

FAQ for assignment utilizing ChatGPT in a small research paper.

This FAQ is based on the assignment noted in Chris McKenna & Carol Wright's My Favorite Assignment submission (from Denver 2023) entitled "Is that source actually real? Research-based writing limitations using AI drafting tools."

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What AI tools are the students permitted to use in the assignment?

A: Only ChatGPT.

Q2: Must the students complete the assignment in the class workshop?

A: No, they can produce it prior to class and bring it in completed if they wish, though most students do not seem to want to work ahead.

Q3: What tools are used to determine to what extent AI tools may have been used in the development of each paper?

A: Two, primarily. First, the AI checking tool embedded with Brightspace/D2L (which runs automatically when students upload their papers), and second—via individual paper uploads—GPTZero (which can be found at [GPTZero.com](https://www.gptzero.com), though a subscription may be needed to evaluate a large number of papers). Both tools rate the relative likelihoods of human vs. machine creation of the text. The tools, however, are not infallible, and the authors of this assignment would advise sharing the AI-checker information with students, but not necessarily accusing them of using an AI drafting or revision tool.

Note that the second tool is employed because apparently, the AI checker in Brightspace fails to note AI usage in drafts that do not exceed a specific word count. Moreover, given the fallibility of AI checkers, the use of more than one tool is advised.

Q4: What additional checks does the instructor make to determine potential AI usage?

A: All sources in the References list are checked against Google Scholar and Business Source Complete (and, if needed, plain Google if the first two choices fail) in order to determine whether or not the sources cited actually exist. In addition, obvious cases in which written quality markedly improves (relative to tone, surface errors, flow, etc.) are noted as part of the instructor's feedback (see attached example paper for a sample).

Q5: What common issues are noted in this specific assignment?

A: There are several, some of which are due to the vagaries of AI drafting tools, and some of which are due to the nature of the assignment itself, which is a combination of both a topical summary (i.e., the

advantages and disadvantages of contingent work) and a personal projection by the student as to the role that such work might play in their future careers (a topic that AI can't readily deal with).

Nevertheless, the prose produced by AI tends to have the following characteristics:

- Repetitive sentences structures as well as sentences generally of similar lengths (plus, sentences often longer than those that students normally produce).
- Relatively bland yet highly predictable word choices.
- Few if any surface errors.
- A lack of direct quotes embedded in the prose.
- Typically, a failure to incorporate in-text citations and other signs of specific evidentiary support (as opposed to summarizations of topics or issues, which are common).
- "Two-sided" summaries, as opposed to prose that summarizes but also eventually adopts a specific position or recommendation.
- Occasionally, references to sources that cannot be found on the internet or in standard scholarly databases.
- Tonally, more sure and certain prose than students typically produce, even within the same paper.
- Prose that scores as non-zero when it comes to AI checkers, which attempt to determine the paper's likelihood of human versus mechanical production.
- Prose that students often have difficulty explaining or defending in detail when questioned further about the sources they referenced (what might be deemed "managerial scrutiny").
- And critically, prose that never addresses the critical question embedded in the assignment—namely, the role that contingent work would play in their future career (if any).