

LESSON PLAN • SPEAKING + READING + WRITING

AI, Bias and Accountability

Who should answer when an automated system goes wrong?

LEVEL	DURATION	CLASS
C1	70 minutes	Older teens / adults

Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify accountability gaps in an automated decision process.
- Distinguish efficiency claims from evidence of reliability and fairness.
- Defend a governance proposal with oversight and appeal safeguards.

Materials

Student worksheet (pages 3–4), board or shared screen, pens; optional timer. All reading texts and scenarios are original fictional classroom examples.

Language focus

Evaluating trade-offs and making qualified recommendations

1. Warm-up (7 minutes)

Ask: If software helps decide who receives a training grant, who should explain a refusal?

- Pairs share a short example; take two or three responses without putting anyone on the spot.

2. Language preparation (10 minutes)

Contrast "The algorithm decided" with "The organization remains responsible for the decision." Introduce "on balance", "subject to review", "provided that".

- Students choose two useful expressions from the language bank on page 4 and rehearse them in pairs.

3. Reading for meaning (12 minutes)

Give students the fictional case on page 3. Read independently, then underline the main problem and the response. Ask learners to explain the case in one sentence.

- Do not provide the answer key yet; invite two different summaries.

TEACHER PLAN • CONTINUED

Teaching sequence

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4. Guided practice (15 minutes)

Students complete the five-item vocabulary match and four reading questions on page 3. Check in pairs first, then review answers as a class.

- Ask for the sentence or detail in the reading that supports each answer.
- For faster groups, ask whether the characters could have chosen another respectful solution.

5. Communicative task (17 minutes)

Use the role-play on page 4. Give each participant one minute to prepare their position; complete the discussion and agree on an action.

- A grants committee is deciding whether to restart a paused AI-assisted ranking system after an audit.
- If working in threes, an observer records one effective expression and one suggestion for improvement.
- Learners present their agreed decision briefly to another pair.

6. Writing and feedback (6 minutes)

Students complete the page 4 writing task (170–200 words). Prioritize a clear point and practical example over perfect grammar.

- Ask students to underline one target-language expression and check whether their proposal answers the prompt.

7. Exit ticket (3 minutes)

Each learner writes one sentence explaining what they would change in the case and why. Collect two examples or ask for a volunteer summary.

Differentiation and classroom care

Support: allow preparation notes and sentence frames; pair less confident speakers with supportive peers. Stretch: require a counterargument, a limitation or a measurable next step.

Distinguish a suspected bias pattern from a proven causal or legal finding; encourage evidence, appeals and human accountability.

Assessment

Look for (1) accurate understanding of the case, (2) two appropriate topic expressions, (3) respectful turn-taking, and (4) a specific, justified recommendation.

Optional extension / homework

Draft a one-paragraph appeals policy for applicants affected by automated screening.

STUDENT WORKSHEET • 1/2

AI, Bias and Accountability

C1 | Read the case, work with key vocabulary, and check your understanding.

A. Read the case

Fictional classroom case study

A nonprofit organization begins using an AI-assisted screening tool to prioritize applications for limited training grants. Staff praise the speed of the new system, and early reports suggest shorter waiting times. However, applicants receive only generic rejection messages, and several people cannot work out whether missing documents or a model-generated score influenced the result. A volunteer researcher notices that applicants from some districts appear to be rejected more often. The observation raises an important question, but it does not by itself prove discrimination: applicant circumstances and other variables may differ.

The organization commissions an independent audit of the tool, the data used to develop it and the decisions made by staff. The auditors find that some relevant records were incomplete and that staff tended to accept the tool's recommendations without sufficient scrutiny. The organization pauses automatic ranking, publishes clearer eligibility criteria and offers a human review when applicants challenge an outcome. It also plans to track decision patterns while protecting applicants' personal information. Supporters argue that automation can still reduce routine work; critics reply that speed is of limited value without reasons, remedies and oversight. The case shows why accountability cannot be delegated to a system that cannot itself answer to the people affected.

B. Vocabulary match

Match the words (1–5) to the definitions (A–E). Write the correct letter.

WORD	DEFINITION
1. audit ____	A. difficulty in seeing how a decision was reached
2. contest ____	B. unequal or noticeably different
3. opacity ____	C. a systematic review of whether a process works as intended
4. accountability ____	D. responsibility for explaining and correcting an outcome
5. disparate ____	E. to challenge a decision formally

C. Check your understanding

1. What benefit initially supported the tool's use?

2. Why was unequal rejection data not conclusive by itself?

3. What problem did the audit identify in staff behavior?

4. What two remedies were introduced?

STUDENT WORKSHEET • 2/2

Speak, decide, write

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D. Role-play and decision

A grants committee is deciding whether to restart a paused AI-assisted ranking system after an audit.

ROLE A

Efficiency lead: argue for limited automation with performance targets and staff review.

ROLE B

Accountability lead: argue for explanations, appeal rights, documented overrides and privacy safeguards.

Your decision: Write three conditions that must be met before any automated ranking resumes.

Useful language

- The evidence is suggestive, but not conclusive.
- A necessary condition would be...
- The burden of explanation rests with...
- On balance, I would recommend...

E. Writing task

Write a 170-200-word recommendation addressing evidence, appeal mechanisms, accountability and a plausible counterargument. Use the lines below or continue on separate paper.

F. Reflection

Which phrase helped you communicate respectfully or clearly? What would you improve next time?

TEACHER KEY

Answers and teaching notes

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B. Vocabulary matching

1 C · 2 E · 3 A · 4 D · 5 B

C. Reading comprehension — suggested answers

1. Faster screening and shorter waiting times.
2. Other differences among applicants might explain the pattern.
3. Overreliance on recommendations without sufficient scrutiny.
4. Clearer criteria, human review, paused automatic ranking and monitoring.

D. Speaking task — success criteria

Write three conditions that must be met before any automated ranking resumes.

- Each speaker states a concern without personal attacks.
- The pair acknowledges at least one trade-off or limitation.
- The final decision names a specific action or safeguard.

E. Writing — sample response

On balance, the committee should not restore automated ranking until independent checks demonstrate that the process is reliable enough for its intended use. Faster processing is a legitimate goal, but efficiency cannot justify decisions that applicants cannot understand or challenge. The organization should publish relevant eligibility criteria, record when staff accept or override recommendations, and provide a clear human appeal route. Monitoring should examine disparities carefully without assuming that a statistical difference alone proves unlawful discrimination. Sensitive applicant data must be protected, with access restricted to authorized reviewers. A staged pilot, subject to regular audits and suspension criteria, would allow the committee to test whether automation genuinely improves outcomes. Responsibility should remain with identifiable decision-makers rather than being attributed vaguely to the system. In addition, the committee ought to define in advance what would trigger a pause in deployment, such as unexplained changes in rejection rates or repeated appeal successes. Applicants should be informed when automated assistance has materially influenced screening. A governance process that can explain and correct its mistakes is more defensible than one that merely reports higher processing volumes.

Teacher reminder

Distinguish a suspected bias pattern from a proven causal or legal finding; encourage evidence, appeals and human accountability.

Further practice

Draft a one-paragraph appeals policy for applicants affected by automated screening.