

Designing AI-Resistant Assignments

Five Principles to Out-Design AI

You can't out-detect AI. You can out-design it.

1. Process Over Product

Require drafts, reflections, or documentation of thinking. AI can produce a polished final product, but it can't fake a messy, authentic process.

Example: Annotated bibliography with a reflection on how sources changed the student's thinking.

2. Local and Personal Context

Tie assignments to class discussions, course-specific materials, or personal experience. AI doesn't know what happened in your class on Tuesday.

Example: "Apply this framework to the case study we discussed" or "Interview a family member about their experience."

3. Metacognition and Explanation

Ask students to explain their choices, not just make them. "Why did you structure it this way?" is hard to fake.

Example: Code that works + a recorded walkthrough explaining the decisions behind it.

4. Iteration with Feedback

Build in checkpoints where you respond and they revise. AI can generate content, but it can't incorporate your specific feedback over time.

Example: Proposal → feedback → draft → feedback → final submission.

5. AI as a Visible Tool

Make AI part of the assignment instead of pretending it doesn't exist. When AI use is visible and structured, it becomes a learning tool rather than a shortcut.

Example: "Generate a first draft with AI, then critique and improve it—submit both versions with annotations explaining your changes."

Quick Reference: Redesign Checklist

When evaluating an assignment, ask:

- Could AI complete this and pass?
- Does it require something only this student could provide?
- Is there a visible process, not just a product?
- Do students have to explain their thinking?
- Is there room to make AI use visible and productive?