

The AI Homework Rulebook

What AI is allowed to do for homework at each grade level, what it isn't, and the one sentence to say when the line gets tested. Print it. Argue with it. Put it on the fridge.

Elementary (K-5)

At this age AI should be something you use together, out loud, with an adult in the room. The goal isn't productivity — it's noticing that the machine can be wrong.

ALLOWED

- ✓ Reading a hard word or sentence aloud together
- ✓ Asking AI to explain an idea a second way after the child tried it
- ✓ Brainstorming story ideas the child then writes themselves
- ✓ Checking spelling after a first draft exists

NOT ALLOWED

- ✗ Any writing that gets handed in as the child's own
- ✗ Math answers before the child has attempted the problem
- ✗ Unsupervised chat with an AI assistant

SAY THIS

"You can ask the robot to explain it — you can't ask the robot to do it. Show me your try first."

Middle school (6-8)

This is where the line really gets tested. Middle schoolers can use AI usefully, but they cannot yet reliably tell good output from confident nonsense.

ALLOWED

- ✓ Outlining after they've listed their own ideas first
- ✓ Explaining a concept the teacher rushed through
- ✓ Generating practice questions to study from
- ✓ Feedback on a draft they wrote (“what's unclear here?”)

NOT ALLOWED

- ✗ Generating paragraphs that end up in the final draft
- ✗ Summarizing a book or article they were assigned to read
- ✗ Any use of facts or statistics AI produced without a real source

SAY THIS

“AI can react to your work. It can't produce your work. If you can't explain a sentence without looking, it doesn't go in.”

High school (9-12)

Older teens should be learning to use AI the way they'll use it at work — with disclosure, verification and judgment. The rule shifts from “don't” to “declare and defend.”

ALLOWED

- ✓ Research starting points, with every fact verified against a real source
- ✓ Structural feedback and counter-arguments to their own thesis
- ✓ Code explanation and debugging when they can walk through the fix
- ✓ Anything the teacher's policy explicitly permits — read it first

NOT ALLOWED

- ✗ Submitting AI prose as original writing, ever
- ✗ Using AI on assessments meant to measure their own recall
- ✗ Hiding AI use when the assignment asks them to disclose it

SAY THIS

“Two questions before you hand it in: could you defend every sentence out loud, and would you be comfortable if your teacher saw the whole chat?”

By assignment type

Grade level sets the ceiling; assignment type sets the line. Same kid, same day, different rules.

ALLOWED

- ✓ Math practice — AI may explain a method after an attempt, never give the answer set
- ✓ Reading response — AI may quiz them on the text, never summarize it for them
- ✓ Essays — AI may critique a draft, never generate one
- ✓ Study prep — AI may generate unlimited practice questions
- ✓ Projects and slides — AI may help with layout and phrasing they wrote

NOT ALLOWED

- ✗ Anything graded for original thinking
- ✗ Anything the teacher said is a closed-resource task
- ✗ Take-home tests, unless explicitly allowed in writing

SAY THIS

"Ask yourself what this assignment is measuring. If AI does that part, the assignment stopped working."