

THIS WEEKEND'S FAMILY ACTIVITY

The Baseline

GAME

SKILL: EARNED ACCESS

45 MINUTES

RECOMMENDED AGE RANGE

Ages 8–14. Best for families where kids already use AI for schoolwork and can compare their unassisted output to what AI produces.

WHAT YOU NEED

Paper and pencil for each person

A kitchen timer or watch (not a phone)

One phone or laptop for the AI step only

Optional: three index cards with topic suggestions

ACTIVITY STEPS

- 01 Choose a Topic.** Pick a shared topic everyone will work on independently — explain how something works, summarize what you know about a country or animal, or write the opening paragraph of a story. Write the topic on a shared piece of paper. Rule: no AI, no internet, no asking for help. All phones go away except the timer. (3 min)
- 02 Work Alone.** Set a kitchen timer for 8 minutes. Everyone works in silence, writing what they know about the topic using only what is already in their head. Work is done when the timer goes off, not when it feels finished. If you get stuck, stay stuck and keep writing. (8 min)
- 03 Share Unedited.** Go around the table. Each person reads what they wrote, unedited and undefended. No corrections from anyone else. After reading, each person finishes one sentence: "The part I was least sure about was..." (10 min)
- 04 Run It Through AI.** Bring out one phone or laptop. Type the same topic into an AI tool. Read the response out loud together so everyone hears it for the first time at the same moment. (5 min)
- 05 The Comparison Round.** Each person answers two questions: (1) What did you write that the AI did not have? (2) What did AI add that no one in the family had? Then discuss: what would each person have missed if they had started with AI instead of writing their own version first? (19 min)

THE DEEPER LESSON

When a child uses AI before trying something themselves, they have no way to know what they gave up. They get an answer but cannot measure what the shortcut cost them. The Baseline creates the comparison they would never otherwise make: here is what I could do, and here is what AI does differently. That gap is the most concrete argument a kid can encounter for building the skill before reaching for the tool.

CONVERSATION STARTER

When you looked at what you wrote before seeing the AI response, was there anything in yours that the AI did not have? Where did that come from?

Raised Nimble

You cannot out-compete AI. But you can out-human it.

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