

# Mastering EFL Writing With ChatGPT: A Systematic Review of Benefits, Challenges, and Best Practices

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**Abstract**—The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction—especially in writing—is unprecedented. Among AI tools, ChatGPT stands out as a powerful resource, offering real-time, contextual feedback that goes beyond simple grammar corrections. This systematic review draws on insights from 21 studies to evaluate the impact of ChatGPT in improving EFL students' writing skills. It looks at how AI-generated feedback compares to human feedback and reflects on the broader effect of using ChatGPT in EFL writing instruction. Research findings showed that ChatGPT significantly improves students' accuracy, vocabulary use, fluency, and coherence. Furthermore, it motivates and encourages students' self-regulated learning. Nevertheless, there are still some concerns, such as potential overreliance, and issues related to academic integrity. To address these issues and concerns, this systematic review outlines best practices for integrating ChatGPT into EFL writing classrooms. These include integrating AI-generated feedback with educators' guidance, training students to use AI tools with responsibility, and ensuring educators' supportive role. By striking a balance between AI-generated feedback and educators' support, benefits of ChatGPT will be maximized while still keeping students' academic integrity.

**Index Terms**—Artificial Intelligence (AI), ChatGPT, English as a Foreign Language, EFL writing skill, AI-assisted writing

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) has changed greatly with the emergence of artificial intelligence and its tools. One of these innovations is ChatGPT, which has attracted language learners' attention by providing real-time and meaningful feedback that goes beyond correcting grammatical errors. In contrast to traditional writing tools, ChatGPT supports students during the whole writing process, helping them come up with ideas, revising and refining writing. Accordingly, students' writing process will be fostered (Wang, 2024; Yan, 2023). Studies reveal that AI tools as ChatGPT can improve EFL learners' writing by improving the diversity of vocabulary, complexity of sentence structure, fluency, in addition to cohesion (Marzuki et al., 2023). Moreover, its interactive design fosters students' motivation and enhances self-regulation (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025).

Nevertheless, there are ongoing concerns regarding students' overreliance on the tool, the possibility of plagiarism, and the tool's limited capacity in offering analytical insights (Al-Garaady & Mahyoob, 2023). Although many studies emphasize ChatGPT's usefulness in education, others raise concerns about some ethical and cognitive issues associated with using it. Taking into account these two contrasting views, there is a need for a systematic review to evaluate the effect of ChatGPT in EFL learners' writing skills by investigating the following questions:

1. How does ChatGPT help EFL students in enhancing their writing skills?
2. How does feedback provided by ChatGPT compare to human instructors' feedback in developing learners' writing?
3. What are the potential challenges and ethical issues arising from implementing ChatGPT in EFL writing education?
4. What pedagogical strategies can maximize the capabilities of using ChatGPT in EFL classrooms?

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Design

This study reviews systematically the existing research to investigate how ChatGPT is implemented in EFL writing classes. In contrast to earlier scoping reviews like Xiao et al. (2025), which presents a general overview of artificial intelligence in the field of education, this study follows strict selection criteria to provide a more focused analysis. It investigates the effect of ChatGPT in EFL writing classes, the problems and challenges that teachers and students

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experience when using it, and the best ways for using it in the classroom setting. By reviewing earlier studies, this study seeks to provide practical ideas about how ChatGPT can assist language learning, enhance students' interaction and engagement, and help improve writing performance while also presenting concerns, such as plagiarism, students' overreliance on using AI and its tools, and the teachers' role in helping students to use it effectively. Ultimately, this study seeks to help instructors get a clear understanding of how ChatGPT works in EFL writing classes—and how effectively it can support their teaching goals.

#### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines when selecting studies to ensure a consistent and transparent process. This structured approach helped to identify relevant research more systematically and to reduce bias throughout the review process. Selecting the studies went through several stages. Firstly, searching academic databases using specific keywords which related to AI tools, such as ChatGPT, and their use in teaching writing in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. When the duplicated entries were removed, the studies' titles and abstracts were scanned to identify the ones that followed the inclusion criteria. Later, the entire studies that are potentially relevant were reviewed to assure their suitability for the study. To assure that only-high quality studies were included, each study was evaluated in terms of desired criteria. Moreover, several researchers reviewed the studies and compared their findings to strengthen the reliability of the review process. To achieve objectivity, a panel discussion was used to resolve any disagreements. Regardless to say that the way of selecting the studies ensures that reviewing process is based on reliable research, offering significant insights into how AI tools such as ChatGPT are used in teaching writing in EFL classes, obstacles it faces, in addition to the effective pedagogical practices for its implementation for integration into writing classes.

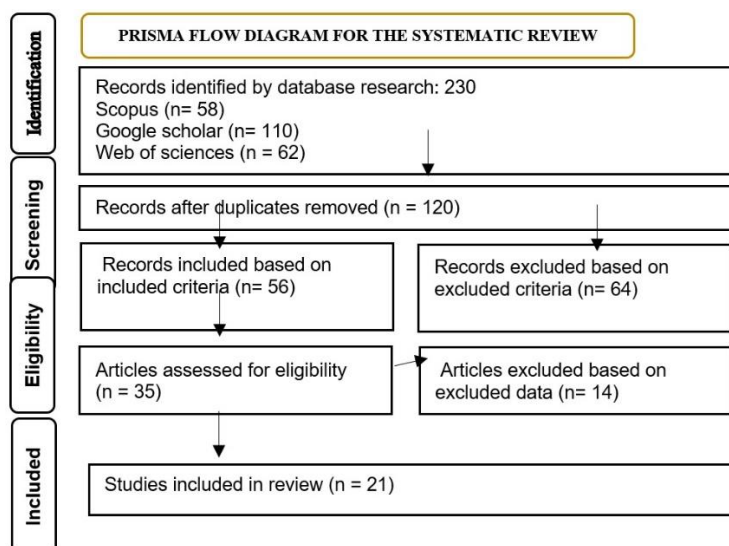


Figure 1.

#### (a). Inclusion Criteria

To ensure the selection of high-quality and relevant studies for this review, inclusion criteria were determined.

The selection process was guided by the following criteria:

- Empirical, peer- reviewed studies dated between 2022 and 2025 that investigated the role of ChatGPT in enhancing writing in EFL classes, including its impact and usage in different writing activities.
- Studies that collect and explore students' and instructors' perspective towards using ChatGPT in EFL writing classes, taking into consideration its perceived advantages, challenges, and ethical issues.
- Studies with a comparative focus on the usefulness of ChatGPT- generated feedback in relation to human instructors' feedback, highlighting specific components such as grammar, organization, content development, and ease of understanding.
- Empirical studies that present evidence of students' writing improvement as a result of using ChatGPT, drawing on objective measures, such as writing assessment results, rate of errors, and descriptive scales like students' writing habits and confidence.

#### (b). Exclusion Criteria

The following exclusion criteria were applied to ensure the relevance and rigor of the selected studies. Studies were excluded based on the following considerations:

- Studies that are purely conceptual or theoretical and do not include empirical data or evidence were excluded.

- Research focusing on artificial intelligence tools other than ChatGPT was not considered, in order to maintain a clear focus on ChatGPT specific role.
- Studies that do not directly address EFL writing instruction, such as those centered on other language skills or unrelated educational contexts, were excluded.
- Research lacking a clear methodological framework, including information on participants, procedures, or analysis methods, was not included.

### *B. Data Collection and Search Strategy*

A search was carried out in three major academic databases—Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus resulting in 530 records. After removing duplicates, the remaining studies were screened for relevance based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. This process focused on reviewing the full text, titles, and abstracts. A total of 21 studies which met the established criteria were selected and included in the systematic review.

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *A. Effectiveness of ChatGPT in EFL Writing*

A great number of studies have assured that ChatGPT improves fluency, coherence, and accuracy of EFL students' writing. Studies reveal that students who employed ChatGPT in writing classes wrote essays that were more coherent, lexically diverse, and structurally organized as opposed to students who depended exclusively the instructor's feedback (Xiao et al., 2025). Similarly, Nguyen and Nguyen (2023) observed that students who used ChatGPT in their writing courses achieved noticeable development in the paragraph's structure and the coherence. These results are compatible with Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) research, which assures that AI tools instant feedback improves fluency and accuracy. Additionally, Marzuki et al. (2023) noticed that students who use ChatGPT wrote elaborated and well-developed essays, getting the benefit of AI rewording tools. Still, Xiao et al. (2025) raise concern that while AI tools such as ChatGPT can enrich vocabulary, it may at times recommend synonyms that are either overused or contextually inaccurate, requiring the instructor's intervention to improve students' word choice accuracy.

### *B. ChatGPT Feedback vs. Human's Feedback*

ChatGPT is effective at offering fast and detailed feedback on grammar and vocabulary, but when it comes to evaluating the structure of an argument, the logical flow of ideas, and contextual relevance, human feedback remains more effective (Xiao et al., 2025). Studies that compared AI and human feedback have revealed the following insights:

- In identifying grammar mistakes, ChatGPT was slightly more accurate than human instructors; however, the difference was not significant (Wang, 2024).
- Regarding addressing the specific context of the writing, human feedback was more personalized and of higher quality.
- At times, ChatGPT proposed synonyms which were inaccurate, or displayed a pattern of unnecessary repetition.

These results showed that while ChatGPT manages to identify mechanical errors, it fails to provide the critical evaluation that human instructors do.

### *C. Challenges and Ethical Concerns*

Cultural differences shape students' writing styles. There is a strong focus on direct argumentation and presenting a well-defined thesis statement in English academic writing classes. But, in the traditions of some Asian and Middle Eastern countries, writing tends to follow more indirect structure, where ideas are introduced implicitly and gradually. As ChatGPT is trained primarily on Western English writing texts, it may misunderstand cultural differences in the styles of writing. This can result in feedback that unintentionally steers students toward Western writing styles which may not align with their rhetorical traditions, leading to confusion (Al-Garaady & Mahyoob, 2023; Deng et al., 2025). In addition to limitations in style, AI tools sometimes reflect cultural biases based on their training data. These biases can affect word choice, sentence patterns, and AI default tone, sometimes creating a mismatch with students' linguistic norms (Zhang & Huang, 2023). Moreover, ChatGPT lacks depth in understanding idiomatic language, historical knowledge, and cultural background beyond the dominant training data, leading at times to awkward, irrelevant, or even inappropriate responses and suggestions.

Additionally, there are many ethical issues to be taken into account. ChatGPT just like any other AI tools requires users to submit samples of their writing so as to receive feedback. However, it remains unclear how this data is utilized, stored, or protected, raising concerns regarding privacy protection, user consent, and responsibilities of institutions. Educators and institutions that use AI tools should be aware of potential risks and concerns and implement clear policies that safeguard students' data and support ethical practices (Xiao et al., 2025).

### *D. Pedagogical Strategies for Effective ChatGPT Integration*

-Using ChatGPT under the Teacher's Guidance: The teacher's role is essential in ChatGPT-supported writing classes to address its limitations and improve its educational effectiveness. Using explicit instruction in teaching AI literacy is

one of the effective strategies that the teachers use to motivate students to critically evaluate the AI tools' feedback rather than simply accepting it (Marzuki et al., 2023). Integrating AI evaluation tools in English language teaching can develop students' ability to evaluate AI-generated responses, recognize the constructive feedback from the misleading or unclear input, and modify AI-generated text without losing originality (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025). To increase further accountability, educators may use guided activities, such as "revision logs," where students judge how they evaluate and review AI-generated text. Moreover, offering guidance on the ethical concerns and responsibilities when using AI-generated content without clear attribution can enhance students' responsibility in using AI. These mentioned strategies help students meet academic expectations and they allow teachers to observe students' use of AI tools in writing classes (Zou & Huang, 2023).

-Using ChatGPT to support Collaborative Writing Process: For effective and meaningful integration in EFL writing classes, ChatGPT should be used as a helpful tool for developing students' writing performance rather than replacing students' own efforts and competence (Yan, 2023). One effective way to use ChatGPT in writing classes is to help students generate topic ideas, outlining, brainstorming, and distinguishing their arguments. This way helps students engage actively in structuring and organizing their ideas rather than accepting AI-generated output. Furthermore, teachers can foster students' self-editing skills by encouraging them to revise their writing after getting AI feedback. Peer review sessions can further support this process by allowing students to compare their revisions with AI-generated text, helping them develop stronger analytical reasoning skills (Wang, 2024).

-ChatGPT Ethics & Academic Integrity Policies: As AI tools like ChatGPT become more prevalent in academia, it is crucial to establish clear guidelines for their appropriate use in academic writing. One approach is the implementation of 'AI Use Contracts,' in which students pledge to use AI ethically in their coursework. Students should develop skills in what can be termed 'responsible prompt engineering'—learning how to ask precise and targeted questions that encourage AI to generate constructive responses rather than plagiarized or nonsensical content.

TABLE 1  
KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REVIEWED STUDIES

Study	Focus	Main Findings
Deng et al. (2025)	ChatGPT & mental effort in writing	ChatGPT eases cognitive load by assisting with language-related tasks, though it may also make argumentation skills less robust
Alkamel and Alwagieh (2024)	AI-assisted writing performance	ChatGPT enhances writing motivation
Xiao et al. (2025)	AI (ChatGPT) vs. human feedback in writing	ChatGPT offers detailed feedback, though it lacks the contextual depth needed for comprehensive writing assessments.
Nguyen and Dieu (2024)	Students' familiarity, usage, and perceptions regarding ChatGPT as an AI writing assistant.	Students use ChatGPT because it can enhance writing quality, generate ideas, and improve language accuracy. but over-dependence on ChatGPT leading to reduced critical thinking and creativity.
Baskara (2023)	AI-enhanced writing engagement	AI enhances student engagement in writing tasks
Nguyen and Nguyen (2023)	AI in academic writing and motivation	ChatGPT can boost students' motivation and engagement, but it might also encourage superficial learning rather than deep understanding.
Yan (2023)	Effectiveness of ChatGPT in self-revision	ChatGPT helps with structural feedback but it does not enhance originality
Al-Garaady and Mahyoob (2023)	ChatGPT bias & ethical issues	ChatGPT responses often miss cultural nuances, which can impact the quality of writing
Tai et al. (2023); Nguyen and Dieu (2024)	ChatGPT 's effect in spelling and grammar checking, summarization, and translation	improving language accuracy and clarity. AI-generated text raises ethical questions, including concerns about plagiarism
Fitria (2023)	ChatGPT in vocabulary and creativity	Students incorporated more varied expressions but struggled with nuanced meanings
Al-Zubaidi, Jaafari, and Touzani (2024)	ChatGPT impact on academic writing among Moroccan university students	ChatGPT helps with grammar and sentence structure, but without proper guidance, students may misuse it, leading to plagiarism or over-reliance on ChatGPT.
Gayed, Carlon, Oriola and Cross (2022)	AI (ChatGPT) influence in various aspects of writing, including grammar, vocabulary, and overall coherence.	ChatGPT enhanced cohesion and enriched lexical diversity
Marzuki et al. (2023)	AI(ChatGPT) literacy training in writing instruction	Teaching AI literacy develops learners' ability to judge ChatGPT feedback
Adauto Medina et al. (2024)	Explore the impact of using ChatGPT in academic writing.	ChatGPT helps students write more smoothly and accurately while offering instant feedback. However, over-reliance may hinder critical thinking development.
Zhang and Huang (2023)	ChatGPT in academic writing & argumentation	ChatGPT strengthens structure; however, it reduces depth of argumentation
Seo (2024)	Efficiency of ChatGPT in improving writing skills	ChatGPT helps refine language, sparks ideas, and offers quick feedback.
Wang (2024)	ChatGPT influence in EFL students' writing performance,	ChatGPT enhances clarity, structure, and language, but over-reliance may weaken independent writing skills.
Ibrahim and Kirkpatrick (2024)	AI (ChatGPT) feedback & motivation	ChatGPT enhances L2 writing by boosting motivation, streamlining tasks, and providing instant, personalized feedback.
Barrot, J. S. (2023)	AI (ChatGPT) feedback across multiple writing stages	ChatGPT aids with first draft of writing but it makes originality weak.
Werdiningsih et al. (2024)	ChatGPT enhances students' writing by improving vocabulary, grammar, structure, and clarity.	ChatGPT helps enhance vocabulary, refine grammar, generate ideas, structure essays, and polish language.
Zou and Huang (2023)	Role of ChatGPT into L2 writing	ChatGPT aids brainstorming, drafting, and editing, but relying too much may limit independent writing growth.

Across the studies, many key themes appeared. One key focus was grammar and the structure of the sentence, with research showing that ChatGPT helps students make fewer errors and write more accurately (Wang, 2024; Deng et al., 2025). Some studies compared ChatGPT feedback to instructors' feedback, highlighting points of strength and weakness for both in the classrooms. Studies showed ethical issues and challenges concerning plagiarism and students' overreliance on AI-generated content and feedback. Many studies highlight how institutions reacted to these challenges through the development of many policies and guidelines. Finally, several studies examined the impact of using ChatGPT on expanding and developing students' vocabulary. Although ChatGPT offered many vocabulary options, researchers found that some of these words were unnatural or contextually inappropriate.

These findings revealed the impact of using ChatGPT in students' writing, addressing its benefits in improving language proficiency while assuring the need for a well-structured and ethical integration in academic writing classrooms.

TABLE 2  
SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES BY THEME

Theme	Key Findings	Supporting Studies
Effectiveness	As a result of ChatGPT's role in generating corrections, students' grammar, coherence, and syntax were enhanced.	Baskara (2023); Wang (2024); Deng (2025); Adauto Medina et al. (2024)
	Because of AI-generated synonyms and paraphrasing, vocabulary was expanded	Zhang and Huang (2023); Gayed, Carlon, Oriola and Cross (2022)
	Improved writing fluency and coherence through ChatGPT	Al-Zubaidi, Jaafari, and Touzani (2024); Yan (2023); Marzuki et al. (2023); Werdiningsih et al. (2024); Zhang, Zou and Cheng (2025); Alkamel and Alwagieh (2024); Zou and Huang (2023)
	Students' motivation and engagement in writing tasks were increased	Baskara (2023); Nguyen and Nguyen (2025) Ibrahim and Kirkpatrick (2024); Nguyen and Dieu (2024)
	Enhanced self-editing and revision efficiency with ChatGPT's instant feedback	Al-Zubaidi, Jaafari, and Touzani (2024); Barrot, J. S. (2023); Seo (2024); Fitria (2023); Tai (2023)
Challenges	Relying too much on ChatGPT hinders students' self-sufficiency and it may hinder the development of students' creativity and analytical skills in writing	Gayed, Carlon, Oriola and Cross (2022); Barrot, J. S. (2023); Adauto Medina et al. (2024); Ibrahim and Kirkpatrick (2024); Nguyen and Dieu (2024); Wang (2024); Seo (2024)
	Interpreting ChatGPT feedback poses challenges, especially for less proficient learners	Al-Garaady and Mahyoob (2023)
	With limited contextual awareness, ChatGPT falls short in supporting complex analysis and argumentation.	Deng et al. (2025); Hu et al. (2024); Nguyen and Nguyen (2025); Zhang, Zou and Cheng (2025)
	ChatGPT's broad feedback lacks nuance, potentially leading to repetitive writing structures.	Yan (2023); Zhang and Huang (2023); Marzuki et al. (2023)
	Plagiarism becomes a concern when students use AI-generated content without making any changes.	Al-Zubaidi, Jaafari, and Touzani (2024); Werdiningsih et al. (2024); Alkamel and Alwagieh (2024)
	ChatGPT's feedback remains generic, without considering individual learning progress	Fitria (2023); Algaraady, J., and Mahyoob, M. (2023).
	AI suggestions can be inappropriate due to limited cultural and contextual awareness	Al-Garaady and Mahyoob (2023)
	AI-generated responses may include misinformation and inherent biases	Deng et al. (2025); Baskara (2023); Deng (2025)
Best Pedagogical Practices	With guidance from teachers, students should evaluate ChatGPT's feedback thoughtfully, making revisions that reflect their learning goals and personal writing style.	Al-Zubaidi, Jaafari, and Touzani (2024); Marzuki et al. (2023); Nguyen and Dieu (2024); Wang (2024); Deng (2025); Seo (2024); Werdiningsih et al. (2024); Zou and Huang (2023)
	Combining AI and human feedback ensures both efficiency and in-depth learning.	Barrot, J. S. (2023)
	ChatGPT literacy training teaches students its limitations, fostering critical thinking.	Marzuki et al. (2023); Nguyen and Nguyen (2025); Barrot, J. S. (2023); Adauto Medina et al. (2024); Baskara (2023); Gayed, Carlon, Oriola and Cross (2022)
	ChatGPT is a tool for brainstorming and revision, not a replacement for writing.	Yan (2023); Ibrahim and Kirkpatrick (2024); Zhang, Zou and Cheng (2025); Alkamel and Alwagieh (2024)

Table 2 showed results on the role of ChatGPT in teaching writing. Regarding effectiveness, AI tools such as ChatGPT improve linguistic accuracy, vocabulary diversity, cohesion, and students' engagement, making it a beneficial tool in a language learning setting. Still, many challenges have arisen, such as excessive reliance on AI-generated text, obstacles in responding to feedback, in addition to ChatGPT's limited awareness of rhetorical content leading to misleading or inaccurate output. Additionally, there is a growing concern about plagiarism, lack of personalized feedback for students, and cultural bias in AI-generated text—addressing the need of using tools like ChatGPT thoughtfully in education. To address these concerns, there are many steps to follow, such as guiding students in how to use AI effectively, showing them how to construct AI literacy, and combining AI feedback with teacher feedback to create more meaningful and supportive learning experiences.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### A. Conclusion

Research has shown that ChatGPT can be a beneficial tool for helping students improve their writing—especially in improving grammar, expanding their vocabulary, and enhancing their writing fluency (Wang, 2024; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025). On the other hand, although advanced learners usually get the most out of it, students with lower level of proficiency often struggle to fully understand what the AI generates (Al-Garaady & Mahyoob, 2023). While ChatGPT is helpful for improving grammar and word choice, still it cannot provide the in-depth feedback that students need to build clear and persuasive arguments in their writing (Xiao et al., 2025; Zhang & Huang, 2023). Unlike AI tools, educators are

superior in providing personalized and culturally responsive feedback that aligns with students' diverse learning needs (Guo & Wang, 2023). Although ChatGPT offers several benefits, it raises many challenges and ethical issues. Plagiarism and excessive reliance on AI-generated content raise ethical concerns regarding integrity in academic work. Furthermore, because ChatGPT can reflect some certain built-in biases and has limited cultural awareness, it may suggest vocabulary that is inappropriate or misleading for students from diverse background (Deng et al., 2025).

It is important to use ChatGPT with clear goals and a well-planned approach to get the most out of using it in EFL writing classrooms. Educators can help their students to critically evaluate ChatGPT's output and to identify the differences between misleading and valuable feedback (Marzuki et al., 2023; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025). Combining ChatGPT fast linguistic response with the instructors' deep analytical insight help students get benefit of both efficiency and contextually appropriate guidance in their learning process (Zou & Huang, 2023).

Future research should aim to improve AI feedback tools that respond to students' levels of proficiency and their cultural backgrounds, to enhance more personalized and inclusive learning outcomes (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025; Al-Garaady & Mahyoob, 2023).

Ultimately, ChatGPT serves as a valuable tool when used alongside human instruction. A structured, blended approach, combining AI-driven feedback with educator intervention, can maximize its benefits while mitigating ethical risks. Future research should explore adaptive AI feedback mechanisms that personalize suggestions based on learners' proficiency levels (Nguyen, 2023).

### B. Recommendations

- Equip students with AI literacy skills – Educators should train students how to critically evaluate ChatGPT's feedback to avoid misinterpretation and ensure meaningful responses.
- Support a blended feedback model – AI tools help with linguistic accuracy and fluency, whereas educators promote students' clear argument and encourage them to think critically coming up with their own ideas.
- Establish institutional policies for ethical AI use – Academic institutions as universities need to address clear guidelines on the appropriate practices and applications of AI in academic writing and require students to track their use of AI tools such as ChatGPT to ensure ethical engagement and integrity.
- Restrict the use of AI in full essay writing – educators should encourage their students to use ChatGPT in thinking critically, drafting, and revising, rather than generating whole essays to ensure integrity.

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