

Just Because You Can: Teaching Adult Learners When to Use AI and When Not To

Vi Hawes, M. Ed • VH Ed Tech Consulting

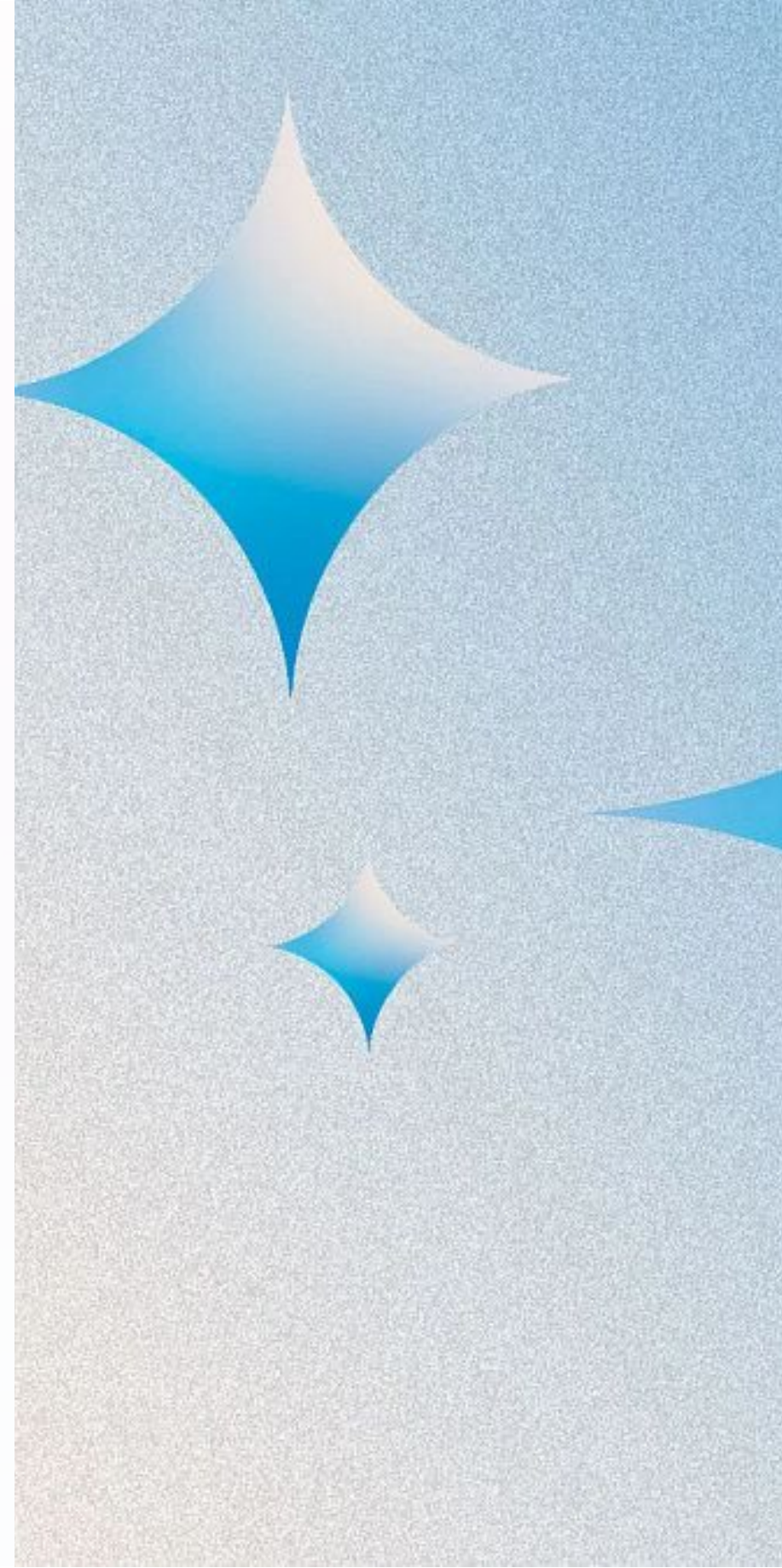
COABE AI Virtual Summit

October 6, 2026



WORKFORCE & ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

AI JUDGMENT FRAMEWORK



Agenda:

"Would You?"

Three rapid-fire scenarios. Would you use AI? 👍
or 👎

The Gap

Learners already encounter AI. Are we teaching them to navigate it?

STOP Framework

Four questions. One traffic light. Every decision gets easier.

Activity 1

Red Light, Green Light. Vote 🟢🟡🔴, then name the STOP letter.

Activity 2 + Language

Same task, different context. Sentence frames that work.

Close & Commit

One scenario you'll bring back this week.

Vi Hawes, M.Ed (she/her/hers)



ESOL Instructor / Ed Tech Specialist /
Consultant

VH Ed Tech Consulting, LLC

✨ Fun Facts!

1. I completed both a half and full marathon
2. I can speak 3 languages
3. I gave birth to my second child AND completed my Master's program soon after.



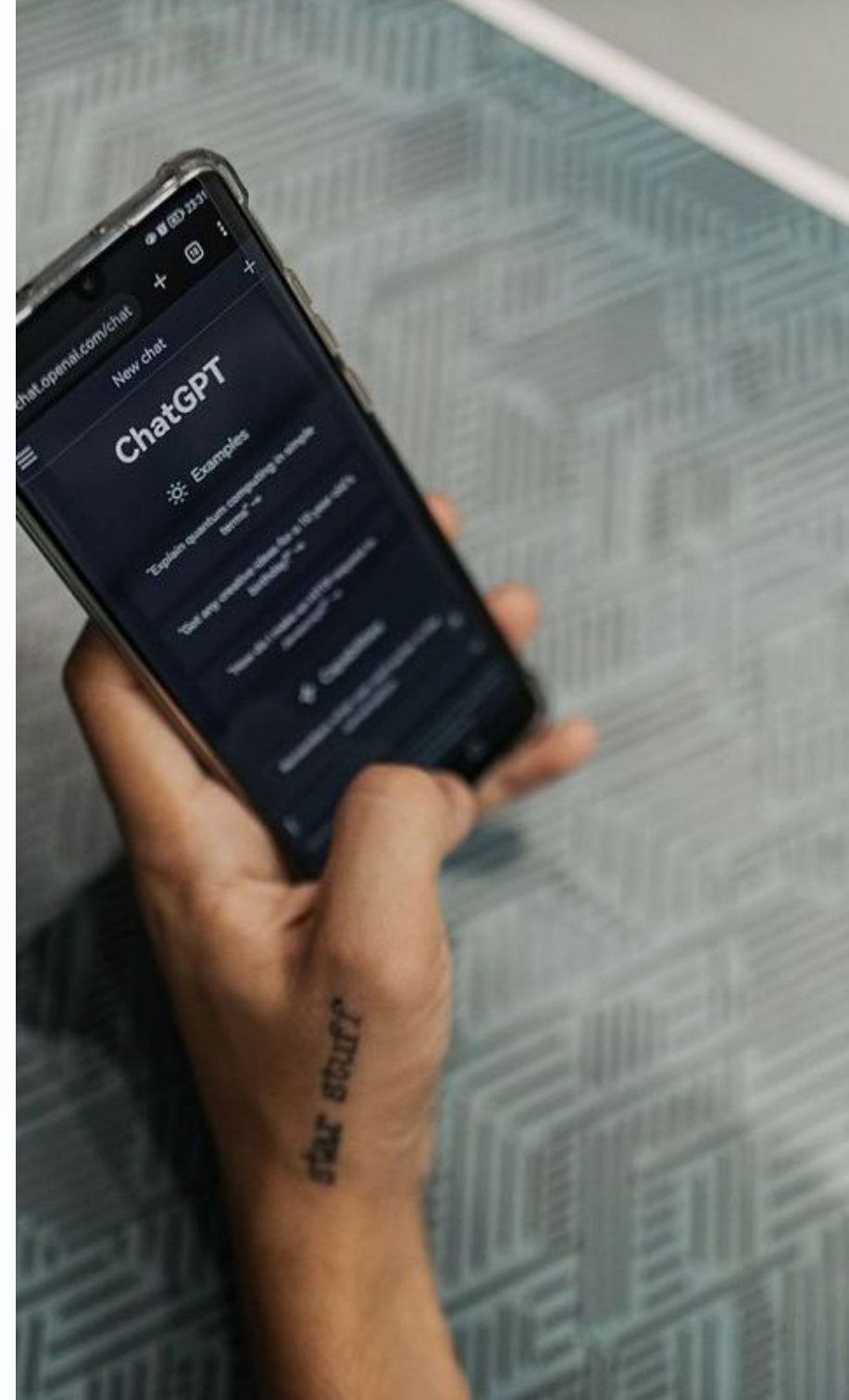
Would You?

Let's kick things off with a rapid-fire exercise. For each scenario below, quickly decide if you would use AI to help you (👍) or not (👎).

Scenario 1

Writing a heartfelt birthday message to your mom.

📄 Would you use AI for this? 👍 or 👎



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

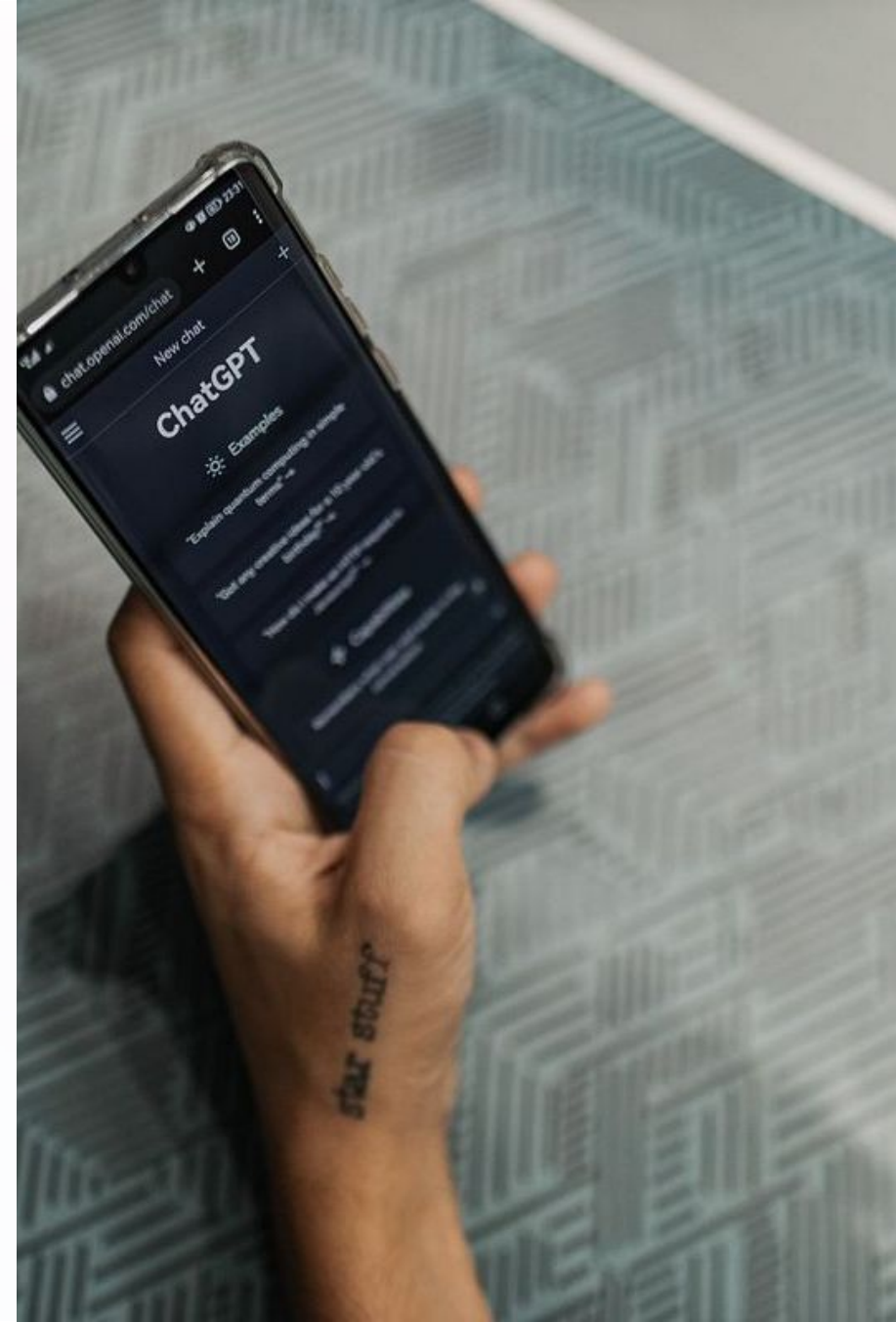
Would You?

Scenario 2

Summarizing a 40-page policy document to prepare for a meeting.



Would you use AI for this? 👍 or 👎



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

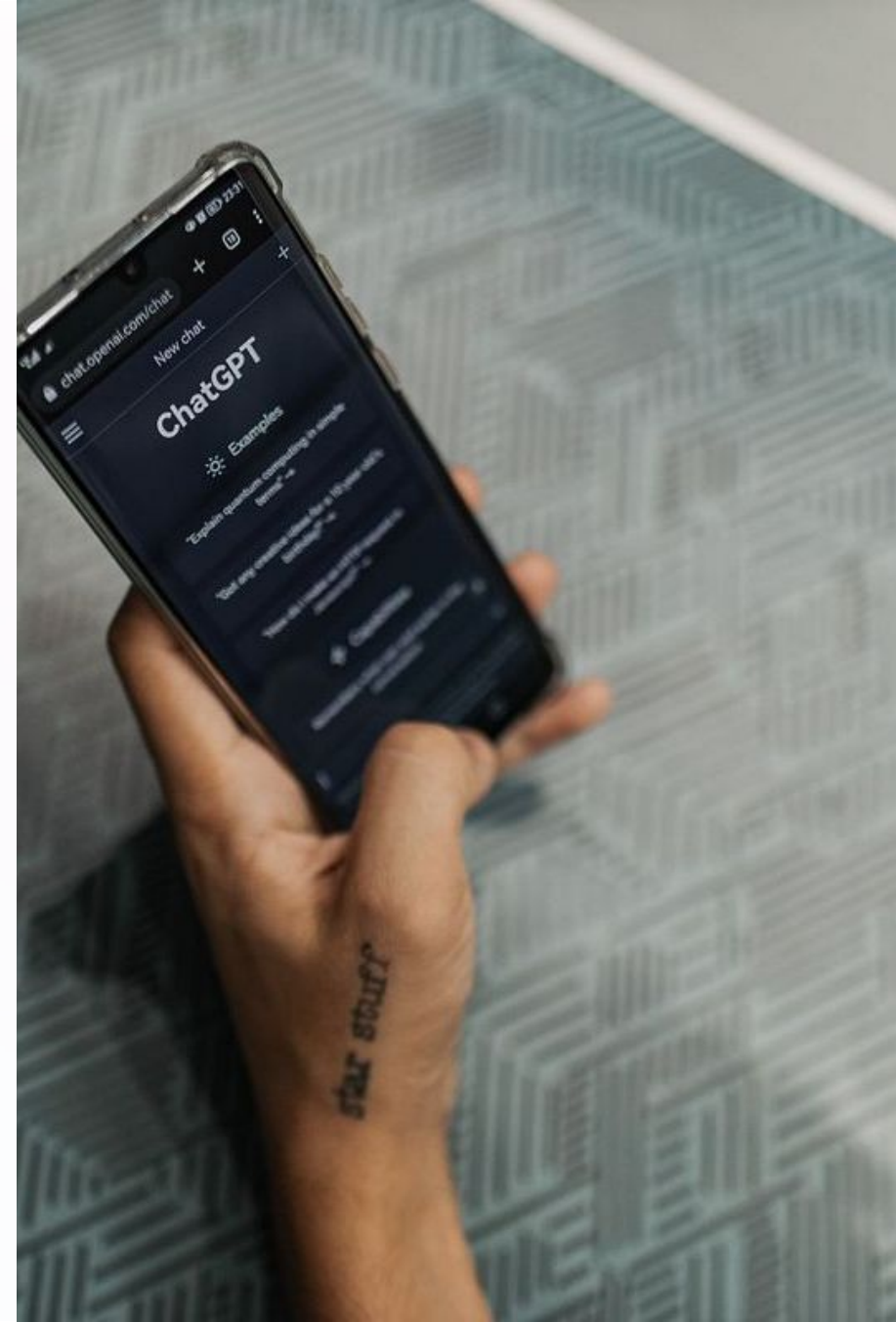
Would You?

Scenario 3

Drafting the content for your own performance self-evaluation.



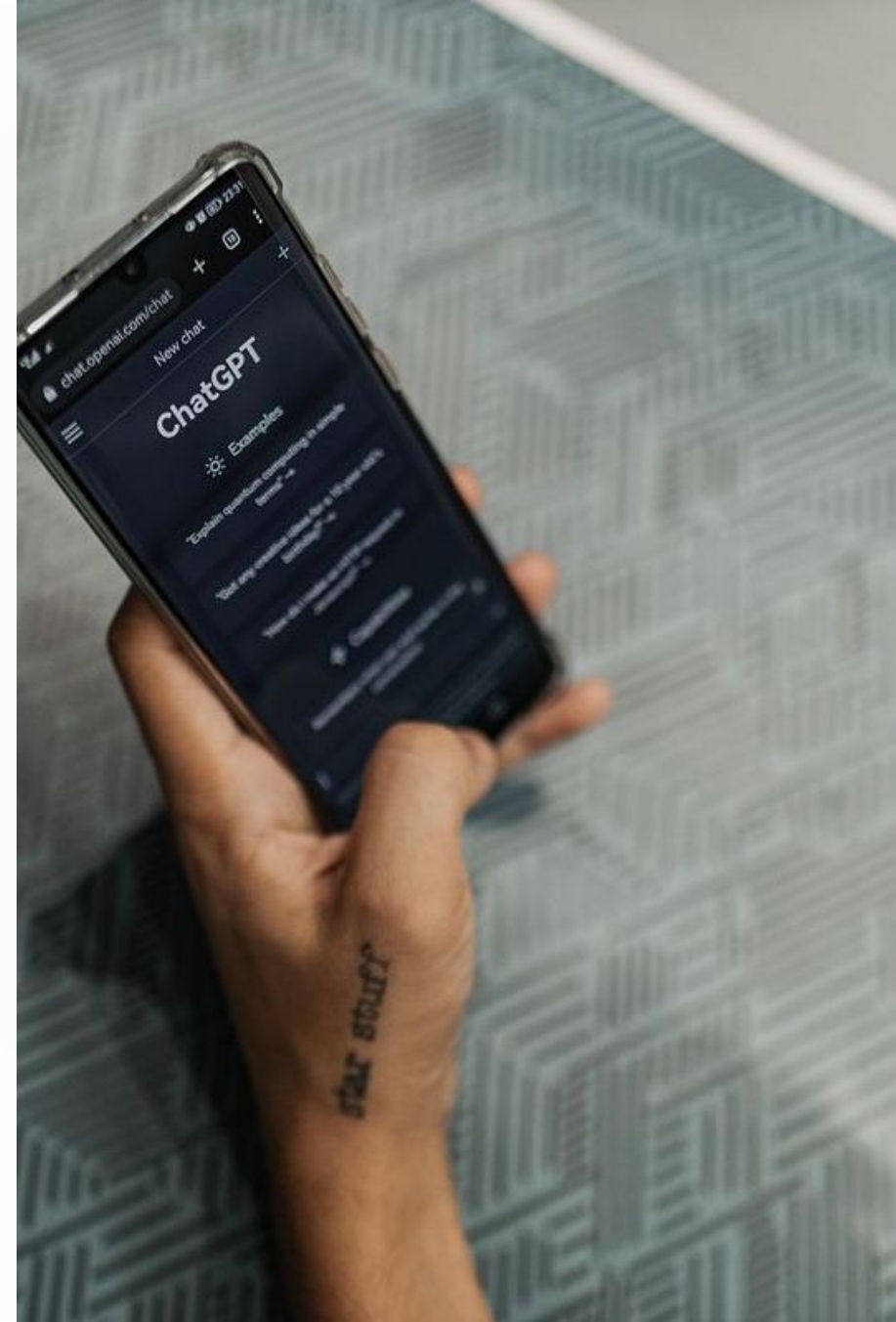
Would you use AI for this? 👍 or 👎



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

Would You?

That critical gut check is the essential skill. Right now, almost nobody is teaching it to our adult learners.



The Unseen AI: Where Learners Already Meet It

Our adult learners are already engaging with AI, often without realizing it. Are we preparing them to navigate this new landscape?



Job Applications

AI screens resumes and analyzes application responses, influencing hiring decisions.



Scored Assessments

AI grades written assignments and oral presentations, impacting evaluations and progress.



Workplace Software

Embedded AI tools suggest content, automate tasks, and personalize user experiences.



Online Tutors

AI-powered platforms provide personalized feedback and adaptive learning paths.

The STOP Framework

Four questions. ESOL-friendly language. One verbal cue: "**Let's STOP first.**"

Letter	Stands For	Question	Protects
S	Skill	Is this something I need to learn myself?	Skill-building
T	Trust	Can I check if the answer is right? What if it's wrong?	Accuracy & stakes
O	Ownership	Am I allowed to use AI here? Will I be honest that I did?	Integrity & rules
P	Privacy	What am I sharing? Is it safe to share?	Personal data

The Traffic Light Decision

Green — Go

AI supports your goal. Output is easy to check. Nothing private is shared.

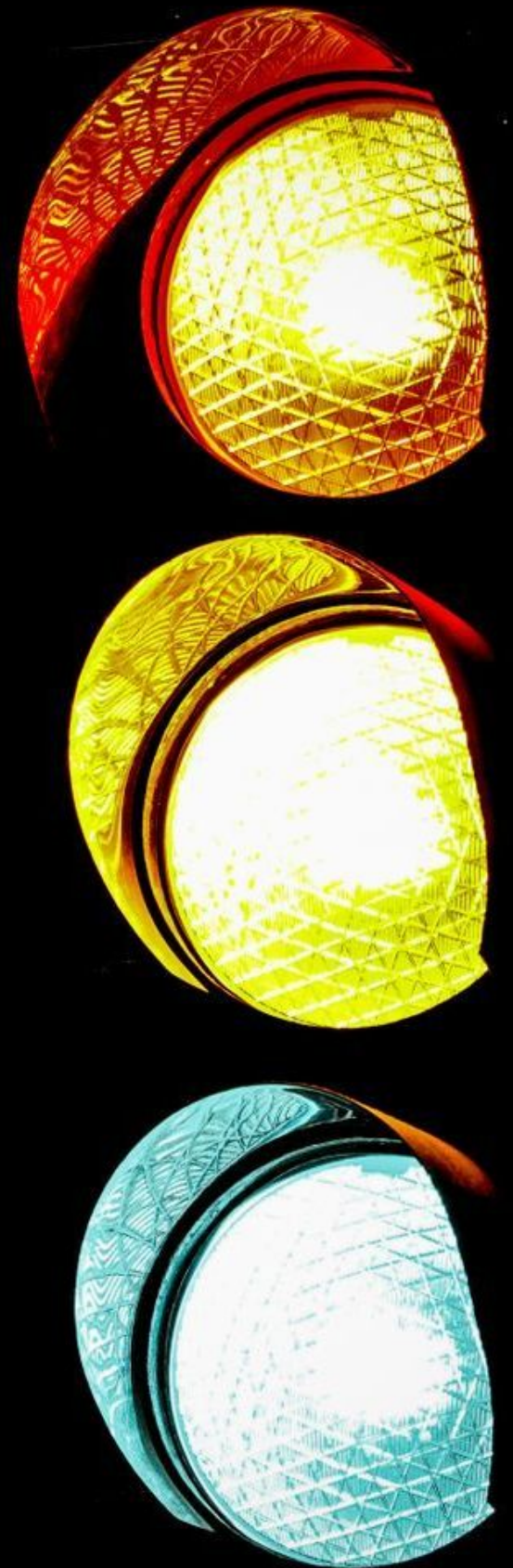
Yellow — Use with Care

Remove names.
Verify facts. Try a first draft yourself.
Most real decisions land here.

Red — Stop

You're building the skill. Mistakes are costly. It isn't allowed. Data is sensitive.

 The goal isn't 'AI good' or 'AI bad.' The goal is using AI on purpose.



ACTIVITY 1

Red Light, Green Light

Vote    on each scenario, then name the STOP letter that decided it.

Scenario 1

GED student has AI write their practice essay.

ACTIVITY 1

Red Light, Green Light

Vote    on each scenario, then name the STOP letter that decided it.

Scenario 2

Job seeker uses AI to tailor their resume.

ACTIVITY 1

Red Light, Green Light

Vote    on each scenario, then name the STOP letter that decided it.

Scenario 3

CNA student asks AI to confirm a medication dosage.

ACTIVITY 1

Red Light, Green Light

Vote    on each scenario, then name the STOP letter that decided it.

Scenario 4

ESOL learner has AI make vocabulary practice quizzes.

ACTIVITY 1

Red Light, Green Light

Vote    on each scenario, then name the STOP letter that decided it.

Scenario 5

Teacher pastes student essays (with names) into a free chatbot.

ACTIVITY 1

Red Light, Green Light

Vote    on each scenario, then name the STOP letter that decided it.

Scenario 6

Employee uses AI to draft email with account details.

Where the Rules Live

AI policies and expectations vary significantly across different environments. Knowing where to look for these guidelines is essential for responsible AI use.



Workplace

Company AI policies often dictate how employees handle confidential data and the use of AI tools. Employers may also screen for AI-generated applications.



Postsecondary

AI policies can change from syllabus to syllabus, even at the same college. Learners must check each course for specific guidelines on AI use.



Assessments

Strict rules govern AI use in GED, other proctored exams, and certification tests. Unapproved AI can lead to disqualification.

Language That Works

“

With Learners

"AI can help with this later. Today we're building ____, so we'll do it ourselves first."

”

“

With Colleagues

"I'm not asking if AI is good or bad. I'm asking when it helps learning and when it gets in the way."

”

“

With Administration

"Our learners already meet AI in hiring and training. Teaching judgment is workforce readiness, not a tech add-on."

”

CLOSE & COMMIT

Close & Commit

Complete this sentence in chat:

"Just because you can use AI to ____, doesn't mean you should, because ____."

Take With You

The **STOP** framework: four questions before every prompt

Use Tomorrow

Red Light, Green Light activity: works with any level, any context

Teach for Life

Judgment: the skill no AI can build for your learners