JSTOR

Nurture young learners' research skills and critical thinking with JSTOR's research tool

Madeleine Champagnie
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Summary

Secondary school English teacher Madeleine Champagnie uses **JSTOR's interactive research tool** to make scholarly research more accessible, efficient, and inclusive for her A-level students—demonstrating how thoughtful integration of AI in can foster critical thinking and academic growth.

Embracing AI and other emerging technologies for efficient and accessible research and teaching

Education is rapidly evolving with the expansion of AI across the globe, and this especially impacts young learners. Madeleine Champagnie, an English teacher at Thames Christian School in London, believes that the solution isn't to outright reject emerging technologies but rather to engage in ongoing discussions with fellow educators and students to develop skills, confidence, and trust in using the technology through a measured approach.

As the Head of English and Innovation Lead at a small private school, Madeleine saw an opportunity to explore AI tools in education when she got a chance to try JSTOR's research tool. Designed to help users deepen and expand their research using JSTOR's trusted corpus, the tool quickly proved valuable—both as a practical aid and a pedagogical resource, supporting students' research while also strengthening their critical thinking skills.

Enhancing research accessibility for students

Madeleine's journey with JSTOR started small—with a free personal account she used to access scholarly content. But it quickly became clear that JSTOR had broader potential: it could benefit not just her, but her students and fellow teachers as well. That realization led to her school securing full institutional access. Then came another opportunity to explore something new—and consider how it might serve others: the chance to test a new AI-powered tool on JSTOR. "As the person in charge of innovation at my school, I'm always up for trying something new—just giving it a go," she said. "Trying it out was a no-brainer for me."

Murphy Radio Ltd. Black-and-white television. 1968. Science Museum Group.

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Once again, Madeleine led the way. After experimenting with the tool herself and exploring key features—like surfacing key topics to assess relevance, and recommending related themes and content—she introduced it to her Advanced-level (A-level) English students, who are sixteen and older, as they use JSTOR to research a range of critical views for their essays. One of the immediate benefits she observed was improved accessibility.

"One of my students—she has dyslexia—has found the tool incredibly helpful for quickly discerning what an article is about. Even my other students, who do not have dyslexia, have benefited from how much it speeds up the research process for all of us."

As we have seen in a previous case study, the research tool helps bridge skill gaps among students from all walks of life. Madeleine's observations support this point, as the tool enables students with different literacy processing skills to engage in research as efficiently as their peers.

Streamlining research with reliable AI assistance

Beyond surfacing key ideas, JSTOR's research tool accelerates the process of finding relevant articles on specific topics. And, because it references only the contents of the text itself and the content on JSTOR, reliability and accuracy is assured. This can be extremely helpful in the research process—and in the classroom.

"I like the way the tool references actual quotations from the text itself," Madeleine says. That's really useful. I was able to find what I wanted within about five minutes, whereas, without these tools, it would have taken me several hours of reading and highlighting. I would never have been able to do that in the middle of a lesson. Previously, I would have had to say, 'I'll go and find out for you and come back next lesson,' or 'You go off and find it yourself.' This tool makes the process unbelievably faster."

As a busy English teacher, Madeleine cannot individually guide each student in searching for the right sources. By reducing research time from hours to minutes, JSTOR's research tool allows her to engage with students more effectively without overwhelming her workload.

Conversational search: A game-changer for specific research needs

One of the tool's most valuable features is its ability to help identify relevant articles using conversational language, particularly for students searching for definitive critical perspectives.

"A student was looking for articles with a specific critical view on totalitarianism in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. When you do the initial search, it brings up a bunch of articles, and you obviously look at the titles. Now, in the past, I would have said, 'Here's a bunch of headline articles, read some of them and see what you can find.' But actually, while she was writing something else, I was able to quickly use the AI-powered research tool to check what the key points were in each article and what they said about totalitarianism," said Madeleine.

For many educators, AI-powered tools evoke mixed emotions—enthusiasm and skepticism alike. A recent Ithaka S+R report on AI in higher education found that humanities
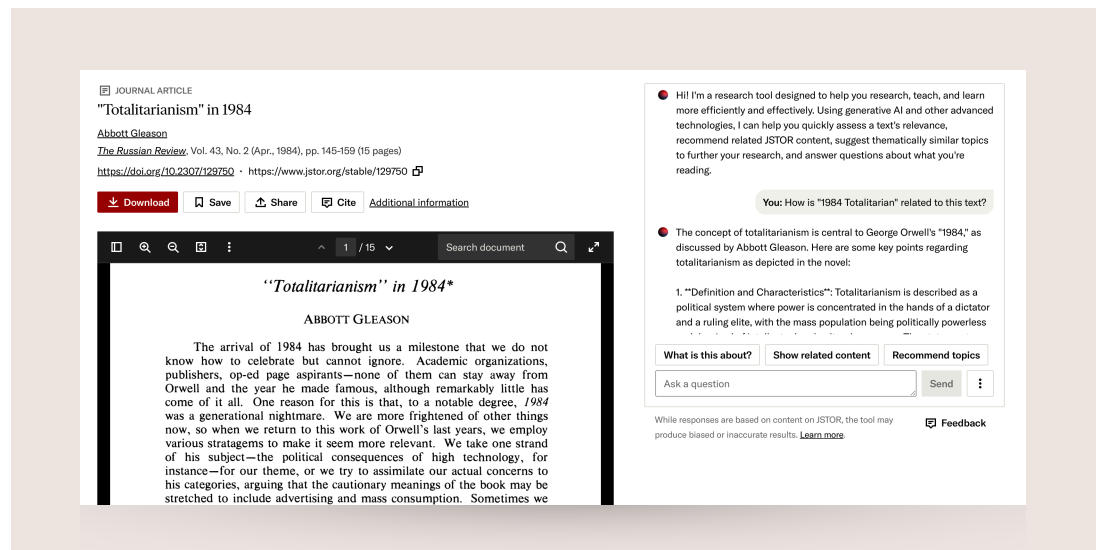
educators, in particular, express significant distrust in AI. However, Madeleine's approach demonstrates that introducing AI into the classroom doesn't have to be a cause for concern.

What about academic integrity? Is there a risk of students misusing the tool? Madeleine doesn't believe so. "Cheating is not really an issue with JSTOR's research tool because my students use it for research in their coursework. Their assignments require them to include other critical opinions on the texts they're studying. I just don't have any concerns like that. I know my students and their writing well enough to tell. My main concern was more about accuracy—whether the tool would provide vague responses or meaningful insights. And so far, it's been fine."

Engaging in thoughtful AI discussions with educators and students

Madeleine actively participates in ongoing conversations about AI in education, collaborating with colleagues on school policies and best practices for introducing AI to students, such as thinking about ethics and addressing questions surrounding AI. "We keep each other updated on developments because AI is evolving so rapidly. This isn't something that one person can navigate alone."

Her measured approach, introducing JSTOR's research tool to her students in the research phase, shows that implementation of AI powered-tools in the classroom does not mean the beginning of fear and chaos. Through understanding of the tool and its capabilities and thoughtful discussions with fellow teachers, Madeleine believes that JSTOR's research tool benefits both instructors and learners and overcomes the skepticism."Our approach is to learn fast but implement slowly and thoughtfully. We're absorbing a lot, but we make sure to integrate AI tools carefully."

Try it for yourself

Incorporating JSTOR's research tool into your teaching doesn't mean the end of critical thinking or learning—in fact, it can enhance the research experience by making scholarly materials more accessible and the process of finding them more efficient. We encourage you to try it for yourself to start exploring with your colleagues, students, or on your own. You can learn more about the research tool through **other case studies here.** If your institution does not yet have access to the research tool contact **your Outreach representative** to get started.