

Flagged by an AI Detector: The Parent Script

What to do, in order, when your child is accused of using AI — including the email to send and the words to avoid.

First: do these three things before you reply to anyone

- **Ask your child once, calmly, in private.** Not “did you cheat” — ask “walk me through how you wrote this.” Their ability to walk you through it is the real evidence.
- **Find the version history.** Google Docs and Word both keep it. A document that grew over days with edits and deletions is the single strongest defense there is.
- **Do not agree to anything yet.** Not a rewrite, not a zero, not a “we’ll just move on.” Once you accept a penalty it is very hard to undo.

What a detector score actually means

AI detectors don't detect AI. They measure how statistically predictable the writing is. Careful, structured, grammatically clean writing scores as “AI-like” — which means strong students and multilingual students get flagged more, not less. A percentage is not proof, and most vendors say so in their own documentation.

The email to send

Subject: Question about the AI flag on [assignment name]

Dear [Teacher],

Thank you for letting me know about the AI detection flag on [child]’s [assignment]. I take academic honesty seriously, and I’ve spoken with [child] about it.

[Child] tells me the work is their own, and I’d like to help you verify that rather than argue about it. I can provide:

- The document’s full version history, showing how the draft developed over time
- [Child]’s notes and outline from before the draft
- [Child]’s willingness to discuss the assignment with you in person, or write a similar short piece under your supervision

I understand detection tools are new for everyone. My understanding is that vendors themselves caution against using a score alone as evidence, particularly for students who write carefully. I’d be grateful if we could look at the process rather than the score.

What would be most useful to you?

Thank you,
[Your name]

Words to avoid

- ✗ “Your software is wrong.” — puts the teacher on the defensive about a tool they didn't choose.
- ✗ “My child would never.” — every parent says this; it carries no weight.
- ✗ “I'm going to the principal.” — keep that in reserve, not in the first email.

If it doesn't resolve

- Ask, in writing, what evidence beyond the detector score is being used.
- Ask what the school's written AI policy says — many schools have none, which matters.
- Request the grade be held, not recorded, until the review finishes.
- Escalate to the department head or principal only after the teacher has had a fair chance.