



A Strong and Safe Start with AI: OpenAI's Teen AI Literacy Blueprint

November 2025

OpenAI

At OpenAI, we believe that AI is a revolutionary technology that can unlock human potential and shape the future. AI will scale human ingenuity itself and will drive unprecedented productivity, economic growth, and new freedoms that we can't even imagine today. Today's teens—the first generation to come of age in the Intelligence Age—should have broad access to AI at home, at school, and as they prepare to enter the workforce.

To fully and safely realize AI's benefits, teens need to become AI literate—through education that equips parents and teachers to guide responsible use, and equips students to critically interpret AI outputs, deploy AI effectively, and mitigate risks. Educators should lead in how schools prepare students for an AI-enabled workplace, where they can use AI to contribute to future shared prosperity and create it for themselves. That's why we built a version of ChatGPT just for teachers and have made it available for free.

Parents should also feel confident that their teens are protected from potential harms. That's why OpenAI is building strong protections for teens ages 13–17 by combining default safeguards with tools that empower parents to help their children get the most out of AI.

But safeguards alone are not enough. Our vision for AI literacy is one in which teachers, families, and communities—supported by robust infrastructure—prepare teens to use AI responsibly and productively. Education takes deeper hold when it is connected to trusted institutions, technical capacity, and opportunities to learn by doing. AI also will continue to advance, so building and maintaining AI literacy will require fostering a culture of lifelong learning that is rooted in community institutions and values. This approach will not only help teens navigate AI safely today but also equip them to thrive in the AI-driven workforce and society of tomorrow.

OpenAI envisions a future where every teen learns to use AI safely, critically, and creatively from the beginning. To achieve this, we urge educators, parents, communities, and AI companies to work together to:

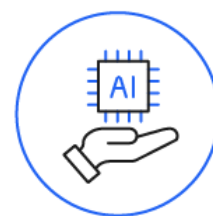
- *Empower teachers to lead.* Support educators with the training, time, and tools to guide the use of AI within the classroom and deploy AI safely, responsibly, and confidently. At OpenAI, we believe teachers are at the center of AI literacy—AI will never replace them.
- *Strengthen core knowledge.* Preserve and expand rigorous instruction in history, civics, math, science, and literature to give students the foundation to interrogate AI outputs and use AI responsibly.
- *Create future-ready courses.* Expand math, science, and career-technical education to teach students how to continuously upskill, engage with emerging technologies, and apply AI to real-world problems.



- *Connect communities of lifelong learners.* Make schools, libraries, and civic organizations hubs for peer-to-peer AI exploration, mentorship, and hands-on learning that reinforces classroom instruction and guides students as they experiment with AI.
- *Modernize infrastructure and guardrails.* Build clear policies, open educational resources, equitable broadband and device access, and research frameworks that allow schools to test and scale what works while maintaining safety, privacy, and public trust.

In this future, teachers are assisted by world-class AI tutors, students have AI-enabled support outside school, and public libraries serve as gateways to cutting-edge skills. Guidelines and guardrails build public trust, and lifelong learning is nurtured through partnerships from local neighborhoods to global networks.





Empower Teachers to Lead

We believe teachers are irreplaceable, and that teachers should lead the implementation and pace of deployment of AI in the classroom. Classroom instruction is strongest when teachers have the training, time, and tools to assess how best to deploy AI within their classrooms. Early use should focus on reducing administrative burdens so that teachers can have maximum time with students. As their expertise grows, teachers—not technology—should decide how AI is incorporated into lesson planning and learning.

Have teachers set the pace. Teachers should determine how and when to use AI in and around their classrooms. Early use, for example, could start outside the classroom—using AI to streamline lesson planning, generate materials, and reduce administrative workload. Using AI to free up time can help create time and space for teachers to reconnect with students, offer more engaging and personalized instruction, and gradually build expertise with the technology. Teachers could also consider using AI to help personalize instruction at scale, create active learning opportunities, tailor tutoring to individual student needs, and support special populations (e.g., multilingual learners). Ultimately, teachers should set the pace for how—and how quickly—they incorporate AI, using their professional judgement and meeting the needs of their students.

Integrate AI into teacher preparation. Teacher preparation and certification programs should support practical AI fluency, from using AI to create lesson plans to guidance on monitoring student use; identifying inappropriate tasks for automation; adapting exams to test students' judgment, creativity and applications; ensuring safe, transparent, and ethical use in classrooms.

Protect teacher time. Teachers need dedicated time to learn about AI, revise lesson plans, and design new ones that incorporate AI concepts—not just nights and weekends. We should treat this time as an investment in professional development and educational opportunity and seek out creative solutions that expand teachers' capacity to engage in these activities. For example, schools could dedicate some—or parts of—teacher institute days to AI or could provide stipends to teachers willing to integrate AI into their courses during summer break.

Create partnerships with AI companies. AI companies should offer their tools at a reduced cost to schools, removing cost pressures to deploy AI immediately and giving teachers space to learn,

explore use cases, and build confidence before bringing AI into classrooms. For example, OpenAI launched a free version of ChatGPT for Teachers, and we are already working with school districts to deploy it.

Invest in professional learning partnerships. AI companies, teachers' unions, and universities should collaborate to create structured opportunities for educators to learn about AI—ideally from other educators. For example, OpenAI and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have partnered to explore responsible classroom use cases and create teacher-led guidance. “TeachAI Summer Institutes” could expand this model, offering intensive workshops, peer-to-peer learning, and case studies on AI use in education.





Strengthen Core Knowledge

AI literacy starts with strong fundamentals. Students need a deep grounding in history, ethics, civics, math, science, and literature to develop the critical thinking skills required to interrogate AI outputs. AI can transform students' relationship with knowledge—but it should not replace it. By reinforcing core curricula and introducing AI tools under the guidance of teachers and parents, teachers can help students build their foundational knowledge while also learning to use AI to explore subjects, experiment with its limitations, and push the boundaries of their own understanding.

Protect rigorous instruction. Classrooms should maintain and strengthen foundational curricula by protecting and expanding rigorous instruction in a core knowledge base of history, ethics, civics, math, science, and literature—the foundational subjects that students need. AI literacy requires consistent, sustained funding for schools—including to strengthen core curricula, maintain small class sizes, and recruit teachers.

Incorporate AI modules. Led by teachers, schools should add AI “modules” to existing courses that teach students to explore subject matter and understand AI's limitations. For example, a history class might compare primary sources with an AI-generated summary, while a science class could use AI to generate hypotheses and analyze data. In addition to reinforcing core knowledge, these modules could teach students how to team with AI to explore new knowledge; to use AI to support learning, not replace it; use AI for coursework transparently and with integrity; and how to manage AI as a decision-support tool.

Develop educational tools that teach, not just answer. AI companies should build tools that help students learn core subjects, and don't just offer solutions without helping students make sense of them. For instance, OpenAI built Study mode as a learning experience that helps students increase critical thinking skills and work through problems step-by-step instead of just giving them an answer. In building these tools, AI companies should also ensure that privacy protections for students must be top priority.



Create Future-Ready Pathways

AI will create jobs we cannot yet imagine, and students who develop the resilience and fortitude to adapt to a rapidly changing economy will thrive. The best way to build these skills is through rigorous, future-focused STEM education. Strengthened math and science courses should teach students how to learn new technical concepts on their own, preparing them to continuously upskill, adopt new tools responsibly, and remain competitive in an AI-driven workforce. By pairing strong STEM foundations with exposure to AI concepts and real-world applications, we can help students build the confidence and curiosity to solve real-world problems, think critically about technology's impact, understand and embrace technological change, and lead innovation rather than just adapt to it. At the same time, we should prepare schools and teachers to stay agile—as AI evolves rapidly, so too must the courses and methods we use to teach it.

Strengthen STEM graduation requirements. High school students should have the opportunity—and imperative—to take robust math and science courses that explore the mathematical concepts behind today's AI systems, including statistics, linear algebra, and calculus. These courses should not only teach content but also emphasize “learning how to learn”—training students to approach unfamiliar technical material, break it down, and master it. This skill set will prepare graduates to continuously reskill as technologies evolve, and to engage critically with AI as both users and future innovators.

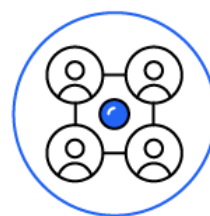
Build next generation coding skills. High school computer science courses should be modernized to prepare students for early career software engineering roles, which will look different in the age of AI. Early career roles will shift their focus from coding to more creative responsibilities, including defining system requirements, establishing overall system architecture, and overseeing rapid cycles of development and evaluation. Coursework should prepare students for this shift, ensuring that they both understand the fundamentals and theory behind software code and how to leverage AI to apply that knowledge to real-world situations.

Create a dedicated Advanced Placement (AP) AI course. A new AP course should focus exclusively on AI fundamentals, from the historical evolution of AI systems to the basics of machine learning and neural networks. Students could gain exposure to programming in Python, model training and evaluation techniques, and responsible AI practices. The course should culminate in a

capstone project where students design an AI-informed solution to a local problem—such as optimizing municipal energy use, addressing small business challenges, or improving community health outcomes—accompanied by an ethical reflection and analysis of societal impacts.

Modernize and expand career and technical education (CTE) programs. CTE tracks should be updated to include AI-related skills such as data literacy, prompt design, coding, and digital design. Industry-specific applications could be woven into each track—for instance, health science students could learn to use AI to analyze medical images and organize patient data, while architecture and construction students could use AI to generate schematics and simulate energy usage. These programs should culminate in industry-recognized credentials signaling AI proficiency, giving students a competitive edge in the job market and meeting emerging workforce needs. For example, OpenAI's own Certifications program piloting in 2025 is on track to be available at scale, including for students aged 18 and older, in 2026.





Connect Communities

Learning doesn't end when the school bell rings. Families, neighbors, libraries, and civic organizations play a critical role in shaping how young people and adults understand technology. AI literacy programs should strengthen these local ties, bring people together to share experiences, and create opportunities for collaborative learning. By embedding AI literacy into community institutions, we can make AI education more accessible, relevant, and sustainable.

Create scalable family literacy resources. Develop parent-friendly guides and courses—similar to OpenAI's Academy—that train parents, teachers, and community leaders to personalize their teen's AI experience using parental controls and to have informed conversations about responsible use. These resources should be available online, translated into multiple languages, and accessible through schools, libraries, and local organizations. As much as possible, these guides should be co-created with families, experts, and teens themselves.

Offer camps, workshops, and competitions. Provide hands-on opportunities for teens to use AI to solve real community problems, support local businesses, or pursue creative projects. Examples include weekend hackathons, summer “AI boot camps,” or robotics and AI competitions where students collaborate on projects that benefit their neighborhoods. These experiences make AI tangible, teach teamwork, and inspire students to view AI as a tool for civic problem-solving rather than just entertainment.

Host community-based learning sessions. Libraries, community centers, and schools should run recurring “AI literacy nights” and workshops that teach parents how to use parental controls and monitor safe AI use; demonstrate practical ways AI can save time, improve decision-making, or foster creativity; and offer space for open Q&A and discussion to demystify the technology. Ideally, communities would participate in the co-design of these sessions to provide the expertise on how best to tailor for their residents.

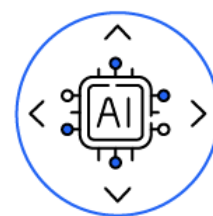
Launch “AI Ambassador” programs. Train cohorts of volunteers—parents, teachers, librarians, or local professionals—to become trusted resources for their peers. Ambassadors can answer questions at school open houses, lead live demonstrations, and share safety best practices, ensuring that communities have local, human points of contact for AI guidance. Over time, these

ambassador programs can evolve into communal learning communities where people share their experiences, lessons learned, and best practices using AI.

Create structured spaces for peer learning and professional sharing. Communities should host regular “AI show-and-tell” events where teachers, parents, and professionals share their experiences using AI—what worked, what failed, and what they learned. Teachers could co-create innovative lesson plans, parents could share strategies for healthy AI use at home, and professionals could demonstrate how AI is being deployed in their industries.

Facilitate mentorship and real-world exposure. Local businesses, universities, and community organizations should partner to host students for site visits, internships, and summer labs where they can see AI in action. For example, healthcare systems could show students how AI assists in diagnostics, banks could demonstrate AI’s role in fraud detection, and universities could offer short courses or research opportunities. These experiences build a bridge between classroom learning and real-world application.





Modernize Infrastructure and Guardrails

Led by teachers, the integration of AI into schools and curricula provides a twofold benefit: it helps students learn to use AI responsibly—adding a layer of safety—and unlocks the academic advantages of personalized instruction and creative exploration. Achieving these outcomes requires modern infrastructure and clear guardrails that support schools to adopt new tools confidently while protecting students’ privacy and safety.

Set clear, flexible policies to encourage responsible use. Policymakers should establish regulatory “sandboxes” that allow schools to safely test and evaluate new applications before standards are finalized. State and district guidelines should specify which AI tools are permitted or discouraged in classrooms (e.g., discouraging the use of unreliable AI-powered cheating detectors) and clearly define how student data may be used. Feedback and data should be safely and appropriately shared with researchers and educators to inform evidence-based improvements.

Develop open educational resources for teachers. Governments, universities, and technology companies should collaborate to fund state or national repositories of open educational resources (OER). These repositories should include plug-and-play AI modules aligned to grade-level standards—such as a middle-school machine learning activity, or a high-school civics lesson on algorithmic bias—along with accompanying slide decks, exercises, and assessments. A vetted directory of AI educational tools can help teachers navigate a crowded ed-tech market and prioritize applications that demonstrably improve personalization, engagement, and active learning. Peer-to-peer learning opportunities led by teachers, such as AFT’s Share My Lesson, can create communities of collaboration and practice.

Invest in broadband and modern devices for equitable access. High-speed internet and updated laptops or tablets are no longer optional—they are prerequisites for AI literacy. Many rural communities, tribal lands, and low-income districts still lack reliable broadband, leaving students unable to use cloud-based AI tools without disruptions. The public and private sectors should work together to expand broadband infrastructure, upgrade school networks to support real-time AI applications, and create programs that provide students with modern, individual devices. Shared or outdated devices make AI integration inconsistent and exacerbate educational inequities.

Create research infrastructure for continuous learning. Schools should have systems that allow them to safely pilot new AI applications, measure outcomes, and rapidly improve. AI companies can partner with universities and research consortia to offer subsidized education licenses in exchange for carefully supervised access to anonymized usage data. Schools should set research priorities and approve data-sharing agreements, while researchers should develop evaluations to assess AI's impact on learning longitudinally and across multiple districts and should feed lessons back to policymakers and educators. This virtuous cycle of experimentation, evidence, and refinement will allow districts to scale only what works and retire ineffective tools quickly.

Streamline procurement and speed adoption. Public school procurement processes are often slow and fragmented, delaying access to promising new technology. Central education departments or school districts should create pre-approved catalogs of AI tools with negotiated pricing, privacy and security reviews, and integration support. Districts could purchase directly from these catalogs without repeating lengthy procurement cycles. States can increase efficiency further by forming pooled procurement agreements that let multiple districts—especially those in rural or underserved areas—buy collectively, lowering costs and sharing due diligence.

We look forward to discussing these proposals, and sharing progress and lessons learned from our own initiatives, with representatives of all the key stakeholders on this all-important question of how best to get American teens off to a strong and safe start in using AI.

About OpenAI

Artificial intelligence is an innovation like electricity—it will change how we live, how we work, and how we engage with one another. OpenAI's mission is to ensure that artificial general intelligence benefits all of humanity. We're building AI to help people solve hard problems because by helping with the hard problems, AI can benefit the most people possible—through more scientific discoveries, better healthcare and education, and improved productivity. We're off to a strong start, creating freely available intelligence being used by more than 800 million people around the world, including 4 million developers. We believe AI will scale human ingenuity and drive unprecedented productivity, economic growth, and new freedoms that help people accomplish what we can't even imagine today.

Cover image created with ChatGPT

