

2026-27 AI Challenge

Ask the questions. Challenge the answers.

The **AI Challenge** asks students not just to use AI, but to challenge it. Pick a current issue, interrogate an AI chatbot like a curious investigator and devil's advocate, then reflect on how the conversation sharpened your own thinking. It's not about polished writing. It's about asking sharp questions, digging deeper, and recognizing that AI is not always right.

At a Glance

Who can enter	Students in grades 8-12 who are at least 13 years old, and live in the U.S., Canada, or at a U.S. military address. Submissions must be in English. One entry per student.
Additional Contests	If you enter the AI Challenge, you may enter the SITC Video Contest but NOT the Essay Contest.
AI tools	ChatGPT or Gemini. Both let you create the public share link your entry requires.
Deadline	January 18, 2027, 11:59 PM Eastern Time.
Winners announced	March 5, 2027.
Student prizes	1st: \$1,500 2nd: \$1,000 3rd: \$500 Ten finalists: \$250 each.
Teacher rewards	Top submitting teacher: \$200 Amazon gift card, plus five \$50 gift-card drawings.

How the Challenge Works

1. **Choose a topic.** Pick one of the topics below.
2. **Discuss with the AI.** Use ChatGPT or Gemini. Ask tough questions, push back on the answers, and request and review the sources it gives you. **Keep your age, school, and family details out of the chat — your conversation becomes a public link!**
3. **Reflect.** Write 500 to 750 words, in your own words, about what you learned and where the AI helped or fell short. Do NOT use AI to write your reflection. Use the reflection questions below.
4. **Submit.** Paste the public share link to your chat and upload your reflection. Test your link before you submit.

This Year's Topics

Presidential Powers

What are the purposes of executive orders and emergency powers? Explore the constitutional basis of executive orders and emergency powers and whether their recent increased use by presidents of both parties has been an abuse of executive power. Choose one specific use of executive power — a particular executive order or emergency declaration. Explore what action the president took, what legal or constitutional authority was cited to justify it, and how other branches responded.

Recommended videos:

- [Executive Orders](#)

Digital Privacy

How much privacy should we have online? Why are some people concerned about online privacy? How much—if any—personal information should the government require private companies to collect from individuals for online access? Should the government require age verification to prevent young people from accessing certain web content? If so, who in the government should decide? How might age verification interfere with individuals' privacy? Explore how digital identification requirements and online verification affect privacy, security, and/or freedom. Does it even matter?

Keep your age, school, and family details out of the chat — your conversation becomes a public link!

Recommended videos:

- [Privacy Module](#)

Fraud in Government Programs

Government programs distribute billions of taxpayer dollars every year. What are the consequences when some of that money is lost to waste, fraud, and abuse? Explore the economic idea of opportunity cost by considering what those resources could have been used for and by whom. How might the concept of concentrated benefits/dispersed costs limit government investigations into waste, fraud, and abuse of government programs? Explore proposed reforms or think through your own to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.

Recommended videos:

- [Fraud Nation](#)

Interest in Democratic Socialism / Communism

Surveys show increased interest among young people in democratic socialism and communism. What factors help explain this trend? Who are the leaders and influencers driving this increased interest? What are the messages and why are they so appealing? Explore this growing interest and examine how the historical experiences of countries governed under socialist or communist systems support or refute the messaging of these influencers.

Recommended videos:

- [Economic Systems Module](#)
- [Both Sides: Democratic Socialism Revisited](#)
- [Equal Shares – Why Collectivism Fails](#)
- [Both Sides: Does Capitalism Reduce Poverty?](#)

Your Reflection

Write 500 to 750 words in your own words. Do not use AI to write your reflection.

Answer:

1. What were you trying to figure out, and why did you pick this topic?
2. How did you challenge the AI? What devil's advocate questions did you ask, and what did you find about its sources and any bias?
3. What surprised you? Did the AI show bias, miss a perspective, or get something wrong, and how did you respond?
4. How did your thinking change (if it did) through the back-and-forth?
5. What did you learn about using AI responsibly?

Sharing Your Chat Link

You must submit a working public link, not a screenshot or pasted text. Do not delete your chat until winners are announced. To confirm your link works, open it in a private or incognito window before submitting. **TEST YOUR LINK BEFORE SUBMITTING!**

ChatGPT: Open your chat, click Share (top right), then Copy Link. This saves a snapshot at the time; later edits will not appear.

Gemini: Open your chat, click the Share icon, click Create link, then Copy link. Gemini links are static; new messages after sharing will not appear.

How You'll Be Scored

Judges score your chat and your reflection on a six-part rubric: the quality of your questioning, how you challenge the AI, how you handle and check sources, your own voice and thinking, your engagement with AI as a tool, and your clarity. See the separate AI Challenge Rubric for the full breakdown.

Tips

- Pick the topic that genuinely interests you.
- Treat the AI as a thinking partner, not an answer machine. Keep asking follow-ups.
- Push back when an answer is vague, one-sided, or off-track.
- Always ask for sources, and check them yourself.
- In your reflection, focus on what challenged you, what surprised you, and what you concluded.

Official Rules

Eligibility. Open to students in grades 8-12 at some point during the contest period (Sept. 9, 2026 through January 18, 2027) who are at least 13 years old at the time of entry. Entrants must be located in the United States, Canada, or at a U.S. military address, and all submissions must be in English. One entry per student. Students may enter both the AI Challenge and the Video Contest, but may not enter the Essay Contest. Employees of Stossel in the Classroom, Stossel TV, and the Center for Independent Thought, anyone involved in operating the contest, and their immediate family members are not eligible. Previous winners of a Stossel in the Classroom first-place prize are not eligible for prizes in a later contest unless they are competing in a different division or contest type (essay, video, or AI).

Entry. An entry consists of a working public link to your chat with an approved AI (ChatGPT or Gemini) and a reflection of 500 to 750 words. Entries missing either part, or without a working link to the approved-AI chat, will be disqualified.

Deadline. Entries must be submitted no later than **11:59 PM Eastern Time on January 18, 2027.**

Original work. All reflections must be the original work of the student named on the entry. Plagiarism or AI-generated content in the reflection results in immediate disqualification.

Judging. Judges score reflections and chats on a shared rubric for how clearly and thoughtfully they respond to the entry instructions. Judges are selected for their background in education, writing, and the subject matter. Decisions of the judges are final.

Taxes. Winners are solely responsible for any federal, state, or local taxes on winnings.

Ownership and use. Work remains the property of the student. Entry grants Stossel in the Classroom, Stossel TV, and the Center for Independent Thought permission, without compensation and with or without attribution, to use, reproduce, transmit, post, distribute, adapt, edit, and display the submission.