*The questions and exercises below are designed to help you turn your research and discussion around your topics into story form.*

What age group(s) would you possibly like to write for?

* 0-2?
* 3-7?
* 8-12?
* 14-18?

What form of story most interests you? A more traditional narrative story? A concept book? A mix of the two? Explain in a sentence or two why this particular form is the one you want to use to present AI concepts to kids.

What comparables (examples of similar stories that already exist) will you use as your story models? List at least two stories in the same genre that you explored and explain what aspects of those stories you might like to emulate?

If you are interested in exploring a concept-driven narrative, discuss how will you engage your young readers in your story without a traditional plot. You could describe an original concept, various non-plot-driven patterns (alternating, build-up), a relatable character who helps explain the concepts and/or who learns alongside the young reader, etc. Give as much detail about your strategy as possible.

If you are interested in exploring a plot-driven narrative, please respond to the following brainstorming questions. You do not have to fill in every question; focus on the ones you find helpful to think about.

**Genre**

Is there a particular genre you’re interested in exploring--realism, fantasy, something in between?[[1]](#footnote-1) How will your chosen genre help to explain your AI concept to kids?

**Character**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name) is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (adj.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ -year-old \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who wants \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

What this character *really* wants, deep down, is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

What are 2-3 essential qualities of your character?

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How will your AI topic fit in with your character’s desire and essential qualities?

If your character were designing an AI algorithm, what values would guide their design and why?

Is there a source of tension or conflict in the story between the character and someone else/nature/themselves? If so, who and/or what? Does your character come to see things in a new way in the story? How does the tension/conflict/new way of seeing in the story relate to your AI topic?

**Setting**

What settings in the story are not mere backdrops but are entwined with who the character is (e.g. her car, her lab, the forest behind her house, the workshop in her basement, etc.)? How do the settings relate to your AI topic?

In what ways does the character engage with their setting?

Is the setting in any way symbolic? Does it create a particular mood or atmosphere (fearful, awe-inspiring, comic) around the events that will unfold?

**Point of View**

Will your character tell their own story (first person), or will someone else tell their story (either another first person character or a third person narrator)? How will your choice of point of view help you to explain your AI concept to kids?

**Plot**

What “gets the ball rolling” in your story? What throws the comfort or steadiness of the character’s world out of balance? A departure on a journey? The arrival of a stranger? Is this event thrust upon the character or is it one they initiate themselves?

What are the most important discoveries and decisions that face your character in the story, and how do those discoveries and decisions relate to your AI concept? How does your character, or at least our understanding of your character, change by the end of the story?

What kind of a situation would be most likely to reveal who your character is? In other words, what kind of situation would reveal their vulnerabilities, call on their strengths, bring out the best and worst in them, put them to the test?

If you had only three scenes in which to tell the entire story––say, a scene that gets the ball rolling, a scene that explores what happens next, and then a scene in which the change takes place)––what would those three scenes be?

Trace out the shape of your story. At each turning point, identify how the turn happens––i.e. what bends the arc of the story up or down. How will the progression of your story develop your AI-related concept?

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If you had to divide your story into just 4 panels, what would happen in those panels? Think as if you were storyboarding a movie––i.e. show, don’t tell. Instead of talking about your AI-concepts, translate those concepts into things your characters are doing and saying and place where they are saying and doing them. What do we actually see, hear, smell, taste, feel happening? Include a rough drawing with possible text from the actual story underneath.

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| *Panel 1*: As the story opens, where are we? Who is there? What situation is the main character in? Then what happens that “gets the ball rolling?” How does your opening introduce kids to your AI concept?  Image:  Text: | *Panel 2*: What new world / situation does the main character find themselves in? What discoveries and decisions do they make in response to their new situation and how do these discoveries and decisions develop their understanding of AI?  Image:  Text: |
| *Panel 3:* What is the final event––a discovery / decision / action––that brings about the major change in the main character and their situation? Want is the role of AI in this final event?  Image:  Text: | *Panel 4:* What is the situation at the end of the story? How has the situation and perhaps the hero as well changed? What lessons/takeaways about AI do they have now that they did not have at the start of the story?  Image:  Text: |

Write out a rough draft of your AI-themed story for kids:

1. Of particular interest for an AI-theme story might be a story form known as Science Fiction Prototyping––a form of science fiction that projects forward into the future and imagines the effects on individuals and society of a futuristic technology. You can read examples of Science Fiction Prototyping stories here: https://radicaloceanfutures.earth

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)