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THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HISTORY TEACHING IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: PEDAGOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES, RISKS, AND GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly generative models (e.g., chatbots and text/image/audio generators), is transforming the ways in which students search for information, write, interpret sources, and construct arguments. In the field of history, AI creates opportunities for personalized learning, modeling of historical thinking, comparative source analysis, and didactic simulations; at the same time, it introduces significant risks, including factual "hallucinations," fabricated citations, content bias, erosion of academic integrity, and the collection of minors' personal data. This article examines the main uses of AI in history teaching in pre-university education, proposes a practical framework for implementation (planning–implementation–evaluation), and offers ready-to-use classroom scenarios. The discussion is grounded in international guidelines and in disciplinary principles of historical education such as source criticism, contextualization, and multiperspectivity. Ultimately, the article recommends a "limited-partner AI" approach, in which the teacher retains pedagogical authority and students are trained in verification, argumentation, and transparency in their use of AI.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, history, pre-university education, historical thinking, academic integrity, source verification, ethics, generative AI.*

1. Introduction

History as a school subject aims at more than the reproduction of facts: it seeks to cultivate historical thinking skills such as critical evaluation of sources, identification of perspectives, construction of arguments, and understanding of continuity and change. In this context, generative AI is increasingly becoming a permanent "conversational partner" for students: it offers explanations, summaries, essays, exam questions, and even "historical" images. Yet this is precisely where the dilemma lies: generative models produce text that appears plausible, but is not necessarily true. Guiding principles for historical education emphasize that AI does not generate truths but produces content based on statistical patterns; therefore, students must be taught not to accept it passively as an authority (American Historical Association, 2025).

UNESCO has highlighted the need for a human-centered approach, capacity building, policies, and safeguards for the use of AI in education (UNESCO, 2021; UNESCO, 2023). Meanwhile, the OECD has issued guidelines on the effective and equitable use of AI in education, underlining governance, equity, and practical risks in schools (OECD, 2023). At the European level, the principles of "trustworthy AI" and ethical guidelines for educators aim to raise awareness of privacy, transparency, non-discrimination, and accountability (European Commission, 2019, 2024).

The purpose of this article is to provide:

- an analysis of the pedagogical uses of AI in history education;
- a practical framework for implementation and quality control;
- concrete activity scenarios and assessment models;
- recommendations for ethics, academic integrity, and data security.

2. Theoretical framework: Historical thinking and AI as a "tool," not an authority

2.1. Key competencies in history

Modern history education focuses on:

- Source criticism (authorship, purpose, reliability, and context);
- Contextualization (understanding events within their temporal and social structures);
- Multiperspectivity (reading the past from different viewpoints);
- Evidence-based argumentation (claim–reasoning–evidence);
- Change and continuity (historical processes, not merely dates).

These competencies are "immune" to full automation: even when AI produces a text, the student must still evaluate its quality, evidence, and omissions (American Historical Association, 2025).

2.2. Limitations of AI in history

Guidance documents in the field of history emphasize three fundamental problems (American Historical Association, 2025):

- AI generates content, not truth;
- it can "hallucinate" facts, citations, and sources;
- it creates a false sense of certainty, especially when generating "historical" images.

These limitations are particularly critical in history, because the discipline is grounded in accuracy, nuance, and the verification of sources.

3. Main uses of AI in history teaching

3.1. Lesson planning and pedagogical skills

AI can assist teachers with:

- creating measurable learning objectives (aligned with Bloom's taxonomy or competency frameworks);

- generating inquiry questions;
- differentiating materials (texts at varying levels of difficulty);
- designing assessment rubrics and question banks.

However, every AI-generated product must pass through the teacher's filter (fact-checking, curriculum alignment, age-appropriate language), in accordance with the principle of human oversight (European Commission, 2019).

3.2. Supporting learning (tutoring, explanations, reformulation)

For students, chatbots can function as:

- a "tutor" for clarifying concepts (e.g., imperialism, feudalism, state formation);
- a tool for reformulation (paraphrasing, structuring paragraphs);
- a tool for guided summarization, paired with a verification task.

The OECD frames this as a potential for improving learning, while stressing the need for guidance, governance, and equitable access (OECD, 2023).

3.3. Analysis of primary and secondary sources

AI can be used to:

- assist with reading (explaining terms, providing context);
- generate guiding questions about a source ("Who is speaking?", "What is missing?", "Who benefits?");
- compare narratives (e.g., two texts with different perspectives).

Golden rule: AI should not replace engagement with the source; it should be used to open up analysis, not to close it with ready-made "answers" (American Historical Association, 2025).

3.4. Simulations, role play and historical scenarios

AI can:

- generate character profiles (with teacher-imposed constraints and oversight),
- suggest debate questions,
- simulate counterarguments that students must refute using evidence.

Disciplinary guidelines emphasize that creativity and authentic assessment become even more important in the age of AI, because simple tasks (e.g., standard summaries) are easily produced by AI (American Historical Association, 2025).

3.5. Formative assessment and feedback

AI can provide feedback on:

- the structure of an argument,
- linguistic clarity,

- coherence and use of evidence.

However, it should not be the final judge of grades. The principles of trustworthy AI emphasize human oversight and accountability in the use of AI systems in educational environments (European Commission, 2019, 2024).

4. Main risks and ethical issues

4.1. Hallucinations, fabricated citations, and the "beautiful false fact"

AI may generate invented bibliographies or citations that appear scholarly. Disciplinary guidance in history identifies this as a direct risk to students' intellectual formation (American Historical Association, 2025). Pedagogical consequence**:** students acquire a false sense of certainty and lose their capacity for verification.

4.2. Bias and cultural exclusion

AI models are trained on large text corpora that may embed ethnic, gender, or Eurocentric biases. UNESCO links the use of AI in education to principles of cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as to measures for equity and inclusion (UNESCO, 2021; UNESCO, 2023).

4.3. Data privacy and the protection of minors

In pre-university education, the risks are heightened because:

- students may inadvertently disclose personal data;
- platforms store prompts and interactions;
- schools often lack clear AI protocols.

European guidelines for educators specifically aim to raise awareness of ethical and data-related risks in the use of AI (European Commission, 2024).

4.4. Academic integrity and "AI as a shortcut"

A major strand of public debate concerns the use of AI as a cheating aid. The OECD emphasizes the need for governance and clear guidance, since ambiguous practices generate confusion and inequality (OECD, 2023).

5. A practical framework for school implementation: the three-phase Model (P–I–E)

(Planning – Implementation – Evaluation)

A simple, school-friendly model is proposed:

Phase A: Planning (P)

1. Define objectives (historical competencies + digital/AI literacy).
2. Specify the role of AI: support for analysis, not an "author."
3. Develop clear task policies: what is allowed/prohibited and how AI use must be cited.

Such clarity and transparency are also emphasized in disciplinary guidance for history (American Historical Association, 2025).

Phase B: Implementation (I)

- Teach students responsible prompting: request sources, counterarguments, and uncertainty.
- Apply mandatory verification: every AI claim must be checked against a source (textbook, document, atlas, or a reliable online archive).
- Use collaborative work with defined roles: fact-checker, source analyst, argument builder.

Phase C: Evaluation (E)

- Assess the process: how sources were verified, how arguments were constructed, and how AI use was documented.
- Reduce the weight of the "final product" (a polished essay) and increase the weight of evidence of thinking: outline, notes, verification log, and in-class discussion.

6. Classroom scenarios (ready to use)

Scenario 1: "AI as a text to be debunked" (45–60 minutes)

Topic: A curricular historical event (e.g., the Congress of Manastir, the European Revolutions, the Cold War).

Steps:

1. The teacher generates a 200–250word summary with AI (without showing sources).
2. Students receive 2–3 reliable sources (textbook, document, encyclopedic article).
3. Task: identify five AI claims and label them as accurate / inaccurate / unverifiable.
4. Discussion: Why did the AI err? What is missing? What tone does it use?

Assessment**:** rubric for verification, argumentation, and source citation. Rationale: this activity aligns with the goal of developing AI literacy and awareness of hallucinations and limitations (American Historical Association, 2025).

Scenario 2: Primary source analysis with AI-generated "Socratic questions" (45 minutes)

Topic: A letter, excerpt, law, or manifesto (primary source).

Steps:

1. The student asks AI to generate 10 critical questions about the source (author, audience, purpose, bias).
2. The student selects the five best questions and answers them by citing lines or passages from the source.
3. The student identifies two important questions that the AI failed to ask.

Assessment: quality of questions + use of evidence from the source.

Scenario 3: Multiperspectival debate (90 minutes / two lessons)

Topic: "Was reform X beneficial or harmful?"

Steps:

1. The teacher assigns 3–4 roles (e.g., peasant, merchant, administration, intellectual).
2. AI is used only to suggest initial arguments; students must support them with sources.
3. Structured debate: claim – evidence – counterargument.

Assessment: evidence-based argumentation, role fidelity, and critical reflection on AI use.

Scenario 4: Essay with "AI transparency" (homework + 20 minutes in class)

Task: A 500–700word essay requiring submission of:

- an outline,
- three cited sources,
- an AI-use statement (what was used and why),
- one reflective paragraph: what was helpful and what was risky.

Rationale: disciplinary guidance stresses the importance of clear policies, citation, and transparency regarding AI use (American Historical Association, 2025).

7. Possible research methodology (if the article requires an empirical study)

If the journal requires an empirical component, a school-feasible research design can be presented:

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