When to use AI

A planning routine for teaching, practice and independent checks.

> **A proposed routine.** The Minnesota expert report suggests promise in AI-supported practice after initial learning. Its ratings are expert judgements about general-purpose AI, not classroom trial results. These four phases turn that principle into a teaching plan. They can span several lessons; the report hasn't tested a one-in-four timetable.

1 Teach the idea

Students work without AI

Explain and model the new content. Students describe it in their own words. You can use AI to prepare materials, checking them before the lesson.

2 Build and check knowledge

Students work without AI

Ask students to explain, connect ideas and answer from memory. Check the essential knowledge before offering AI-supported practice. Reteach any gaps you find.

3 Practise and use feedback

Optional, checked AI support

Start with the student's own attempt. AI can supply questions, hints or feedback. Students answer from memory and check suggestions against taught material before deciding what to change.

4 Apply it independently

No AI or notes for this check

Later, change the question or context. Students explain their reasoning unaided. Use what they can do independently to decide what needs further teaching.

Before offering AI-supported practice

- Can the student explain the essential idea without AI or notes?
- Will they make their own attempt before seeing generated answers?
- Have you provided reliable material for checking AI feedback?

If an essential idea is missing: model it again and ask a fresh unaided question. If students can't check the feedback, provide teacher feedback and further teaching.

For this routine: student AI use stays in phase 3. Use school-approved tools and follow age and access rules. Teacher-mediated use is enough; students don't need their own accounts.

Source: Kendeou, Greene, Nixon et al. (2026), University of Minnesota, expert consensus report on GenAI and learning. This guide is an educator's proposed implementation.

See it in a lesson

Illustrative Year 8 example: Digestion and Nutrition. This hasn't been trialled.

DISTINGUISHING DIGESTION FROM ABSORPTION

Teach first	Chemical digestion breaks large food molecules into smaller, soluble molecules. Absorption moves small nutrients such as glucose through the small-intestine wall into the blood.
Check unaided	Ask: "A student says digestion is food moving into the blood. What have they mixed up?" Illustrative misconception: "Food goes into the blood. That's digestion." This still confuses the two processes.
Act on it	Model the distinction with the taught diagram, then ask a fresh question. Once the student explains both processes, offer practice. Optional AI feedback is presented by the teacher, checked against the diagram and discussed by students.
Use feedback	Give this teacher-checked hint: "Separate breaking molecules down from moving them across a wall." Students explain what they'll change and why. The hint can be written by you or prepared with AI.
Check later	Without AI or notes: "Glucose solution reaches the small intestine. Must glucose be digested first? How does it enter the blood?" Look for: no, glucose molecules are already small enough to absorb; they cross the intestinal wall into the blood by absorption. Reteach any missing idea.

Plan your lesson

Type into the PDF boxes and save a copy, or print and write. Plan one practice lesson within your sequence.

Class / topic / practice lesson

Essential idea / expected answer

My unaided readiness question

Practice task + reliable checking material

If there is a gap, I will...

Later unaided task + what I'll look for

Biology checking sources: Oak National Academy, Year 8: digestion and enzymes; absorption and transport of nutrients.