



Sentral's Teacher AI Guidebook

A practical guide to enhancing planning, pedagogy, and engagement

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Introduction:

Your new teaching assistant

We hear you. The daily reality of teaching is a whirlwind of planning, differentiation, marking, and communication. Between meeting the diverse needs of your students, managing classroom dynamics, and fulfilling administrative duties, there's often little time left to innovate or even catch your breath. Artificial Intelligence is often discussed in abstract terms, but its true value for you is practical, immediate, and supportive.

Think of AI not as a replacement for your professional judgment, but as your new, on-demand teaching assistant. This guide is designed to cut through the noise and show you how to use AI to reclaim your most valuable asset – time – so you can focus on what you do best: teaching. Inside, you'll find a practical framework (**T.E.A.C.H.**), real-world classroom scenarios, and a library of prompts to get you started immediately.

We also know the limitations of AI. It is not you. It is not human. It mimics what we do, but doesn't have the same way of working in the world. It doesn't sleep, and it doesn't know what it means when someone is tired. This is why you are critical to education. You know how students feel. You are responsible for them, and their learning. This guide is to help you be more human, not less.

As you move through this guide, don't assume AI will do 100% of all your work. In some cases, it will help 10%. In others, 90%. Or somewhere in between. Evaluate your work with AI in these terms and you will find a much more productive way of working. Talk about it with your colleagues and leaders. Find which tasks where AI can play a central role. Highlight those where it can't.

Start human. Use AI. Stay human.

The 'Why': Core benefits for teachers

Our goal is to leverage AI to make your complex job more manageable and impactful. Here are four pillars of AI support for the classroom:

1. **Amplify efficiency: Instantly reduce your planning and administrative load.** AI can draft lesson plans, create differentiated worksheets, generate report card comments from your notes, and write parent newsletter blurbs, freeing up hours in your week.
2. **Enhance communication: Master your messaging with less effort.** AI helps craft clear, empathetic, and consistent communications for every stakeholder – from a carefully worded email to a parent to providing constructive feedback on student work.
3. **Strengthen pedagogy: Move from feeling rushed to being responsive.** Use AI as a brainstorming partner to design engaging learning activities, create rubrics aligned to your curriculum, simplify complex texts for different reading levels, and find new ways to teach difficult concepts.
4. **Support every student: Empower your learners more effectively.** AI can help you generate scaffolded resources, create extension tasks for advanced students, and build visual aids or social stories to support diverse learning needs.



Our students need us to understand AI

To guide our students effectively and ethically, we must first be confident users ourselves.

Scan the QR code to read *Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools*



Ethical guardrails: Responsible AI in your classroom

! **IMPORTANT:** Your primary responsibility is to protect your students. Always adhere to your school, system (e.g., Department of Education), and federal (e.g., The Privacy Act 1988) policies regarding data privacy and student information. The guidance here is a supplement to, not a replacement for, official policy.

Three elements of responsible AI use:

- 1. Keep the human in the loop:** AI provides a first draft, not a final product. Your professional judgment, knowledge of your students, and pedagogical expertise are irreplaceable. Always review, edit, and own the final output. Start human. Use AI. Stay human.
- 2. Handle data with care:** Never input personally identifiable or sensitive student information (names, contact details, medical information, specific behavioural or academic struggles) into public AI models. Use anonymised data and general scenarios.
 - **Bad:** “Jane Smith in my Year 3 class is struggling with reading.”
 - **Good:** “A Year 3 student is struggling with decoding CVC words.”
- 3. Promote academic integrity:** Model and explicitly teach the ethical use of AI. Frame it as a tool for brainstorming, research, and feedback – not for generating final answers. Design assessments that require higher-order thinking, creativity, and in-class application that AI cannot replicate.



The T.E.A.C.H. framework: A new model for prompting

Getting great results from AI depends entirely on giving it a great prompt. Use this simple framework to get targeted, high-quality outputs every time.

T – Task: Clearly state what you want the AI to do.

“Create a lesson plan...”

E – Expertise: Define your role and the specific context.

“...as a Year 5 teacher in NSW...”

A – Audience: Specify who the output is for.

“...for students with a range of learning abilities, including EAL/D learners.”

C – Context & H – How: Provide the key details, curriculum links, and format.

“...The topic is the Australian Gold Rush. The lesson should be a 60-minute session, include a warm-up, an explicit teaching component, a group activity, and a plenary. Align it with the HSIE syllabus outcomes. Format it as a table.”



Don't stop at the first prompt.

This is a conversation. Use follow-up prompts to refine the output until it perfectly suits your needs.

Anatomy of an AI interaction: From prompt to polish



AI is a dialogue. Your first prompt gets a draft; your follow-up questions refine it into a finished product.

1. **The Teacher's Goal:** "I need a creative writing prompt for my Year 8 English class to practice descriptive language. I want something more interesting than 'describe a sunset'."

2. **The Prompt (Using T.E.A.C.H.):**

- **T:** "Generate 5 creative writing prompts."
- **E:** "I am a Year 8 English teacher."
- **A:** "The audience is a mixed-ability class of 13-year-olds."
- **C+H:** "The goal is to practice using sensory details (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste). The prompts should be mysterious or unusual. Avoid clichés."

3. **The AI's First Draft (The Output):**

1. Describe a forest where the trees whisper secrets.
2. You find an old, locked box. What does it feel, smell, and sound like?
3. Describe a meal cooked by a friendly monster.
4. You wake up in a city where it rains colours instead of water.
5. Describe an abandoned theme park at night.

4. **The Teacher's Refinement (Human in the Loop):** The teacher likes prompt #4 but wants to add more structure.

- **Follow-up Prompt:** "These are great. For prompt #4, 'city where it rains colours', create a worksheet. Include the prompt at the top, and then create a table with columns for Sight, Sound, Smell, Touch, and Taste for students to brainstorm ideas before they start writing."

This refinement turns a good idea into a ready-to-use classroom resource in seconds.

Teacher scenarios



Teacher scenario 1: Differentiated planning (primary)

The Situation: You're teaching a Year 2 math lesson on addition with regrouping. You have three ability groups: one that needs concrete materials, one that is ready for the standard algorithm, and one that needs an extension.

The T.E.A.C.H. Prompt:

T: "Create three differentiated activities for a Year 2 math lesson on two-digit addition with regrouping."

E: "I am a Year 2 teacher."

A: "The activities are for three different learning groups."

C+H: "Group 1 (Support): Needs a hands-on activity using MAB blocks. Group 2 (Core): Needs a worksheet with standard algorithm problems. Group 3 (Extension): Needs challenging word problems involving money or measurement. Provide a brief description for each activity."



Teacher scenario 2: Resource creation (secondary)

The Situation: Your Year 10 History class is analysing propaganda posters from World War II. You need a structured analysis worksheet to guide them.

The T.E.A.C.H. Prompt:

T: "Create a source analysis worksheet."

E: "I am a Year 10 History teacher."

A: "The worksheet is for students analysing a visual source."

C+H: "The topic is WWII propaganda. The worksheet should be structured with sections for: 'Observation' (what do you see?), 'Inference' (what does it mean?), and 'Purpose' (what is the poster trying to make you think or do?). Include prompt questions under each heading. For example, under 'Purpose', include 'Who is the intended audience?' and 'What techniques are used to persuade?'"

Your AI-powered week: A teacher's workflow

Monday Morning:

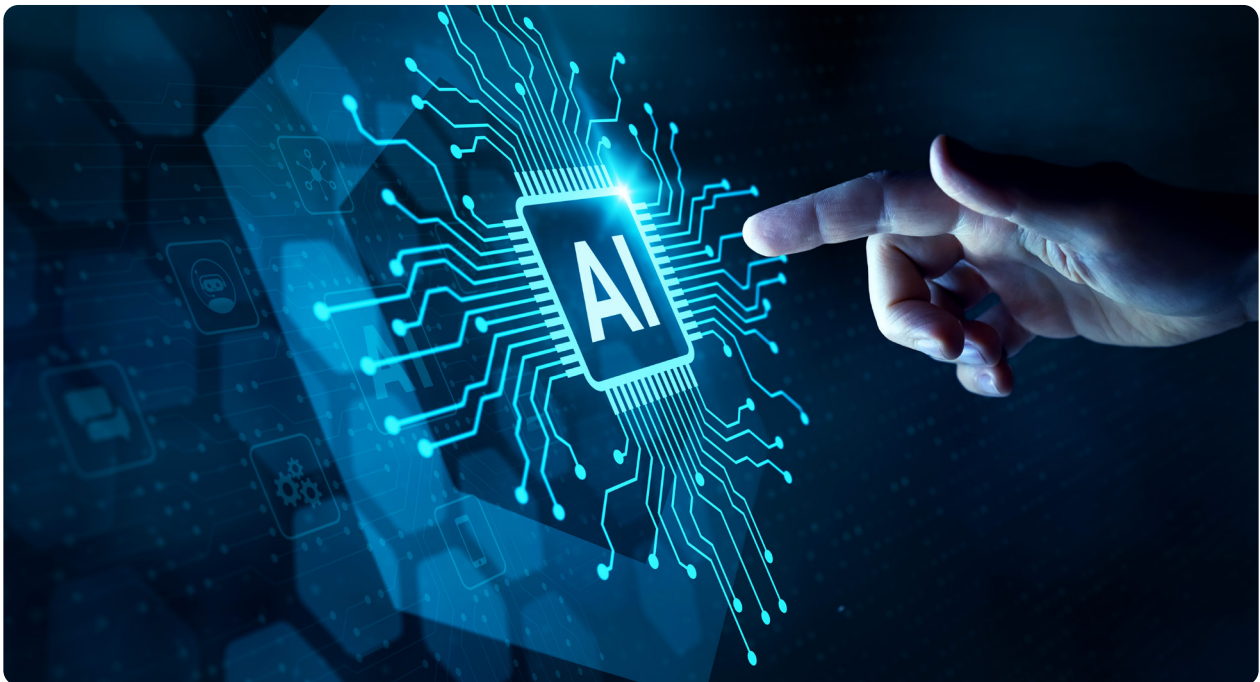
- **Goal:** Plan the week's literacy block.
- **Prompt Starter:** "I'm a Year 4 teacher. Based on the text 'The Twits' by Roald Dahl, generate a 5-day literacy plan for this week. Include a daily focus: Monday (Predicting), Tuesday (Vocabulary), Wednesday (Character Analysis), Thursday (Summarising), Friday (Creative Response). Suggest a short activity for each day."

Wednesday Afternoon:

- **Goal:** Communicate with a parent.
- **Prompt Starter:** "Draft a positive, professional email to a parent. I am a Year 9 Science teacher. The email should mention that their child, a student in my class, made an excellent contribution to a group discussion on ethics in science. Keep it brief and encouraging."


Friday Afternoon:

- **Goal:** Prepare for reporting.
- **Prompt Starter:** "Generate 5 different report card comments for a Year 6 student who has shown great improvement in their effort in Mathematics but still needs to work on checking their answers for accuracy. The tone should be encouraging and constructive."



Quick reference:

The teacher's prompt library

 This section of the guidebook leads you through several prompt examples that use the T.E.A.C.H. framework – the first examples are scaffolded for you. It might be a useful exercise to go through the later prompts and see if you can identify the elements of T.E.A.C.H.



Lesson planning & resource creation

Create a lesson plan:

“Act as a Year 3 teacher. Create a 5E (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate) lesson plan for a 60-minute science lesson on the water cycle. Align it with the Australian Curriculum.”

T: Create a 5E (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate) lesson plan.

E: I am a Year 3 teacher.

A: The lesson is for a 60-minute science lesson.

C+H: The topic is the water cycle. Align it with the Australian Curriculum.

Generate word problems:

“Generate 10 multi-step multiplication word problems suitable for a Year 5 class. Include at least two problems involving money and two involving measurement (metric units).”

T: Generate 10 multi-step multiplication word problems.

E: I am a teacher.

A: The problems are suitable for a Year 5 class.

C+H: Include at least two problems involving money and two involving measurement (metric units).

Create a rubric:

“Create a marking rubric for a Year 11 English persuasive essay. The criteria should be: Argument & Thesis, Evidence & Analysis, Structure & Cohesion, and Expression & Mechanics. Use A-E grade descriptors for each criterion.”

T: Create a marking rubric.

E: I am a Year 11 English teacher.

A: The rubric is for a persuasive essay.

C+H: The criteria should be: Argument & Thesis, Evidence & Analysis, Structure & Cohesion, and Expression & Mechanics. Use A-E grade descriptors for each criterion.

Simplify a text:

“Take the following article about black holes [paste text] and rewrite it at a Year 7 reading level. Define key vocabulary like ‘singularity’ and ‘event horizon’ in simple terms.”

T: Rewrite the following article about black holes [paste text].

E: I am a teacher.

A: The rewritten text should be at a Year 7 reading level.

C+H: Define key vocabulary like ‘singularity’ and ‘event horizon’ in simple terms.



Differentiation & support

Scaffolding:

“I am teaching my Year 1 class to write a simple narrative. Create a writing scaffold with sentence starters for the beginning (‘Once upon a time...’), middle (‘Suddenly...’), and end (‘In the end...’).”

Extension tasks:

“Create three challenging extension activities for Year 9 students who have finished their geometry topic on trigonometry. The activities should involve real-world problem-solving.”

Brain breaks:

“Give me 5 ideas for a ‘brain break’ for a Year 2 class that can be done in the classroom in under 3 minutes and requires no equipment.”



Communication & admin

Parent email (concern):

“Draft a calm and professional email to a parent who is concerned about their child’s friendship issues. I am the student’s Year 4 teacher. The email should acknowledge their concern, reassure them I will observe the situation, and suggest a brief phone call. Do not make assumptions or promises.”

Newsletter blurb:

“Write a 100-word blurb for the school newsletter about our recent Year 12 Geography excursion to the Blue Mountains. The tone should be upbeat and informative. Mention our focus on landforms and environmental management.”

Excursion note:

“Create a template for a parent permission note for a school excursion. I am a high school PDHPE teacher. It needs sections for excursion details (date, time, location, cost), transport arrangements, what to bring, and a tear-off permission slip with fields for student name, parent name, signature, and emergency contact number.”

Let's continue the conversation



You've explored the framework for AI in education; the next step is implementation. A powerful strategy requires a powerful platform.

Sentral is more than just a school management system; it's a strategic partner that streamlines everything from student data and reporting to payments and parent engagement, freeing your team to lead with confidence.

Schedule a strategic call:

Book a no-obligation demo with our team to see how Sentral can power your school's vision.

Discover the platform:

Learn more about how Sentral empowers educators across Australia.

 www.sentral.com.au

 www.linkedin.com/company/sentral/



The Next Word

Navigating the complexities of AI in education requires more than just prompts; it requires a strategic partner. At The Next Word, we help school leaders move beyond the hype to build robust AI strategies, deliver practical staff training, and create ethical frameworks that enhance learning while managing risk. We ensure you lead the change, not just react to it.

Ready to build a future-ready school?

Book a complimentary, no-obligation AI strategy call with our education team to map your school's next steps.

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