AI-Supported Academic Reading Workbook

Education and Learning in the Digital Age

FREE LESSON

AI-Supported Reading Workbook

1. Who is it for?

This booklet is designed for international students who are preparing to study, or are already studying, at university or college where English is the medium of instruction. It focuses on developing academic reading skills through the theme of education and learning in the digital age**,** helping students interpret meaning, structure and writer intention in academic texts.

No specialist knowledge of education or technology is required. Depending on their level of English, some students may need additional time to process the texts. Each lesson combines guided reading tasks, individual analysis and reflection activities, enabling learners to practise core academic reading skills in meaningful university-level contexts.

2. How long will it take to complete the booklet?

The time required will vary depending on the student's level of English and reading experience. On average, each lesson is designed to take 45–60 minutes, including guided reading, analysis, AI-supported checking and reflection.

The workbook contains ten core lessons**,** designed to be studied sequentially, moving from identifying main ideas to integrated critical reading. Lessons may also be used individually to target specific academic reading skills.

3. What context is used to practise academic writing?

The thematic focus of this workbook is education and learning in the digital age**.** Across the lessons, students practise academic reading through topics such as digital learning, AI-powered personalised learning, student engagement, assessment and the future of higher education.

This familiar and neutral academic context allows students to focus on interpreting meaning, structure, stance and limitation rather than specialist subject knowledge. The texts function as a vehicle for developing academic reading skills rather than testing background knowledge.

4. How should this booklet be used?

Each lesson follows a clear and consistent structure:

- clearly set out aims.
- a short academic reading text.
- guided and independent reading tasks.
- an AI- supported interpretation check.
- reflection on reading strategies and AI use.
- optional extension task with longer, more challenging text.

Throughout the workbook, students are guided in responsible and controlled use of AI tools to support noticing, interpretation and reflection, rather than answer generation. Checklists and reflection tasks help learners evaluate their understanding, judgement and confidence as academic readers.

5. What outcomes should students expect?

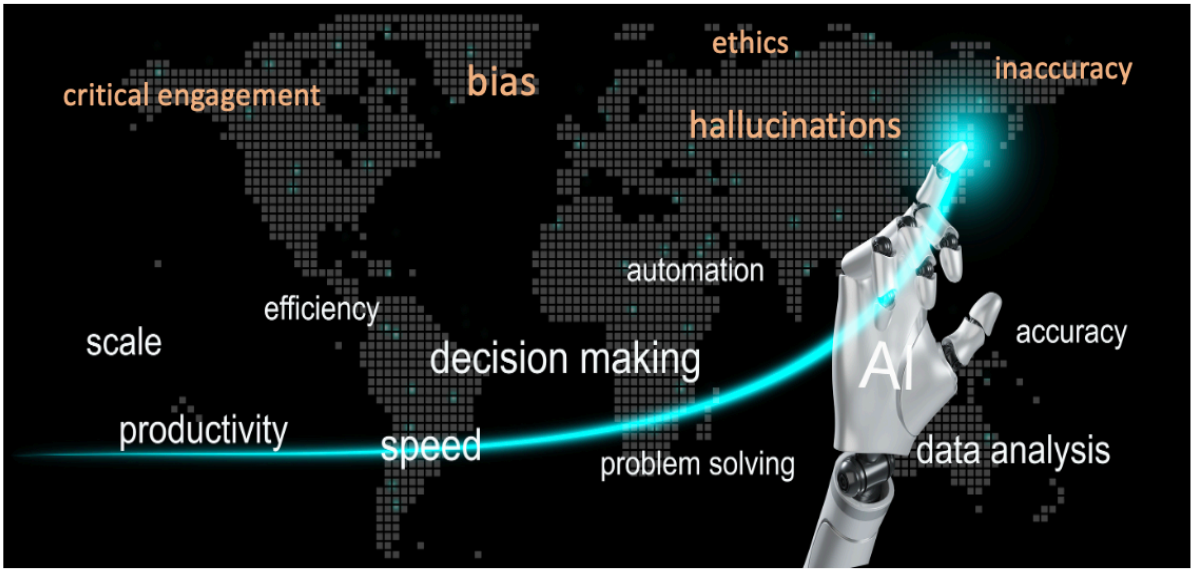
By the end of this workbook, students will have greater control over key skills required for academic reading. They will be able to:

- identify main ideas and supporting detail in academic texts.
- Distinguish between key and minor detail.
- interpret writer stance, emphasis and limitation.
- understand how cohesion and organisation support meaning.
- read academic texts critically rather than passively.
- reflect on how AI tools can support academic reading without replacing judgement.

The final lesson brings together the reading skills developed throughout the workbook, helping students demonstrate confident, critical academic reading in preparation for further university study.

Workbook Contents

Benefits and Limitations of AI in Education



Lesson 4

Recognising Stance and Hedging

Lesson 4: Recognising Stance and Hedging

Aims of the Lesson

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- recognise whether a writer's stance is positive, cautious, or critical.
- identify common hedging language used in academic texts.
- distinguish between strong claims and cautious academic claims.
- evaluate AI feedback on writer stance critically.

→ **Tip: Focus on how confidently ideas are expressed, not whether you agree with them.**

⇒ ***Note: The theme of this lesson is the 'benefits and limitations of AI in education'. You do not need any specialist knowledge, but you may like to use a dictionary to check unknown words.***

Task 1: Noticing writer's stance

Read the paragraph below. Underline words or phrases that show the writer's stance towards AI in education and decide whether the overall stance is positive, cautious or critical. Write your answer in the following box.

Reading Text 1
AI tools are increasingly used in higher education to support teaching and learning. These tools may enhance efficiency by providing faster feedback and personalised learning pathways. However, concerns have been raised about data privacy and the potential over-reliance on automated systems. As a result, many institutions appear to be adopting AI cautiously rather than fully integrating it into all aspects of education.

	Positive ✓	Cautious ✓	Critical ✓
The writer's stance is:			

⇒ *Discuss your answers with your classmates and your teacher.*

Task 2: Identifying stance and hedging

Look again at the paragraph in Task 1 and answer the questions below:

1.	Which words or phrases reduce the strength of the claims?	
2.	Which sentence introduces a limitation or concern?	
3.	Why do you think the writer avoids strong or absolute language?	

⇒ *Do **NOT** compare your answers with your classmates. Move on to the next exercise.*

Task 3: AI-supported stance and hedging check

Now use an AI tool to support your learning.

	Step		
1.	Copy reading text 1 into your chosen AI tool and copy this prompt exactly as it is written: Identify the writer's overall stance in this paragraph and highlight any hedging language. Do not summarise the paragraph.		
2.	Compare the AI's response with your answers by completing these questions:		
	i.	Did the AI identify the same stance as you?	
	ii.	Did it highlight the same hedging expressions?	
	iii.	Do you agree with the AI's interpretation? Why or why not?	

⇒ *Discuss your answers with your classmates and your teacher.*

Task 4: Independent transfer

Read the paragraph below. Decide whether the writer's stance is positive, cautious, or critical. Underline any words or phrases that show hedging.

⚠ Do **NOT** use an AI tool for this task.

Reading Text 2
AI-driven study support tools are increasingly used in higher education to guide independent learning. These tools can be understood to facilitate the recommendation of resources and study strategies based on learner behaviour, helping students focus on areas where additional support **is** likely to be beneficial. When integrated with clear guidance and thoughtful course design, automated study support has the potential to encourage more targeted engagement with course content and is expected to contribute to the development of students' ability to manage their own learning effectively.

	Positive ✓	Cautious ✓	Critical ✓
The writer's stance is:			

⇒ *Do **NOT** compare your answers with your classmates. Move on to the next exercise.*

Task 5: Feedback

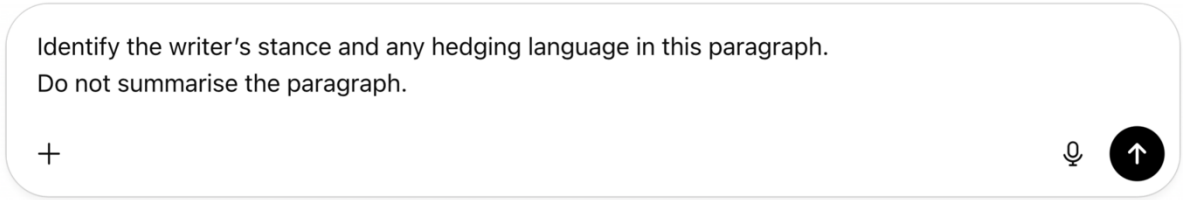
Step 1: Check your own work

Read your answers from task 4 and tick (✓) the statements that are true.

1.	I identified the writer's overall stance accurately.	
2.	I recognised hedging language rather than strong claims.	
3.	I recognised both positive points and limitations expressed by the writer.	

Step 2: Use an AI tool to support your learning

Copy reading text 2 and the following prompt into the AI tool.



Task 6: Reflection

How did using AI help you confirm or question your understanding of writer stance and hedging in this lesson? Give **ONE** specific example.

⇒ *Discuss your answers with your classmates and your teacher.*

Task 7: Optional extension task

Read the text below and identify the stance and hedging language. For each choice, write a brief rationale explaining how the hedging language affects the strength or certainty of the writer's position**.**

⚠ Do **NOT** use an AI tool for this task.

Reading Text 3
The use of AI-generated feedback on short academic tasks is increasingly discussed within higher education contexts. Although this approach is often promoted as a way of providing timely responses to student work, particularly in large courses where individual feedback is limited, its educational value remains contested. AI systems are generally limited to identifying surface-level features such as recurring language errors or incomplete responses, which offers only partial support during early stages of task completion. As a result, AI feedback is more accurately viewed as a constrained supplement to human input rather than a meaningful alternative. Moreover, AI-generated comments are typically based on pattern recognition and do not consistently account for task purpose or disciplinary expectations. There is also a growing concern that students may rely on automated feedback without critically evaluating its relevance or accuracy. Taken together, these limitations indicate that AI feedback should be treated with caution and carefully embedded within a broader learning framework. Even when used selectively and with guidance, its contribution to student learning appears uneven and is likely to depend more on student interpretation than on the capability of the technology itself.

⇒ *Apply the strategies you learned in this lesson to check your answers.*

Teacher's Notes and Answer Key

1.	Identifying main ideas.
2.	Understanding supporting detail.
3.	Distinguishing between key and minor information.
4.	Recognising writer stance and hedging.
5.	Understanding text organisation.
6.	Interpreting reference and cohesion.
7.	Interpreting description and process.
8.	Inferring meaning and writer intention.
9.	Evaluating scope and limitation.
10.	Integrated critical reading and AI reflection.

Lesson 4: Recognising Stance and Hedging

Overall purpose

This lesson develops students' ability to recognise writer stance and hedging in academic texts, a core skill for critical reading, evaluating claims and interpreting AI-generated feedback accurately.

Task 1: Noticing writer's stance

This task focuses on identifying language that signals the writer's stance towards AI in education. When reviewing answers, check that students have underlined words or phrases that indicate levels of confidence, caution, or evaluation, and that they can justify the overall stance selected.

⇒ *Brief peer or whole-class checking is appropriate.*

Reading Text 1
AI tools are increasingly used in higher education to support teaching and learning. These tools *may enhance* efficiency by providing faster feedback and personalised learning pathways. *However*, *concerns have been raised* about data privacy and the *potential over-reliance* on automated systems. As a result, many institutions *appear to be adopting* AI *cautiously* rather than fully integrating it into all aspects of education.

	Positive ✓	Cautious ✓	Critical ✓
The writer's stance is:		✓	

Task 2: Identifying stance and hedging

This task encourages students to explain how stance is constructed through hedging and limitation rather than simply identifying labels. Ask students to focus on how confidently ideas are expressed.

⇒ *Do **NOT** provide feedback until all students have completed tasks 2 & 3.*

1.	Which words or phrases reduce the strength of the claims?	*may enhance, potential, appear to be, cautiously*
2.	Which sentence introduces a limitation or concern?	*However, concerns have been raised about data privacy and the potential over-reliance on automated systems.*
3.	Why do you think the writer avoids strong or absolute language?	*To maintain academic caution.* *To reflect uncertainty or ongoing debate.* *To balance benefits and limitations.*

Task 3: AI-supported stance and hedging check

This task highlights that AI interpretations of writer stance are not fixed rules. Students compare AI feedback with their own judgements and evaluate any similarities or differences. Class discussion focuses on why AI interpretations were accepted or rejected, rather than identifying correct answers.

Task 4: Independent transfer

This task requires students to apply their understanding of stance and hedging to a new paragraph independently. No AI tool should be used.

⇒ *Do **NOT** provide feedback until all students have completed tasks 4, 5 & 6.*

Reading Text 2
AI-driven study support tools are increasingly used in higher education to guide independent learning. These tools *can be understood to facilitate* the recommendation of resources and study strategies based on learner behaviour, helping students focus on areas where additional support *is likely to be beneficial*. When integrated with clear guidance and thoughtful course design, automated study support *has the potential to* encourage more targeted engagement with course content and *is expected to contribute to* the development of students' ability to manage their own learning effectively.

	Positive ✓	Cautious ✓	Critical ✓
The writer's stance is:	✓		

Task 5: Feedback

This task asks students to first evaluate their own answers from Task 4 by ticking the self-check statements, focusing on whether their decisions are based on meaning rather than wording alone. Students then compare their judgements with AI feedback, noting similarities or differences.

Task 6: Reflection

This reflection encourages students to evaluate how AI supported or challenged their understanding of writer stance and hedging. Class discussion should focus on why AI judgements were accepted or rejected, rather than on correcting individual answers.

Task 7: Extension task

This optional task allows students to practise the lesson strategy using a more challenging text. It encourages them to apply what they have learned and to compare their analysis with AI, focusing on interpretation rather than answers.