AI in Education Playbooks

AIPlaybook#4: Prompting for Accessibility - Reducing Bias and Supporting All Learners

Audience: Educators, support staff, AI tool developers and school leaders
Tone: Clear, grounded, professional. Accessible to educators in mainstream and specialist settings. No jargon.

1. Why This Matters

The language we use in prompts shapes the inclusivity of AI output. Neurodivergent and disabled learners are often excluded when tools and language are not designed with accessibility in mind. Prompting well is an act of inclusive design:

"*help ensure that written material considers the difficulties experienced by some dyslexic people and allows for the use of text to speech to facilitate ease of reading. Adopting these principles for dyslexic readers has the advantage of making all written communication easier on the eye for everyone.*" (BDA - The Dyslexia Style Guide 2023)

2. The Risks of Poor Prompting
  * Unintended bias, stereotypes or exclusion
  * Overly complex prompts that overwhelm or confuse
  * Cultural assumptions or vague metaphors
  * Misuse of labels or deficit language (e.g. "suffers from" instead of "is autistic")

3. What Makes a Prompt Accessible? The ACCESS Model
The **ACCESS model** is developed for this Playbook by David Curran in collaboration with AI support from ChatGPT, drawing on guidance from the British Dyslexia Association, National Autistic Society and inclusive education frameworks.

This model also reflects general principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which aim to reduce barriers and support all learners through flexible approaches to teaching, content and engagement.

ACCESS stands for:

- **Audience-first**: Define who the AI is helping and how
- **Clarity of language**: Use plain English, short sentences, and consistent formatting
- **Contextual support**: Include any relevant scaffolds or information a learner might need
- **Explicitly inclusive**: Avoid bias or generalisations. Respect preferred language
- **Structure and steps**: Give prompts that guide in small steps or options
- **Safeguard tone and dignity**: Avoid demeaning, pitying, or "fixing" language

4. Prompt Smarter: Small Shifts, Big Impact

Inclusive prompting is not about "avoiding mistakes" — it's about making small, thoughtful choices that help more learners access the task confidently.

Below are subtle rewrites that increase clarity, reduce pressure, and respect neurodivergent thinking:

Instead of...	Try...
Write a detailed paragraph explaining this	Write 3–5 sentences explaining this in your own words
Explain your reasoning	What made you choose that answer? You can write in full sentences or bullet points
Describe a typical day	Describe a day that feels familiar to you. Everyone's day can look different
Answer all parts of the question	Let's take this step by step. Start with part 1 and I'll help you from there
Evaluate this design	What works well? What could be improved? Use bullet points or a table if helpful

5. Prompts That Avoid Stereotypes
- Don't assume learning styles, e.g. "all dyslexic students are visual learners"
- Avoid cultural, gender or ability stereotypes
- Be cautious with humour or idioms
- Use strengths-based language

6. Prompts That Centre Neurodivergent Thinking

- Ask learners what kind of help works for them
- Offer choices for how to receive information, e.g. text, audio, visual
- Use time-aware prompts, e.g. "Would you like a summary now or later?"
- Validate and normalise different thinking styles

7. Embedding Inclusive Prompts Into Practice

- Use consistent templates in lesson plans and AI tools
- Build student co-creation and input into AI prompt design
- Offer sentence starters for neurodivergent learners
- Train staff on bias and accessibility in AI usage

"People are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or condition." (Social model of disability | Disability charity Scope UK)

This statement reflects the Social Model of Disability, the foundation for inclusive design and the principle that environments must adapt to support difference.

8. Summary Checklist
Quick checks for every educator:

- Did I avoid jargon and overly long sentences?
- Is this prompt flexible and respectful?
- Have I considered different access needs?
- Does this prompt avoid assumptions or stereotypes?

9. Suggested Editable Prompts for Inclusive Practice
These prompts are starting points to support inclusive practice. This list is not exhaustive and should be adapted to suit individual learners, contexts and settings.

- **Classroom Support**

    - Produce in a format for ease of accessibility, e.g. use of text-to-speech
    - Explain this concept in three simple sentences. Use short words
    - Give three different ways a student might understand this topic, e.g. visual, audio, text
    - Break this task into steps a Year 7 student with dyslexia could follow

- **Homework Help**

    - Can you give me a choice of tasks that suit different learning styles?

- Suggest a visual summary of this topic for someone who finds reading hard

- **Careers or Transition**

  - Write this as advice for a 15-year-old student who is autistic and prefers factual, clear language
  - Explain this post-16 pathway without jargon or assumptions

- **SEN Reviews or Reports**

  - Give a strengths-based summary of a student with ADHD. Avoid deficit terms
  - Suggest language I can use in a report that respects neurodiversity and avoids stereotypes

- **Staff Training or CPD**

  - List ways staff can check if their AI prompts are accessible to dyslexic students
  - Create discussion questions for staff training about inclusive use of AI tools

Suggested further Reading and References
- British Dyslexia Association
- National Autistic Society
- Universal Design for Learning
- The Social Model for Disability

⚠️ Legal & Data Disclaimer

- This tool supports ethical professional practice and should not be used to process personal or sensitive data.
- Users remain responsible for ensuring compliance with school policies, safeguarding procedures, UK GDPR, and any local data protection requirements.
- Outputs should be reviewed by a qualified teacher before use with learners.

David E Curran
Email: currand@moonhall.co.uk