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<div align="center">AI in Writing: A Crutch or a Tool?</div>

When I write, I want my words to sound like me—not like a machine powered by millions of voices that are not mine. With the rise of artificial intelligence platforms such as ChatGPT, which can generate text within seconds, some are questioning the need for writing altogether. This concern is especially relevant to schools, where students are often asked to write essays about topics they may not be interested in, increasing the temptation of using AI programs. However, even AI has its limits. While AI can support writing composition in useful ways, relying on it too much weakens essential skills, creativity, and original thinking that make the writing process meaningful.

AI programs often replace self-expression and deep thinking, which can make a written work impersonal, unoriginal, and sometimes erroneous. ChatGPT and other forms of AI pull on outside resources to generate robotic, generic responses. Those who use AI frequently in their writing may begin to rely on its tone and style. One student admitted that its influence became so strong that its "voice started to replace [their] own, and [they] couldn't write a paragraph without wondering how [ChatGPT] would say it" (Source C). Writing is a form of self-expression, and it's a process that takes time. AI can produce a writing piece rapidly, but "it can't replace the satisfaction and authenticity which comes from writing by yourself" (What Students Are Saying). People start a written work with their thoughts, and the process of transforming those thoughts into writing can deepen their understanding of themselves. When people decide to write

their whole essay or journal entry with AI, they rob themselves of the opportunity to explore their messy thoughts and form their own opinions. Those who prompt "A.I. tools to generate rough drafts for their application essays" (Singer) may not realize that in addition to losing the chance to discover new things, they might be submitting completely inaccurate content. When asked about a pop song that demonstrates curiosity in someone's life, ChatGPT responded with "Cake by the Ocean," "a song title that is a euphemism for sex on the beach" (Singer). AI may be fast, but it can generate false information and take data from unreliable sources. Completely relying on these tools may mean that people will not be able to recognize these mistakes and may start to absorb misinformation. Writing is meant to be an extension of people's thoughts, and AI can never replicate that.

Although some argue that AI can free us from writing, it actually removes the learning process that builds valuable skills. Some believe that having AI "write for us will allow us to focus on more important things that AI is not yet capable of" (What Students Are Saying). However, writing is a key tool to harness, and learning how to write can help in many other areas. The writing process "teaches critical skills: researching a topic, judging claims, synthesizing knowledge and expressing it in a clear, coherent and persuasive manner" (Source A). Writing teaches people how to express and communicate their ideas. These skills apply to speaking, writing emails, texting, and even interviews and presentations. AI tools can't be with a person wherever they go, so people need to know these skills themselves. Overreliance on AI causes people to stop thinking for themselves and allows a machine's ideas to take over until people can no longer form their own. If everyone starts using AI to help them formulate every idea and every sentence, "eventually we'll leave our own voices behind, and you [AI] will speak for us all" (Source C). Artificial intelligence utilizes existing ideas to create its responses. If

people are unable to write their ideas and content on their own, they lose the ability to articulate their thoughts, problem-solve, and create unique ideas.

Grammar is crucial when learning to write, but as writers grow, the focus shifts to expressing ideas—this is when AI can be used as a tool. With AI platforms swiftly advancing, it isn't surprising that everyone has started to use them. Still, some vehemently oppose this shift. At a recent academic conference, one professor even warned that "it's A.I. that's going to kill us" (Brooks). AI itself isn't a threat; it's how people use it that can make it dangerous. If AI is used to teach and help people understand small things, such as grammar, it can support writers without being detrimental to the creative process. So, instead of trying to get rid of AI completely, people should use it carefully. A media start-up, Every, uses AI to help "select headlines" and help with the "writing and editing of stories" (Mullin). For simple tasks such as selecting headlines or fixing the grammar of a piece, AI is useful because these tasks are not the core parts of the writing process, which require more thinking and originality. Learning grammar is still important and part of becoming a strong writer, but at a certain stage in a person's writing level, grammar becomes less vital in comparison to content. However, this company still may be using AI in excess, since they are using it to write some of the content in their stories—content that should rely on the author's own opinions and thoughts. There is a key difference between using AI for grammar and content. AI can check punctuation and syntax, but "it cannot replace the creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence that we human writers bring to the table" (What Students Are Saying). Artificial intelligence could never write my favorite book, which requires "storytelling, persuasion," and the ability to "connect with readers on a personal level" (What Students Are Saying). However, it could certainly add a comma here and there without affecting the meaning of a sentence.

AI has quickly infiltrated the lives of many people across the globe, and its influence cannot and will not be stopped. People will use AI regardless of those who oppose it. What can be controlled, however, is *how* people use AI. Writing is an important skill that fosters critical thinking, innovation, and communication—all necessary for success later in life. To protect those benefits, AI must be used carefully in writing to ensure that nobody's ideas are replaced or left unheard. AI is powerful, but not as powerful as the human voice.

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