

Expanding Inquiry: Simulations and Investigations

Part 1: [Student interaction with AI](#)

Historical Figure simulation

Part 2: [Student interaction with each other](#)

AI Character Role play Simulations

Part 1: Where students interact with the AI

(For all examples, please feel free to change the prompt in any way to match your own context/discipline/etc.)

1. First, a basic historical figure simulation prompt

Try this:

I am a 9th grade history student. I want to discuss the American Civil War with Abraham Lincoln. Act as President Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War. Have a conversation with me. Don't just tell me information but ask questions and respond to my questions. Use language and tone appropriate for the time period but ensure a 9th grader can follow your responses.

Try adding: **Please take your information from Lincoln's own writing.**

2. Creating a trained, custom GPT

By customizing and training the bot, you can have more control over the students' experience.

Try out [Truman's Choice here](#).

3. Investigations: How can students interact with the chatbot in ways that enhance their curiosity and critical thinking as well as their content knowledge?

Try this:

I am a 9th grade history teacher and I want to create an AI-assisted historical investigation in which my students have to learn about Ancient Persia.

Assume the role of museum curator and engage the students. Begin by providing a timeline of Ancient Persia. Then, create an investigation that gives students a brief primary source, explanation, or other resource and then ask them questions about it. Ask one question at a time and give the student feedback on their answer before moving to

the next question. Once they have answered 2-3 questions about the source, ask the student if they have any questions about the source. After answering any student questions, move on to another source.

As the investigation continues, the questions should cover zoroastrianism, islam, relationship with the Greeks, leaders, and arts and culture. By the end, students should have a solid basic understanding of the key elements of Ancient Persia from at least 5 sources.

4. Prompting

Prompts need to include:

- role
- scope and limiters
- learning goals and objectives
- tone/directions for conversation

Try to create a prompt for a simulation (talk to a historical figure, a famous author or mathematician or artist or scientist OR explore a historical moment or scientific phenomenon) or an investigation (a scientific process, a mathematical principle, a literary or artistic movement, or a current event) that includes the prompt elements above.

Part 2: Where students interact with each other

1. Inquiry through interactive simulations
2. Historical framing: French Revolution Journal Assignment
3. Prompts: Character bios, Meet and Greet, Rumor Mill, Trials
4. Pedagogical follow ups to each prompt - emphasizing research and inquiry

AI Character Role play Simulations

Instructions:

Decide on an historical event and insert it into the base prompt (e.g. the French Revolution, American westward expansion, Vietnamese Revolution, Fall of the Berlin wall etc). Feel free to change the “identifiers” to include race, gender, location, etc. insofar as it fits your historical content better. Input the “Base Prompt.” Once the (imaginary) characters are created, input any of the following simulations. After inputting any prompt, different AI bots may need you to follow up by confirming various decision options (note: these can differ widely so I’d be excited to see what “hangups” or problems arise).

After each prompt I have also put some recommendations for how to use this simulation for an interactive class experience, which can vary widely based on grade level. (I teach Middle School so these were primarily to get the students interested in the time period and learn some research skills). Higher levels may want more rigorous elements inserted into the prompts, but

remember that AI can hallucinate important historical info, so please fact-check. Most importantly, the goal here is “engagement” with the historical period.

Base Prompt: Character Bios

You’re a knowledgeable and creative history teacher who is designing a simulation for 16 students studying [**historical event**]. Create 16 characters, each of which will be assigned to students for role playing simulation. For each character, give a 4-5 sentence description of the character’s background and weave into the descriptions varied social identifiers (age, occupation, social class, political ideology in accordance with the time period), and any other relevant identifiers that marked important societal differences of the time period for each character.

Design your lesson!

Prep: Print out and distribute characters

In-Class: Create a character name tag for future use. Research the time period and start a journal from your character’s perspective. What is a typical day like in their life? What do they care about?

Prompt: Simulation #1: Meet and Greet

In Simulation #1, characters will interact with each other and discuss their bios and the historical context.

Step 1: Create a grid. Using the names from the character bios, assign to Character 1 four other characters to whom Character 1 will ask a historical prompt/question. Do the same with Characters 2 through 16. Double-check to make sure there are no duplicates or self-pairings.

Step 2: Create rich, historically grounded prompts/questions for each of these characters to ask the others based on the unique background of the characters in this historical context. Organize these in paragraph form so that each character has 4 prompts to ask the 4 intended characters of their prompts.

Design your lesson!

Prep: Distribute the prompts for each student to ask. Have each student research the time period and be prepared to answer questions from other students.

In-Class: Mingle and have conversations with others. When you encounter a character you are supposed to ask a question, you should get to know them first. Then, ask your prompt.

Follow up: Journal: Who did you “meet” today? Describe them and their views (political ideologies, etc.). Did any tough questions stump you - what historical information might you need to answer them? Any difficult interactions between characters - what historical basis is there for antagonism?

Prompt: Simulation #2: Rumor Mill

In Simulation #2, characters will converse with each other and seek to uncover accurate information about what is going on in their historical time period and place.

Split characters into 4 groups based on a closely shared identifier (e.g. occupation or social class). Label each group based on the shared identifiers. Give each group 10 rumors about the other groups (40 rumors total for all 4 groups). Create some historically accurate rumors and some historically exaggerated rumors, concerning (**specific historical event**). For the historically plausible rumors, make sure there is plausible historical precedent for such information so that students can research it. Do not label the rumors. After you've written 10 rumors for a group, provide a note for the teacher about which rumors have plausibility.

Design your lesson!

Prep: Print out rumors for each group. Students should do more research on the identifiers of their character.

In-Class: Call out groups and distribute group specific rumors (perhaps cut up individually). Have them read rumors aloud within their group. Then have free time where they can tell other individuals what they've "heard" about their group.

Follow up: Research (and cite sources) which of these rumors were plausibly true in history and which were false (characters are fake, but are there similar instances of this behavior taking place?). Additionally, how did it feel to hear rumors about your group from others? Could you have overcome these divisions and connect across groups? Which group would this be difficult with?

Prompt: Simulation #3: Trials

In Simulation #3, the courts of the current government in power have brought charges against each character.

Step 1: Create a richly detailed accusation against each character based on plausible historical events and each character's personality.

Step 2: Assign each character 3 potential alibis in the form of other characters in the room. Also give each character 3 other characters for whom they could be potential alibis.

Design your lesson!

Prep: There are accusations against everyone! Prepare your defense once you receive your accusation. You can ask 3 characters to be your alibi. Use historical knowledge of the time period to convince them you didn't commit this crime. Also, 3 characters will ask you to be their alibi. Decide if you want to corroborate a story in their defense. There are no historical verdicts to research here- it's a hypothetical situation where you can research historical information to make a plausible case for your character. Be creative and convincing!

In-Class: Part 1: Ask other characters to be your alibi and corroborate a story about why you didn't commit the crime.

Part 2: Character is brought in front of the room, accusation is read aloud. They make their defense (20-30 seconds or so) and call for alibis. The room votes on whether they are guilty or innocent (majority rules)

Follow up: How successful were you defending yourself? How successful were you in negotiating for an alibi? Write a journal entry from your character's perspective about how their trial went and what they are now awaiting (sentencing or freedom).

Other role play simulations: elections, write letters to each other under role play conditions, create a government together and give characters principles to defend, create various "crises" and have characters journal how they would respond, introduce economic decisions and have characters respond, and mimic big peace conferences (like Treaty of Versailles or a Model UN).