

## **2026-2027 Middle School Ethics Bowl Case Set**

To learn more about this event, please visit:

<https://www.ethicsatkentplace.org/student-programs/middle-school-ethics-bowl>

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## Case 5: AI Tutors

Mira has always struggled to keep up with her schoolwork. Sometimes the materials her teachers provide don't help her understand difficult lessons. She puts off assignments, does not always study for tests, and sometimes barely pays attention in class. What Mira loves is soccer. She loves practicing, competing and spending time with her teammates. But students have to maintain a certain grade average to stay eligible to play. Mira's grades eventually become so low that she is placed on Academic Probation risking her position on the team. Her school, however, is short on resources and lacks academic support programs. Realizing that she needs to bring her grades up fast, Mira turns to AI.

At first, AI seems like the perfect solution. AI helps her understand math problems and explains science questions. It helps her brainstorm essay ideas, generates practice questions for tests, and doesn't grow frustrated with her when she needs further explanations. Soon Mira has a C average, high enough to keep her on the team.

Over time, however, Mira's AI use becomes a habit. Instead of asking AI to explain how to solve a problem, Mira increasingly asks it just to solve the problem for her. Instead of reading an entire chapter, she asks AI just to summarize it. Instead of thinking of her own thesis for an essay, she asks AI just to give her one. Even when she can complete an assignment herself, she automatically opens AI first. Mira's school does not have clear policies on the use of AI and would not have the resources to enforce them rigorously. Mira is thus left to make her own decisions. She tells herself that her AI use is fine because she still reads the answers it produces, and she rewrites parts of essays to reflect her own opinions and voice. The work is getting done and she is playing sports. It's a win/win all around!

### Match Questions

1. Is it fair for Mira to use AI given that she doesn't get the academic support she needs?
2. At what point, if at all, does Mira's use of AI cross the line from healthy to unhealthy? Why?
3. Who bears the greatest responsibility for correcting Mira's abuse of AI? Why?

### Study Questions

1. Should using AI to explain a problem be treated differently from using AI to produce an answer? Why or why not?
2. If we grant that by the end, Mira is in fact using AI to cheat, who is harmed by that cheating?