



EduTrend Contents

P4C · AESTHETICS AND ART · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Can a Machine Make Art?

Creativity, intention and machine-made images

Ages 12–14

Level: Intermediate

50 minutes

Circle and small groups
· up to 30

Activity 04

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 04 · AT A GLANCE

Can a Machine Make Art?

Students look at invented cases: a picture made by an AI image generator from a short prompt, a painting made by an elephant trained to hold a brush, a random pattern made by a computer and a child's painting of their dream. They discuss which is art and who the artist is. They create questions and enquire into whether art needs a creator who means something by it.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- analyse creativity and intention;
- compare human and machine making;
- reason about authorship;
- build a justified view.

KEY WORDS

creativity · intention · machine · artist · AI · author

CURRICULUM LINKS

Computing: artificial intelligence.
Art: creativity and technique.
Citizenship: ownership of work.

1**STIMULUS**

Share something to think about

2**THINK**

Quiet thinking time

3**QUESTION**

Create and choose a question

4**ENQUIRE**

Reason together

5**BUILD**

Agree, disagree, add

6**REFLECT**

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Image case cards
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Do not use an AI image tool with students. Use the prepared cards only.

ACTIVITY 04 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–8 min Stimulus	Share the four image cases.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
8–20 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
20–44 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"Can a machine make art?"</i>
44–50 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Argue whether a machine can make art.

ACTIVITY 04 • FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Many theories of art say that an artwork expresses the intentions or feelings of its maker.

Machine-made images challenge these theories and raise questions about who counts as the author.

Common ideas to listen for

- “If a machine made it, it is not creative.” People disagree.
- “Anything pretty is art.” Beauty and art differ.
- “The person who typed the prompt is the only artist.” Authorship is debated.

Adapting the activity

Support

Compare two cases.

Stretch

Write rules for an art competition about machine-made work.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Who is the artist?

Analyse.

Who is the artist?

Case	Art?	Who is the artist?

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

**Does art need an artist who means something? Before the enquiry I thought...
Now I think... because...**

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Can a Machine Make Art? is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Aesthetics and Art programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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