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7 WAYS TO USE AI CRITICALLY IN THE CLASSROOM

Educators Technology
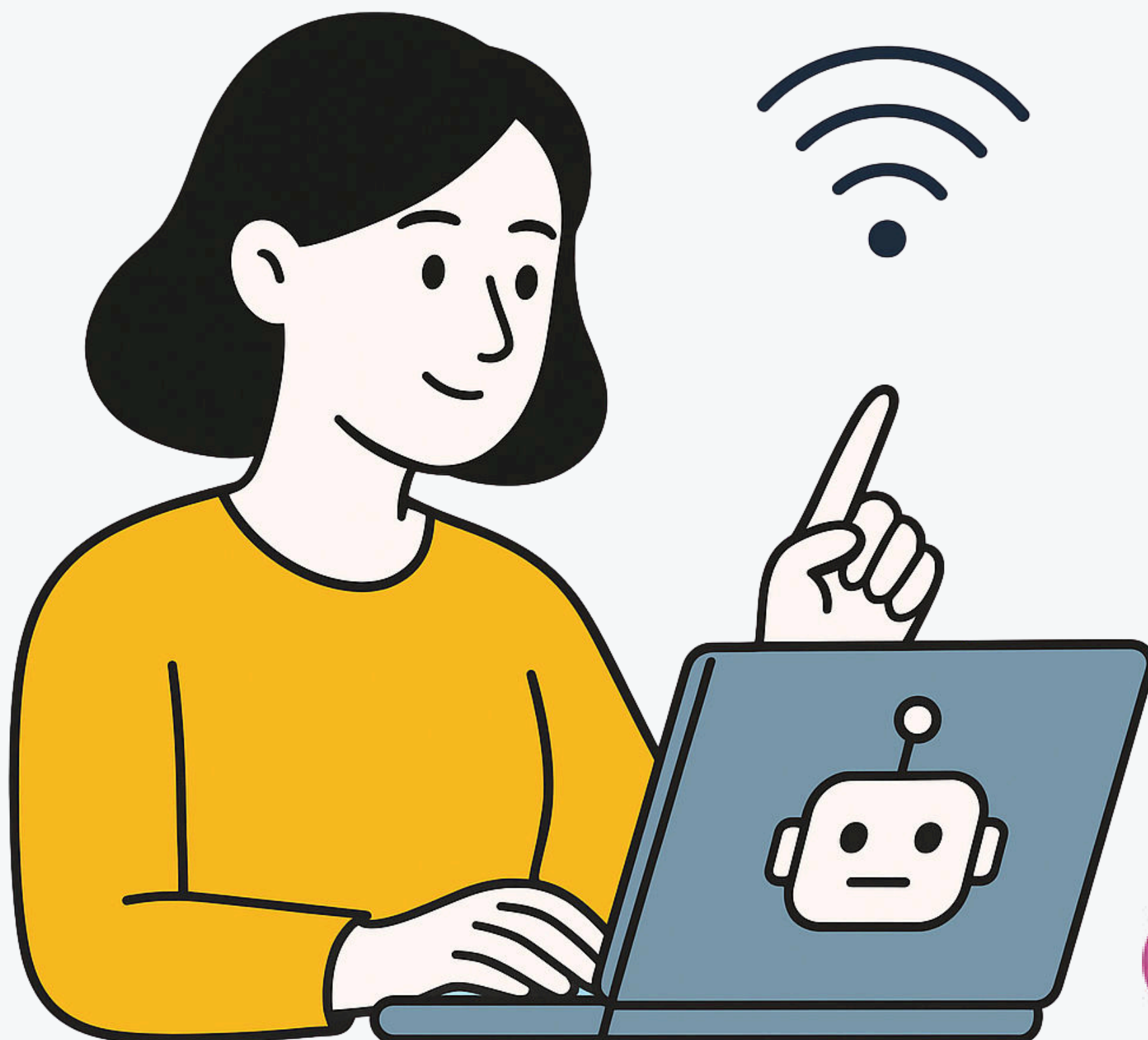
Students are using ChatGPT constantly but often uncritically. It's our job as teachers and educators to guide them beyond shortcuts and into deeper thinking.

In this guide, I share some hands-on classroom activities that can help you turn ChatGPT into a tool for inquiry, analysis, and creative learning.

Search Smarter: ChatGPT vs. Google

Ask students to research a topic using both ChatGPT and a mainstream search engine like Google. Then have them compare the results side by side:

- What kind of information does each tool prioritize?
- Are there differences in depth, tone, or bias?
- Which one is better at summarizing? Which one offers more sources?

Interrogate the Machine

Give students a prompt and ask them to critically evaluate ChatGPT's response. What did it do well? What's vague, missing, or misleading?

- Are the facts accurate and up-to-date?
- Is the reasoning sound or just confident-sounding fluff?
- What perspectives or counterarguments are missing?

3 Prompt Like a Pro

Teach students that good prompts aren't born, they're built. Start with a vague prompt and show how a back-and-forth with ChatGPT can sharpen it into something specific, useful, and powerful. Then, put that final prompt to work:

- Use it in Midjourney to generate an image
- Feed it into Canva's AI to build an interactive worksheet
- Plug it into Canva Code to generate a game or simulation

Check for Bias

AI outputs aren't neutral. They reflect the data they're trained on and, as we all know by now, that data has blind spots. Ask students to analyze a ChatGPT response for bias:

- Whose perspective is centered or missing?
- Does it reinforce stereotypes, assumptions, or dominant narratives?
- What happens when you change the phrasing of the prompt? The tone? The identity markers?

5 **Use ChatGPT with Other Tools**

Pair ChatGPT with another tool like Canva, Slides, or any creative platform and have students build something with it.

Examples

- Use ChatGPT to outline a concept, then turn it into an infographic in Canva
- Summarize a research topic, then present it in Google Slides
- Brainstorm game mechanics, then build it in Scratch or Canva Code

6 Talk to the Image

Upload an image into ChatGPT and challenge students to interact with it. What they can do:

- Ask ChatGPT to describe or analyze what's in the image
- Search for historical, scientific, or cultural references based on its content
- Transcribe or translate any visible text
- Ask it to generate a new image in a similar style or mood

Make It Multidisciplinary

Use ChatGPT to build bridges between subjects. Give students a topicand ask them to explore it from multiple disciplinary angles.

- What are the scientific causes of climate change? (Science)
- How has it influenced global policy? (Social Studies)
- Can you write a poem or short story from the perspective of the Earth? (Language Arts)
- What data would you collect to measure its effects? (Math)
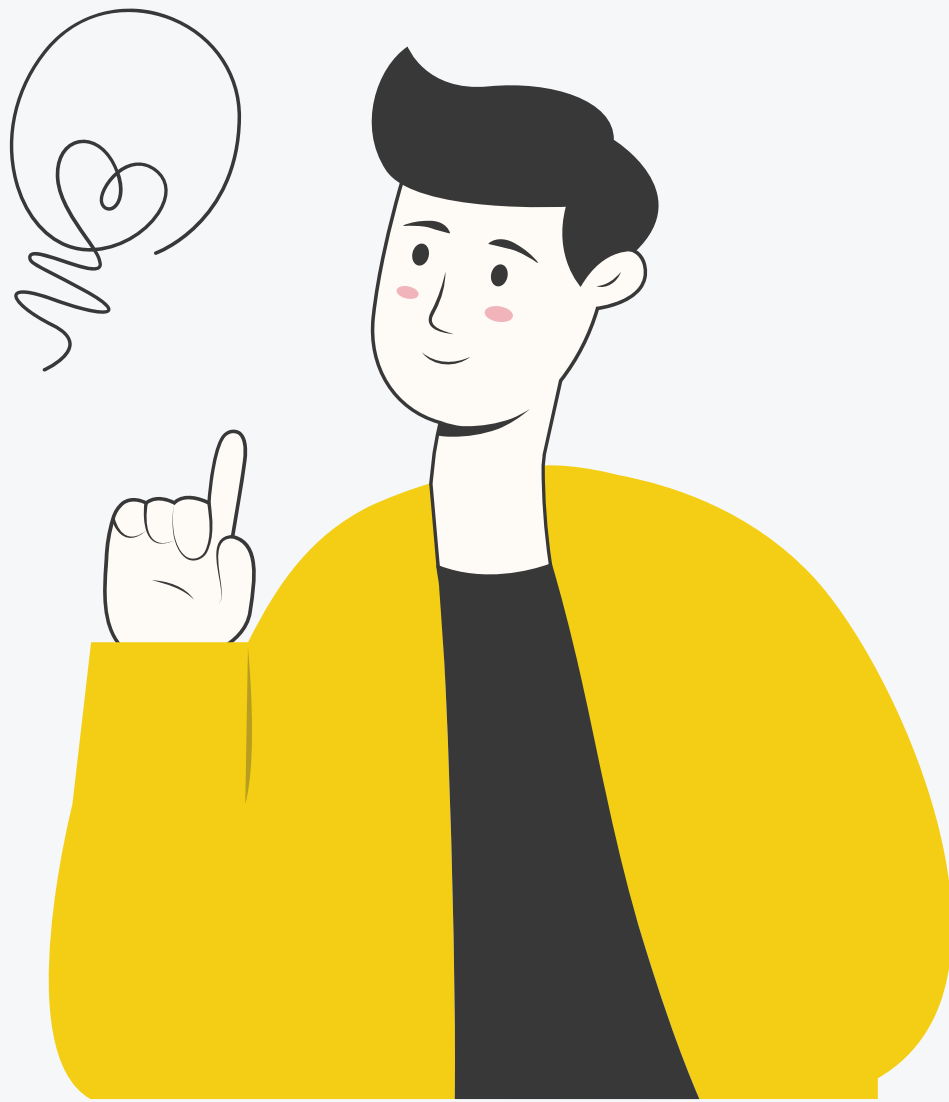
ChatGPT can support deeper thinking but only if we teach students how to use it well. Our role is to help them build the critical thinking skills to question, evaluate, and create with purpose. These are habits they'll need long after the lesson ends.