

AI in the Writing Process - script of the third episode

Welcome back to AI in the Writing Process! I'm Matilda, an AI voice.

And I'm Chris, another AI voice! Last time, we talked about how we used AI to brainstorm and plan our essay topic. In this episode, we're diving into the second phase of our writing journey: information retrieval and references.

That's right. This is the part where we moved from brainstorming and planning to actually gathering the knowledge we needed to write something meaningful. And yes, we had some help from AI—but not all the way.

This time, we used Copilot, as it's the tool our university recommends. We kicked things off by asking the AI to generate a research question based on our topic. At first, it gave us just one option.

Yeah, and we weren't satisfied with just that. So we asked for more alternatives, compared them, and found two that really stood out.

Then we asked the AI to merge those two into a single, stronger research question. We saved that version into a Word document and tweaked it a bit more to better fit our needs. The final research question was "In what ways can artificial intelligence support the various stages of academic writing, such as information retrieval, text production, and editing, and what ethical considerations need to be taken into account?"

After that, we moved on to keywords. AI can't perform systematic information searches for you, but it's surprisingly good at suggesting relevant search terms. We got some good suggestions in both Finnish and English, such as "artificial intelligence" combined with "information retrieval", "analysis", "textgeneration", "ethical guidelines", "practical challenges" and "scientific writing", which we changed to "academic writing" to fit our needs more broadly. We refined those suggestions to make them more precise for our database searches.

That's right. Now, when it came to actually finding sources, we went manual and searched for research papers and other academic sources in academic databases. Databases are still the gold standard for information search—AI used alone just isn't reliable enough for systematic retrieval.

Exactly. AI tools can have biases, and many don't filter for peer-reviewed content. It's a bit like using Google Scholar—helpful, but not foolproof. You need to remain critical all the time.

We also tested a tool called Keenious, which is an AI tool specifically designed to find academic sources and it is provided by University of Jyväskylä. We pasted in our research question to the tool in Finnish using a cross-language search and checked the suggestions.

At first, the results weren't quite right. They leaned too much toward scientific writing, so again we needed to clarify that we meant academic writing. That helped a lot.

It was a good reminder not to blindly trust AI translations or interpretations. Always double-check and fix the translations yourself, if needed.

So stay alert! Then, when we found a promising paper, we saved the DOI or access link. Keenious also let us upload papers to it to find similar ones, which was super helpful. So Keenious complemented our search with specific papers we had missed, and in some cases, it also provided papers we had already found, which, in turn, reinforced their relevance to our essay-writing process.

And if you're using Word or Google Docs, Keenious has an add-on—just remember to follow copyright and data security guidelines, when using it. However, it is a safe tool to use when you are logged in with JYU credentials.

Next came reading the sources and taking notes. AI can do a lot to support you in this stage—but it should never replace actual reading.

That's right. For academic integrity, you need to always read the original text yourself, and not blindly trust what AI tells you about the text. You can never know if the AI has made some mistakes or hallucinated some of its output. It can also leave relevant information out, since it might just shorten texts, which is different from meaningfully summarizing them.

Exactly, it's a good reminder that you are always responsible for your work and cannot blame AI for mistakes. So, keeping this in mind, we first uploaded the English paper PDF into Copilot and asked for a summary of the paper. It gave us a solid overview. Since English isn't our first language, we asked it to list key terms and explain them in Finnish. Once we started reading, these really helped with comprehension, especially for tricky academic vocabulary and abstract topics.

We also asked Copilot some specific questions, like whether the paper discussed academic integrity—since that was relevant to our topic. This helped us focus on certain parts of the paper more closely.

And when we hit a difficult sentence, we asked the AI to explain the sentence or an unfamiliar word in context. That was useful, but we tried not to rely on it too much. It's important to practice figuring things out from context, too.

We also asked about the research method. It gave us an explanation, which focused too much on data collection, so we had to follow up and ask specifically about sentiment analysis, which was mentioned as the analysis method.

The answer was okay, but if you're unfamiliar with the topic, it's always best to check the original source. You can never be 100% sure that the AI's explanation is correct.

Think of AI as Wikipedia 2.0: it is a good starting point, but not the final word.

Exactly! We also asked the AI to find the chapter discussing fraudulent AI-use in our source paper. It actually pinpointed it pretty well and helped us find the most relevant part for us!

Finally, we created a reading plan—with AI's help.

We wrote a detailed prompt explaining that reading in English can be tough and that we needed a clear, structured plan for our next paper.

The AI gave us a good plan, but we reviewed it carefully. We even removed some parts—like using AI to analyze key points—because that's something we wanted to do ourselves.

Identifying key points is part of academic expertise and critical thinking skills. It's a skill every university graduate should have, so we did not want to use AI to do that for us.

So that wraps up the information retrieval phase. AI was a helpful assistant, but we stayed in the driver's seat.

Let AI assist, but don't skip reading, note-taking, or identifying key points yourself. That's where real learning happens.

Great tips, Matilda. And remember—AI is a tool, not a shortcut. Use it wisely, and it can really boost your writing process.

Next time, we'll talk about how we moved from information search to drafting with the help of AI.

Thanks for listening to AI in the Writing Process, until next time!

Hello from the creators! This podcast was created with the help of AI. Copilot was used to translate the original Finnish video subtitles into an English language podcast draft.

This draft was then heavily edited to fit our needs and ideas. Then Elevenlabs was used to turn our finished script into the podcast you are now listening to.