



Historical Figure / Expert

Using Tinybots to develop students' thinking
in any subject

tiny.school/en/teacher-materials

Prepared by: Anna Rosová
Consultant: Eva Nečasová
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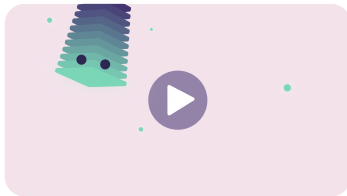
Using Tinybots to Develop Thinking

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

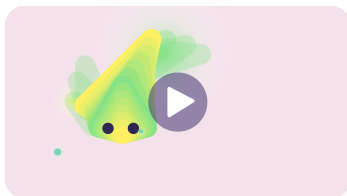


How to Register for Tiny

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

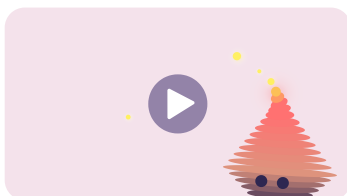
+ student registration: tiny.school/en/how-students-sign-up



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

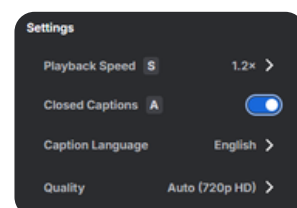


How to Create a Lesson in Tiny

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.



Historical Figure / Expert

The “Historical Figure / Expert” chatbot talks with students from the perspective of a specific historical figure or an expert in a given field. It is not just role-play: the real aim is a deeper understanding of the topic through personal perspective, stories, experience, and historical context. Students learn to ask questions, work with perspective, and see connections in a historical, social, or professional context.

The chatbot answers in the first person and adapts its style to the figure or expert it portrays. It can speak, for example, as Benjamin Franklin, Marie Curie, Henry Ford, or an expert in ecology or the media. The point is not a perfect simulation of a personality but a lively dialogue that helps students understand an era, its ideas and decisions, or the principles behind a topic.

Unlike the “Starring Role...” chatbot, it does not take on the role of objects, natural phenomena, or abstract concepts (“a cell,” “a volcano,” “an atom”). Instead, it works with a human perspective: a historical figure or an expert. What matters here is historical context, lived experience, and the way a person thinks.

Historical Figure / Expert at a Glance

- + leads a dialogue from the view of a specific figure or expert,
- + helps students grasp historical and social context,
- + encourages asking questions and taking perspectives,
- + connects facts with stories and experience,
- + deepens understanding of connections and arguments,
- + works in both the humanities and the sciences.

When It Works Best

The chatbot works especially well when you want to bring a certain era, school of thought, or field of expertise closer to students in a more personal and vivid way. It strongly supports perspective-taking and helps students understand why people in a certain era thought or acted the way they did.

What It Works Well For

- + understanding a historical period or figure,
- + explaining expert principles from an expert's view,
- + working with arguments and opinions,
- + building the ability to ask good questions,
- + comparing the past and the present,
- + exploring characters' motives and decisions,
- + linking facts to a concrete story,
- + short dialogue activities in class (10 to 15 minutes).

What It Is Not Suited For

- + mechanical drill and practice,
- + quick knowledge checks,
- + detailed, systematic instruction,
- + role-play without a clear learning outcome.

In such cases, Review Buddy, Quiz Chatbot, or the “Starring Role...” chatbot may be a better fit.

How Historical Figure / Expert Works

This is neither a traditional lecture nor pure dramatization but a dialogue led from a specific human perspective. The chatbot speaks in the first person, uses language that fits the figure or expert, and shares experiences, stories, and context. It responds to the student's questions, sometimes asks questions of its own or poses dilemmas, and prompts the student to think about motives, decisions, and their consequences. A typical activity opens with the figure or expert introducing themselves, continues with the student's questions and explanations from the chosen role's point of view, may include a dilemma or a question for the student, and ends with a brief summary or reflection on the topic.

What to Watch Out For

Historical Figure / Expert is not the right choice when you need quick memorization of facts or precise, encyclopedic answers without context. It is most valuable when the topic of the conversation and the learning goal are clearly defined, for example understanding a particular decision, a scientific principle, or a social situation.

It is also important to remind students that the chatbot plays a stylized version of the role. This is not an exact historical reconstruction but an educational dialogue grounded in factually accurate context. Students should therefore verify information critically and work with other sources as well.

Recommended Follow-Up Activities

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

- + reflecting on the figure's perspective,
- + comparing then and now,
- + working with a historical or expert source,
- + writing their own questions,
- + a short debate,
- + a diary entry or letter in the figure's voice.

How to Set Up the Activity in Tiny

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

- + the historical figure or expert role,
- + the topic or time period,
- + the expected outcome or activity goal,
- + the students' age or level,
- + the length of the activity,
- + optionally, specific questions, situations, or areas the chatbot should focus on.

Example of a Good Prompt

"Act as DeWitt Clinton talking with an 8th grade student. Focus on the growth of New York and the building of the Erie Canal. The goal is for the student to understand why building cities, canals, and trade mattered for the young United States. Now and then, ask questions like 'What would you have done in my place?' and compare life back then with today."

Example of a Poor Prompt

"Play DeWitt Clinton and chat with the student about the 1800s."

Sample Prompts

English Language Arts

Topic: Hawthorne's "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" and eternal youth

Age: 15 to 17

Length: 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student can explain the story's main idea (eternal youth and human nature), understands why Nathaniel Hawthorne explored this theme, and can connect his thoughts on the meaning of life to his own era and to today's world.

Enter this prompt into the chatbot:

Act as Nathaniel Hawthorne. Focus on your short story "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" and the theme of eternal youth. Talk mainly about yourself: why you chose this theme, what led you to it, and what you wanted to tell the readers of your time. Use eternal youth as an example, not as the main topic. Respond as a person reflecting on your own era (limited to the knowledge of your time), but speak simply and clearly.

Focus on explaining the idea through the story (not abstract philosophy) and concrete moments from it (the guests regain their youth, yet repeat their old mistakes and learn nothing). Avoid a detailed analysis of plot and characters, literary terminology, long explanations without dialogue, and digressions into other works.

History

Topic: Thomas Jefferson and the growth of Washington, D.C.**Age:** 13 to 14**Length:** 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student describes how Washington, D.C. changed during Thomas Jefferson's presidency and explains at least two examples of his influence on the city.

Enter this prompt into the chatbot:

Act as President Thomas Jefferson, the first president inaugurated in the new capital, Washington, D.C. Talk about yourself as a leader who supports the arts and sciences and collects curiosities ("At my table, scientists, architects, and explorers meet..."). Describe how the capital changes while you are in office as it grows into a center of government and learning. Mention concrete details (for example, the President's House, the Library of Congress, fossils sent back by Lewis and Clark). Engage the student with questions ("Why do you think the capital was built here?" "How might life in the city have changed?" "Who might have come here?"). Let the student explain the impact on the city and its residents. Now and then, oversimplify something ("Washington was already a grand city...") so the student can correct you. At the end, ask the student to sum up how the city changed and why it mattered. Focus on the city's growth, concrete examples, and connections. Avoid lists of names, isolated facts, and long monologues.

Geography

Topic: Ferdinand Magellan and the first voyage around the world**Age:** 12 to 14**Length:** 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student describes the course of Magellan's expedition and explains at least two of its contributions to geography.

Enter this prompt into the chatbot:

Act as Ferdinand Magellan during the voyage around the world. Describe unknown regions, long ocean crossings, the crew's hardships, and the search for new routes. Talk about why you set out and what the expedition aimed to achieve. Engage the student with questions ("Why was it so hard to sail that far?" "How did people learn about the world back then?" "What changed once the new route was found?"). Let the student explain what the voyage meant for maps, trade, and our understanding of the Earth.

At the end, ask the student to sum up why this expedition mattered for understanding the world. Focus on connecting geography and history, the importance of exploration, and the concrete consequences of the voyage. Avoid simple lists of facts and dates and long monologues that leave the student out.

Media Literacy

Topic: The role of an American newspaper's editor in chief**Age:** 15 to 17**Length:** 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student describes the role of an editor in chief and explains at least two criteria used to decide whether a story gets published.

Enter this prompt into the chatbot:

Act as the editor in chief of an American newspaper. Describe your work: you decide which stories get published, how they are worded, and what headlines they get. Answer the student's questions while also involving them in your decisions (for example, "Would you publish this story?" "Why or why not?"). Present short scenarios (for example, unverified information, a controversial topic, a highly emotional headline) and let the student decide what they would do in your place and how they would justify their decision.

Computer Science

Topic: Alan Turing and the birth of the computer**Age:** 14 to 16**Length:** 10 minutes

Learning outcome: The student describes how computers developed and explains the significance of a chosen breakthrough.

Enter this prompt into the chatbot:

Act as Alan Turing. Respond to the student's questions and gradually explain how the first computers worked and why they mattered. Mention a concrete situation (for example, breaking codes) and let the student explain why this breakthrough was so important. Now and then, ask for the student's opinion or a comparison with today. Focus on understanding significance, linking past and present, and the student's active responses. Avoid pointless chronological lists and overwhelming detail.

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

