

What Does Your City Lose If Only Rich Students Learn AI?

A discussion catalyst on AI access, fairness, and the digital divide.

Students debate what happens when powerful learning tools reach only some people — and what they can do to share what they learn.

Teacher note

This is a non-partisan equity discussion. The question is simple and serious: if AI becomes a powerful learning and work tool, what happens when only students who can afford access, devices, coaching, and time learn to use it well?

Keep the discussion grounded in access, skills, opportunity, confidence, language, devices, and community support. No party politics. Stay in class.

1 40-minute discussion flow

Teacher-led. Students move from fairness to personal action.

0–5 min Hook

Ask: “If only some students get calculators, coaching, and internet, is the exam still fair?”
Then connect to AI.

5–15 min Live AI map

Run the access prompt.
List consequences for students, families, schools, jobs, and the city.

15–30 min Class

debate

What does the city lose if AI skills become unequal?

30–40 min Personal

step

What could you do to share what you learn?

☐ Class understands this is about access and fairness, not party politics.

2 Run the live access prompt

Use Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, or Perplexity. Perplexity can help find examples or data if needed.

COPY-PASTE LIVE CLASS PROMPT

If only students who can afford it learn to use AI well, what happens to everyone else – and to the city?

Explain for Grades 9–12. Keep it balanced and non-partisan. Separate:

1. What advantages AI-skilled students may get
2. What disadvantages other students may face
3. What the city loses if talent is left out
4. What schools, families, and students could do to make access fairer
5. What one student could do to share what they learn safely and respectfully

TEACHER MOVE

Before showing AI's answer, ask students to predict one advantage, one disadvantage, and one city-level consequence.

☐

Class ran the live prompt and mapped consequences.

3 **Map the access gap**

AI inequality is not only about money. It can also be about guidance, language, devices, and confidence.



Device + internet gap

Some students may not have reliable devices, data, quiet space, or time to practise AI tools.



Guidance gap

Some students learn how to ask better prompts, verify answers, and use AI safely. Others only hear vague warnings or hype.



Language + confidence gap

Students who are less confident in English or formal writing may need more support to use AI well.

THOUGHT BULB

The digital divide is not just “who has a device?” It is also “who knows how to use the tool well?”

4 **Debate: what does the city lose?**

Students debate consequences at three levels: student, school, city.

If only rich students learn AI well...

They may get better homework support, interview practice, writing feedback, coding help, and career awareness.

They may become more confident using future workplace tools.

Their schools may move faster because teachers and parents have more support.

The city may lose...

Talent from students who could have built useful things but never got access.

Fair competition in learning, jobs, internships, and entrepreneurship.

Local solutions from communities that understand real problems but lack tools.

DISCUSSION SENTENCE STARTER

“The city loses _____ because students without AI access may not get _____.”

☐ Class debated what students, schools, and the city may lose.

5 Who gets left out?

Use categories carefully. The point is empathy and systems, not labelling classmates.

Barrier	How it affects AI learning	What could help?
No reliable device or internet	Less practice, fewer chances to experiment, slower skill growth.	Shared school lab time, library access, offline guides, group practice.
No adult guidance	Student may copy blindly, trust wrong answers, or avoid AI completely.	Teacher demos, simple safety rules, peer explanation, guided prompts.
Language confidence	Student may think AI is only for fluent English users.	Local-language examples, simple prompts, translation support, confidence-building.
Fear of doing something wrong	Student avoids experimenting and falls behind.	Low-risk practice, clear “use AI to understand, then do it yourself” rules.

CLASS BOUNDARY

Do not ask students to reveal personal family income, devices, marks, or home situation. Discuss barriers as systems, not as labels on classmates.

☐ Class discussed barriers respectfully without targeting classmates.

6 Page 3 escalation: what could you share?

Students move from “this is unfair” to “what small thing can I do?”



Teach one prompt

Show a friend how to ask a better question using WHO / WHAT / HOW or a clear constraint.



Share one safety rule

Tell someone: “AI can be wrong.
Check important answers against a textbook or trusted source.”



Make one guide

Create a one-page “AI for homework understanding” guide: use AI to understand, then write yourself.

STUDENT-ACTION PROMPT

Help me make a simple, safe one-page guide I can share with a classmate who is new to AI.

The guide should explain:

1. How to ask one clear prompt
2. How to check if AI is wrong
3. Why they should not copy-paste homework
4. One small practice activity

Keep it friendly and simple. Do not collect personal data.

PERSONAL MOVE

Fairness is not only a big policy question. It can start with one student sharing one useful skill responsibly.

☐ Each student named one safe thing they could share.

7 Discussion questions

Choose 3–5 depending on time.

CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Is AI access becoming like access to coaching, internet, or English fluency?
2. What does a city lose when only some students get future skills?
3. Is access enough, or do students also need guidance?
4. What is the difference between sharing AI skills and helping someone cheat?
5. What should schools do so AI does not widen the gap?
6. What small thing can a student do without being preachy?

THOUGHT BULB

Equity does not mean everyone uses AI the same way. It means everyone gets a fair chance to learn how to use powerful tools wisely.

8 **Four-page class kit preview**

Use this as a printable lesson structure.

Page 1 • Hook + Setup

Is the tool fair if only some people get it?

Teacher introduces AI access as a fairness issue using coaching, calculators, internet, or language support as simple comparisons.

Page 2 • Consequence Map

What happens to everyone else?

Class maps student-level, school-level, and city-level consequences of unequal AI skill access.

What could you share?

Students identify one safe, honest, non-cheating way to share what they learn about AI.

My fairness sentence

Students complete: “If AI skills are only for some students, the city loses _____. One thing I can share is _____.”

9 Exit ticket

End with one fairness sentence and one action.

If AI skills are only for some students...

If AI skills are only for some students, the city loses _____. One thing I can share is _____.

CLASS CLOSER

A city is stronger when more students can ask smart questions, check answers, and use powerful tools responsibly.

☐ Students completed the fairness exit ticket.

Teacher wrap

Final board line: **“AI access is not just a tech issue. It is a fairness issue.”**

☐ Class kept the discussion balanced, respectful, and non-partisan.

☐ Class discussed access without asking students to reveal personal income or home details.

☐ Class named one responsible way to share AI learning.