

September 2026
The Human Edition

THE VOICES

BEYOND

People. Perspectives. Possibilities.

A machine can write the words.
But can it know what they mean to you?



What's Waiting Inside



The Koffee Jr. Model

What if AI's real role in healthcare is connecting what happens between appointments?



The Hotel That Learns

The smartest hotel of the future may not look different. It may simply work differently.



What I'll Give AI. And What I Won't

What should we happily hand over to AI — and what should remain completely ours?

Draft One: AI. Draft Six: Me

I asked AI to write this Editor's Note. It was fast, polished and annoyingly good. The problem? It didn't sound like me.



Divya Mathew,
Editor-in-Chief

On a late August afternoon, I opened a blank document and typed a simple request: write the Editor's Note for BEYOND's September issue — The Human Edition.

I gave it the brief: *AI. Humanity. Curiosity. Creativity. Empathy. Not preachy. Not boring.*

Eight seconds later, it delivered – It was slick. Confident. Perfect grammar, elegant structure, a satisfying arc. It even made a joke. I laughed. I also felt a small pang of suspicion. Had I just been shown up by a machine? So I did it again, this time with my editors hat firmly on. The arguments were fine. The transitions were smooth. The closing line was strong. But something was missing — texture. A heartbeat. The little imperfections that come from real life, not a dataset.

And I couldn't help thinking about when I first started writing professionally. Back then, an article took time. There were interviews to go back to, background reading, notes everywhere, three possible openings — none of which behaved and the inevitable moment when you deleted half the piece and wondered why you hadn't chosen a more sensible profession.

And coffee. A lot of coffee.

Today, I can put a brief into AI and have a perfectly respectable starting point before that coffee has even cooled. And I'm not imagining the time saved.

A 2023 study published in Science found that people using AI for professional writing tasks completed them about 40% faster on average. More recently, a 2025 field experiment across 66 companies and 7,137 knowledge workers found that employees who actively used generative AI spent about two fewer hours a week on email.

Two hours. That's a long lunch. A workout. A conversation with your child. Or, realistically, several more emails.

Perhaps AI saves me time today because I spent years learning what good looks like yesterday.

Which makes me wonder about those starting today. If AI can write the first draft, do we still learn how to recognize a good one? If it can give children the answer, do they still get the delicious frustration of figuring something out? If it can make us faster, are we using that saved time to become better or simply to do more?

The answer, surely, isn't to avoid the shortcut. AI is an extraordinary assistant — it can brainstorm, summarize, polish and help us see something differently. I use it. I enjoy it. I am often amazed by it.

But shortcut should not quietly become the whole journey. So yes AI helped with the

editors note. It made me faster. It sharpened a thought or two. It may even have suggested a phrase I was briefly tempted to take full credit for.

But, the deciding, deleting, doubting, re-writing and the slightly unnecessary joke? **Still me. Mostly**



AI CAN READ A FACE. SORT OF.

One AI model recognised facial emotions with about **86%** accuracy, yet **confused fear with surprise** more than half the time.



YOUR BRAIN RUNS ON ABOUT 20 WATTS.

That's roughly the power of a small light bulb, while remembering, imagining, worrying, joking and making decisions.

Not bad, brain.



SOMETIMES AI IS BRILLIANT. SOMETIMES... NOT.

In one difficult brain-and-spine scan test, experts scored **86.2%** accuracy. The best AI managed **35%**.

The Hotel That Learns

From blueprint to check-out, how AI could make hotels more intuitive, efficient and profitable.



Rajneesh Malhotra,
Senior Industry Leader | Founder All About Hotels | Country Head – Hospitality, Adani Realty

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rajneeshmalhotra-aah>
What will an AI-enabled hotel look like in 2031? Probably not very different from the hotel you know today.

There may be no robot waiting at the reception or futuristic screens following you down the corridor. The biggest change may be almost invisible. The hotel itself will begin to learn. AI is likely to become an intelligent layer across the entire life of a hotel — from the first sketch on an architect's screen to the experience of a guest many years later.

Design

AI can evaluate thousands of possibilities — room mix, space efficiency, energy consumption, staffing needs and guest experience. The question will no longer simply be, "What will this hotel cost to build?" but also, "How well will it perform over its 40-or 50-year life?"

Construction

During construction, AI can help monitor progress, identify deviations and improve coordination. Once the hotel opens, the possibilities become even more interesting. Imagine a digital twin — continuously learning from what is happening inside the real building.

Operations

An air-conditioning system showing early signs of trouble could be serviced before it fails. Housekeeping could be planned around actual arrivals, departures & room usage. Energy could adjust according to occupancy, weather and tariffs. Kitchens could forecast demand more accurately, helping reduce waste without affecting availability.

The hotel begins to move from reacting to anticipating.

Revenue management can become more dynamic too. AI can look beyond historical occupancy to signals such as events, weather, airline capacity, competitor pricing, search behaviour and local demand — helping hotels make smarter decisions about rates and packages.

But for me, the most important transformation may be the guest experience.

Imagine a guest arriving after a long, delayed flight. The system may already know their preferred room, preferred temperature and even what they usually order. But the real moment of hospitality may still come from the person at the reception who notices they are exhausted, skips the usual conversation, gets them checked in quickly and sends up a cup of tea.

AI can know the preference. A person can understand the moment.

A returning guest could walk into a room already set the way they like it. Check-in

could become almost invisible. Routine requests could be anticipated. Waiting and repetitive transactions could gradually disappear. But the objective should never be to make hospitality feel more technological. It should make hospitality feel more intuitive.

Because hospitality, at its heart, is still about people. If AI removes repetitive administration, hotel teams can spend less time behind screens and more time doing what humans do best — noticing, responding, reassuring and connecting. For owners, this is where the guest experience and profitability come together.

A hotel that can generate more revenue, consume less energy, reduce waste, predict maintenance, deploy people intelligently and personalise the guest experience can improve its economics over decades. So the AI-enabled hotel of 2031 may not be the one with the most visible technology. It may simply be the one where everything works a little better because the building is always learning.

The future of hospitality is not technology replacing the human touch. It is technology creating more room for it.

74%
of travellers surveyed were interested in hotels using AI to tailor services and offers.

53.6%
of travellers wanted contactless check-in and check-out to remain a permanent hotel feature.

30%
buildings account for around 30% of global energy demand.

The Koffee Jr. Model

A Human–AI–Clinician Partnership
for Continuous Healthcare



Harjeet Kakkar,
CEO Vhire4u | Vydehi School of
Excellence | IMPS |
SourcePartner | Wish2fly |
CampusMedicine, and
Proud Pet Parent

Koffee Jr. was my beagle. He had epilepsy.

During his illness, occasional conversations with artificial intelligence gradually became something neither of us had consciously designed: a longitudinal healthcare partnership. His veterinarians diagnosed and treated him. I observed and cared for him. AI helped me research, organise, remember and ask better questions.

His seizures were recorded. Medicines and dosage changes were tracked. Blood levels were compared. Behavioural changes were considered against his history. Before consultations, questions could be researched; afterwards, outcomes became part of the next conversation. Koffee Jr. eventually left us. But the process developed while caring for him survived him – and suggested an idea extending far beyond veterinary medicine:

What if one of AI's greatest contributions to healthcare is not replacing clinical intelligence, but connecting everything that happens between clinical encounters?

Humans and AI Learn Together

Koffee Jr.'s journey revealed something else: the human learns too. Repeated conversations improve health literacy. Medical terminology becomes clearer. Observations become more precise. Questions improved. At the same time, retained context allows AI to incorporate relevant previous events. The human becomes better informed. AI becomes better contextualised. The clinician receives a better history.

This approach could be useful wherever patterns over time matter: diabetes, neurology, oncology, geriatric care, paediatrics, rare diseases and veterinary medicine.

Before a consultation, AI might turn months of information into a simple brief:

What changed?
What recurred?
What medicines changed?
What trends appeared?
What remains unexplained?

The clinician receives signal rather than a mountain of data.

We call this **The Koffee Jr. Model.**

The human remains the real-world observer.

What happened? When? How long did it last? What changed? AI can help connect events over time. Has this happened before? Did symptoms begin before or after a medication changed? Are laboratory values trending?

But AI should identify relationships worth investigating – not manufacture causation.

Its role is not to diagnose. It is to help the patient or caregiver arrive at the consultation with a better history and better-informed questions. The clinician examines, diagnoses and decides. Then the outcome matters too. Did the patient improve? Did nothing change? Did another symptom appear? When outcomes are recorded, treatment becomes information – and the cycle begins again.



The Red Lines

AI can also be confidently wrong. It can misunderstand laboratory units, confuse medicines or mistake coincidence for causation. So the boundaries must be clear:

- AI should never independently prescribe or change prescription treatment.
- Emergencies must override AI conversations.
- Drug names, doses, laboratory values and units must be verified.
- Hypotheses must remain distinct from established evidence.
- Privacy and security matter.

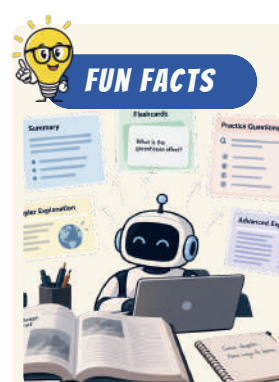
Above everything, The clinician remains the medical decision-maker.

And Sunday lunch? Never. The argument over the menu is the memory.

What human skill matters more now?

- Taste – knowing what is worth making. And asking the right questions. Answers just became free. Questions became everything.

AI will keep getting better at what we do. It will never get better at what we mean.



AI CAN CREATE ITS OWN STUDY MATERIALS.

Give an AI a chapter of a textbook, and it can turn the same material into summaries, flashcards, practice questions, quizzes, or explanations at different difficulty levels.

The People Behind the Partnership

No account of Koffee Jr.'s journey would be complete without the people who stood beside him. I remain deeply grateful to **Dr Pawan, Dr Anvita, Dr Ramesh, Dr Amruth, Mr Yathish, Dr Ravindra, and the many doctors, nurses, technicians and members of Team Cessna who cared for him.**

AI helped us remember, research and ask better questions. But behind the investigations, medication decisions, emergencies and difficult clinical judgements were real people bringing knowledge, experience and compassion. Together, they helped make Koffee Jr.'s last two years better, safer and more comfortable. For that, I am deeply grateful.

Koffee Jr.'s Legacy

Koffee Jr. taught us that useful healthcare intelligence can begin with a simple instruction – *Remember when it happened. Remember the medicine. Remember the test result. Remember what happened afterwards.*

Then: connect it. Research it. Question it. Then take it to the clinician.

Act. Verify. Learn. Perhaps the most important healthcare AI revolution will not be creating an artificial doctor, but creating a **better-informed relationship between patients, caregivers & the real ones.**

Koffee Jr. was our patient zero for that idea. **And perhaps that is his most unexpected legacy.**

The Case That Never Existed



Anuradha Agarwal,
Advocate

It looked completely legitimate. A case name. A legal principle. A Supreme Court citation. There was just one problem. The judgments did not exist.

A property dispute in Vijayawada seemed routine enough. The court order cited Supreme Court judgments to support its reasoning – complete with case names and legal principles. Except those judgments had been generated by AI.

For lawyers, that is what makes AI both exciting and unsettling. It can scan enormous volumes of legal information, and help draft documents in seconds – but law is about understanding context, questioning evidence, and considering what is fair for the person whose life may be affected.

AI can be an extraordinary assistant. But it cannot carry the responsibility for the answer. Because in law, sounding right is never enough. You have to know that it is right.



That's how fast IBM's Deep Blue could analyse chess positions when it beat Garry Kasparov in 1997.

What I'll Give AI. And What I Won't

A quick conversation with Chirag Taneja,
Co-Founder & CEO, GoKwik



Chirag Taneja, Co-Founder & CEO, GoKwik



Questions by
Shruti Taneja,
Educator

What would you happily let AI do for you?

- Everything that repeats – reading, remembering, sorting noise from signal. I want my mornings to start with decisions, not chores.

What would you never hand over?

- Apologising for me. The sorry has to be mine, with my discomfort attached.

When AI Enters the Physics Classroom

Physics teaches us what AI cannot: understanding is earned in the space between a wrong answer and a better question.



Ms Ritu Sarvahi,
Principal, Vydehi School of Excellence

When I taught Physics, I remember a familiar classroom scene: a difficult numerical on the board, a room full of students staring at it, and one impatient voice asking, "Ma'am, just tell us the formula."

It would have been easy to do exactly that. But Physics was never really about the formula. It was about the few minutes before it – the guessing, the disagreement, the wrong turn, the sudden connection. The moment when a student stopped asking, "Which formula do I use?" and began asking, "Why does this happen?"

That distinction matters even more today. AI can solve a numerical in seconds. It can explain Newton's Laws through cricket, simplify difficult concepts, generate practice questions and even point out where a student's reasoning has gone wrong. Used well, that is extraordinary. **But the real risk is not that students will use AI. It is that they will use it too early.**

Because confusion is not a failure of learning. Often, it is where learning begins. So instead of asking AI for the answer, ask for a hint. Ask it to challenge your reasoning. Ask it to explain the same idea in three different ways. Then test that explanation against the real world.

Physics gives us a wonderful advantage: **reality is the final examiner.** A force must behave like a force. Light must bend as predicted. Motion must make sense beyond the screen. AI can generate an answer. But intuition, judgement and scientific curiosity are still built through observing, questioning, testing and sometimes getting it wrong. As educators, our job is not to protect children from AI. It is to make sure that, even with AI beside them, they never lose the habit of thinking for themselves. The answer may arrive in seconds. Understanding should still take its time.

Confusion is not a failure of learning. Often, it is where learning begins.

LET'S KEEP ASKING



What would you do differently?



What do you think?



And—tell me how you got there.



Why do you think so?

AI Accounting —

ಕೃತಕ ಬುದ್ಧಿಮತ್ತೆ ಆಧಾರಿತ ಲೆಕ್ಕಪತ್ರ



Somashekar B V,
Senior Accounts Executive



ಲೆಕ್ಕಪತ್ರ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ 5 ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಅನುಭವ ಹೊಂದಿರುವ Accounting Professional. ಆಗಿ, AI Accounting ಅನ್ನು ಲೆಕ್ಕಪತ್ರದ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ವೇಗವಾಗಿ, ಸರಳವಾಗಿ ಮತ್ತು ಪರಿಣಾಮಕಾರಿಯಾಗಿ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ಸಹಾಯ ಮಾಡುವ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಆಧುನಿಕ ತಂತ್ರಜ್ಞಾನವೆಂದು ನಾನು ನೋಡುತ್ತೇನೆ. AI ಮತ್ತು Automation ಬಳಸಿ Data Entry, Invoice Processing, Transaction Matching, Reconciliation ಹಾಗೂ Routine Checking ಮುಂತಾದ ಪುನರಾವರ್ತಿತ ಕೆಲಸಗಳನ್ನು ಕಡಿಮೆ ಮಾಡಬಹುದು. AI ಆಧಾರಿತ Accounting Software ಮತ್ತು ERP Systems

The Complaint No Algorithm Could Fix

Sometimes the fastest solution isn't the one a guest needs first.



Akash Kalia,
General Manager, DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Bengaluru ORR

A guest complaint is rarely just a complaint.

On the surface, it may appear straightforward – a room that wasn't ready, a meal that arrived late, a billing error that needed correcting. The natural instinct is to identify the problem, offer a solution and move efficiently towards resolution. But complaints are not always that simple. I recall a guest who arrived at the front desk visibly shaken. Something had gone wrong with his room, and we had every practical tool available to address it – a room change, a gesture of goodwill, whatever was needed. We presented the options. None of them helped. It took a moment of genuine stillness to understand why. He wasn't ready for a solution. He needed someone to listen first.

Technology can support service recovery enormously. Algorithms can identify patterns in complaints. Systems can suggest appropriate responses. AI can recommend the fastest path to resolution. These are genuinely useful capabilities in an industry that operates at scale. But the fastest response is not always the most helpful one.

When a guest says, "This is unacceptable," they may not simply be asking for a refund or a room change. They may be saying – something closer to: "I have had an incredibly difficult day, and I need someone to understand why this has affected me".

A system can recognize the words. Only a person can respond to the weight behind them. So we stopped. We listened while the guest described what had happened. We did not interrupt, offer explanations or defend the hotel.

Once he felt genuinely heard, the tone of the conversation changed entirely. Only then did we discuss what we could do. In the end, the solution itself was unremarkable. What the guest remembered when he checked out was that someone had taken real responsibility rather than passing him through a sequence of processes.

Automation can make hotels faster. AI can make them more consistent. But a complaint, at its core, is not a transaction. It is a moment when a guest needs patience, judgement and the reassurance that, on the other side of the process, there is a human being who cares.

Some problems can be resolved with a system. Others require a conversation.



ಬಳಸುವುದರಿಂದ, ಕೈಯಾರೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಕೆಲಸಕ್ಕೆ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಸಮಯ ವ್ಯಯಿಸಿ, Accounting Accuracy, Compliance, Financial Analysis ಮತ್ತು Reporting ಮುಂತಾದ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಕಾರ್ಯಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಗಮನಹರಿಸಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. AI ದೊಡ್ಡ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದ Financial Data ಅನ್ನು ವೇಗವಾಗಿ Process ಮಾಡಲು, ತಪ್ಪುಗಳು ಅಥವಾ ಅಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ Transactions ಗುರುತಿಸಲು, Reconciliation ಅನ್ನು Automate ಮಾಡಲು ಮತ್ತು ಉಪಯುಕ್ತ Financial Insights ಒದಗಿಸಲು ಸಹಾಯ ಮಾಡುತ್ತದೆ.

Thoughts from a Teacher's Desk



Paromita Mitra,
Editorial Board | Teacher

7:30 a.m. Lesson plan ready. Worksheets ready. Questions ready. *AI, you really are making my mornings easier.*

Later that day... These assignments are excellent. The vocabulary! The presentation! The perfect answers! Wait... why do they all feel so... perfect?

- *Where are the funny mistakes?*
- *The strange ideas?*
- *The sentences that could only have come from this child?*

So I tried something different. **"Write about a moment that changed you. No perfect answers. Just yours."** There were crossed-out words. Awkward sentences.

A story about losing a cricket match. A grandmother's kitchen. A fight with a best friend. One very imperfect little drawing. *And suddenly I thought: There you are.*

AI can help me plan a lesson. It can help a child find an answer. **But the part that makes a classroom human? That still has to come from us.**

Dear Diary, Do My Students Still Need Me?



Seemita Bhattacharya,
Editorial Board | Teacher

25 August 2026. 9:45 p.m.

Dear Diary, What a day! Lately, I've been wondering if my students still need me. Earlier, one question in class would lead to another. Children would argue, laugh, disagree and sometimes surprise me with the answers they came up with.

**Now?
Homework? AI
Projects? AI
Doubts? AI**

Today, I asked a student how he had finished his homework so quickly. "AI helped me, Ma'am," I smiled. But inside, I wondered, a little hurt: *If a machine can explain a poem, solve a problem and give an answer in seconds, what do children need me for?* Then, the next day, a student came to me with an AI-generated answer. "Ma'am, this doesn't feel right. Can you explain it?" Another joined in. "I got a different answer. Which one is correct?" Suddenly, I was surrounded by questions again. Then one child said something that stayed with me: "Ma'am, AI gives us answers, but sometimes we don't know whether we can trust them."

Perhaps I no longer need to be the person with every answer. Maybe my role is to help children ask better questions, recognise wrong answers and have the courage to think for themselves.

Tonight, I'm smiling. *The machines may know more. They may even answer faster. But they cannot care more.*

Good night, Diary!

The Value of Being Stuck



Naveen Yenmandra,
Architect and Dad

One evening, my daughter Zaara was sitting at her desk, wrestling with a physics problem on projectile motion. After several attempts, frustration won. She copied the question into an AI app.

Within seconds, a clean, perfectly organised, step-by-step solution appeared. She copied it down, shut the notebook and moved on. Problem solved.

Except, later that night, an uncomfortable truth set in – the answer was on the page. The understanding wasn't in her head.

A few days later, she faced another difficult problem. This time, instead of taking a shortcut, she stayed with it. There were messy diagrams. Wrong equations. Crossed-out calculations. Probably a fair amount of muttering too. But eventually, something clicked.

On test day, the difference was obvious. The concepts she had struggled through herself came back to her.



“ Learning can be a little like architecture: without a strong foundation, speed is not necessarily progress. ”

The ones she had simply borrowed from AI did not. And as an architect, perhaps it made particular sense. You can put up a structure quickly. But if the foundation has not had time to strengthen, speed is not necessarily progress.

Learning can be a little like that. Nature was never in a hurry. Human intelligence was shaped slowly – through repetition, experience, failure and the steady compounding of learning over generations. Yet somewhere along the way, we began confusing speed with progress and control with wisdom.

AI can now deliver in milliseconds what once took us hours or years to discover. But every model is still built on accumulated human knowledge – generations of people trying, failing, questioning and trying again.

Silicon does not create wisdom in an empty room; it feeds on the groundwater of human experience.

That is why the way we use AI matters. If it helps us explore, question and learn, it can extend what we are capable of. But if it becomes our repository of answers, we risk losing the habit of discovering things for ourselves.

There is value in being stuck.

Some of our deepest human abilities cannot be measured by data.

Intuition, for instance, is not a mystical anomaly. It is simply experience, memory and emotion coming together as instinct.

A machine can assemble a flawless proof. It cannot experience the satisfaction of finally understanding why it works. The “Wisdom of Slow Growth” is not about rejecting AI or competing with silicon on speed. It is about knowing when to use the shortcut – and when to stay with the problem a little longer. To be confused. To make mistakes. To try again. And to trust the slow, quiet architecture of the natural mind.

Humans, in Their Own Words

We asked one simple question: What would you never let AI do for you?

Some jobs need hands, heart and human connection – not just intelligence.

Jaseena P. | Software Engineer

AI can know my customer's clicks. I still want to know the person behind them – what made them pause, what changed their mind, and what finally made them say yes.

Namrata Kashyap, Digital Marketing Expert

AI can make things easier. But I still want my three-year-old to figure some things out the wonderfully messy way.

Sprinkle Misra | HR Head | Parent

Boost my potential. Don't steal my creative spotlight.

Mahak | Consultant

Moral decisions should remain human. We have the intelligence to question, choose and know what is right.

Rebecca | Homemaker

AI should grow my strengths, not become them.

Disha | Consultant

AI can challenge my thinking. It doesn't get to take over the steering wheel.

Aravind | AI Engineer

AI can analyse the game. I'd still rather play it.

Aryan | Grade XI

Help me get better, AI. Don't make me feel replaceable.

Ryan | Grade 9

More information isn't always more intelligence. Sometimes, my brain needs room.

D.Sindhuja | Homemaker

AI can make us faster, but judgement, creativity and connection must stay human. The more powerful AI becomes, the more valuable the human touch will be.

Tarun Sethi | Sales Professional

AI can read the report. I still want a human holding my hand.

Nalini.P | Retired Hindi Literature Teacher

AI can help me find the words. But I still want them to sound like me. Some conversations and connections – I'd rather keep completely human.

Udit Negi | Creative Head



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AI Planned the Holiday. We Made the Memories



9:00 AM
Leave hotel

Everything running perfect



10:00 AM
Visit the Grand Palace

ACTUAL: Phone dies halfway there.



12:30 PM
Eat at one of the "best places"

ACTUAL: "I'm hungry!"

→ Find tiny shop on a random street.

→ Delicious. Cheap. Not on the list.



AFTERNOON
Continue perfectly planned sightseeing

ACTUAL: Miss the bus.

→ Wander into a colourful market.

→ Stay anyway.



SUNSET
Follow itinerary to next stop

ACTUAL: Somehow end up at a beautiful viewpoint.

→ Stop planning.

→ Watch the sunset together.

AI planned our perfect holiday. We ignored half of it. Somehow, that was the half I'll remember forever.

Perhaps the best thing AI gave us was a plan worth abandoning.



Riya Poovathany,
Grade VIII

The AI That People Confessed To



Aadhya Jha,
Grade VIII

Back in the **1960s**, computer scientist **Joseph Weizenbaum** created **ELIZA** – a very simple program that mostly replied to people by turning their words into questions.

It didn't understand feelings.

It didn't have feelings.

And yet... people started telling it their problems.

Some opened up about worries, fears and deeply personal thoughts – enough to surprise even ELIZA's creator.

Plot twist?

People didn't need the computer to feel.

Sometimes, simply sounding like it was listening was enough.

Nearly 60 years before AI tools, humans were already getting emotionally attached to a chatbot.



– Prisha P, Grade IX

AI started as my study buddy. Now sometimes it feels like it's doing the studying. I'm all for the shortcuts—but I don't want to shortcut my own brain. AI should help me think, not think for me

Sumaira Prakash, Grade VII



The Shot AI Couldn't Take



Shreshta Aradhya,
Grade VIII

Basketball has always been a big part of my life, but one practice session still stands out – mainly because I was playing terribly.

My shots wouldn't go in. My passes were off. I lost the ball more times than I want to admit. Basically, if there was a wrong way to play that day, I was probably doing it. And I was getting seriously annoyed. Then one of my teammates came over and said, "Come on. Try again." She passed me the ball. I missed. She gave it back. I missed again. One more try. And finally – I scored.

It wasn't some amazing, game-winning shot. No dramatic slow motion. No cheering crowd. But honestly? It felt great. We laughed and went straight back to playing.

AI could probably give me loads of basketball tips. It could tell me how to improve my shot, fix my footwork or practise my dribbling. But it wasn't there when I kept missing. And it definitely wasn't there to laugh with me when I finally scored. Sometimes, you don't need the perfect advice. **Sometimes, you just need someone next to you saying – "Try again."**

A Brush Shouldn't Claim Credit for the Artwork



Avni Kamal,
Grade IX



This is a rant by someone who loves creating art and expressing through it – the minute details, the imperfections, the surprises, the perfect mistake, the search for a new colour, and everything that comes with being human.

Here's what unsettles me – AI was meant to make the boring, necessary work quicker, giving us more time to do what we love. Yet increasingly, we are asking it to do the creative work too.

There is a difference between using AI as a stepping stone and letting it do the creating for you. People wrote poetry before language models. They made art before image generators. Creating something yourself is messy. It is frustrating. Sometimes you feel completely stuck. But perhaps that is the point. Those feelings are incredibly human.

AI should be the tongue that speaks, not the brain that thinks.

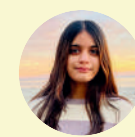


THROUGH THEIR EYES

A hammer does not build a chair on its own. A camera does not dictate what your photograph says. And a brush should not claim credit for the artwork.

I want it to remain what it was meant to be – a tool that helps us create, not one that creates in our place. And yes, it is in human nature to rant.

What Happens When AI Thinks for Us?



Sana Sangwan,
Grade XII, Lynbrook High School,
San Jose, California
Instagram: @revastra_handmade

It's late on a school night. You still have a history essay to finish, a literary argument to review and a Computer Science lab waiting. You open an AI interface, type in the questions, and within seconds, all three assignments begin appearing on your screen.

Grammatically clean. Perfectly structured. Ready to submit. It feels like a superpower. But the machine is writing the words – is it actually thinking?

Large language models work by recognising patterns and predicting what is most likely to come next, based on enormous amounts of training data.

Our minds work differently. When you read a book or wrestle with a difficult calculus problem, your brain draws on memories, emotions, experiences and connections built over time. We don't simply produce an answer. We understand what it means.

And that process matters. Every time you work through a difficult calculation, rewrite a paragraph or stay with a problem that refuses to make sense, you are exercising your ability to think. If AI does all that work for us, the task may get done faster – but our brains get fewer opportunities to build that stamina.

Then there is boredom. Waiting after school or sitting between classes, our first instinct is often to pull out a phone and scroll. But those empty moments have value. When the mind is allowed to wander, it creates space for imagination and new ideas.

When every quiet moment is filled with algorithmic feeds, notifications and instant answers, we may be leaving less room for our own ideas to arrive.

None of this means we should abandon AI. It is already a powerful tool for research, medicine, scientific discovery and solving complex problems.

The real differentiator for our generation may not be who can prompt AI the fastest. It may be how well we use curiosity, judgement and empathy alongside it – while protecting our ability to think independently.

So use AI. Explore with it. Learn from it. But stay curious.

Stay true to the messy process of learning. Give your brain the chance to do some of the heavy lifting too. Be the pilot of technology, not just a passenger.



To Pause Before the Answer



Suzanne Matson,
Editorial Board | Grade IX

I've noticed something about myself. The moment I don't know something, I reach for an answer. Google. AI. Search. And within seconds – there it is. Very convenient.

But note to self: not every question needs an instant answer.

Sometimes it's okay to wonder. To guess. To be confused for a bit. To sit with a problem a little longer. To ask one "why?" and then another.

AI can help me understand something difficult, and I'm glad it can. But if I ask it everything the moment I get stuck, I might get the answer without ever experiencing the fun of figuring it out myself.

So maybe the challenge isn't avoiding AI. Maybe it's remembering when not to use it.

Human Edge

The computer is smart; it can pass any test
It never gets tired; it doesn't need rest.
It can solve all the math on a shiny glass screen
But it's still just a cold & unfeeling machine.

It can't feel goosebumps; it can't shed a tear
It can't tell a joke or get rid of your fear.
That power to care is the promise we pledge
That feeling inside us is the HUMAN EDGE.



Keerthi Animireddy,
Grade VIII

जब ए-आई ने मेरी दादी की रसोई में 'धमाका' कर दिया!



स्कूल पत्रिका के लिए मैंने ए-आई से पूछा, "पारंपरिक गाँव-साँठ बर्फी कैसे बनती है?" उसने सम्पूर्ण आत्मविश्वास से लिखा—"गोंद को 3 मिनट माइक्रोवेव करें ताकि वह पॉपकॉर्न बन जाए, या पानी में भिगोकर फेविकोल जैसा पेस्ट बना लें!"

मैं तुरंत रसोई की ओर भागी। दादी ने मेरी बात सुनकर अट्टहास लगाया। वे बोलीं, "अरे बेटिया! माइक्रोवेव में गोंद जलकर धुआँ हो जाएगा और पानी में चिपचिपा जाएगा। असली स्वाद इसे घी में धीरे-धीरे सेंकने से आता है।"

उस दिन मुझे समझ आया कि स्क्रीन पर लिखी हर बात सच नहीं होती। ए-आई की बातें सच जैसी हैं, किंतु भ्रामक प्रतीत होती हैं। मशीनें केवल साधन हैं, असली समझदारी हमारे अपने विवेक से काम करने में है।



Lakshita Kansal,
Editorial Board | Grade IX

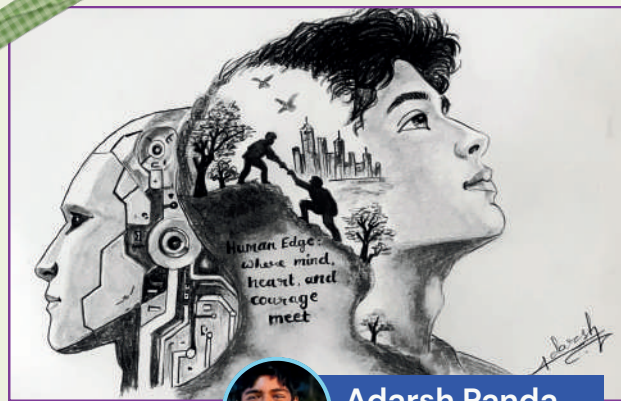
AI: The Unofficial Classmate

Never says, 'I'm busy'
Explains things like you're five.

But just because AI can do something doesn't mean we should let it do everything.



Vindhya,
Grade X



Adarsh Panda,
Grade X

The Shortcut Tax



Ariha,
Grade X



What do we lose when AI makes everything easier?

10 p.m. Essay due tomorrow?

Ask AI.

Can't draw?

Generate it.

Need a better word?

Why open a dictionary?

So what's the tax?

A new word you might have learnt.
A mistake that might have taught you something.
A trick you might have discovered by accident.
That tiny rush of saying, "I made this."

The shortcut saves time. Just make sure it doesn't skip the good part.

Perfectly Imperfect



Bhavaghna Kalam,
Grade VIII



- ✓ Burnt your toast and called it "gourmet"?
- ✓ Searched everywhere for the keys already in your hand?
- ✓ Stared at the ceiling because doing the laundry felt like... too much?

Congratulations, you're human!

AI can get things right in seconds. We, on the other hand, can mess up, panic, laugh, learn — and turn the whole disaster into a great story later.

P.S: But only humans can turn a mistake into a memory.



"I watched the video twice and thought, 'Yep, that's real.' So I shared it. Plot twist: it wasn't.

The boy's face and voice had been manipulated using AI. By the time we figured it out, the video had travelled way further than the truth. That was the part that got me – AI didn't make me share it. I did.

Maybe the real human edge is knowing when not to hit 'forward'.



Shravan S,
Editorial Board | Grade VIII

My Mother Doesn't Use AI, She Uses Me



Zui Deshpande,
Grade VIII



"Crop this."
"Which one looks better?"
"Is this caption okay?"
"Are you sure?"



I'm basically my mother's **editor, tech support and human 'Post' button.**

One day, AI might do all of this for her in seconds. But it won't come with the arguments, eye-rolls and laughter in between.

Maybe convenience saves time. But some of the best moments hide in the things we still need each other for.

ए-आई (AI) और मानव

चक्र समय का घूम रहा है, नई क्रान्ति अब आई है,
मानव के मानस से उपजी यह कैसी पढ़ाई है।
ए-आई अब सोचने लगी है, खुद की राह बनाती है,
कठिन से कठिन परिस्थिति को, पल भर में सुलझाती है।

कल तक जो थी मात्र कल्पना, आज हकीकत बन बैठा,
ज्ञान-विज्ञान के इस उपवन में, AI महान बन बैठा।
सवालियों के उत्तर हाजिर हैं, उंगली के एक इशारे पर,
सृजन हो रहा है यहाँ नया, अब बुद्धि के इस किनारे पर।

यह मनुष्य की नई उड़ान है, या मनुष्य का विश्राम है,
सोचना होगा हमें आज, कि, क्या इसका अंजाम है।
मशीन बने केवल साधन, तो जीवन सरल बनाएगी,
पर सब कुछ इसको सौंप दिया तो, खुद ही हमें चलाएगी।

कौशल और विवेक का हमको, एक उत्तम मेल बिठाना है,
ए-आई को उत्तमोचित साथी बनाकर, आगे बढ़ते जाना है।



Mihir Tanwar, Grade VII

Dear AI, We Need to Talk



Moukthika Bella,
Editorial Board | Grade IX

Dear AI,

I remember the first time we met – you felt like a glimpse into the future – a world where questions had answers, ideas had no limits and technology could make life easier. I thought you might become a friend. But now I have a question I never thought to ask: **What did we have to give the Earth to build you?** I used to imagine AI simply living inside my screen. I never pictured the world behind it – the data centres, cooling systems, land and resources needed to keep it running. **AI is not as weightless as it looks. And that matters to me.**

I can imagine a tree on a hot afternoon. Rain falling through its leaves. A river carrying life quietly along. I don't want forests to become something we only see in photographs. And we were simply so excited about what you could do that we forgot to ask – **What will it cost?** So here is what I hope for your future: **Become smarter – but also gentler. Use less. Waste less. Grow responsibly.** Because when I imagine the future, I don't want to choose between brilliant technology and a living planet. I want both.

Yours,

A student who still believes the Earth deserves a future too.



What If Earth Was One Country?



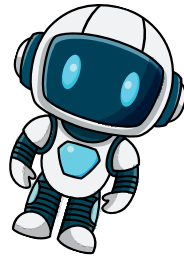
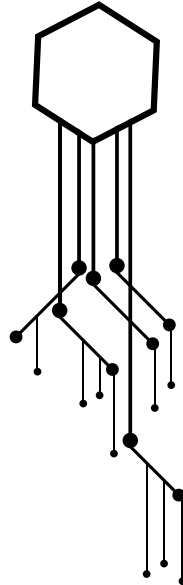
Shaik Danish Ali,
Grade I



One day, Danish looked out of the window and imagined a world with no borders, no wars – **just people sharing food, playing together and being kind.**

His idea was entirely his own. **AI simply helped bring that imagination to life.** “Different cultures, different clothes, different people – but everyone smiling together.”

A little reminder that AI can create the picture. But the dream still begins with a human mind.



The Feeling Test

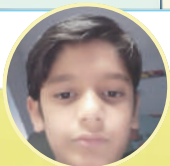


Shreya Shah,
Editorial Board | Grade VII

Shreya decided to put AI to a very human test. Both helped me. But only one seemed to know that I needed cheering up before I needed advice. AI knew what to say. My friend knew how I felt.

So... can AI understand sadness without ever being sad?

THE MOMENT	MY FRIEND	AI
 My best friend ignored me.	Told me not to worry, guessed she might be busy – and then started telling me jokes to cheer me up.	Suggested I wait, stay calm and keep myself occupied.
 I got lower marks than I expected.	Reminded me that one bad score wasn't the end of the world and made me feel better about the next exam.	Gave me practical tips to improve my marks next time.



AI may have speed. Our edge is connection, judgement and knowing what to do when life surprises us

Lakshit Mishra,
Grade VIII



AI can recognise a smile. It can spot a tear. It may even know when I need cheering up. Does it actually feel anything? Nope. But as mates go... not bad, AI.

Ira Khandaway, Grade VII



Artwork by
Meenakshi Mehta,
Creative Director

GAGGLE Calls An Emergency Meeting

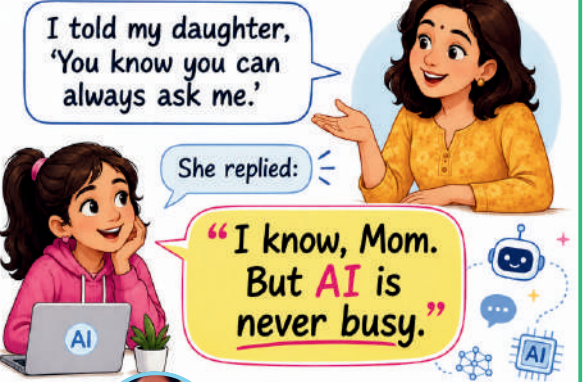


Manvik Sethi,
Editorial Board | Grade XI

Patty Punster, President of **GAGGLE – Global Association of Gags, Giggles and Laughter Enthusiasts** – called an Extraordinary General Meeting to order.



AI: 1. MOM: 0.



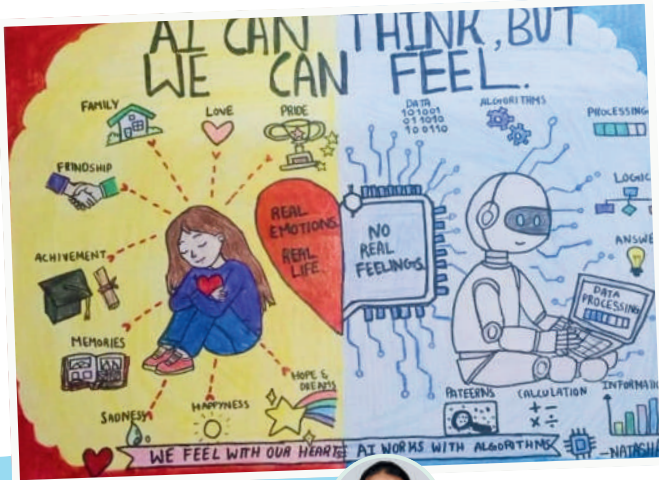
Shailaja NM,
Teacher & Parent



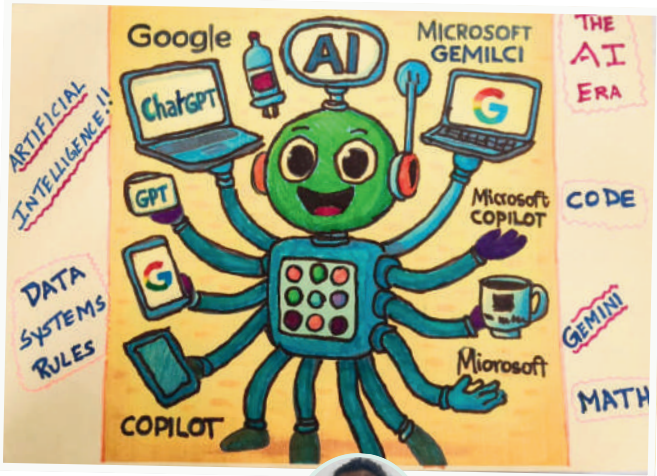
AI can crunch the facts. Intuition is that little voice saying, 'Go this way.' Sometimes, the human edge is trusting a feeling before you can fully explain it.

- Vaishnav S, Grade IX

THROUGH THEIR EYES



Natasha Reddy, Grade XI



Vishruthi Rao, Grade II



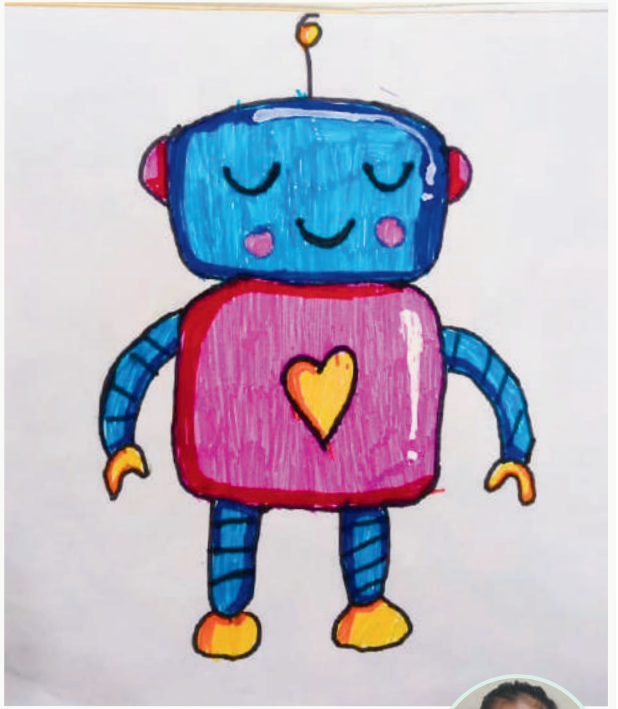
Aarushi Aaditya Khanzode, Grade VIII



- Priyal Tiwari, Grade XII



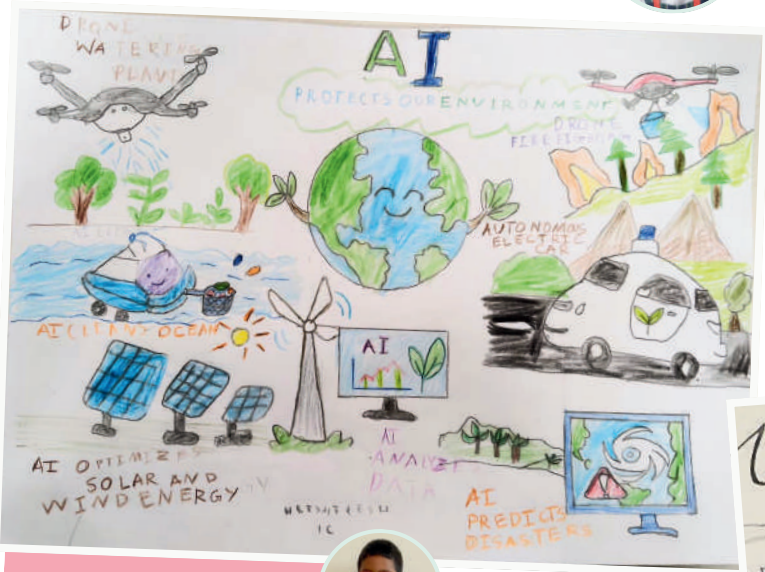
Dhriti Saha, Grade I



- Aaradhya, Grade I



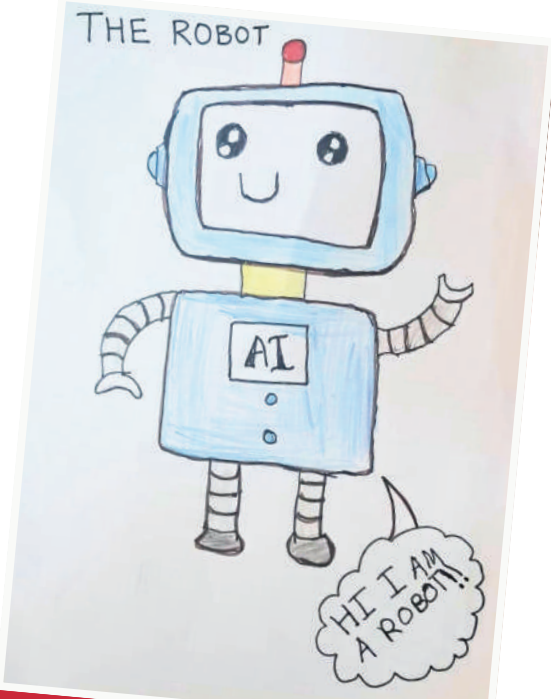
Nia Marie Siju, Grade IX



Hrishikesh, Grade I



Obudhakshana O, Grade VIII



- Joanna Vishwas, Grade I



- T S Sridev, Grade II





Spot The AI

Your challenge – How many examples of AI can you spot in this scene? Circle them or write them down.



AI Bingo

How many have you done? Tick every box you've done. No cheating!

☐ Asked AI a question

☐ Used maps to find your way

☐ Watched something "recommended for you"

☐ Got an autocorrect fail

☐ FREE SPACE Used my own brain!

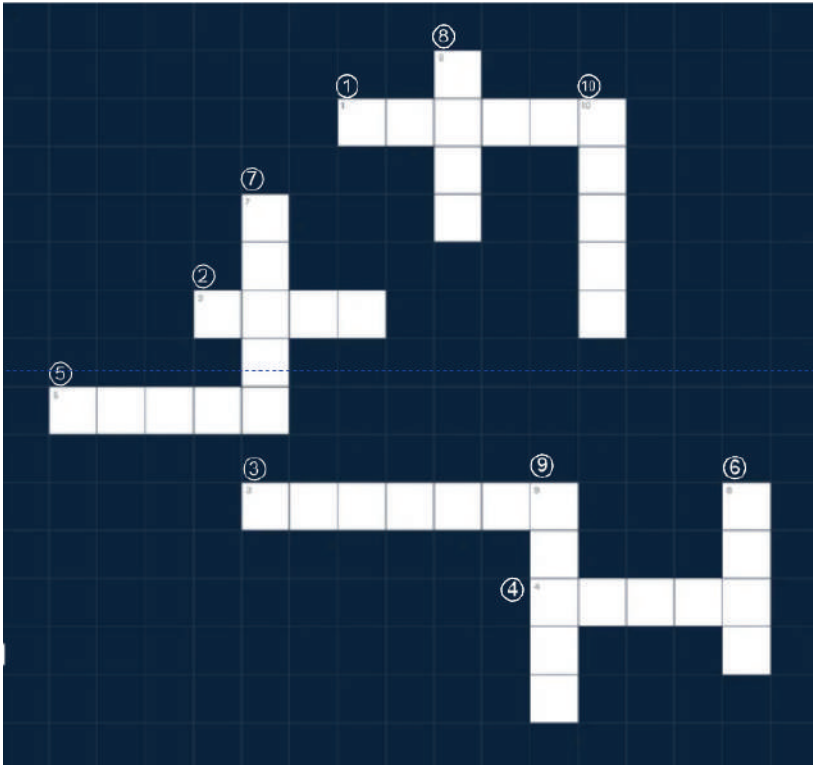
☐ Used face unlock

☐ Asked AI something ridiculous

☐ Ignored an AI suggestion

☐ Thought, "Wait... how did it know that?"

Crack The Code



Across

- 1. The words you type to tell AI what you want.
- 2. Facts and information AI learns from.
- 3. An AI you can actually have a conversation with.
- 4. Something AI can create from just a few words.
- 5. What everyone solving this crossword is!

Down

- 6. Instructions that tell a computer what to do.
- 7. Where your memories, ideas and daydreams live.
- 8. A little spark that can turn into something brilliant.
- 9. What AI should help you do – not do for you.
- 10. Something AI still has to learn from us.

AI WORD SCRAMBLE

Your brain vs. the scrambled bots. Ready?

Unscramble these:

1 TPROMP	7 KTHNI
2 TAAD	8 CVOIE
3 NABRI	9 TRSUT
4 AIMGE	10 EDCO
5 NHAUM	11 ORBOT
6 DIEA	12 THAC

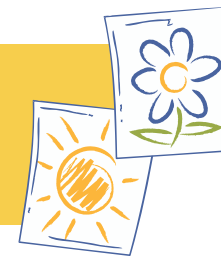
- 1. Prompt
- 2. Data
- 3. Chatbot
- 4. Image
- 5. Human
- 6. Code
- 7. Brain
- 8. Idea
- 9. Think
- 10. Trust

No Prompt. Just Imagination!

AI can help create the picture. But the colours? The mood? The little details? Those are yours. Colour the scene any way you like — then add one thing only a human imagination would think of. A tiny monster? A secret message? Purple leaves? A cat in sunglasses? There are no wrong answers here.



YOUR ART COULD BE FEATURED IN AN UPCOMING EDITION OF BEYOND.
Complete the picture, snap a photo and WhatsApp it to +91 95381 11188





Great-Grandma Molly's Banana Bread

A family recipe written down by hand, passed through generations and still made with love.



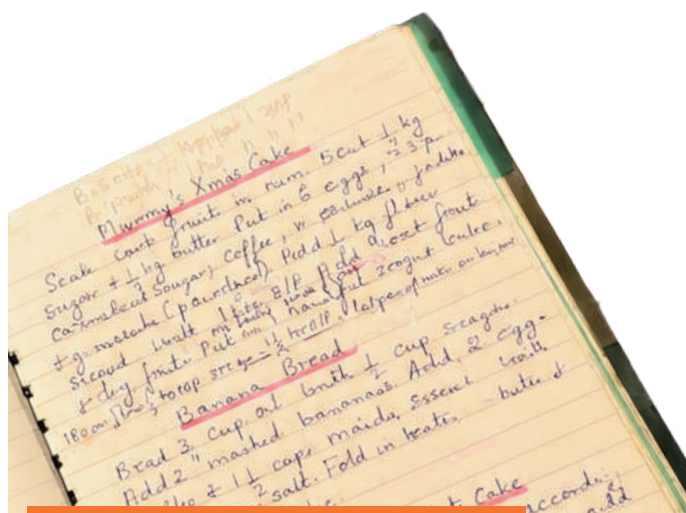
Molly Verghese,
Homemaker &
Great-Grandmother

Ingredients

- ¾ cup oil
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- 2 eggs, separated
- 1½ cups maida / all-purpose flour
- ¾ tsp baking powder
- A pinch of salt
- Vanilla essence

Method

Beat the oil and sugar together. Add the mashed bananas, followed by the egg yolks. Sift the flour with baking powder and salt, and add to the mixture. Fold in the beaten egg whites and vanilla essence. Bake.



COMING UP NEXT

October 2026

Beyond Food

Food is never just what's on the plate. It carries **memories, cultures, people, health, money, traditions and change.**

What tastes like home?
What has changed about the way we eat?
What story does your plate tell?

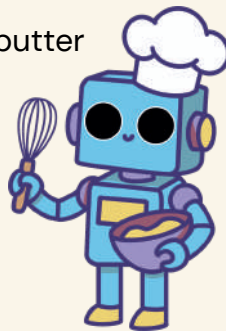
AI's Banana Bread

Generated by AI.

A faster, neater version – with a few modern touches.

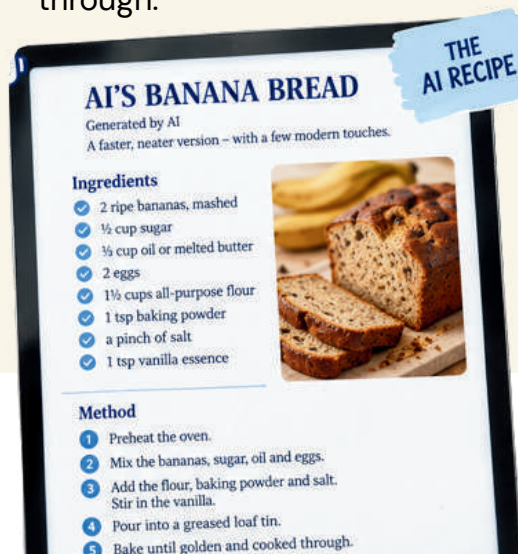
Ingredients

- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- ½ cup sugar
- ⅓ cup oil or melted butter
- 2 eggs
- 1½ cups flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- A pinch of salt
- 1 tsp vanilla essence



Method

- Preheat the oven.
- Mix bananas, sugar, oil and eggs.
- Add flour, baking powder and salt.
- Stir in vanilla essence.
- Pour into a greased loaf tin and bake until golden and cooked through.



WHO DID IT BETTER?

The handwritten original or the AI remix?

Try both. Add your own twist. We'd love to hear from you!

Send us:

A photo of your creation Your human twist

Your verdict. Selected creations can appear in the next edition of BEYOND.

The Ingredient AI Can Never Measure

Recipe for Food That Just Hits Different!



Ameya Sandeep,
Grade VIII



Ingredients

- 1 cup of **"I don't measure"**
- A pinch of spice — or two... or five
- One grandmother saying, **"That's enough."**
- A generous helping of instinct
- One secret family touch
- A little bit of **"you'll know when it's ready"**

Method

- Ignore the measuring spoons.
- Add things until they feel right.
- Taste. Adjust. Taste again.
- Accept that it may never turn out exactly the same twice.
- Serve to people you love.

AI can give you the recipe, the exact measurements and the perfect cooking time. But there's one ingredient it still can't calculate: **LOVE — add as much as you like.**

P.S. That's probably why family recipes always hit different.



GOT A STORY?



Students: Share a food memory, family tradition, favourite dish, food discovery, artwork or an interesting story from your world.

studentdesk@thevoicesbeyond.com

Adults: Share a story, perspective, photograph, family recipe, food tradition or idea that takes us beyond the plate.

community@thevoicesbeyond.com

Please include your name, photograph and profession—or grade and school, if you're a student.

Every plate has a story. We'd love to hear yours.



THIS CONVERSATION ISN'T OVER.

You've spent these pages thinking about AI.

NOW... COME AND SPEAK ABOUT IT.

Some questions were never meant to stay between these pages. They were meant to be:

Questioned

Argued

Challenged

Spoken aloud

AI DEBATE CHALLENGE

Ages 5-8 | 8-12

WANT THE MIC?

Snap the mic on this page.
WhatsApp it to +91 95381 11188.
We'll send you the registration link.

LIMITED SLOTS!

**26
SEPTEMBER
2026**



PICK A SIDE.
OWN THE STAGE.

AI vs Human: Who Wins?
AI is fast. Humans feel, imagine and surprise.

So... who has the edge?
This time, the mic belongs to the generation growing up with AI.

LAST PAGE. FIRST CLUE.

You thought the issue was over.
Not quite!

QUICK. NO GOOGLING.

- WWW stands for...?
- Which came first – YouTube or Facebook?
- Can a computer get a virus without the internet?



Still thinking? Good.



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1

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