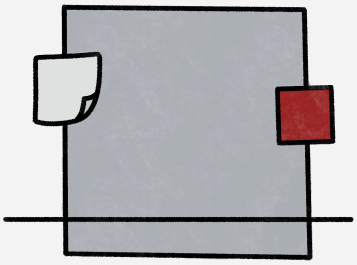
HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CENTER FOR DIGITAL THRIVING

ALIGN ON THE LINE

BETA VERSION



Think about the different ways AI could be used and decide where you draw the line. Then, align on the line together.

1. **Brainstorm:** List all the ways AI could be used for a specific example (an assignment/task/policy).
2. **Map:** Place each use on the scale.
3. **Compare:** Share your map with others. Where do we agree and disagree?
4. **Align:** Together, decide where the line is for this example.

As AI tools evolve, building shared understanding of ethical use for different kinds of schoolwork is crucial. The reality is we're all developing our comfort zones about when and how to use AI — drawing different lines about what feels appropriate based on person, assignment, and learning goal. WHERE IS YOUR LINE — AND WHERE SHOULD OUR LINE BE AS A CLASS? This routine helps you map out different AI uses, see where others draw their lines, and work together to decide what's appropriate for a specific learning context (like an assignment, a task, or even a larger class policy).

PURPOSE

This practice helps students explore a broad range of AI uses through open, judgment-free dialogue and consider where they draw their ethical lines. It helps the class clarify shared norms for a specific learning goal or assignment while building AI literacy. It builds the habit of pausing to consider AI's role before using it. These conversations can be difficult to have, but by elevating different uses and discussing them openly, students learn both how to use AI and contexts for appropriate use. Through repeated practice, students not only develop a disposition to navigate AI use ethically but also to consider how learning goals themselves may need to evolve as the world changes with AI.

WHEN TO USE THIS PRACTICE

This practice works best with concrete, specific contexts. Single assignments or tasks are generally better than broad policies, but the routine is flexible. It can be particularly valuable when introducing a common assignment, a big project, or at the beginning of a unit, when expectations around AI use may not have been set. Consider running this practice multiple times throughout the year with different assignments, or even the same ones as students develop foundational skills and may be ready for different AI supports.

STEPS

1. **Brainstorm all possible AI uses.** Have students generate a comprehensive list of the different ways AI could be used for a specific assignment or task. Frame this as a judgment-free zone — you're exploring what *could* be done, not what students *have* done. Write each use on a sticky note or in a shared list.
2. **Collect and select.** Select a representative set of uses to map as a group (8–12 is best). Choose uses that are distinct from one another and cover the spectrum from clearly appropriate to potentially problematic — this ensures rich discussion across the gray areas. You can select these uses for students or decide as a group.
3. **Map gray areas.** Working individually, students map where each AI use falls on one of five categories: Totally Fine, Mostly OK, Not Really Sure, Feels Sketchy, Crosses a Line. This helps students reflect on their own ethical boundaries before discussing them.
4. **Compare maps and align on shared norms.** First in pairs, then as a whole class, students examine how their mappings align and differ, and discuss why. Together, decide where the class line will be for this specific assignment.
5. **Document.** Share a final version of the map so everyone has clarity moving forward.

VARIATIONS

Live Polling Version: Instead of individual mapping, use app.graidients.ai to vote on each AI use as a class. Display a QR code for each use, and have students vote where it falls on the scale. The results appear instantly as a visual distribution, showing where the class collectively stands. Discuss why certain uses may be resulting in more disagreement than others, then record the class decision for each use. This variation works well when you want to see patterns emerge in real-time and spark discussion about disagreements.

Role Assignment Version: For each AI use, have students define what role AI is playing (e.g., editor, tutor, co-writer, researcher, creator). Then consider whether certain roles feel more or less appropriate for this assignment. This adds a layer of reflection about the relationship between the student and AI, and what kinds of help are acceptable.

Skill Development Version: Before mapping uses, have students first categorize each AI use based on their own skill level: (1) where they already excel, (2) where they're developing, or (3) where they're just beginning to learn. Then discuss how this might influence where they draw the line. This variation builds self literacy and surfaces important questions about when AI support helps versus hinders learning.

TIPS

Frame brainstorming as "*what someone could do with AI*" to support psychological safety and encourage a broad range of uses. Be clear about how decisions will be made — whether students vote, you facilitate consensus, or you decide. Document and post the final map where students can reference it while working. Remind students that norms may vary across classes, and today's decisions are specific to this assignment. If you veto or adjust any student decisions, share your thinking. This helps students understand the learning goals behind the boundaries.