

# Activity 1: Mystery Helpers

Working Together with Robot Friends (Grades K-2)

Dr. Ryan Straight

2025-12-07

## ! Teacher Overview

This activity introduces the youngest learners to the concept that **people and computers work best as a team**. Using a simple classroom mystery, students discover that their robot helper (AI) is good at some things, and people are good at other things—and together they solve problems better!

**Duration:** 25-30 minutes **Grade Levels:** K-2 **Group Size:** Whole class with teacher leading  
**Technology:** Teacher device only (students do not need devices)

## Learning Goals

By the end of this activity, students will:

- Understand that computers can be **helpers**, not just toys or tools
- Recognize that people and computers are good at **different things**
- Experience working **together** with a computer helper to solve a problem

## CYBER.org Standards Alignment (K-2)

- **K-2.DC.CIT:** Digital citizenship foundations
- **K-2.SEC.SAF:** Basic safety concepts

## The Mystery

### Oh No! The Class Pet Picture Is Missing!

**Setup:** Tell students that the class computer had a picture of the class pet (real or imaginary) saved on it, but now it's gone! We need to figure out what happened.

**The Clues** (show on screen or as printed pictures):

1. The computer screen shows: "File not found"
2. Someone saw a student at the computer during snack time
3. The recycling bin icon on the computer looks full
4. There's a note that says "oops" near the computer

## Activity Flow (25-30 minutes)

### Part 1: Look at the Clues (5 minutes)

**Teacher says:** > “We have a mystery! Our class pet picture is missing. Let’s be detectives and figure out what happened. First, let’s look at the clues together.”

Show each clue. Ask students: - “What do you see?” - “What do you think this means?”

### Part 2: Ask Our Robot Helper (10 minutes)

**Teacher says:** > “Now, I have a special helper—a robot friend on the computer! The robot is really good at remembering things and finding patterns. Let’s ask our robot helper what it thinks.”

**Open your AI assistant** (ChatGPT, Claude, etc.) and say to students: > “I’m going to ask our robot helper. Listen to what it says!”

**Type this prompt** (read it aloud as you type): > “You are a friendly robot helper talking to kindergarten and first grade students. We have a mystery: a picture file is missing from the class computer. Here are our clues: the screen says ‘file not found’, someone was at the computer during snack time, the recycling bin looks full, and there’s a note that says ‘oops’. What do you think might have happened? Use simple words.”

**Read the AI response** in a fun “robot voice” if you like!

### Part 3: What Did We Each Figure Out? (5 minutes)

**Discussion questions:**

1. “What did our robot helper notice?”
  - (AI probably mentioned: recycling bin, accidental deletion, checking the trash)
2. “What did WE notice that the robot might not understand?”
  - (Humans noticed: the “oops” note suggests someone feels bad, someone was there at snack time, this was probably an accident not on purpose)
3. “Who solved the mystery—us or the robot?”
  - (Answer: BOTH! We worked together!)

### Part 4: Check the Answer Together (5 minutes)

**Teacher says:** > “Let’s see if we can find our picture! Our robot helper said to check the recycling bin...”

**Demonstrate** opening the recycle bin and “finding” the picture (pre-stage this).

**Celebrate:** “We found it! Our robot helper knew WHERE to look, and WE understood that it was probably an accident. **Together** we solved the mystery!”

## Key Teaching Points

### What to Emphasize

**Robot helpers are good at:** - Remembering where things are on computers - Finding patterns  
- Knowing computer rules (like “deleted files go to recycling bin”)

**People are good at:** - Understanding feelings (the “oops” note) - Knowing about our classroom and friends - Deciding what to do next

**Together:** - We solve problems better than either one alone!

### Simple Vocabulary

Word	Kid-Friendly Meaning
Robot helper	A computer program that can answer questions
Clue	Something that helps us figure out a mystery
Pattern	When things happen the same way again and again
Team	People (or people and robots!) working together

### Variations

#### For Kindergarten

- Use only 2-3 clues
- Focus on the “together is better” message
- Skip the AI interaction and use a pre-written “robot helper says...” card

#### For 2nd Grade

- Let students suggest questions to ask the robot helper
- Discuss: “What questions would you ask?”
- Introduce the word “partner”

### Low-Resource Option

If you don’t have AI access, use this pre-written robot helper response:

“Beep boop! I am a robot helper. I see the recycling bin is full—that is where deleted files go! I think someone might have accidentally put the picture in the recycling bin. We should check there! But I don’t know who was at the computer or why they might have done it. Can you help me understand that part?”

### Follow-Up Activities

#### Art Connection

- Draw a picture of “Me and My Robot Helper” solving a problem together

#### Discussion Circle

- “When else might a robot helper be useful?”
- “What are YOU good at that a robot might not understand?”

### Take-Home Connection

- Simple note to families: “Today we learned that people and computer helpers work best as a team!”

## Assessment

### Observation Checklist

Student Behavior	Observed?
Participated in identifying clues	
Listened to robot helper response	
Contributed to discussion about human vs. robot strengths	
Expressed understanding that teamwork helped solve mystery	

### Exit Ticket (for 1st-2nd grade)

**Draw or write:** “One thing I’m good at, and one thing a robot helper is good at”

### Assessment Connection

This table shows how activity elements connect to the [Human-AI Collaboration Rubric](#) criteria:

Rubric Criterion	Developed Through	Evidence Source
<b>AI Partnership Framing</b>	Listening to robot helper as team member	Observation: Does student talk about robot as “helper” or “friend”?
<b>Complementary Strengths</b>	Discussion of human vs. robot abilities	Exit ticket drawing/writing
<b>AI Limitation Awareness</b>	Teacher emphasis on what robot couldn’t understand	Verbal responses during Part 3 discussion
<b>Synthesis Quality</b>	“Together we solved it” celebration	Student articulation of teamwork message

## Teacher Notes

### Why This Matters

Even our youngest learners are growing up with AI assistants (Alexa, Siri, Google). This activity helps them develop a healthy mental model: AI is a **partner**, not magic, and humans bring important things that AI can’t do.

### Preparation Checklist

- ☐ Choose or create a “class pet picture” to “lose”
- ☐ Pre-delete the picture to recycle bin
- ☐ Test AI access OR prepare the pre-written response
- ☐ Print clue images if not showing on screen
- ☐ Practice your “robot voice” (optional but fun!)