



INTRO LESSON

AI as a Thinking Partner — Not a Thinking Replacement

Time: 30–45 minutes

Grades: 6–12 (adaptable)

Language Approach: ASL discussion + written English comparison

Purpose: Students understand how AI can support learning without replacing their thinking or language development.

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Understand what AI is (and is not)
 - Recognize helpful vs harmful uses
 - Practice analyzing AI responses
 - Connect AI use to language development (ASL + English)
 - Create classroom AI norms
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Opening Hook: “Who Is Doing the Thinking?” (5–7 minutes)

Put this on the board (visually bold):

- **If a computer writes your answer... Who learned?**

Have students discuss in pairs (ASL).

Then whole group share:

- Who has used AI?
- Where?
- What did you use it for?
- Did it actually help you understand?

Keep it dynamic. Validate experiences — even misuse. This is not a lecture; it’s exploration.

What AI Really Is (5 minutes)

Instead of a script, try this interactive framing:

Ask:

- Is AI alive?
- Does AI understand meaning?
- Does AI have experiences?
- Does AI know ASL?

Clarify with students:

- AI predicts patterns in language.
- It does NOT think.
- It does NOT understand.
- It does NOT know if something is true.

On board (big and bold):

- AI supports thinking.
- AI does not replace thinking.

Connect to bilingual development:

- Your brain is growing in/through ASL and English.
- If AI does all the language work for you, your brain doesn't grow.

Activity: Helpful or Harmful? (10 minutes)

Create 4 corners of the room:

- Brainstorming
- Explaining a concept
- Writing a full essay
- Translating directions

Students move to the corner they think is:

- Helpful
- Harmful
- Depends

Have groups discuss:

- Why?
- When is it okay?
- When is it not?

Then debrief as a class - Teacher should guide them toward nuance below:

Helpful:

- Brainstorming ideas
- Clarifying confusing concepts
- Study practice
- Feedback

Harmful:

- Copy/paste answers
- Submitting full AI essays
- Avoiding productive struggle
- Replacing language practice

Key statement: If AI does the thinking, you don't grow.

Mini Investigation: Is This Good Enough? (15-20 minutes)

Display an AI response to:

"Explain the theme of friendship for 7th grade."
Show it in written English.

Then:

1. **Read it.**
2. **Discuss in ASL.**
3. **Ask:**
 - o Is this clear?
 - o Is it specific?
 - o Is it boring?
 - o Is it missing examples?
 - o Does it sound like a real student?
 - o When you read this, what do you feel?

Now ask:

How would YOU improve this?
Have students suggest revisions.

This shows:

AI output = draft material
Students = thinkers and editors

The Golden Rule Moment (Important!)

Write on board:

If you can't explain it, you didn't learn it.

Then extend:

The work must start with you.
The work must end with you.

Make this your classroom norm.

Create Class AI Norms (8–10 minutes)

In small groups (ASL discussion), ask:

- When should we use AI?
- When should we NOT use AI?
- What must students always do?

Have groups write 2–3 norms.

Combine into a final posted list, such as:

- ✓ Start with your own ideas
- ✓ Edit AI responses
- ✓ Fact-check important information
- ✓ Keep your voice
- ✓ Be honest about AI use
- ✓ Be able to explain your work

Post visibly in both ASL video format (if possible) and written English.

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Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

Students respond (written or video):

1. One way AI can help learning
2. One way AI can hurt learning
3. One class rule that matters most

Optional deeper prompt (for older students):

- How could AI affect language development in Deaf students?

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Teacher Talking Points (ASL-Friendly Framing)

Use these consistently:

- "AI is a tool — not a brain replacement."
- "Use AI to think more, not think less."
- "Your brain grows when you struggle."
- "You are responsible for what you submit."
- "If you use AI, you must understand it."
- "It starts with you. It ends with you."

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Optional Extension (If Time Allows)

Ask:

- Could AI be biased?
- Could it misunderstand Deaf culture?
- Could it miss ASL nuance?