AI BASICS · START HERE · 11 MIN READ

Study smarter with AI (and stay honest)

Use AI as a tutor that makes you think, not a shortcut that thinks for you: explain, quiz, plan and give feedback, within your school's rules.

Pass the check (4 of 5) online to earn the “Smart Student” badge:
https://digitalbuilders757.com/university/study/study-smarter-with-ai

Tutor, not ghostwriter

AI can explain anything five different ways, quiz you at midnight, and give instant feedback on a draft. It can also do your homework for you, which feels great until the test, the interview or the job where you need the skill. The rule of thumb: use AI to make your brain work harder, not less.

Always follow your teacher's and school's AI rules. They differ by class and assignment. When AI helped, say how.

Prompts that make you learn

- Explain: 'Explain photosynthesis like I'm 12, then like I'm in college. Ask me a question after each.'
- Socratic tutor: 'Don't give me the answer. Ask me questions that lead me to solve this problem myself.'
- Quiz: 'Make 10 practice questions from these notes, one at a time, and tell me what to review.'
- Feedback: 'Here's my essay draft. Don't rewrite it. Tell me the three biggest ways to improve the argument.'
- Plan: 'I have a test in 6 days and 45 minutes a day. Make a study plan from this syllabus.'

Check it, every time

AI can be confidently wrong on facts, maths and quotes, and it can make up sources. Check important facts in your textbook or a trusted source, redo key maths yourself, and never cite a source you haven't opened.

Privacy and age rules

Many AI tools have minimum ages and need a parent's or school's permission for younger students. Use the tools your school approves. Don't paste other students' work, grades or personal details into AI tools.

Key terms

AI assistant
An app where you talk to an AI model in plain language to get help with tasks.

Hallucination
A confident AI answer that is false or made up.

Personal data
Information about an identifiable person, like names, emails or grades; follows privacy rules.

Prompt
What you give the AI: instructions, a question and any material to work from.

Iteration
Improving something in small rounds: try, check, adjust, repeat.

Try it: Turn notes into a practice test

1. Pick notes from one class (your own words, nothing personal about others).
2. Ask an AI to quiz you with 10 questions, one at a time, without giving answers first.
3. Check two answers it marks right against your textbook.
4. Write down the two topics you missed and review them tomorrow.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

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5 questions. Circle one answer for each; 4 or more correct passes. Answers are at the back.

1. Which is the best use of AI for learning?

A. Having it write your essay and turning it in
B. Copying its answers to homework without reading them
C. Using it during a test that bans it
D. Asking it to quiz you and explain what you got wrong

2. What does a 'Socratic tutor' prompt ask the AI to do?

A. Ask you guiding questions so you solve it yourself
B. Give the final answer first, then explain every step in detail
C. Quote ancient Greek philosophers
D. Grade your teacher

3. AI gives you a quote and a source for your report. What should you do?

A. Use it as is, since the AI gave a source, which proves it's real
B. Open the source and check the quote is there
C. Reword the quote slightly so it isn't copied word for word
D. Cite the AI instead

4. Whose rules decide whether you may use AI on an assignment?

A. Nobody's, as long as the work is in your own words
B. The AI company's terms, since they made the tool
C. Your teacher's and school's
D. Your classmates', if most of them use AI too

5. Which should you NOT paste into an AI tool?

A. Your own class notes
B. A practice problem
C. A topic you're curious about
D. Another student's grades and personal details

Official sites

Khanmigo (AI tutor from Khan Academy): https://www.khanmigo.ai
Common Sense Media: AI ratings: https://www.commonsensemedia.org/ai-ratings

Last reviewed 2026-11-25. AI tools change fast; check each tool's own site for current features, plans and prices.

ANSWER KEY

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1. D: Asking it to quiz you and explain what you got wrong
Quizzes and explanations make you do the thinking, which is what builds the skill.

2. A: Ask you guiding questions so you solve it yourself
Guiding questions help you reason through the problem.

3. B: Open the source and check the quote is there
AI can invent sources and quotes; only cite what you've checked.

4. C: Your teacher's and school's
Rules vary by class and task; follow them and say how AI helped.

5. D: Another student's grades and personal details
Other people's personal information is private.