

AI IMAGE GENERATION CHEAT SHEET

Liz Magaly Herrera | Data & AI Practitioner | Clarity ∞ Decisions ∞ Impact | For Primary School Teachers

WHAT IS IMAGE GENERATION?

AI image generation uses tools like **DALL-E, Midjourney, Gemini, Canva AI, and Firefly** to create images from text descriptions called **prompts**. The more detail you give, the better the result.

Block	What it does	Vague Prompt	What to Write
F FOCUS	Define the subject Who or what is in the image. Number, age, diversity, species, object.	✗ "A teacher."	A friendly robot wearing a Victorian top hat
R RENDER	Choose the visual style. This is the single biggest lever for changing the output.	✗ "Make it look nice."	Colourful cartoon illustration
A ACTION	Describe what the subject is doing. Static or dynamic — the verb drives the scene.	✗ "Teaching."	Reading to diverse children from a giant history book
M MOOD & SETTING	Set the environment and atmosphere. Where it happens + lighting + emotion.	✗ "In a school."	In a bright classroom, cheerful mood
E EXTRAS	Add fine details that make it classroom-ready. Camera angle, labels, format, age-appropriateness.	✗ "For kids."	Flat design, Year 2, no text, A4 landscape, suitable for 5-year-olds

EXAMPLE: Colourful cartoon illustration of a friendly robot wearing a Victorian top hat, reading to diverse children from a giant history book in a bright classroom, cheerful mood, flat design, Year 2, no text, A4 landscape, suitable for 5-year-olds

5 GOLDEN RULES ❶ Start simple, then refine ❷ Specify age and education ❸ Check before print ❹ Say “no text” if adding your own ❺ Keep human in the loop – AI can hallucinate

SAFETY CHECKLIST BEFORE USING AI IMAGES		
✗ Anatomical errors (wrong fingers, distorted faces)	✗ Factual errors in diagrams or scientific illustrations	⚠ AGE RESTRICTIONS: Most AI image tools require users to be 18+. Check each tool's terms before allowing pupil access. Refer to your school's AI policy and the DfE AI Guidance (June 2025) for age-appropriate use.
✗ Cultural stereotypes or gender bias in characters	✗ Misspelled text (if text was included — avoid text!)	
✗ Inappropriate background elements or hidden content	✓ Always review for diverse, inclusive representation	
	✓ Check age-appropriateness before sharing with pupils	
⚠ DATA PROTECTION: NEVER input real pupil names, data, photos, or identifiable information into ANY AI tool. Always use fictional examples.		
UK GDPR • KCSIE 2025 • Data Protection Act 2018 • DfE AI Guidance June 2025		

⚠ **COPYRIGHT NOTICE FOR SCHOOLS**
AI-generated images have varying licensing terms depending on the tool used. Before printing, distributing, or publishing AI images in school materials, check your tool's licensing terms. Always note which tool generated the image. When in doubt, use the image for internal classroom display only, not for external publication. **UK copyright law** for AI-generated content is under active government review. A formal report and economic impact assessment are expected by March 2026 under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Check GOV.UK for the latest guidance before publishing AI-generated images externally.

⚠ **STYLE REFERENCE NOTE:** Style references to specific artists or studios (e.g., “Studio Ghibli”, “Pixar style”) may be restricted on some AI platforms due to copyright and IP protection policies. If a style keyword doesn’t work on your chosen tool, try describing the visual qualities you want instead (e.g., “soft pastel Japanese animation style with detailed nature backgrounds”).

AI IMAGE GENERATION CHEAT SHEET

Liz Magaly Herrera | Data & AI Practitioner | Clarity ∞ Decisions ∞ Impact | For Primary School Teachers

STYLE KEYWORDS

Add these style descriptions to any prompt. Verified on DALL-E, Gemini, Midjourney, Canva, and Firefly.

Style keyword	What you get	Best for	Example prompt snippet
Pixar style / 3D animated	Friendly, rounded 3D characters (Pixar-like)	Character posters, story displays	"Pixar style friendly dinosaur teacher"
Photorealistic / hyperrealistic	Looks like a real photograph	Geography, science, history visuals	"Photorealistic rainforest ecosystem, 8K"
Watercolour painting	Soft, artistic, hand-painted feel	Story illustrations, calm displays	"Watercolour illustration of a village"
Flat design / vector illustration	Clean, simple, modern graphic style	Icons, infographics, worksheets	"Flat design icons of musical instruments"
Children's book illustration	Warm, friendly, age-appropriate	Reading corners, story resources	"Children's book illustration, cat in garden"
Line drawing / pencil sketch	B&W outlines — perfect for colouring in	Colouring sheets, sketch activities	"Line drawing of a Roman soldier, no shading"
Isometric / infographic	3D technical diagram style	STEM visuals, process diagrams	"Isometric diagram of a plant cell"
Studio Ghibli style	Japanese animation, detailed backgrounds	Nature topics, creative writing	"Studio Ghibli style enchanted forest"
Pop art / retro poster	Bold colours, vintage graphic style	Classroom displays, topic headers	"Pop art poster about recycling"
Botanical illustration	Scientific, detailed, naturalistic	Science posters, nature displays	"Botanical illustration of British wildflowers"

PHOTOGRAPHY & LIGHTING KEYWORDS — FOR PHOTOREALISTIC RESULTS

These keywords dramatically improve photorealistic images. Especially effective in Midjourney (with --style raw) and DALL-E / GPT-4o.

Lighting Keywords	Camera & Composition	Pro Combos for Teachers
studio lighting — professional, even, controlled golden hour — warm sunset. Outdoor/nature Rembrandt lighting — dramatic face triangle. Portraits backlit / rim light — glowing edges. Silhouettes soft natural light — overcast, gentle. Indoor scenes cinematic lighting — dramatic, film-like. Displays flat lighting — no shadows. Clean diagrams	close-up / macro — detail of small things. Science wide shot — full scene view. Geography bird's eye view — looking down. Maps, layouts eye-level view — natural perspective. Characters 85mm portrait lens — blurred bg, subject focus 35mm wide lens — captures more. Environments shallow depth of field — dreamy bokeh. Headers	Clean diagram: --style raw --s 30 --ar 16:9 Portrait poster: --ar 2:3 --s 100 --q 1 Worksheet border: --tile --style raw --q 0.5 Storybook page: --ar 3:2 --s 200 --q 1 Quick draft: --draft --q 0.5 (fast + cheap) Explore options: --chaos 40 (varied results) Consistent char: --cref [URL] (same character)

PLATFORM COMPARISON

Platform features and pricing change frequently. This comparison is accurate as of February 2026. Check each provider's website for the latest information.

Feature	DALL-E / GPT-4o	Gemini / Imagen 4	Midjourney V7	Canva AI / Dream Lab	Adobe Firefly
Best for	Quick images in chat (Age 13+, 18+ without parental consent)	Google schools + docs (Age 13+, 18+ for standalone Gemini app)	Stunning displays (Age 18+ no exceptions)	Finished worksheets (Age 13+ via Canva for Education)	Copyright-safe images (Age 13+, 18+ for full features)
Text in images	Improved (GPT-4o)	Best (Imagen 4)	Poor (avoid text)	Good (editor overlay)	Moderate
Platform specific tips	Just describe what you want in ChatGPT, it rewrites your prompt automatically. Use the Select Tool to fix parts of an image. <i>Free tier available (ChatGPT). Plus, from \$20/mo.</i>	Best text-in-images (Imagen 4). Upload a worksheet + say "add illustrations". Available inside Google Slides. Enterprise-grade protection when using Google Workspace for Education does not use data for training. Admin controls by age group. <i>Free with Google account. Advanced features via Workspace.</i>	Highest quality. Add --style raw for educational materials. Use --tile for borders. <i>Paid only. Plans from \$10/mo.</i>	Generate image → drop into worksheet/poster. 14 graphic styles. Magic Edit to fix parts. <i>Free for Education (school signup). Pro from \$13/mo.</i>	Trained on licensed content only = copyright safe. Generative Fill to edit parts. Credit-based pricing. <i>Free tier (limited credits). Paid from \$5/mo.</i>

AI IMAGE GENERATION CHEAT SHEET

Liz Magaly Herrera | Data & AI Practitioner | Clarity ∞ Decisions ∞ Impact | For Primary School Teachers

MIDJOURNEY V7 — COMPLETE PARAMETER REFERENCE

Add these to the END of any Midjourney prompt after a space. These are Midjourney-specific — they won't work in DALL-E, Gemini, or Canva.

Parameter	Values	What it does	Teacher example
--ar	e.g. 16:9, 2:3, 1:1	Sets aspect ratio (shape). Default 1:1. Over 2:1 is experimental.	"classroom poster" --ar 2:3 → portrait A3 poster
--style raw	(just add it)	Removes Midjourney's artistic flair. More literal, photographic, cleaner output. Essential for educational diagrams.	"water cycle diagram" --style raw
--stylize / --s	0–1000 (default 100)	Controls artistic interpretation. Low = literal. High = very artistic. 50 = low, 250 = high, 750 = very high.	"food chain diagram" --s 30 → clean and literal
--chaos	0–100 (default 0)	How different the 4 results are from each other. Higher = more variety.	"Victorian classroom" --chaos 40 → varied angles
--quality / --q	0.5, 1, 2 (default 1)	Render quality & detail. 0.5 = fast draft. 2 = extra refinement (uses more credits).	"worksheet border" --q 0.5 → quick draft first
--no	items to exclude	Negative prompting — tells AI what NOT to include in the image.	"playground scene" --no text --no adults
--tile	(just add it)	Creates seamless repeating patterns. Perfect for borders, backgrounds, wrapping paper.	"floral pattern for worksheet border" --tile
--seed	0–4294967295	Same seed = same base pattern. Great for controlled comparisons when testing word changes.	"forest scene" --seed 12345 → consistent base
--stop	10–100 (default 100)	Stops generation early. Lower = softer, sketch-like. Useful for concept drafts.	"castle sketch" --stop 60 → softer, sketchy feel
--draft	(just add it)	10× faster, half the credits. Lower resolution. Perfect for rapid prototyping.	"history scene" --draft → quick idea check
--sref [URL]	image URL	Style reference — AI copies the visual style of the referenced image.	"forest" --sref [URL of watercolour painting]
--cref [URL]	image URL	Character reference — keeps a consistent character across multiple images.	"robot teacher" --cref [URL of previous robot]

5 READY-TO-USE IMAGE PROMPTS

Vocabulary Flashcards	Story Illustration	Science Diagram
<p>F A single large object matching the vocabulary word (e.g., apple, umbrella, elephant)</p> <p>R Flat design vector illustration, clean lines, bright primary colours</p> <p>A The object sitting still on a plain white background, no distractions</p> <p>M White background, no scenery, cheerful and bright</p> <p>E No text, square format (1:1), suitable for 4-year-olds, one object per image</p> <p><i>Flat design vector illustration of a single bright red apple sitting on a plain white background, clean lines, cheerful, primary colours, no text, square format, suitable for 4-year-olds</i></p>	<p>F A friendly dragon with small wings and big round eyes</p> <p>R Children's book illustration, warm watercolour style</p> <p>A Reading a large golden storybook to three diverse children sitting in a circle</p> <p>M In a cosy library corner with cushions, warm lamplight, magical sparkles in the air</p> <p>E No text, A4 landscape, suitable for 6-year-olds, inclusive representation</p> <p><i>Children's book illustration, warm watercolour style, a friendly dragon with small wings and big round eyes reading a large golden storybook to three diverse children sitting in a circle in a cosy library corner with cushions, warm lamplight, magical sparkles, no text, A4 landscape, suitable for 6-year-olds</i></p>	<p>F A complete water cycle showing evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection</p> <p>R Educational infographic, clean isometric style with labelled arrows</p> <p>A Water moving through each stage: ocean evaporating, clouds forming, rain falling, river flowing back</p> <p>M Cross-section of landscape showing ocean, mountains, sky, and underground, bright daytime colours</p> <p>E Include labelled arrows for each stage, A4 landscape, suitable for 8-year-olds, educational diagram</p> <p><i>Educational infographic, clean isometric style, a complete water cycle diagram showing evaporation from the ocean, condensation forming clouds, precipitation as rain, and collection in rivers, cross-section of landscape with labelled arrows for each stage, bright daytime colours, A4 landscape, suitable for 8-year-olds</i></p>