THE AI GUIDE FOR U.S. K-12 & AP LEARNING

ALIGNMENT

This guide explains how American K-12 and Advanced Placement (AP) students can ethically and effectively use artificial intelligence as a tool to support their learning while upholding the principles of academic integrity.

The Core Principle:

Validate Your Process, Not Just the Product

Generative AI has made traditional assessments based on a final product (like an essay) nearly obsolete. The new focus for academic integrity is **validating the student's intellectual process:** your research, critical thinking, and decision-making.

Your goal is to use AI to **deepen** your learning, not to **misrepresent** how your work was created.

A "Human-AI-Human" (H-AI-H) Approach:

A practical framework for using AI ethically is the "Human-AI-Human" model, which ensures you remain in control of the learning process.

Human (Inquiry)

The process must **begin with you.** It starts with your own curiosity, your questions, and your framing of the problem.

AI (Process)

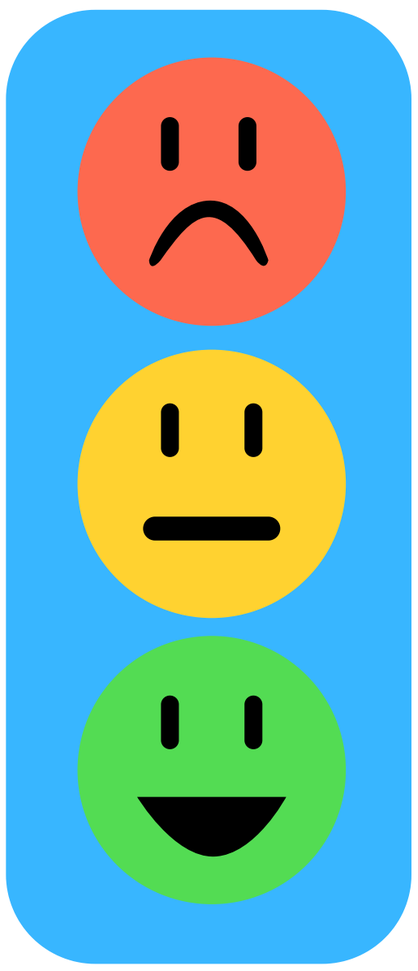
You then use AI as a **collaborative tool**—a "personalized tutor" to brainstorm ideas, get feedback on your writing, or summarize a complex text.

Human (Evaluation)

The process must **end with you.** You are the final arbiter and are responsible for fact-checking, critically editing, and synthesizing the information to make the work authentically yours.

The AI Use Scale (Always Check Your Teacher's Policy First!)

Policies can vary dramatically by school, teacher, and even by subject.



UNACCEPTABLE (Academic Misconduct):

- Submitting AI-generated work in place of your own student work.
- Asking AI to write any part of your assignment, project, or reflection.
- Using AI to "engage in plagiarism, cheating, or any form of dishonesty".
- Using quotes or sources from an AI-generated summary without reading and engaging with the original sources yourself.
- Hiding your use of AI when transparency or citation is required by your teacher.

USE WITH CAUTION (Policy Will Vary):

- **Check policies first!** Your teacher or program (like AP) may have different rules for different subjects.
- Using AI to get grammar and spelling suggestions (you must check).
- Using AI to generate a model or starting point. The final work must reflect your thinking, not just an edited version of the AI's output.

ACCEPTABLE USE (When Permitted by Your Teacher):

- Brainstorming or "exploration of potential topics of inquiry".
- Summarizing key points or alternative viewpoints to broaden your understanding.
- Using AI as a "tutor" to "confirm your understanding of a complex text".

College Board. 2025-26 Guidance for Artificial Intelligence Tools and Other Services. AP Central, apcentral.collegeboard.org/exam-administration-ordering-scores/administering-exams/exam-policies/artificial-intelligence-tools. Accessed 4 Nov. 2025.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Massachusetts Guidance for Artificial Intelligence in K–12 Education. www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/ai/ai-guidance.pdf. Accessed 4 Nov. 2025.

Taliaferro County School District. AI Policy. www.taliaferro.k12.ga.us/AIPOLICY. Accessed 4 Nov. 2025.

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Human-Centered AI Guidance for K–12 Public Schools. OSPI, June 2024, ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2024-06/comprehensive-ai-guidance.pdf. Accessed 4 Nov. 2025.

The AP Student's Guide to AI & Academic Integrity

(2025-2026)

ALIGNMENT

The College Board's AI policies are not one-size-fits-all. They are differentiated to protect the unique "core skill" of each course. This guide covers the specific policies for AP's project-based courses and the general policy for all traditional, proctored exams.

Project-Based Courses: Differentiated AI Policies

For courses that rely on long-term projects, the College Board has specific rules for how and if you can use AI.

AP Art and Design: PROHIBITED

- **Core Skill:** The human-driven creative process, experimentation, and revision.
- **Policy:** The use of generative AI is categorically prohibited at any stage of the creative process. This includes AI-powered features within other software (like "generative fill").
- **Verification:** Your process portfolio. You must show the evolution of your work through sketches, thumbnails, and in-progress shots, proving human authorship.

AP Capstone (Seminar & Research): RESTRICTED

- **Core Skill:** Your synthesis of evidence and original argumentation.
- **Policy:** AI is banned for writing your final paper. However, it is allowed for supplementary tasks like "exploration of potential topics of inquiry," "initial searches for sources," or "checking...for grammar and tone."
- **Verification:** Mandatory "interim checkpoints" and oral defenses. You must be able to verbally "make your thinking and decision-making visible" to your teacher to prove the work is yours.

AP African American Studies: RESTRICTED

- **Core Skill:** Deep engagement with credible sources and your original "analysis and synthesis of evidence."
- **Policy:** AI is banned for writing the final project. It is allowed for initial research, topic exploration, and grammar checks.
- **Verification:** You must demonstrate that you have personally read the primary and secondary sources and are not just summarizing an AI's summary.

AP Computer Science Principles: PERMITTED (with attribution)

- **Core Skill:** The understanding and application of computational logic.
- **Policy:** AI is allowed as a "supplementary resource" or "coding partner" to assist in "code development, and debugging," but it must be cited.
- **Verification:** You are responsible for the final code and "must be prepared to explain your code in detail" on the exam.

All Other AP Exams (e.g., History, English, Sciences, Math)

For the majority of AP courses, the core skill is assessed through the traditional AP Exam.

- **Core Skill:** Your authentic, unassisted knowledge of the subject.
- **Policy:** The College Board's strategy is to "counterbalance" AI's power with traditional, in-person, proctored exams.
- **Verification:** The proctored exam environment. AI use is neutralized because you cannot access any external tools or devices during the timed, in-person (or digital, proctored) exam. This format remains the most reliable way to measure your individual knowledge.

College Board. (n.d.). 2025-26 guidance for artificial intelligence tools and other services. AP Central. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/exam-administration-ordering-scores/administering-exams/exam-policies/artificial-intelligence-tools
College Board. (n.d.). AP Art and Design portfolio policies. AP Students. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/art-design-program/ap-art-design-portfolio-policies
College Board. (n.d.). AP CSP: Questions about plagiarism and AI. AP Central. Retrieved November 4, 2025, from https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-computer-science-principles/course/frequently-asked-questions/questions-about-plagiarism-and-ai
Schaffhauser, D. (2025, March 19). College Board's CEO on how AP courses are changing for the AI era. Education Week. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/college-boards-ceo-on-how-ap-courses-are-changing-for-the-ai-era/2025/03