



Change your story

# Children, young people and teachers' use of generative AI to support literacy in 2024

Summary report  
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Recent developments in technology have accelerated the influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on our lives. The ability of generative-AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude to both 'write' and 'read' texts in a human-like manner means they are set to play an increasingly important role in the literacy lives of children, young people and adults. We are interested in exploring how such platforms might influence, and potentially redefine, what it means to be literate in the digital age.

This summary report explores children, young people's and teachers' attitudes, behaviour and confidence around using generative AI to support literacy and learning. Findings are based on data from more than 50,000 children and young people taking part in our Annual Literacy Survey, with a focus on more than 15,000<sup>1</sup> young people aged 13 to 18 and 1,228<sup>2</sup> teachers from primary and secondary schools across the UK. The full reports may be found [here](#).

## Key findings

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### Overall awareness and use of generative AI in 2023 and 2024 in young people aged 13 to 18

- While 1 in 5 (20.0%) young people aged 13 to 18 said they had heard of ChatGPT in early 2023, by early 2024, almost all (92.2%) said they had heard of generative-AI tools and platforms. Of those who had heard of generative AI, the percentage who said they had used it doubled between 2023 and 2024, increasing from almost 2 in 5 (37.1%) to more than 3 in 4 (77.1%).
- More boys than girls said they had used generative AI in 2023 (40.3% vs. 23.6%) but this gap narrowed in 2024, with similar percentages of boys and girls saying they had used it (78.3% vs 76.4%).
- In 2023, slightly more young people aged 16 to 18 used generative AI compared with those aged 13 to 16 (45.3% vs 36.7%). However, in 2024, slightly more of those aged 13 to 16 than 16 to 18 said they had used it (77.9% vs 72.2%).
- In 2023, 34.8% of those aged 13 to 18 receiving free school meals (FSMs) and 37.7% of those who did not receive FSMs had used generative AI. This

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<sup>1</sup> In 2023, 42,263 children and young people aged 8 to 18 answered questions about generative AI, increasing to 53,169 in 2024. Of children and young people who answered questions about generative AI in 2024, 70.2% (n = 37,339) were aged 8 to 13; 26.1% (n = 13,894) were aged 13 to 16, and 3.6% (n = 1,936) were aged 16 to 18.

<sup>2</sup> We were able to compare this with more limited data on 1,286 teachers from early 2023.

gap narrowed in 2024, with those who did, and did not, receive FSMs equally likely to say they had used it (77.7% vs 77.3% respectively).

The percentage of young people aged 13 to 18 who had used generative AI doubled over the last year, increasing from almost 2 in 5 in 2023 (37.1%) to 3 in 4 (77.1%) in 2024

### **Motivation for using generative AI in young people aged 13 to 18**

- Entertainment, curiosity, homework and inspiration were the most-cited purposes for using generative AI. However, more than 2 in 5 (44.4%) regular users aged 13 to 18 said they'd used generative AI to have a chat, while almost 1 in 5 (18.5%) said they had used it to write stories, 1 in 8 (12.8%) to write poems or lyrics, and 1 in 11 (9.0%) to write non-fiction.
- More young people who said they enjoyed writing and wrote daily said they had used generative AI for writing stories compared with those who didn't. However, 1 in 7 (14.5%) young people aged 13 to 16 who did not enjoy writing also said they had used it for this purpose, suggesting these tools might encourage at least some young people who otherwise don't enjoy writing to experiment with this activity.

Almost 1 in 5 (18.5%) young people aged 13 to 18 said they used generative AI to write stories

### **13- to 18-year-olds' attitudes to using generative AI in 2024**

- Young people aged 13 to 18 agreed that that generative AI helped them with ideas (56.6%, or 1 in 2), to understand things (52.2%) or to learn new things (50.8%). In addition, 2 in 5 (39.6%) said it helped them with writing, and 1 in 4 (23.2%) felt it helped them with reading.

2 in 5 (39.6%) young people aged 13 to 18 felt generative AI helped them with writing, and almost 1 in 4 (23.2%) with reading

## 13- to-18-year-olds' self-reported skills and behaviours when using generative AI

- Almost 1 in 2 (47.4%) 13- to-18-year-olds agreed that, when they used AI, they usually added their own thoughts into anything it told them. By contrast, 1 in 5 (20.9%) said that when they used generative AI for homework, they usually just copied what it told them.
- Fewer young people aged 16 to 18 said they just copied AI outputs compared with those aged 13 to 16 (12.2% vs 22.7%). This suggests that older young people are either less likely to copy AI outputs directly or to admit to doing so.
- Similarly, while 2 in 5 (39.9%) young people aged 13 to 18 said they checked outputs from generative AI as they might be wrong, 1 in 5 (20.6%) did not, suggesting greater support may be needed to ensure this group of young people have the information and skills they need to critically evaluate AI responses.

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## Use of generative AI in young people aged 8 to 13

Some generative-AI platforms provide guidance that they should not be used unsupervised by children under 13. However, brief findings from children aged 8 to 13 are included to provide insight into this younger age group's use of these tools.

- In 2024, 3 in 4 (75.3%) children aged 8 to 13 said they had used generative AI. As with older age groups, entertainment and curiosity were the most-cited purposes for those aged 8 to 13. However, more children in this age group used it for a chat than older age groups (58.9%), and fewer for homework (40.7% vs 59.1% of those aged 13 to 18). Otherwise, a similar percentage of those aged 8 to 13 said they used it to write stories, poems or lyrics, or non-fiction as young people aged 13 to 18.
- Compared with older age groups, slightly more children in this younger age group agreed that generative AI helped them with ideas (63.2% vs 56.6% of those aged 13 to 18), to learn new things (56.7% vs 50.8% of those aged 13 to 18) and with reading (28.7% vs. 23.2%).
- However, there were almost no differences between children aged 8 to 13 and those aged 13 to 18 in relation to adding their own thoughts into AI outputs, copying what generative AI told them, or checking things AI told them as it could be wrong.

## Teachers' use of generative AI in 2024

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### Overall awareness and use of generative AI in 2023 and 2024

- Awareness of generative-AI tools and platforms has increased considerably over the last year. Almost 9 in 10 (87.5%) said they had heard of generative AI in 2024 compared with 1 in 3 (34.2%) in 2023. Of teachers who said they had heard of generative AI, the percentage who said they had used it increased from 3 in 10 (31.0%) in 2023 to 1 in 2 (47.7%) in 2024.
- More than three times as many secondary as primary teachers said they had used ChatGPT in 2023 (75.6% vs. 19.7%). However, this gap narrowed in 2024, mainly as fewer secondary teachers reported using generative AI than in 2023 (56.8% vs 30.9% of primary teachers).
- Among teachers who used generative AI more than once a month, the most popular reasons were trying it out (76.7%), for ideas (53.6%) or to ask questions (50.0%). 2 in 5 (37.8%) had used it to create lesson content and 1 in 3 to generate model answers (34.7%) or for lesson planning (32.4%). Fewer had used it to make quizzes (26.7%), differentiate content (23.1%) or to translate text (10.4%), and just 1 in 20 (4.7%) had used it for assessing work.
- Comparing teachers with young people's motivations for using generative AI, many more young people reported using it for fun (74.2% vs 34.7% of teachers), to ask questions (71.0% vs 50.0%), for advice and help with a problem (34.2% vs 9.1%) or for a chat (44.4% vs 2.6%). However, a similar percentage of young people and teachers said they used generative AI for ideas and inspiration (56.6% vs 53.6%).

### Teachers' attitudes to using generative AI in 2024

- More than 1 in 3 teachers said they were worried about their pupils using generative AI in both 2023 and 2024 (35.7% vs. 37.7%). Compared with primary teachers, more than twice as many secondary teachers said they were worried about pupils using generative AI in 2024 (45.1% vs 19.7%).

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secondary as primary teachers  
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- While almost 2 in 3 (64.8%) teachers felt generative AI could model good writing for their students, 1 in 2 (48.9%) also agreed that it was likely to have a negative impact on children's writing skills.

2 in 3 (64.8%) teachers agreed generative AI could model good writing, but 1 in 2 (48.9%) also felt it could have a negative impact on children's writing skills

- More than 1 in 2 (56.6%) teachers were concerned that generative AI could stop children thinking for themselves and 2 in 5 (42.3%) felt it could decrease children's engagement with learning. More than 4 in 5 (82.0%) agreed that students should be taught how to engage critically with generative-AI tools.
- 3 in 4 (75.3%) teachers said they needed more training, support and resources to use generative-AI tools effectively. While 1 in 2 (50.0%) agreed that generative AI could help support assessment, very few (4.7%, or 1 in 20) were using it for this purpose. Just 1 in 10 (9.9%) said their school had an AI use policy in place, and just 1 in 14 (7.3%) felt their school had found ways to minimise opportunities to plagiarise by using generative AI.

3 in 5 (75.3%) teachers want more training to use AI effectively, and 4 in 5 (82.0%) feel young people should be taught how to engage critically with generative AI

These findings provide initial insight into how children, young people and teachers' use of and engagement with generative AI has changed over the last year. While children and young people's use has increased dramatically, secondary teachers' use has decreased slightly. Our findings suggest that those who use generative AI have a broadly positive attitude towards using it to support learning, inspiration and literacy. However, findings also suggest that greater training and support is needed to ensure that teachers and students alike gain the vital skills they need to benefit from effective, critical and creative interactions with generative AI.