

AI Tools for English Language Teaching

A Practical Guide for EFL/ESL Teachers

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CHAPTER TWO

Top AI Tools for the EFL/ESL Classroom

A Practical Guide to What They Are, What They Do, and How to Use Them

"You do not need to use every AI tool available. You need to know which tools serve your students best — and how to use them with purpose and confidence."

Chapter Learning Outcomes

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify and describe the most widely used AI tools relevant to EFL/ESL teaching
- Understand the specific classroom applications of each tool
- Apply practical teacher tips for integrating each tool immediately into your practice
- Make informed decisions about which tools to use based on your teaching context and student needs
- Distinguish between free and paid tools and select appropriately based on your budget

2.0 Introduction: Navigating the AI Landscape

Walk into any educational technology conference today and you will find dozens of AI tools competing for teachers' attention. The landscape is vast, fast-changing, and often overwhelming. As an EFL or ESL teacher, you do not need to know every tool — you need to know the right tools. This chapter introduces you to the most relevant, most classroom-tested, and most accessible AI tools available today, organised by their primary function.

For each tool, you will find a clear description of what it does, how it can be used in EFL/ESL teaching specifically, and a practical teacher tip drawn from real classroom application. Whether you are teaching in a well-resourced university in India or a community college in East Africa, this chapter is designed to help you find tools that work in your specific context.

A word of advice from experience: start with one tool, learn it well, and integrate it confidently into your teaching before adding another. Depth of use matters far more than breadth of experimentation.

2.1 Generative AI Tools — ChatGPT and Claude

Generative AI tools are the most powerful and versatile category of AI available to teachers today. They can write, explain, create, adapt, translate, summarise, and respond — all in natural, conversational language. Of the many generative AI tools available, two stand out as the most relevant for EFL/ESL teachers: ChatGPT and Claude.

Understanding Generative AI

Generative AI tools work by responding to prompts — instructions or questions you type in plain language. The quality of what they produce depends significantly on how clearly and specifically you phrase your prompt. This is a skill called prompt engineering, and Chapter 3 will guide you through it in detail. For now, it is enough to know that the more context and detail you provide, the more useful and accurate the output will be.

ChatGPT — *by OpenAI*

Best used for:

- ✓ Generating customised lesson plans on any topic, level, and skill area
- ✓ Creating reading texts, dialogues, grammar exercises, and vocabulary activities
- ✓ Explaining complex grammar rules in simple language for students
- ✓ Producing differentiated materials for mixed-ability classes
- ✓ Drafting email communications, course descriptions, and academic texts
- ✓ Generating discussion questions, debate topics, and role-play scenarios

Teacher Tip: *When using ChatGPT for lesson materials, always specify: the English proficiency level (A1 to C2), the age group, the skill focus, and the context. For example: 'Write a 200-word reading text at B1 level for adult EFL learners in Ethiopia about the importance of clean water, followed by five comprehension questions.' The more specific your prompt, the better the result.*

Claude — *by Anthropic*

Best used for:

- ✓ Writing longer, more nuanced academic texts and lesson content
- ✓ Providing detailed, thoughtful feedback on student writing
- ✓ Discussing complex linguistic and pedagogical questions
- ✓ Helping teachers draft research summaries, reports, and professional documents
- ✓ Creating detailed rubrics and assessment frameworks
- ✓ Engaging in extended, context-aware academic conversations

Teacher Tip: *Claude is particularly strong for tasks that require careful, nuanced language — such as writing feedback comments on student essays, drafting academic writing guides, or producing extended reading materials. If you need a tool that thinks deeply and writes with precision, Claude is an excellent choice for professional and academic ELT work.*

Both ChatGPT and Claude offer free versions with generous usage, as well as paid plans that provide higher usage limits and access to more advanced features. For most EFL/ESL teaching purposes, the free versions are a perfectly good starting point.

2.2 Writing Assistance Tools — Grammarly and QuillBot

Writing assistance tools use AI to analyse text and suggest improvements in grammar, vocabulary, style, clarity, and structure. For EFL and ESL teachers, these tools serve two important purposes: they help teachers produce polished professional writing, and they help students improve their written English with immediate, detailed feedback.

Grammarly — AI Writing and Grammar Assistant

Best used for:

- ✓ Checking and correcting grammar, punctuation, and spelling in student writing
- ✓ Suggesting vocabulary improvements and word choice alternatives
- ✓ Providing clarity and conciseness suggestions for academic writing
- ✓ Offering style and tone adjustments for different writing purposes
- ✓ Helping EFL/ESL students develop awareness of their recurring errors
- ✓ Supporting teacher writing — reports, feedback comments, course materials

Teacher Tip: *Introduce Grammarly to your students as a learning tool, not a correction tool. Encourage them to read every suggestion carefully, understand why the change is recommended, and accept or reject it consciously. This transforms Grammarly from a quick fix into a genuine language learning experience. The free version is available at [grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) and works well for most teaching and learning purposes.*

QuillBot — AI Paraphrasing and Writing Tool

Best used for:

- ✓ Teaching paraphrasing skills — a critical academic writing competency
- ✓ Helping students rephrase sentences while maintaining meaning
- ✓ Demonstrating how the same idea can be expressed in multiple ways
- ✓ Supporting summary writing practice
- ✓ Assisting EFL students in expanding limited vocabulary through rephrasing
- ✓ Helping teachers simplify complex texts for lower-level learners

Teacher Tip: *Use QuillBot deliberately in class to teach paraphrasing. Show students the original sentence, then demonstrate how QuillBot rephrases it. Discuss which version is better and why. This builds critical thinking alongside language skills. Be aware, however, that students may misuse QuillBot to avoid original writing — address this directly by designing tasks that require personal voice and specific content knowledge that AI cannot supply.*