



CAMBRIDGE

# AI literacy in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework



Cambridge  
Life Competencies

# What is AI literacy?

AI (Artificial Intelligence) literacy is the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which enable safe, effective and responsible use of AI, including, but not limited to, generative AI. AI-literate learners can use AI in ways that empower and benefit both themselves and society. This involves understanding how AI works and developing the skills and attitudes needed to use AI effectively and ethically.

In practice, this might look like:

## **Understanding AI**

- Defining basic AI concepts
- Understanding how different types of AI work (including how they are created)
- Identifying different ways AI is used in technology

## **Interacting with AI**

- Using AI to search for and organise information
- Using AI-based tools for specific purposes (e.g. language learning, problem solving)
- Creating and iterating on AI outputs (e.g. prompt writing, experimenting with new uses for AI, refining outputs)
- Evaluating AI outputs critically (e.g. checking for hallucinations, detecting bias, judging fitness for purpose)
- Collaborating effectively with AI as a tool to augment and complement human skills

## **Making ethical and responsible choices about AI**

- Understanding ethical debates and societal impacts of AI (e.g. environmental concerns, job displacement, human autonomy)
- Understanding issues of data privacy when using AI-based technology
- Sharing AI-generated content responsibly and staying accountable for content shared

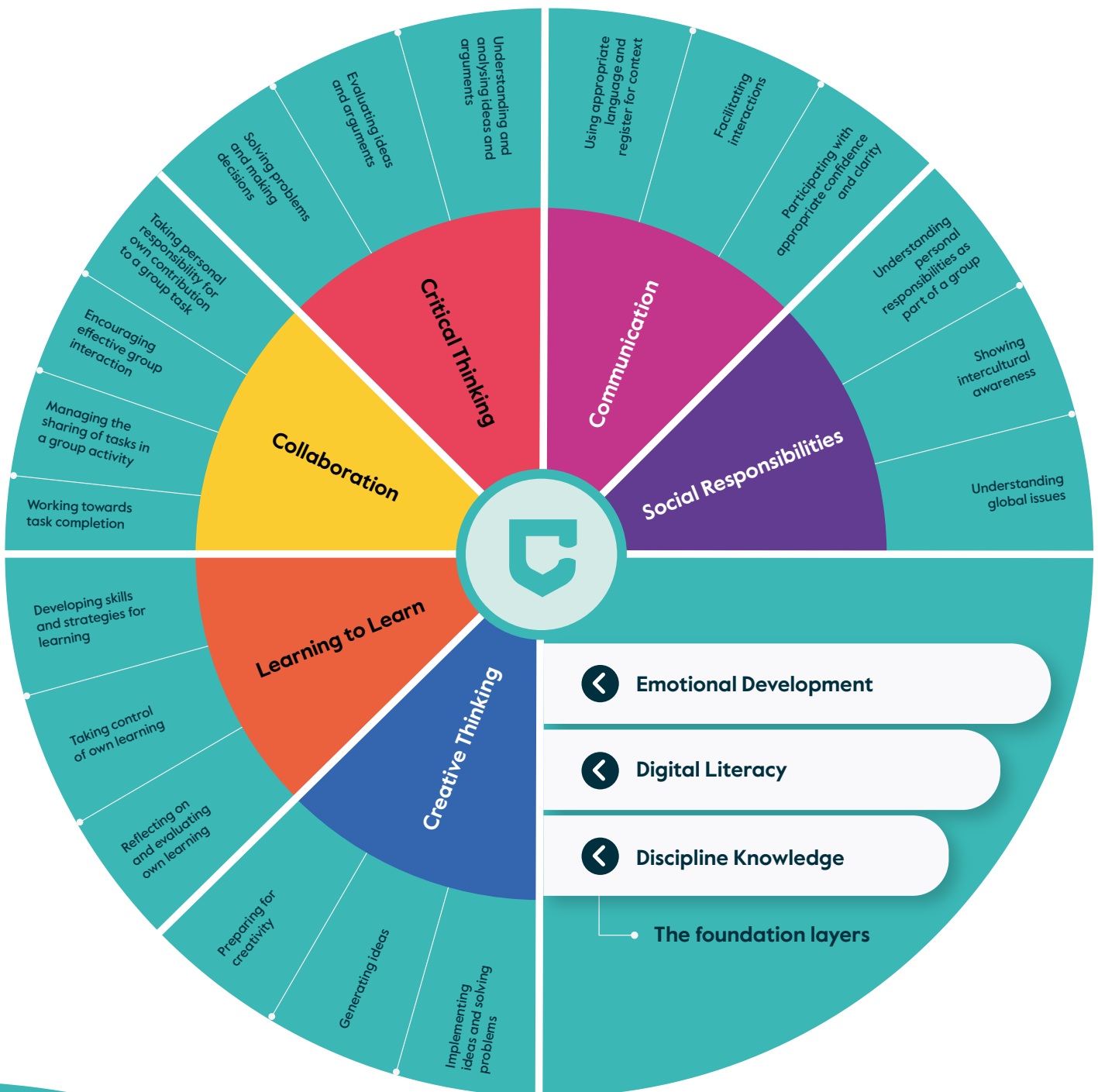
# Where can AI literacy be found in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework?

The AI literacy elements are most present in the **Digital Literacy** foundation layer. Although the elements of AI literacy could be mapped to multiple components within this foundation layer, the mapping below shows only the component to which each element is **most** strongly aligned.

Competency	Core areas	Components	AI literacy elements included
<b>Digital Literacy</b>	Using tools and creating digital content	Understanding fundamentals of technology, including AI	Defining basic AI concepts Understanding how different types of AI work (including how they are created) Identifying different ways AI is used in technology
		Developing techniques for searching and managing digital data, information and content	Using AI to search for and organise information
		Making critical judgements about digital data, information and content	Evaluating AI outputs critically (e.g. checking for hallucinations, detecting bias, judging fitness for purpose)
		Selecting and using appropriate digital tools for specific purposes	Using AI-based tools for specific purposes (e.g. language learning, problem solving) Collaborating effectively with AI as a tool to augment and complement human skills
		Creating digital content to solve a problem or complete a task	Creating and iterating on AI outputs (e.g. prompt writing, experimenting with new uses for AI, refining outputs)
	Safety and wellbeing online	Staying safe online and when using AI	Understanding issues of data privacy when using AI-based technology
		Maintaining personal, societal, and environmental wellbeing	Understanding ethical debates and societal impacts of AI (e.g. environmental concerns, job displacement, human autonomy) Sharing AI-generated content responsibly and staying accountable for content shared

In addition, the other competencies of the framework are aligned to AI literacy in the following ways:

- **Creative thinking:** AI can be used to support idea generation, solve problems and implement ideas.
- **Critical thinking:** Effective and responsible use of AI requires critical thinking skills such as evaluation of AI-generated outputs.
- **Learning to learn:** Learning can be enhanced by AI when used strategically and when based on strong understanding of learning to learn principles.
- **Communication:** Strong communication skills are needed to prompt generative AI effectively and influence decisions about AI use.
- **Collaboration:** Using principles of collaboration can support learners in using AI as a collaborative partner rather than a tool for generating answers.
- **Social responsibilities:** The impact of AI is a global issue. Understanding and actively engaging with this issue is important and is a collective responsibility.
- **Emotional development:** Although AI can be used to support learners in managing their emotions, the skill of developing positive relationships with others remains vital.



# What does AI literacy look like at each stage of learning?

The tables below include some example Can Do statements and language from the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework that could be used in materials to develop competencies around AI literacy for each stage of learning. These are not intended to be comprehensive. For further ideas on how to develop AI literacy competencies, please see the **Further resources** section at the end of this booklet.

## Pre-primary

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language		
<b>Digital Literacy</b>	Using tools and creating digital content	Understanding fundamentals of technology, including AI	Knows that some technology can understand when we talk to it.	It listens.		
			Understands that AI learns from lots of examples.	It learns.		
			Names everyday technologies including those that are AI-enabled.	It's [a computer/ a smart phone].		
	Safety and wellbeing online	Staying safe online and when using AI	Developing techniques for searching and managing digital data, information and content	Identifies age-appropriate AI tools that can help them find information.	That's [name of tool].	
			Making critical judgements about digital data, information and content	Says if AI-generated images are good for their activity.	This picture is good/bad.	
			Selecting and using appropriate digital tools for specific purposes	Uses age-appropriate AI-enabled language learning technology with adult support.	Let's play [name of game].	
				Can interact with age-appropriate AI tools using basic voice commands.	Please play [song/game].	
			Creating digital content to solve a problem or complete a task	Creates simple content with AI assistance (e.g. drawing) and iterates on it, with adult help.	Try again	
			Maintaining personal, societal, and environmental wellbeing	Asks adults before sharing AI-generated output.	Only uses AI-enabled apps or websites that an adult has checked.	I can use [name of app/website].
					Recognises the difference between talking to a person and an AI assistant.	[AI assistant name] is not a person.

## Primary

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language	
Digital Literacy	Using tools and creating digital content	Understanding fundamentals of technology, including AI	Explains what artificial intelligence means in simple words.	AI helps computers learn to do things like people do them.	
			Describes how AI is trained on lots of examples to be able to classify information.	People train the computer. They show it lots of pictures of [horses].	
			Identifies everyday technologies that use AI.	[Smart phones] use AI.	
		Developing techniques for searching and managing digital data, information and content	Uses AI-enabled apps and websites to ask basic questions, with adult supervision.	What is [patineta] in English?	
		Making critical judgements about digital data, information and content	Identifies signs that an image or video has been AI-generated.	The eyes look strange.	
		Selecting and using appropriate digital tools for specific purposes	Identifies ways in which AI should not be used for learning.	You shouldn't use AI [for tests].	
	Maintains own creativity and autonomy when using AI.		AI helped me with some ideas but I changed them.		
		Creating digital content to solve a problem or complete a task	Can write step-by-step instructions for specific tasks, e.g. to be used in a prompt.	First, ... Next, ... Then, ... Finally ...	
		Safety and wellbeing online	Staying safe online and when using AI	Identifies which information should not be shared when using AI.	I shouldn't write my [name/address/school].
			Maintaining personal, societal, and environmental wellbeing	Outlines the disadvantages of overusing AI.	Using too much AI is bad for ...
		Says when they used AI to create content.		I made this with AI.	

## Secondary

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Digital Literacy	Using tools and creating digital content	Understanding fundamentals of technology, including AI	Can explain basic AI concepts.	Machine learning is ...
			Compares different types of AI.	Both [chatbots and recommendation systems] use AI, but they work in different ways.
			Identifies AI in websites and apps.	The content I see on [social media] is selected by AI algorithms.
		Developing techniques for searching and managing digital data, information and content	Checks AI answers by looking at other sources.	The chatbot said ... but this [grammar website] says ...
		Making critical judgements about digital data, information and content	Identifies hallucinations in AI-generated outputs.	That's a hallucination because ...
		Selecting and using appropriate digital tools for specific purposes	Uses chatbots to practise English.	Please help me practise English. You are a [role] ...
	Maintains personal agency when collaborating with AI.		I use AI as a partner to help me think, not as a tool to give me all the answers.	
	Creating digital content to solve a problem or complete a task	Writes and refines prompts for specific tasks to improve AI-generated output.	Instead of ... , please ...	
	Safety and wellbeing online	Staying safe online and when using AI	Explains why it is important to be careful when sharing personal data when using AI.	It's important not to share personal information when ... because ...
		Maintaining personal, societal, and environmental wellbeing	Discusses the potential positive and negative impacts AI can have on society.	It is possible that AI ... , although ...
Considers the implications of sharing AI-generated content.			If [the content] contains hallucinations, it could make people believe something that isn't true.	

## Higher education

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
<b>Digital Literacy</b>	Using tools and creating digital content	Understanding fundamentals of technology, including AI	Demonstrates understanding of key AI concepts.	Neural networks ...
			Compares and contrasts different types of AI.	Generative AI ... whereas recommendation algorithms ...
			Evaluates how AI is used in technology used for research.	This tool uses AI to [transcribe interviews] but needs to be checked by a human before it's analysed.
		Developing techniques for searching and managing digital data, information and content	Justifies why they have (not) chosen to use AI for language learning tasks.	Having considered the different options, I chose to use AI for ... because ...
		Making critical judgements about digital data, information and content	Identifies bias in AI-generated outputs.	This essay only takes into account [Western points of view].
		Selecting and using appropriate digital tools for specific purposes	Discusses ways in which AI tools can help or hinder learning.	[Name of tool] supports [skill] but unless it is used carefully, it could ...
			Maintains academic integrity when collaborating with AI.	I ensured that ...
	Creating digital content to solve a problem or complete a task	Uses subject knowledge to create AI prompts and evaluate outputs.	Based on [theory/ technique], please help me think through the following problem ...	
	Safety and wellbeing online	Staying safe online and when using AI	Evaluates the privacy policies of AI apps and websites before using them.	The policy states that ...
		Maintaining personal, societal, and environmental wellbeing	Critically evaluates AI's environmental impact.	If we compare using AI for [task] with [other method], [AI] uses [more/ less] water. However, ...
Follows institutional standards for AI attribution in academic assignments.			I follow the university's guidelines by ...	

## At work

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Digital Literacy	Using tools and creating digital content	Understanding fundamentals of technology, including AI	Explains AI concepts of a product to clients.	This AI-powered system works by ...
			Compares and contrasts different types of AI used in the workplace.	Our internal AI chatbot ... whereas publicly available chatbots ...
			Explains how AI works in technology they use for work.	Our customer service chatbot uses natural language processing to deal with customer queries.
		Developing techniques for searching and managing digital data, information and content	Evaluates the benefits and drawbacks of using AI technology to search for information.	On the one hand it can save a huge amount of time, but on the other hand ...
		Making critical judgements about digital data, information and content	Uses own knowledge to judge AI-generated output.	This text is in line with the latest research on ... but is missing ...
		Selecting and using appropriate digital tools for specific purposes	Identifies new ways in which AI could be used to enhance existing practices.	I wonder if we could use AI to automate [process].
			Collaborates and iterates with AI tools ensuring that outputs meet expected standards.	I created a rubric for the chatbot to use when checking this work.
	Creating digital content to solve a problem or complete a task	Uses AI to gain a deeper understanding of a problem.	Please create an empathy map of [customer description with a particular problem].	
	Safety and wellbeing online	Staying safe online and when using AI	Evaluates whether it is safe to share business-sensitive information when using AI.	While it is acceptable to share [type of information] using our internal AI-powered system, it is important not to share it when using [name of external app/website].
			Maintaining personal, societal, and environmental wellbeing	Discusses the potential impact of AI trends on their industry.
		Follows their organisation's guidance on sharing AI-generated content.	According to the company policy, AI-generated content must be ...	

# Further resources\*

Cambridge University Press & Assessment. (2024). *Generative AI Idea Pack for English language teachers*. Available at: [https://www.cambridge.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/GenAI\\_Idea\\_Pack.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/GenAI_Idea_Pack.pdf)

Digital Education Council. (2025). *DEC AI Literacy Framework: AI Literacy for All*. Available at: <https://www.digitaleducationcouncil.com/post/digital-education-council-ai-literacy-framework>

European Commission, OECD, code.org. (2025). *Empowering Learners for the Age of AI: An AI Literacy Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (Draft – May 2025)*. Available at: <https://ailiteracyframework.org/>

Galaczi, E. & Luckin, R. (2024). *Generative AI and Language Education: Opportunities, Challenges and the Need for Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge Papers in English Language Education. Available at: [https://www.cambridge.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/CPELE\\_Generative%20AI%20and%20Language%20Education%20Opportunities%20Challenges%20and%20the%20Need%20for%20Critical%20Perspectives\\_FINAL%20%281%29.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/CPELE_Generative%20AI%20and%20Language%20Education%20Opportunities%20Challenges%20and%20the%20Need%20for%20Critical%20Perspectives_FINAL%20%281%29.pdf)

Hockly, N. (2025). *Nicky Hockly's 30 Essentials for Using Artificial Intelligence*. Cambridge University Press.

Mills, K., Ruiz, P., Lee, K., Coenraad, M., Fusco, J., Roschelle, J. & Weisgrau, J. (2024). *AI Literacy: A Framework to Understand, Evaluate, and Use Emerging Technology*. Available at: <https://digitalpromise.org/initiative/artificial-intelligence-in-education/ai-literacy/>

UNESCO. (2024). *AI competency framework for students*. Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ai-competency-framework-students>

UNESCO. (2024). *AI competency framework for teachers*. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391104>

\* Please note, these resources are current at the time of publishing – January 2026. However, newer resources may be available at the time of reading and/or some of the links included may no longer work.

Suggested search terms: 'AI literacy' 'AI competence'



# Where your world grows

We believe that English can unlock a lifetime of experiences and, together with teachers and our partners, we help people to learn and confidently prove their skills to the world.

[cambridge.org/english](https://cambridge.org/english)