



When NOT to Use AI



Critical thinking guide for responsible AI use

Think Before You Prompt



Legal & Ethical Issues

Legal Advice

Using AI to get legal guidance on contracts, lawsuits, or rights.

Why Not: AI lacks current legal knowledge and can't understand case specifics



Better Approach:

Consult licensed attorneys, use AI only for general research starting points

Financial Advice

Getting investment recommendations or tax advice from AI.

Why Not: Markets change rapidly, personal situations vary greatly



Better Approach:

Use certified financial advisors, AI for basic education only

Academic Dishonesty

Having AI complete assignments, write papers, or take exams.

Why Not: Violates academic integrity, prevents real learning



Better Approach:

Use AI for brainstorming and understanding concepts, not completing work



Health & Safety

Medical Diagnosis

Using AI to diagnose symptoms or recommend treatments.

Why Not: Medical conditions are complex, misdiagnosis can be dangerous



Better Approach:

Always consult healthcare professionals for medical concerns

Mental Health Crisis

Relying on AI for serious depression, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts.

Why Not: AI cannot provide proper crisis intervention or emotional support



Better Approach:

Contact mental health professionals, crisis hotlines, or trusted support networks

Emergency Situations

Using AI during medical emergencies or safety threats.

Why Not: Time-critical situations need immediate professional response



Better Approach:

Call emergency services (911), then seek AI information if needed later



Critical Decisions

Business Strategy

Making major business decisions based solely on AI recommendations.

Why Not: AI lacks real-time market data and company-specific context



Better Approach:

Use AI for research and brainstorming, combine with expert analysis

Personal Relationships

Using AI to make decisions about marriage, breakups, or family conflicts.

Why Not: AI doesn't understand emotional complexity or personal history



Better Approach:

Seek counseling, talk to trusted friends, use AI only for communication tips

Career Changes

Making major career decisions based on AI career assessments alone.

Why Not: Career fit involves personal values, skills, and market realities



Better Approach:

Use career counselors, mentors, and informational interviews alongside AI insights



Privacy & Security

Confidential Information

Sharing company secrets, personal data, or private documents with AI.

Why Not: AI conversations may be stored or used for training



Better Approach:

Use generic examples, anonymize data, or use private/enterprise AI tools

Identity Verification

Using AI to verify someone's identity or background.

Why Not: AI can hallucinate facts and has outdated information



Better Approach:

Use official background check services and verified databases

Security Decisions

Relying on AI for cybersecurity or safety protocol decisions.

Why Not: Security threats evolve rapidly and need expert assessment



Better Approach:

Consult security professionals, use AI for general education only



Accuracy Limitations

AI can be confidently wrong - always verify important information



Dates & Events

AI often gets dates wrong or confuses similar events. Always cross-reference historical facts.



Statistics & Data

Numbers may be outdated or inaccurate. Verify statistics with original sources.



People & Quotes

AI frequently attributes fake quotes to real people. Verify all quotations.



Current Events

AI training data has cutoff dates. Check recent news from reliable sources.



When Human Judgment is Essential

Emotional Intelligence

- Reading social cues and body language
- Understanding cultural context
- Empathizing with others' feelings
- Managing conflict and relationships

Creative Expression

- Original artistic vision
- Personal storytelling
- Unique problem-solving approaches
- Innovation requiring intuition

Ethical Dilemmas

- Complex moral decisions
- Balancing competing values
- Understanding consequences
- Cultural and personal ethics

Real-World Context

- Assessing practical feasibility
- Understanding local conditions
- Evaluating risks and benefits
- Making nuanced judgments



Decision Framework: Should I Use AI?

Step 1: Is this high-stakes?

Could mistakes cause serious harm to health, safety, relationships, or finances? If yes → proceed with extra caution



Step 2: Do I need current information?

Is the topic rapidly changing or time-sensitive? If yes → verify with current sources



Step 3: Is expertise required?

Does this need professional judgment, credentials, or specialized training? If yes → consult experts



Step 4: Can I verify the output?

Do I have ways to fact-check and validate AI responses? If no → be very cautious



Green Light for AI:

Brainstorming • Learning concepts • First drafts • Organizing ideas • Getting unstuck • Exploring options



Proceed with Caution:

Health decisions • Legal advice • Financial planning • Academic work • Personal relationships • Current events