

Context: *This Google Doc was created by students in PHIL 126: Environmental Philosophy and Politics at UC Merced in Fall 2024. Students read [these essays](#), then anonymously wrote a one-paragraph response following the instructions below. In class, they were assigned to read a paragraph, classify the type of use of LLMs using [this taxonomy](#), and then explain whether they agreed with the author of the paragraph or not. I gave students the opportunity to veto before sharing the Doc publicly; no one exercised their veto.*

Instructions:

Below the line, add one paragraph sharing your thoughts about writing and LLMs (such as ChatGPT). You might explain how you use LLMs with writing assignments, why you do or don't use LLMs in certain ways, and your overall thoughts about the technology. Your paragraph should be at least a few sentences long, and can be as long as you want.

Note that this is entirely anonymous.

1. I think that LLMs are beneficial when writing depending on how you use it. Sometimes it's good to have it rephrase something. I would only use LLMs to help give me ideas to build off of. In general, original writing is better than what may come out of an AI program, but it's not bad for brainstorming ideas if you find that you're stuck. It's also nice to use when trying to figure out how to further better your paper as some of the feedback it gives is useful sometimes.

-LLMs are literal idiots. They just speak with confidence so this is the only way i think we can use them hell some can't even tell how many r's are in strawberry constantly saying so i wouldn't trust them with anything

2. Writing is usually somewhat difficult for me to do, But I've personally never felt the need to use an LLM for my own writing, at least in an official manner. When it comes to personal writing, I do use LLM and other AI programs, usually when I have trouble putting something to words. I can see how they can be used for writing, perhaps there are some ways to put difficult to explain words into a simpler format or make them easier to understand. Maybe it can provide a question to look at with official or academic resources. But it does have the opportunity to undercut a well-thought-out paper or writing.

3. Starting on my paper has been difficult but I have yet to have the need to use LLMs to write my papers. Using LLMs is beneficial for writing but when you just need to check your grammar or the flow of the paper. You should write your thoughts out and see where it goes. I use LLMs when I have to write a professional email so it can check my tone of voice, grammar, and clarity. It has been beneficial for me since LLMs have made my emails more clear, straightforward, and easier for my team to understand me.

- I think it has a compelling argument however Its a more limiting perspective than it should. LLMs could have some helpful ideas

4. When I begin writing, I create an outline of my paper and create at least 3 different paper topics to choose from and I choose whichever topic is the most interesting to me. LLMs help me reorganize my thoughts and are extremely helpful when writing the objection because sometimes it is difficult to make a strong thought out argument for the other side. I also use it to find academic descriptors or to refine my sentences when I can't properly express my ideas (I'll put my word vomit into the chatbox and it'll produce an academic sentence and I'll write my actual sentence off of that without copying the AI generated sentence). I think that LLMs are not good for writing actual papers because they take concise sentences and add fluff to it, which detracts from the main ideas.

- Partially acceptable? I don't love the idea of using LLMs to create topics because I think the most interesting topics are the ones we come up with ourselves. Same with the objections but at the same time I get it. Using LLMs to find academic descriptors is valid because there are some concepts you genuinely can't google for and maybe AI is the best way to track them down
- The author of this paragraph probably thinks level 5 is acceptable as they use LLMs to co create and revise material such as objections. I disagree and I think that this is partially acceptable, I think they should use it to slightly revise but not to write the ideas for the objection from LLM.

5. I only use LLMs if I don't feel confident in my own understanding of the assignment topic. I might use them to confirm ideas that I already plan on using (for example to see if a metaphor I'm using is flawed) or recognize any unnecessary inclusions in my paper, although it's kind of bad at identifying what's not relevant. It's sometimes also a shortcut around actual research, which I'm aware is poor practice and I resort to it only for complex questions that I don't know how to research using google. I imagine I wouldn't use LLMs if I knew how, but sometimes I can't conceive of a method to pull the information that I'm specifically looking for and it's faster to ask an LLM if I'm under a time crunch. I otherwise don't use LLMs and I actively avoid using it to generate text, structure my papers, or influence anything that I consider an important part of the work. I think a lot of students are in the same position where they wouldn't use LLMs if they knew how to use more legitimate tools. It's not so much that students want to use AI and risk backlash or that we believe it to have superior knowledge, it's mostly because it works in a pinch for unimportant stuff and we don't always know how else to complete the task at hand.

Acceptable. This would probably a level 1-3 /

I would consider this to be acceptable and would give it a level 2-3

6. I've never personally used any LLMs like ChatGPT for anything school related. But there's lots of reasons why a student might use an LLM. Professors usually have writing assignments to check student comprehension and skills, so if a student does poorly the professor will know they might need help. However, these assignments are usually all graded; students have a lot on their plate and sometimes just need to pass a class. They can't afford to do poorly on assignments if they don't fully understand the topic, so they might use an LLM. That being said, there's lots of other resources out there to help

students with writing, including their professors. I think overall, LLMs are a detriment to student learning, even though they do have benefits. I think students can become overly dependent on them, which ultimately doesn't help them learn anything or improve their writing or analysis skills.

1-2

I would think LLM usage is 1-3

7. I have personally never used an LLM in order to help in the process of writing a paper or other piece of academic writing. I think that they could be useful in reading intensive classes in order to get a better understanding of the readings. This would be useful to better formulate an argument or other part in the writing process. I think most professors would consider them to be plagiarism if any of the LLM's writing were to be turned in as the students.

Acceptable, this would probably be level 2

Yes I agree, sometimes people do need clarifications from a reading or need examples to better understand a reading, but there is the option of asking a peer or professor for help.

8. I personally use LLMs whenever I don't feel confident in my understanding of whatever it is that I'm working on in order to gain another perspective. I believe LLMs should not be used as a way to complete an entire assignment, more so as something that can aid you in the right direction in order to have an overall stronger writing. I don't think it is something that is necessary to write strong papers or writing assignments, but it is a neat tool that can be helpful in certain situations.

I agree with this assessment,

9. I find LLMs to be useful when it comes to jotting more ideas and key points of the reading. I have used LLMs to fully understand the writing better than how I would interpret it myself. However, with writing papers I do not use it much because of the inconsistencies and the difficulty of depending on it to create your whole paper. Instead I rely on what I have learned in classes because it should be the most important information I have.

10. The only reason I like LLMs is because it helps significantly with grammar, punctuation etc. But I do not agree with completely relying on it to write out thoughts and ideas because it is inaccurate in that sense.

11. I think that LLMs can be useful learning tools because they allow you to restructure or reword certain phrases and summarize passages to explain them to you from a differing perspective. I believe that LLMs should be used as tools to help you rather than doing the assignment for you. I think that you should create your own authentic response to a prompt and use LLMs as a tool to help you rephrase or edit your original outline or draft.

12. I think the use of LLMs for writing should be heavily limited, especially in an academic setting. The idea of writing assignments is to grow your thinking and writing ability. Offloading parts or all of that process limits your ability to learn and grow as a thinker and writer. For example, if you use it to create an outline or to make an argument you don't actually understand those things because you offloaded those tasks to an LLM (this is assuming the LLM produces a good outline or good argument which it does not do all the time). I do think they could be useful for things like bibliographies strictly when it comes to citing. It can get stuff wrong from time to time so you do have to be sure the information in the citing is proper but it does save a little grunt work. If they are simply being used to reduce the basic labor of writing then I think it's fine but if it is doing the "thinking" then I think that would constitute misuse.

13. I think that using LLMs can be useful for fixing Grammar and for finding citations. But using it as a way to write an essay seems like cheating. Although I do see it being useful in helping writers overcome creative blocks by generating ideas and brainstorming. LLMs can sometimes generate text that is factually incorrect, misleading, or lacks depth. While they can imitate human writing; a lot of their ideas are just a combination of other writers' thoughts and ideas. There's a potential for misuse in spreading misinformation, generating fake news, or producing content that plagiarizes other works.

14. I feel like LLMs are very useful for more tedious tasks of every day life. In the context of writing it can give you a summary from which you can then use as an outline for your own. It automates the creation of a structure so that you can worry about the meat of the issue, which I enjoy a lot. I will say that a downside to this is the loss of those critical thinking techniques that are needed to create the structure. In the most extreme cases, it can even plagiarize others' works, but it's gotten better and is restricting itself. Overall I would say that it is the future of academics at the very least, as since it's a free resource we should teach our kids to use it just as I was taught to read or write. It has that kind of