NO PREP

AI in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, and Canva

Includes: Student reading, case study, differentiated questions, teacher key

Name: Period: Date:

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AI Has Moved Into Your Everyday Tools

You no longer have to switch to a separate app to use AI for writing or design. Microsoft, Google, and Canva

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AI Has Moved Into Your Everyday Tools

You no longer have to switch to a separate app to use AI for writing or design. Microsoft, Google, and Canva have all integrated AI directly into the tools that students and workers use every day. Microsoft has Copilot built into Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. Google has Gemini integrated into Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Gmail. Canva has Magic Write, Magic Design, and a suite of other AI features baked directly into its design platform. The AI is no longer a separate tool you visit; it is embedded in the tools you already use. This integration is significant for two reasons. First, it dramatically lowers the barrier to using AI productively: you do not need to learn a new application or copy and paste between windows. Second, it means AI assistance is available at every stage of every task, which changes how work gets done. Understanding what these tools can do, and what their limitations are, is increasingly part of basic digital literacy.

Microsoft Copilot in Word

Microsoft Copilot in Word allows users to draft, rewrite, and summarize documents directly inside the Word interface. You can open a new Word document, click the Copilot icon, and ask it to create a first draft of almost anything (a business letter, a project proposal, a report outline, a job description). You can also highlight an existing paragraph and ask Copilot to rewrite it to be more concise, more formal, or to add more detail. And you can ask Copilot to summarize a long document into key bullet points. One of the most useful Copilot features in Word is the ability to reference other documents in your Microsoft environment. If you have meeting notes in OneDrive and you need to write a follow-up email, you can prompt Copilot to draft the email based on the meeting notes without switching applications. This kind of cross-document reference is a significant productivity tool for professionals but

requires a paid Microsoft 365 Copilot subscription. The free version of Copilot has more limited capabilities.

Google Gemini in Docs

Google's Gemini integration in Docs offers similar drafting, rewriting, and summarization capabilities. The Gemini sidebar in Docs allows you to prompt the AI while you are working on a document, and it can pull context from your Google Drive files if you ask it to reference them. Like Copilot, Gemini in Docs can draft a first version of a document, help you expand an outline into full paragraphs, or condense a long document into a shorter summary. One notable Google Docs feature is the 'Help me write' prompt interface, which appears when you start a new document or blank line and offers to help you draft content. This is particularly useful for students who struggle with starting: the blank page problem that paralyzes many writers. You can give it a rough idea and ask for a starting point, then reshape it into your own voice and argument. Google Workspace for Education makes many AI features available to students through school accounts, though availability varies by district.

Canva's AI Suite: Magic Write and Beyond

Canva has integrated AI across its design platform in ways that go beyond simple text generation. Magic Write generates written content inside Canva designs — captions, headlines, presentation slide text, social media copy. Magic Design can generate an entire presentation design from a simple text prompt, choosing layouts, color schemes, and images automatically. Magic Edit allows you to modify images within your designs by describing changes in text — 'change the background to a mountain scene' or 'remove the person on the left.' Background Remover uses AI to isolate subjects from image backgrounds with one click. For students, the most relevant Canva AI features are in presentation creation and visual content design. If you need a poster, infographic, social media post, or presentation for a class project, Canva's AI tools can dramatically accelerate the process. You describe what you need, AI generates a starting design, and you customize from there. This is significantly faster than building from scratch while still requiring your creative judgment about what looks good and communicates effectively.

What These Tools Do Well and Where They Fall Short

In-app AI tools in Word, Docs, and Canva are best at handling structured, routine tasks: drafting professional emails, creating standard document formats, generating presentation outlines, writing marketing copy, summarizing meeting notes. They work particularly well when you have a clear sense of what you want and need help executing it efficiently. Where they fall short is in anything requiring original thinking, nuanced judgment, or genuine creativity. A Copilot-drafted report about your company's quarterly results will be structurally correct but intellectually empty if you do not supply the actual insights and analysis. A Magic Design presentation will have professional-looking slides but will not make a compelling argument unless you supply the substance. These tools accelerate execution — they do not replace the thinking that gives your work value. Students who understand this will use them as efficiency tools rather than as replacements for intellectual effort.

Privacy, Data, and What Happens to Your Work

When you use AI features in these applications, your input is processed by the AI in ways governed by the company's privacy policy. Microsoft, Google, and Canva all have policies about what data is used to train their models, though the details and opt-out mechanisms vary and change over time. For school assignments, personal information, or anything sensitive, it is worth understanding what happens to the content you type into these AI features. Most platforms offer enterprise or education tiers with stronger privacy protections than consumer accounts. If you are using a school-issued Google Workspace account, your data may have different protections than a personal Gmail account. Microsoft's educational licensing includes specific data handling commitments. Canva for Education has its own data policies for students. The basic principle: never input genuinely sensitive personal information, confidential business data, or anything you would not want stored on a third-party server into any AI feature. It is also worth understanding that AI features in these platforms are updated frequently — often monthly. A feature that did not exist in Word three months ago may be standard today. This means staying current with AI capabilities in tools you already use is itself a professional skill. The workers and students who periodically explore what is new in the tools they use daily consistently find time-saving features that their peers are missing. Treating AI tools as static — learning them once and assuming that knowledge is permanent — is increasingly a liability in

fields where these tools evolve rapidly. Beyond writing and design, AI integration in these platforms is also becoming significant for accessibility. Microsoft's Copilot can read documents aloud, summarize lengthy reports for users who struggle with long-form reading, and translate documents — all with a single command. Google's Gemini can convert spoken dictation into formatted documents, making it useful for students who find typing difficult or think better by speaking. Canva's text-to-presentation features help visual learners who struggle to organize written outlines into visual formats. These accessibility applications are increasingly recognized as one of the most valuable dimensions of AI in productivity tools — they make professional-quality work more accessible to a wider range of learners and users.

Key Information: AI in Everyday Productivity Tools

Tool / Platform	Key AI Feature
Microsoft Word (Copilot)	Draft, rewrite, summarize documents; reference other OneDrive files
Google Docs (Gemini)	'Help me write' prompts; draft, expand, summarize; reference Drive files
Canva (Magic Write)	Generate text content — captions, headlines, slide copy — inside designs
Canva (Magic Design)	Generate full presentation or design from a text prompt automatically
Canva (Magic Edit)	Modify images inside designs using text descriptions of the change
Canva (Background Remover)	AI-powered one-click background removal from images
Privacy consideration	Text entered into AI features is processed per each company's data policy
Core limitation	All tools accelerate execution but cannot replace original thinking and analysis

Case Study: Aaliyah's Presentation in 45 Minutes

Aaliyah has a presentation due in two hours on the American Civil Rights Movement for her history class. She has the content knowledge — she has been studying this unit for two weeks — but she has never been good at making presentations look professional. She opens Canva and uses Magic Design, typing: 'Create a 10-slide presentation about the American Civil Rights Movement for a high school history class, with a clean professional look.' Canva generates a complete design with layouts, fonts, and color scheme in about 30 seconds. Aaliyah then edits every slide with her own content — replacing the placeholder text with the real facts, quotes, and analysis she has learned. She uses Canva's Magic Write to help her write a more compelling introduction slide but rewrites it in her own words. She removes three slides that do not fit her argument and adds two of her own. The presentation that results is genuinely good — professional-looking and intellectually substantive because Aaliyah supplied the knowledge and Canva handled the design. Total time: 45 minutes.

1. How did Aaliyah divide the work between herself and AI in building her presentation? What did each contribute?

2. The reading says in-app AI tools 'accelerate execution but do not replace the thinking that gives your work value.' How does Aaliyah's process demonstrate this principle?

Multiple Choice

1. According to the reading, what distinguishes the AI integration in Word, Docs, and Canva from using a separate AI tool like ChatGPT?

a) The in-app tools do not require any prompting from the user

b) The in-app tools are more accurate because they draw only on pre-verified company information

c) In-app AI is always free, while separate AI tools require paid subscriptions

d) AI is embedded directly in tools people already use, lowering the barrier to productive use

2. What is Magic Design in Canva?

a) An AI feature that generates an entire presentation design from a text prompt

b) A feature that removes the background from any image with just a single click

c) A filter that applies a specific artistic style to uploaded photos

d) A tool that writes captions and headlines inside Canva designs

3. What basic privacy principle does the reading recommend when using AI features in everyday apps?

a) Always use a VPN when accessing AI features in Google or Microsoft products

b) Never input genuinely sensitive personal information into any AI feature

c) Disable AI features in school accounts to protect your academic work

d) Share only public information and cite the AI tool in your document footer

Matching

Write the letter of the correct definition on the line next to each term.

Term	Definition
1. ___ Copilot	A) Google's AI integration in Docs that can draft, expand, and summarize documents
2. ___ Magic Write	B) Using AI to complete tasks faster without replacing the thinking that gives the work meaning
3. ___ Magic Edit	C) Microsoft's AI assistant integrated into Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook
4. ___ Gemini in Docs	D) Canva's AI feature that modifies images based on text descriptions of desired changes
5. ___ Execution acceleration	E) Canva's AI feature that generates written content like captions and headlines inside designs

Fill-in-the-Blank

1. Microsoft Copilot in Word can reference other documents in your _____ environment to help draft related documents without switching apps.

2. The 'Help me write' feature in Google Docs is particularly useful for students who struggle with the _____ page problem.

3. Canva's _____ feature can generate an entire presentation design with layouts, color schemes, and images from a simple text prompt.

Short Answer

Answer each question in 2-4 complete sentences.

1. What types of tasks are in-app AI tools best at, and where do they fall short? Use specific examples from the reading.

2. Why does the reading describe AI's presence in everyday tools as significant for 'digital literacy'? What does this mean for students learning these tools today?

3. What should students consider before entering personal or academic content into AI features in Word, Docs, or Canva? What guidance does the reading offer?