Using AI Tools in Your Research

AI tools like ChatGPT, Frase, Jasper AI, Writesonic, Google Bard, and many others can be very useful. A university context is different than regular life, though, and there are some things you need to think about before using AI tools for your assignments.

Is AI Ok to Use?

The first thing to think about is whether you should even use AI in your research or assignments. You shouldn't assume it's always ok.

When to Use AI

Whether or not it's ok depends on your instructor. If your instructor says it's fine, or it's part of your course assignment, then you can use AI. But make sure you use it in the ways that are specified.

When Not to Use AI

If your instructor doesn't mention AI, and doesn't specifically say it's ok to use, you should assume you can't use it. If you aren't sure, always make sure you ask.

Why Can't I Use AI?

There are some concerns about using AI for your university work and assignments. These include:

- Impact on learning
- Bias and superficial thinking
- Academic integrity

1. Impact on Learning

AI might seem to make hard academic work easier when you're feeling stuck or under pressure. But a big part of your university education is learning how to research, organize and express your thoughts. Using AI as a shortcut doesn't help you improve those skills.

2. Bias in Responses

What you get from AI depends on what question or prompt you give it. Your wording influences the response you get. That means you might only get a partial, biased part of the whole picture, and miss key ideas or points of view.

2. Bias in Material

AI tools search and compile information from web sites to generate responses. Some of those web sites might be poor quality, biased, or incorrect. AI responses tend to reflect the most dominant or popular voices on a topic, rather than the most knowledgeable.

3. Academic Integrity

Your assignments should be your own work, the result of your research, thinking, and expression. Using AI means the work may not be entirely your own. This is normally considered a violation of academic integrity, which has serious consequences.

If You Use AI, Cite It

If you use ideas, words or other output from an AI tool it becomes a source for your work. You need to credit AI by citing, like any other source.

Citing makes it clear what you got from other people. If you don't cite AI output you imply that it is your own work, which is plagiarism.

How Do I Cite AI?

Different citation styles have different ways to cite AI. Find out how to cite it using the style you are using. Instructions for some common citation styles are on the Library's [Citing AI web page](#).

Use With Caution

When using AI, be skeptical. AI can give you incorrect, outdated or biased information. AI is also known for regularly making up citations that aren't real. Don't take information you get from an AI at face value.

Check and Verify

Make sure you verify anything you get from an AI.

AI doesn't replace doing your own scholarly research using Library search tools to find and verify information, or replace doing your own thinking and writing.

Questions & Help

If you have questions or need help with your research, contact the Library at [library.wlu.ca/help/askus](#). We're here to help you!