SESSIONS 1 TO 3 · LESSONS 1 AND 2 · CURIOUS

Fun with AI and What Comes Next?

THE BIG IDEA

A chatbot writes by predicting the most likely next word, one word at a time. Sometimes the next word is obvious, and anyone can guess it. Sometimes it isn't. Change the prompt and you change the prediction.

What your child did. In Lesson 1, your child met RAILE Chat, made something with it, and changed one word of a prompt to see the answer change. In Lesson 2, they guessed the chatbot's next word, tested their guesses in RAILE Chat, and wrote one sentence starter with an obvious next word and one without.

While your child works

Lesson 1 is Session 1. Lesson 2 is Sessions 2 and 3, and each of those ends with 10 minutes of RAILE Learn. You don't need to sit with your child. If they call you over, it is usually for one of these.

What happened	What to tell them
They can't get into the Quick Check.	It is at eval.joinraile.ai and uses the same login code as RAILE Chat.
The chatbot wrote a whole sentence, not one word.	Look for the word that finishes the sentence. That's the prediction. RAILE Chat sometimes says first that it is a computer program, not a real person. Skip that line.
The chatbot gave the same answer twice.	That is common. The same prompt often brings back nearly the same answer. To get something different, change a word that matters.
The answers seem to repeat or run together.	The chatbot reads the whole chat. Start a new chat for each test.
“Jelly.” has a capital letter or a period.	It still counts as a match.
They can't think of a starter for Run 3.	Offer one to get going: “Once upon a…” Then ask for another like it.

For you: how it actually works

Background, if you want it. Your child doesn't need you to know any of this.

- **Chatbots run on large language models** trained on an enormous amount of text to do one thing: predict what comes next. Technically they predict *tokens* (words or pieces of words). “Word” is accurate enough for this age.
- **A reply is a loop:** score every possible next piece, pick one, add it, repeat, hundreds of times.
- **The prompt is the starting point for every prediction**, and so is the rest of the chat. Change a word that matters (*homework* to *video games*) and every prediction after it changes.
- **Picture makers** work differently, but they also make something new from patterns rather than finding an existing picture.

After Session 3: look at three things

Your child checks their own answers at the back of the Student Guide, so there is nothing for you to mark. These three are worth a look.

In the Student Guide	What a good answer looks like
Session 2: the two starters in Run 3	The obvious starter has one word that almost has to come next ("Once upon a," "Happy birthday to"). The not-obvious starter leaves room for many words ("My favorite food is"). This is the best single check of whether the lesson landed.
Session 3: "Would you change your vote now?"	Any answer that moves toward predicting or guessing from patterns. It is fine if the first vote was "looked it up." Many students start there.
Session 3: "In your own words"	Something like: it predicts the next word, then the next, based on all the writing it learned from.

Where does that leave your child? Taken together, the three answers put them in one of these places.

Where they are	What it sounds like	What to do
They have it	"Only one word really fits after 'peanut butter and,' so anyone could guess jelly. Lots of words fit after 'school is.'"	Move on to the next lesson.
Almost there	"Peanut butter and jelly is obvious and the other one isn't."	Ask: *What is the chatbot doing, one word at a time?*
Not yet	"It's random." "It looked it up."	Look at the bar picture in the Session 3 guide together, then try one more starter in RAILE Chat.

Then: the conversation

Sit down with the finished guides. Use these in order. The words in quotes are a starting point, so say them your own way.



ASK "Read me your obvious starter. Don't tell me what the chatbot said." Guess the word. Then do the same with the not-obvious one.

You guess the first and miss the second. Ask why. Listen for: *only one word really fits* and *lots of words could fit*.

ASK "That poem about the dog and the vacuum. Nobody had written it until you asked. Where did it come from?"

Listen for: *it predicted it, one word at a time, from patterns in the writing it learned from.*

ASK "What happened when you changed one word in your prompt?"

Listen for: *the whole answer changed, because every word after that was predicted from different words.*

NOW PUSH BACK

You say: "I still think it just looked the answer up on the internet."

Say it as if you mean it, and hold your position for a round or two. Your child has done this lesson alone, so you are the first person to disagree with them.

A strong answer sounds like: *"Then where did my second answer come from? It didn't exist until I changed the word."* Or: *"Then why could I guess jelly before it answered?"*

When you hear one, give in: "OK. So it's predicting, not finding."

If your child says "It's smart. It's thinking." Try: "It's very good at predicting. Predicting isn't the same as knowing."

Their questions about AI. The last box in the Student Guide collects your child's questions. Answer the ones you can. "I don't know, let's find out" is a good answer too.

SESSIONS 1 TO 3 · LESSONS 1 AND 2

Prompt card

Every prompt in the three sessions, word for word, and what to expect. Each one goes in a new chat.

Where	Prompt	What to expect
Session 1: poem	**Write a four-line poem about a dog who is scared of the vacuum.**	A four-line poem.
Session 1: make something	**Write a short poem about _____.** **Tell me a joke about _____.** **Make a picture of _____ doing _____.**	Your child fills in the blanks.
Session 1: change one word	The same prompt with the topic word changed.	A whole different answer. This is the point of the step.
Session 2: Run 1	**Finish this sentence with one word and then stop:** **Peanut butter and**	Almost always **jelly**. Most guesses match.
Session 2: Run 2	**Finish this sentence with one word and then stop:** **The best thing about school is**	It varies. Few guesses match, and that is the point.
Session 2: Run 3	**Finish this sentence with one word and then stop:** plus your child's own starter.	A match on the obvious starter, and usually a miss on the other.
Session 2: two more	**Finish this sentence with one word and then stop:** **Twinkle, twinkle, little** **Finish this sentence with one word and then stop:** **The best pizza topping is**	The first is almost always **star**. The second varies.
Session 3: Make it obvious	**Finish this sentence with one word and then stop:** plus a starter your child rewrites.	A match, once only one word really fits. If not, they add a clue and try again.
Session 3: Obvious or not?	No prompts. Your child decides on paper.	1: obvious; 2: not obvious; 3: obvious; 4: not obvious.