Talking with Kids about AI
How to Use Humanities Topics You Already Teach
To Inspire Important Discussions about AI

History: Topics + Discussion Questions

→ **The Industrial Revolution -** What is man's relationship with machines?

Discussion Questions That Will Connect to AI:

>> When technology produces unintended side effects, who should own the consequences?
>> How do questions raised by the Industrial Revolution prompt questions about AI today?
>> What is intellectual labor – and what value is there in it for humans? How does automation, especially of intellectual labor, help us understand what makes us human?

→ **The Bill of Rights (and the AI Bill of Rights) -** What is the relationship between the individual and society?

Discussion Questions That Will Connect to AI:

>> What did the Bill of Rights protect against? Why revive this language today?
>> What examples do you see of tensions between individual and societal needs today?
>> Should there be a "Bill of Rights" for the internet? How might you think about balancing individual and collective needs? What instances have you already seen?

→ **The Civil Rights Movement -** Are all people treated equally in the eyes of the law and society?

Discussion Questions That Will Connect to AI:

>> In what ways do artificial intelligence tools perpetuate bias and discrimination?
>> In what ways might artificial intelligence tools help reduce bias and discrimination?

→ **Comparative Government -** How do we balance freedom and authority?

Discussion Questions That Will Connect to AI:

>> Who should set the rules for AI use: people, corporations, or governments?
>> Is it better for new technology to be transparent so more people can innovate with it or closed so bad actors can't use it for bad purposes?

Ethics and Philosophy: Topics + Discussion Questions

→ **Utilitarianism and Libertarianism -** What is the relationship between the individual and society?

Discussion Questions That Will Connect to AI:

>> If a pedestrian jaywalks in front of a self-driving car, should the car be programmed to hit the pedestrian or to swerve and crash into a building? What if it's five children walking in front of a car?
>> Should corporations be held accountable for crimes committed by people using AI?

→ **Epistemology -** How do we determine what is truth?

Discussion Questions That Will Connect to AI:

>> Would you trust AI to tell you facts about earth's geology? Would you trust it to offer career advice?
>> Would you trust it to match a face in criminal lineup with a face on a picture?
>> When would seek answers from a person, from a book, from an AI, from faith?

aptonym   R.E.A.L. Discussion

Literary Texts that Invite Discussion about A.I.

5 Themes and 30+ Texts You Might Already Teach

While many of the following texts directly address technology and AI, others don't at all. However, each opens opportunities for discussing themes that are relevant to AI's growing impact on society.

What is the relationship between man and machine (personal)?

→ Look for: texts that raise questions about what it means to be human -- biologically, socially, or spiritually.

>> What happens when humans create machines that begin to approximate human behaviors?
>> What happens when individual humans develop relationships with nonhuman creations?

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley
Ancillary Justice by Ann Leckie
R.U.R. by Karel Capek
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick
Neuromancer by William Gibson

What is the relationship between man and machine (cultural)?

→ Look for: texts that explore ways in which humanity has negotiated its complex relationship with technology.

>> What happens when technology begins shaping culture and society?

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
Autonomous by Annalee Newitz
1984 by George Orwell
The Circle by Dave Eggers

What is the relationship between the individual and society?

→ Look for: texts that prompt us to ask whether the conflicts characters face are different in our age of AI even if they do not address technology directly.

>> How do we balance our unique identities with assimilation in society? How is artificial intelligence changing this balance?

The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros
Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison
American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang
Darius the Great Is Not Okay by Adib Khorram

What is the relationship between power and responsibility?

→ Look for: texts that explore the relationship between power and responsibility and provide insight into how AI is designed to be embedded into decision-making apparatuses.

>> How do we make decisions when we are in positions of authority? Whose interests do we prioritize and when?

Lord of the Flies by William Golding
In the Time of Butterflies by Julia Alvarez
Macbeth by William Shakespeare
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

What is the relationship between tradition and change?

→ Look for: texts that explore the relationship between tradition and change, especially in generational conflict and questions of how AI repositions the past while shaping the present.

>> How do we protect the values of the past in a rapidly changing present?
>> How do we preserve identity in a diverse world?

White Teeth by Zadie Smith
The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy
Pachinko by Min Jin Lee
Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides