

AI in the classroom: practical approaches

When AI becomes part of classroom life, the goal is not to control every use; more useful is creating learning environments where students remain active participants, even when tools can generate fast and polished answers. There is no single strategy that works everywhere. Still, some classroom habits tend to encourage more reflection, awareness, and meaningful engagement.

Make AI visible

Many aspects of AI remain invisible to students. They see the final answer, but not the process behind it. An explanation appears instantly, often fluent and convincing, without making visible how it was generated or why certain information was prioritised. Slowing this process down can already change how students engage.

This does not require technical expertise; sometimes, a few simple questions are enough:

- *“Why do you think this answer was suggested?”*
- *“Would another person receive the same result?”*
- *“What might the system be using to generate this response?”*

Questions like these help students realise that AI systems are shaped by patterns, data, and design choices rather than neutral “magic”.

Shift the focus from answers to thinking

One of the risks of AI-supported learning is that the final answer becomes more important than the thinking behind it. When polished information arrives quickly, students may feel less need to interpret, struggle, revise, or explore ideas independently.

Small shifts in classroom practice can make thinking visible again: for example, instead of focusing only on whether an answer is correct, teachers might ask students where they hesitated, what still feels unclear, or whether another interpretation could also make sense.

Comparing two different AI-generated responses can also create surprisingly rich discussions about perspective, reliability, and missing information. These approaches do not slow learning; they make the thinking process easier to notice.

Normalise questioning

Many students grow up in digital environments where speed and confidence are associated with reliability. If something looks polished and sounds convincing, it is easy to assume it must also be trustworthy. Because of this, questioning needs to become part of everyday classroom culture – not only when discussing AI, but when engaging with information more broadly.

- *“Does this actually make sense?”*
- *“What would you want to check next?”*
- *“Would you trust this information completely?”*

Over time, these questions stop feeling like “activities” and become part of how students naturally approach information.

Interactive classroom activity: “Would you trust this?”

Age group:	Adaptable (upper primary to lower secondary)	Time needed:	Around 20–30 minutes	Materials:	2 short prepared answers
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This activity is designed to help students reflect on what makes information feel trustworthy. Rather than focusing only on whether AI is “good” or “bad”, the activity slows the automatic trust that often accompanies confident or polished answers. Importantly, students do not need to use AI tools directly. The focus remains on discussion, interpretation, and judgement.

Preparing the activity

Before the lesson, prepare two short answers to the same question or prompt (e.g., a scientific explanation, historical description, or short opinion text). One text can come from a textbook; the other can be AI-generated or adapted. The point is not whether students “guess correctly”, but that both sound believable enough to prompt discussion (noticing vague language, overconfidence, missing details, or minor inaccuracies).

Step 1 – First impressions

Students read both texts individually or in pairs. Rather than immediately asking “Which one is AI?”, invite them to focus first on trust and credibility:

- “Which answer feels more reliable? Why?”
- “Is anything unclear or exaggerated?”
- “Would you confidently use this for schoolwork?”

At this stage, it is useful not to reveal the origin of the texts too early.

Step 2 – Discussion and comparison

Students compare impressions in small groups. Some may trust a text because it sounds formal or confident, while others notice repetition or missing info. Guide the discussion with:

- “What makes an answer sound trustworthy?”
- “Do confident answers always mean accurate answers?”
- “What would you want to check before fully trusting this information?”

Step 3 – Reveal and reflect

Only after discussion does the teacher reveal which text was AI-generated. Avoid a simple “right versus wrong” reveal. Reflect on why certain answers felt convincing and how easily polished language can create a sense of reliability even when incomplete or inaccurate.

Going one step further

To conclude, students reflect on what they would actually do next before trusting or sharing information online (e.g., checking another source, asking follow-up questions, looking for missing information, or discussing with someone else).

KEY TAKEAWAY

AI-generated content can be useful, creative, and convincing. But understanding where information comes from – and learning how to question it – remains an essential part of learning.