Assignment: Speculative Futures with AI and Collaboration

Overview

In this assignment, you will work collaboratively to imagine possible futures shaped by today's environmental and social challenges. Inspired by the University of Toronto's We Did It!? project, you will combine research, AI tools, and creative writing to produce a piece of speculative fiction. Your work will explore both the promise and risks of human choices, showing how storytelling can communicate complex issues in accessible and meaningful ways.

Learning Goals

By completing this assignment, you will:

- Summarize and integrate complex research into creative expression.
- Use AI tools responsibly and critically.
- Collaborate with peers to co-author a story.
- Reflect on authorship, ethics, and the role of technology in shaping expression.
- Practice multimodal communication by publishing your work in a digital format.

Instructions

Step 1: Research (Individual)
Select a current sustainability issue (for example: renewable energy, climate migration, ocean health, food systems, biodiversity loss).

Find 2–3 credible sources (articles, reports, data sets). Bring notes to your group.

Step 2: Brainstorm (Group)
In groups of 3–4, share your findings.

Identify key challenges and opportunities.

Brainstorm utopian and dystopian future scenarios.

Step 3: Draft with AI Support (Group)
Use an AI tool (for example: ChatGPT) to:

- Summarize your research in plain language.
- Generate speculative "what if" questions.
- Offer narrative prompts (optional).

Important: You must edit and expand on AI-generated text to make it your own.

Step 4: Write Your Story (Group)
Co-author a short speculative fiction piece (500–800 words).

Requirements:

- Ground the story in your research.
- Include both imaginative elements and real-world context.
- Clearly show a possible future (utopian, dystopian, or hybrid).

Step 5: Reflect (Individual)

Write a reflection (250–300 words) addressing:

- How did AI support or limit your process?
- What role did human creativity and collaboration play?
- What questions about authorship and originality did this raise for you?

Step 6: Publish (Group)

Use Adobe Express Web Page to publish your story with visuals (images, video, or audio).

Share the link with the class for a collective digital magazine of speculative futures.

Deliverables

- Group Story: 500–800 words (Adobe Express format).
- Individual Reflection: 250–300 words (submitted separately).

Assessment Criteria (100 points total)

- Research & Integration (20 points): Demonstrates use of credible sources and accurate synthesis.
- Creativity & Storytelling (20 points): Engaging, imaginative, and clear narrative.
- AI Engagement (15 points): Shows thoughtful and ethical use of AI tools.
- Collaboration (15 points): Evidence of group contribution and shared authorship.
- Reflection (15 points): Thoughtful analysis of process, authorship, and ethics.
- Digital Presentation (15 points): Clear, polished, and visually engaging Adobe Express web page.

Due Dates

Group draft: [insert date]

Final story + Adobe Express link: [insert date]

Individual reflection: [insert date]