
AI can improve at tasks like writing or recognizing faces by analyzing examples.	Yes, this is AI	No, this is not AI



Discussion Question:

What sentence was the trickiest one to decide? Can you think of another sentence you would add to “Yes, this is AI” and another for “No, this is not AI”?