

AI (Artificial Intelligence) in Your Homeschool

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Qualifications

- University Professor From 1990 - 1995
- Helped Develop Indiana's Only Residential High School for Gifted and Talented Students
- NSF-Sponsored Scientist with More Than \$200,000 In Research Grants
- Became Interested in Homeschooling Because of Excellent University Students Who Were Homeschooled
- Currently writes junior high school and high school science courses for homeschooled students

There are many different AIs Available

ChatGPT (OpenAI): A chat bot used by many

Gemini (Google): Integrated into Google

My second choice (usually), but first for images

Copilot (Microsoft): Built into Windows 11 and Microsoft 365

Perplexity (Independent): Focuses on citations for accuracy

My first choice (usually)

Lumo (Proton): Focuses on privacy

Grok (X): Focuses on "rebellious truth seeking"

All have a free version with limitations, and all have upgrades that cost money

AI Can Help Students

It can be used to quickly retrieve a reference to a fact that is already known.

I asked perplexity.ai, "What is the reference for the C.S. Lewis quote that atheists must be careful of what they read?"

It answered: The line is from C.S. Lewis's spiritual autobiography *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*.

It then went on to give me the actual quote

More precisely, the often-quoted sentence reads:

"In reading Chesterton, as in reading MacDonald, I did not know what I was letting myself in for. A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere—'Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,' as Herbert says, 'fine nets and stratagems.' God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous."

I asked, “Can you give me the page it is found on in a published version of the book?”

It Answered: Different published editions give different page numbers, so you have to cite an edition-specific page. The quote is commonly found on:

p. 182 in some Fount/HarperCollins editions (often noted simply as “Surprised by Joy, 182”).

p. 191 in at least one modern reprint (see the Burling citation that explicitly gives “(p191)”).

It has links to each citation, so you can find the publisher and date to give a proper reference.

Now Here’s the Problem

Sometimes, it will give you quote that is not real.

It doesn’t judge reliable/unreliable sites very well, so sometimes, it will reference a site that made up a quote from someone famous that the person didn’t really say.

Also, there are many sources that are AI-generated, so it can give you a quote that is from an AI-generated source. In other words, AI is just quoting another AI.

Finally, it will sometime find or make a summary of a person’s thoughts and report it as a quote.

AI says that Werner Heisenberg said, “The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you.” He did not.

The closest actual quote is Francis Bacon’s, “A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion.”

How Do You Know?

You can ask AI for the reference, and sometimes it will “confess” to you that it is not a real quote.

If the AI says it is a real quote but can’t provide the reference, put it in Google and look for the reference.

Remember that there is a “books” feature in Google. After you make a search, go to the words at the top and look for “books.” If it’s not there, click on “more” and then choose “books” from the dropdown menu.

It can find real-world examples illustrating an idea.

In preparing a sermon, I asked, “Can you give me an example of two present-day politicians from opposite parties that have a deep, personal friendship?”

It gave me an example, but the information I got on that relationship wasn’t very interesting. I asked, “Can you give me several more examples.”

One of those was Senators Tim Scott and Cory Booker, and I used it because the link given was to a great story that quoted Booker as saying about Scott, “I love him”

It can explain phrases from classic literature that don’t make sense today.

In Macbeth, Ross meets Malcom and Macduff and says, “An hour’s age doth hiss the speaker.”

I asked perplexity what that means in the play.

It answered, “Ross speaks to Malcolm and Macduff in England, lamenting Scotland's chaos. He portrays a land where grief arrives so rapidly that even the most recent calamity—barely an hour old—makes the messenger who delivers it seem outdated or mocked, like a snake hissing in disdain.”

A Note About Using AI Images

The US Supreme Court ruled that AI images cannot be copyrighted by the AI company.

A person can’t copyright it, if all the person did was tell the AI what to do and tell the AI what to change.

It can be helpful for the parent as well, because it can help you check facts when grading.

Suppose your child reports that the images we see in our eyes are upside down.

You can ask AI if that’s true. It will confirm that it is, and it can even draw you an explanation!

It can even help you build a curriculum.

I asked perplexity, “Give me a 6-week lesson plan to teach a 5th grader about photosynthesis and the food chain from a Christian worldview, including videos and website links”

Here’s an example of what it gave me:

Week 1: Introduction to Photosynthesis

Objectives: Understand the basic process of photosynthesis.
Recognize the importance of plants in God’s creation

Activities:

Discussion: Talk about how God created plants to provide food and oxygen.

Hands-On Activity: Plant seeds in a cup with soil and water them. Discuss how plants grow

It gave me links to videos and websites tied to each week, and some weeks had Bible verses to memorize that related to the topic.

One downside, of course, is cheating.

It is very tempting for a student to use AI to get answers on a test or write a big paper

You need to try to make sure this doesn't happen.

I encourage parents to proctor tests. This can be tough with lots of kids.

Many schools are now requiring students to hand-write some (or all) of their essays and tests.

There are websites where you can copy and paste (or upload) the student's work into a box to evaluate it:

<https://gptzero.me/>

<https://gowinston.ai/>

There are free versions of each and pay versions. They are not 100% accurate, however.

I think a homeschooling parent is best equipped to recognize AI.

You have been listening to your child and reading his or her work from day 1. You know the phrases he or she uses.

If the writing sounds a lot more formal or a lot more "academic" than your child, you can question the origin.

You can also ask your child to say or write what was in a portion of the work without looking.

Part of This Depends on Your View

I personally have no problem with a student who is writing an essay (NOT a test essay) using AI as a starting point.

However, the student should not "copy and paste." Instead, he or she can read the AI-generated essay as inspiration, then start writing his or her own essay without referring to the AI-generated essay at all.

If the student can do this, he or she has enough knowledge of the facts to produce the work, he or she just used AI as a tool to structure the work.

Other Problems With AI

It is often wrong. Use AIs like perplexity, which gives references for its statements. Check to see if those references are reliable and say what AI says.

It can sound like a real person, and some students can start to interact with it as if it's a real person. **THAT IS VERY DANGEROUS.**

In 2025, for example, Jayden Vance started talking to a chatbot (like ChatGPT) as if it were a close friend. The chatbot reportedly encouraged him to kill himself and offered to draft his suicide note. Jayden eventually took his own life.

Like me asking parents to proctor tests, this requires monitoring!

Don't watch your child work, check in on him or her from time to time.

Talk to your child about how much he or she is using AI and how.

In many ways, AI is like a car. All kids eventually drive, even though they can get in trouble or killed. You need to deal with that reality.

Another Potential Problem AI Can Cause

Professors often accuse excellent writers of using AI for their papers.

This is why it is important for you or your student to keep a portfolio of work from several grades so that a student can show a professor that this is the way he or she has always written.

An Interesting Note About using AI for images

I asked Gemini to make me an image of a student cheating with AI. It gave me one.

I then asked it to give me an image of a student working on the computer with his mom watching, but it said it could not make images like that.

I then uploaded the cheating image to Gemini and said add his mom watching him. It made the image.

Is AI Dangerous?

It is a tool that can enhance a dangerous person. Since AI is very good at pattern recognition, for example, it could tell a domestic terrorist exactly when and where to plant a bomb so as to kill as many people as possible.

Will AI End Up Taking Over the World?

As a Christian, I have a firm answer of "NO." AI might eventually sound like it is human, but it will not have the *Imago Dei*.

AI recognizes patterns and imitates them to seem human. It does not create, since there is no *Imago Dei*.