



Tiny

Curious Buddy

Using Tinybots to develop students' thinking
in any subject



tiny.school/en/teacher-materials

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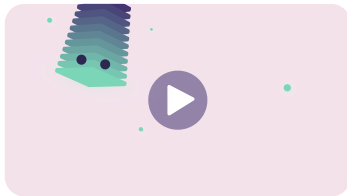
Using Tinybots to Develop Thinking

Introduction

The goal of meaningfully integrating generative AI (GenAI) into teaching is to use chatbots as guides for students' thinking and learning. Rather than handing out ready-made answers, the chatbot should lead students to think, ask questions, make connections, and build arguments. That is why we created Tinybots. This teaching material walks you step by step through using Tiny to bring chatbots into your lessons in a way that truly supports students' growth and thinking. We wish you every success!

The activities in this teaching material require registration in Tiny, an AI app developed by the nonprofit AI for Children. Please register in the app. If you need help, we have prepared video tutorials for you.

teacher.tiny.school

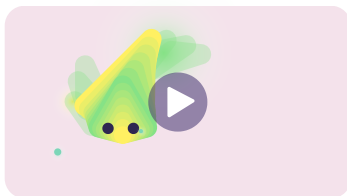


How to Register for Tiny

Registering for Tiny is quick and easy. We have prepared two video tutorials for you:

+ teacher registration: tiny.school/en/how-to-sign-up-as-a-teacher

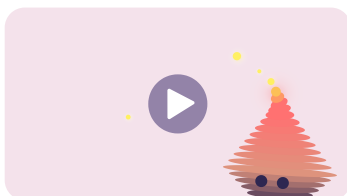
+ student registration: tiny.school/en/how-students-sign-up



Getting Started with Tiny

From a blank app to a live activity: create a class, set up a lesson, pick one of the eleven Tinybots, and give it a topic. Then just share the four-digit code with your students.

+ Video tutorial: tiny.school/en/how-to-work-with-tiny

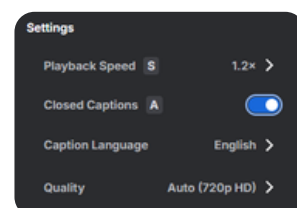


How to Create a Lesson in Tiny

Three ways to prepare a lesson: with the Tiny Guide, from the Lesson Library, or from scratch.

+ Video tutorial: tiny.school/en/how-to-create-a-lesson-in-tiny

Please note that the videos are in Czech. English subtitles are available. To turn them on, click the gear icon (Settings) in the bottom right corner of the video, switch on Closed Captions, and select English under Caption Language.



Curious Buddy

The Curious Buddy Tinybot helps students check whether they truly understand a topic by playing a friendly alien who has just landed on Earth and knows nothing about the subject. The student has to explain it simply, clearly, and in their own words. Recognizing or repeating the material is not enough: they must be able to explain it so that someone completely new to it understands.

The chatbot responds like a curious visitor who has never heard of the topic, takes things literally, or gets confused about parts of it. It asks about terms, relationships, and connections, flags unclear explanations, and asks for everyday examples. This reveals whether the student really understands the topic.

Curious Buddy at a Glance

- + plays a Curious Buddy new to Earth,
- + asks for explanations in plain language,
- + makes students explain in their own words,
- + asks about terms and relationships,
- + reveals gaps in understanding,
- + encourages examples and analogies.

When It Works Best

The chatbot works especially well when we want students to explain a more complex topic or concept in simple terms. It is very good at exposing cases where a student uses technical terms without really understanding what they mean.

What It Works Well For

- + explaining concepts and principles,
- + checking genuine understanding,
- + practicing explaining in their own words,
- + finding gaps in understanding,
- + working with causes and effects,
- + clarifying differences between concepts,
- + independent practice at home.

What It Is Not Suited For

- + long, in-depth lectures,
- + rote drills,
- + quick knowledge checks,
- + topics that don't call for student explanations.

In those cases, use the Review Buddy or the Quiz Chatbot instead.

How Curious Buddy Works

This is not a typical teacher-student dialogue but a conversation with a Curious Buddy who is new to Earth and needs the topic explained. The chatbot acts unsure about the topic: it asks natural questions, requests examples and rephrasing, and points out unclear spots. It never explains the material for the student; instead, it helps uncover what the student doesn't yet fully understand.

What to Watch Out For

Curious Buddy is not the right tool when you need to deliver a lot of information quickly or walk students systematically through the material step by step.

It works best when the topic, the specific goal of the activity, and the key concepts or relationships that should come up in the conversation are clearly defined. We therefore recommend listing in your prompt the keywords, terms, or principles that the conversation should not leave out.

It is also worth reminding students that the chatbot can make mistakes and that the goal is not a "correct definition" but the ability to explain things clearly and meaningfully.

Recommended Follow-Up Activities

To make sure the Tinybot is not just a stand-alone activity but a meaningful step toward your learning outcome, we recommend planning a follow-up task. Here are a few ideas for building on it:

- + a class summary of the topic,
- + students writing their own definition or explanation,
- + pair work ("explain it to a classmate"),
- + creating a mind map,
- + a short reflection on the trickiest concepts,
- + follow-up practice with the Review Buddy.

How to Set Up the Activity in Tiny

For the most relevant results, we recommend including the following in the system prompt in Tiny:

- + the topic or concept to be explained,
- + students' age or level,
- + length of the activity,
- + expected outcome or goal of the activity,
- + any specific focus or context,
- + keywords, concepts, or relationships that should come up.

Keywords help the chatbot steer the conversation and make sure students don't skip important parts of the topic.

Example of a Good Prompt

"Act as a Curious Buddy who has just landed on Earth and has never heard of cells. The student should explain what a cell is and what the cell membrane, nucleus, and mitochondria do. If something is unclear, keep asking. When the student uses a technical term, ask what it means or what that part of the cell does. Focus on these terms: cell membrane, nucleus, cytoplasm, and the difference between plant and animal cells."

Example of a Poor Prompt

"Explain what a cell is."

Sample Prompts

English Language Arts

Topic: Complete sentences vs. sentence fragments

Age: 12 to 13

Length: 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student can explain the difference between a complete sentence and a fragment, spot fragments in simple examples, and explain why a command like "Sit down." is complete without a stated subject.

Enter this prompt into the chatbot:

Act as a curious buddy who is learning English and has never heard of complete sentences or sentence fragments. Have the student explain how they differ and why a command like "Close the door." counts as a complete sentence even though no subject is written. If they use grammar terms, ask for a simpler explanation or a concrete example. When you're unsure, ask for more examples and try to sum up in your own words what you've understood. Focus on the difference between the two, concrete examples, and explanations in the student's own words. Avoid definitions without examples and quickly confirming answers.

Math

Topic: Percents (whole, increase, and decrease)

Age: 13 to 14

Length: 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student can explain what percents mean, find a percent of a number, and give a real-life example.**Enter this prompt into the chatbot:**

Act as a curious buddy who has never heard of percents. Have the student explain what 50%, 20%, or 30% off actually mean.

Ask about everyday situations and push for concrete examples. If the student uses a method or calculation, ask them to explain why it works.

Focus on percent as part of a whole, turning percents into actual numbers, and real-life examples. Avoid formulas without explanation, abstract examples without context, and mechanical calculation.

Geography

Topic: Why climate differs around the world

Age: 12 to 14

Length: 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student can explain the factors behind climate differences on Earth and compare temperate and equatorial climates using specific examples.**Enter this prompt into the chatbot:**

Act as a curious buddy who has just arrived on Earth and doesn't understand climate zones. Have the student explain why some places are warm all year while others have changing seasons. Ask confused questions ("Why is it hot all year in some places, but others get four seasons?" "How can it be freezing in one part of the world and hot in another at the same time?"). Have the student explain how the climate in Minnesota differs from that of equatorial Africa. Gradually guide them to describe the role of latitude, the amount of sunlight, the tilt of Earth's axis, and air circulation. Respond with misconceptions or oversimplifications ("So being closer to the Sun automatically means it's hotter?" "I guess that means it never rains in Africa.") so the student has to sharpen their explanation and back it up with specific examples. Also ask how climate affects people's lives ("How does climate affect farming?" "Why do people build different kinds of houses in different places?"). Finally, ask the student to sum up the main differences between temperate and equatorial climates and explain their causes. Focus on the causes of climate differences, comparing regions, linking climate to human life, and the student's own wording. Avoid isolated definitions without context, overly technical details without explanation, and quickly confirming answers.

Media Literacy

Topic: How to tell if a source is trustworthy

Age: 15 to 16

Length: 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student can explain what makes a source of information trustworthy.**Enter this prompt into the chatbot:**

Act as a curious buddy who doesn't know how people check information online. Have the student explain how they can tell whether a source is trustworthy and how they fact-check information. Present simple situations ("I saw it on TikTok. Isn't that enough?") and have them explain what they would do. Focus on verifying information, sources, reasoning, and concrete examples. Avoid simply listing rules without applying them in practice.

Computer Science

Topic: Storing data (files and folders)

Age: 10 to 12

Length: 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student can explain the difference between a file and a folder and give an example of how each is used.**Enter this prompt into the chatbot:**

Act as a curious buddy who has never heard of files and folders. Have the student explain what a file is, what a folder is, and how the two relate. Ask for examples from their own computer or phone. If something is unclear, ask for an everyday comparison. Focus on concrete examples, explanations in the student's own words, and making ideas more precise. Avoid technical definitions and quickly confirming answers.

More Tinybots

Tiny offers eleven chatbots that don't hand out ready-made answers but guide students' thinking.

To keep things clear, we have grouped them into categories based on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The flower diagram shows the cognitive levels (labeled at the bottom), with the individual Tinybots branching out from them (at the top). This grouping helps Tiny set the right learning outcomes and rubrics, which we use to give you and your students feedback on their conversations.

You'll find a description of each Tinybot type, along with its teaching material, here: tiny.school/tinybots

