

## Is AI the end of academic writing?

**Dear Faculty Relations** – My students are required to complete academic writing assignments as part of their course assignments. Students ask if they can use AI to complete them. Is this an appropriate path? - *I have AI anxiety*

**Dear AI anxious** – AI writing technology presents a crossroads in our relationship with the written word. This moment may provoke anxiety, but it is also an occasion to reflect on how writing itself enables what we value most in research and learning: exploration, discovery, expression, conversation, and consensus building. Writing exists at the intersection of all academic work. AI will not replace academic writing, but it will influence the assumptions we make about what constitutes knowledge. We must help students to understand that AI does not produce knowledge; it delivers a product based on data humans produce. This distinction is important because it reminds us that the human processes of knowledge creation and dissemination are irreplaceable to learning and scholarship, regardless of the technologies we have at our disposal.

The writing process is the primary occasion where we focus our attention to grappling with, reflecting on, and ultimately taking ownership of our ideas and their larger relevance. When writing, we reckon with the contextual and cultural elements of our discourse. We have an ethical responsibility as educators and scholars to develop and model this rhetorical understanding, and it's important that students know that the process of writing is where much of this work occurs. We're accustomed to sharing stories about our own writing with colleagues as a way to build community. As AI develops a larger role in our daily lives, it is incumbent on us to broaden these conversations to include students and to help them understand that AI can be a valuable supplement to the writing process, but it cannot replace it. In doing so, we invite and inspire them to participate in knowledge creation by employing our most powerful critical thinking tool.

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