Using and Citing AI: A Student Guide

For high school students: what's allowed, how to give credit, and how to protect yourself.

Researched in partnership with A.D. Henderson University School & FAU High School (FAU Lab Schools)

One school's rule, in one sentence

> "The use of AI or of someone else's ideas, words, data, or work without proper acknowledgement constitutes the act of plagiarism."
>
> FAU Schools Technology Policy & Guidelines, 2025-26

Your school's policy may use different words. This guide is built on the same three ideas: follow the AI level your teacher sets, say when you used AI, and make sure the thinking in your work is yours.

Know your level

LEVEL	WHAT YOU MAY DO
0 · No AI	No AI at all, including AI features in other apps that suggest or rewrite your sentences.
1 · Plan	AI can help you explore a topic, brainstorm, or explain a concept. You write everything you submit.
2 · Feedback	You write a draft first. AI can comment on it. You decide what to change and make the changes yourself.
3 · Collaborate	AI can help you draft and revise, as your teacher directs. You check every fact and can explain every part.

No level on the assignment? Treat it as Level 0 and ask your teacher.

Before you open an AI tool

- [ ] What level is this assignment?
- [ ] Is this tool approved by my school?
  Many AI tools set a minimum age in their terms. Don't sign up for a tool your school hasn't approved just to finish an assignment. Ask your teacher for another option.
- [ ] Am I about to type anything personal?
  Never enter your full name with other details about you, your address, phone number, passwords, health information, or photos of other people.
- [ ] Am I saving my work as I go?
  Notes, drafts, and version history show how your work grew. In Google Docs, click **Last edit** at the top right to see version history.
- [ ] Am I using AI to learn, or to skip the learning?

How to cite AI in MLA style

The MLA Style Center updated its advice in August 2025. Do not list the AI tool as the author. Fill in these parts, in this order:

> "*Description of your prompt*" prompt. *Name of AI tool*, model or version, Company, date you used it, link.
>
> MLA'S OWN EXAMPLE
>
> "Describe the theme of nature in Jane Austen's Mansfield Park" prompt. *ChatGPT*, model GPT-4o, OpenAI, 23 Sept. 2024, chatgpt.com/share/66f1b0a0-d704-8000-be9a-85f53c850607.
>
> IN YOUR TEXT
>
> ("Describe the theme")

- **Link:** if the tool gives you a share link to the conversation, use it. If it doesn't, give the tool's main web address.
- **Sources the AI mentions:** open them, read them, and cite those sources directly. MLA warns that AI tools can "make up" sources.
- **APA, Chicago, or another style:** ask your teacher which style to use. APA publishes its own format for citing AI at apastyle.apa.org.

Citing is not the whole story

A citation covers words or ideas you took from AI. If AI also helped you plan, revise, or check your work, say so in an AI use disclosure (last page). MLA puts it this way: "Acknowledgment of the use of AI is slightly different from, and more comprehensive than, citation." Your reader should be able to tell where the AI stopped and you began.

Check the AI before you trust it

- **Facts and quotes:** confirm every one in a real source before you use it.
- **Agreement is not proof:** if a chatbot says your idea is great, ask it for the strongest argument against your idea, then decide for yourself.
- **A chatbot is not a counselor or a friend.** If you are struggling, talk to a trusted adult. You can also call or text **988**, any time, for free and confidential support.

If your teacher asks about your work

Teachers may ask you to explain how you did an assignment. That is a normal part of school. Show your notes, drafts, and version history, explain your ideas in your own words, and be honest about any AI you used. If you used AI within the rules and disclosed it, you have nothing to hide.

Sources. FAU Schools, Technology Policy & Guidelines, amended 7-16-2025, labschools.fau.edu · MLA Style Center, "How do I cite generative AI in MLA style? (Updated and Revised)" and "Beyond Citation: Describing AI Use in Your Work," both 13 Aug. 2025, style.mla.org · Google Docs Editors Help, "Find what's changed in a file," support.google.com/docs/answer/190843 · 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, 988lifeline.org. All opened November 12, 2026.

AI use disclosure

Attach this to any assignment where you used AI at Level 1, 2, or 3.

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	AI LEVEL	DATE

1. Which AI tool(s) did you use? (name and model if shown)

2. What did you ask it? Paste your main prompts, attach a share link, or summarize.

3. What did you use from its answers? What did you change or reject, and why?

4. How did you check that what you used is accurate?

5. Which parts of this work are entirely yours?

☐ I followed the AI level for this assignment, and this disclosure is complete and honest.

Student signature **Date**

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