



W. L. Adams Center for Writing

AI LITERACY

What Is AI Literacy?

AI literacy is the ability to comprehend, evaluate, and utilize artificial intelligence effectively and responsibly. It involves recognizing both the capabilities and limitations of AI while practicing discernment about when and how it should be used in academic contexts. Developing AI literacy is highly relevant because, as Bowen and Watson (2024) explain, it will be an essential work and life skill for both faculty and students.

What is Generative AI?

Generative AI is a specified type of artificial intelligence that focuses on creating new content (images, audio, text, or code), based on patterns ascertained from large datasets.

AI Strengths

AI possesses several strengths:

- Perspective — Presents information from multiple points of view
- Accessibility — Offers alternative explanations and formats for better accessibility
- Organization — Categorizes and structures notes and outlines
- Brainstorming — Generates ideas and ways to approach them quickly
- Summarization — Condenses large portions of information into shorter passages

AI Limitations

Limitations to AI include the following:

- Bias — Reflects biases from its training data or prompt wording
- Context — Misunderstands context or nuance of a question
- Accuracy — Provides information that may be incorrect or obsolete
- Fabrication — Creates information or sources that do not exist
- Source Verification — Determines whether sources are reliable and corroborated

Think Critically

Gegg-Harrison and Shapiro (2025) provide a list of principles and strategies for agency and empowerment regarding AI text generation. Some of the most important recommendations are being transparent about approaching generative AI, creating space for people to learn what these tools can and cannot do, and helping everyone to approach these tools critically. Additionally, here are several questions worth considering to ensure critical thinking occurs when engaging with AI-generated information:

- Is this information true?
- Can these sources be verified?
- Is any important information left out?
- Does this reflect independent understanding of the topic?
- What potential biases may be present in this information?

Academic Integrity / Course Policies

Ying (2026) states that students should not be passive recipients of GenAI technology and use it unethically; instead, he believes they should seek to interpret, adapt, and shape the ethical contours of GenAI use in their specific field of study. Therefore, students should maintain responsibility for their decisions regarding AI by being transparent about its use, understanding courses contain differences in their course policies, and taking proper precautions to avoid unintentional misconduct. For students to maintain intellectual ownership of their ideas, AI should be a support tool rather than a replacement for human thinking.

Practical Advice

- Evaluate AI-generated responses for accuracy.
- Understand the strengths and limitations of AI.
- Utilize AI as a starting point and not as a final authority.
- Review course policies and assignment prompts to know when the use of AI is appropriate.

References

- Bowen, J. A., & Watson, C. E. (2024). *Teaching with AI: A practical guide to a new era of human learning* (2nd ed.). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Gegg-Harrison, W., & Shapiro, S. (2025). From policing to empowerment: Promoting student agency in the context of AI text-generators and AI-detection tools. In C. Wang & Z. Tian (Eds.), *Rethinking writing education in the age of generative AI* (pp. 26–41). Routledge.
- Ying, J. (2026). Academic integrity in the age of generative AI: A scoping review of research on higher education student voices. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 24, 78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-026-09752-1>