

## 'Beowulf is lit' – could ChatGPT really write good book blurbs?

### Level 3: Advanced – Teacher's notes

**Article summary:** Bookwire has included ChatGPT on their book platform to write blurbs and endorsements. The author experimented with the chatbot to see what it could do, creating some entertaining (but cliché) texts.

**Time:** 60–90 minutes (depending on the time to use a chatbot in class)

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Phrases and phrasal verbs

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

**Key:**

1. *disclaimer*
2. *enrage, enraged*
3. *cutthroat*
4. *backstab, backstabbing*
5. *gasp, gasped*
6. *awe*
7. *mind-blowing*
8. *soul-stirring*
9. *awestruck*
10. *enraptured*
11. *passable*
12. *stale*
13. *cringeworthy*

As an extension to help students learn the new words, ask them to write a word that they associate with each word on a random place on a blank page. This can be an example of the word, a synonym, or a personal association. Alternatively, you can focus on the topic of literature and ask students to write a book, character, or other literary example for each item. Then have students work in pairs and guess or explain their word sets.

### 1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to introduce the books/texts mentioned in the article and engage students in the topic.

**Key:**

1. *c*
2. *f*
3. *a*
4. *e*
5. *g*
6. *b*
7. *d*

- b. You can note down emergent language related to the theme on the board. Ask students to reflect on what they know about these books and ChatGPT. Then get them to predict the answer to the question in the article title.

### 2. Key words

- a. Students can complete the activity individually or in pairs. If pressed for time, divide the class into two groups and ask each group to complete half of the items (1–6 or 7–13) and then compare their answers in pairs before regrouping and sharing their answers with someone who completed the other items.

### 3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to work individually to answer the questions and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Remind students that they need to decide if each statement can be inferred from the text. In other words, if the text provides supporting evidence for the statement.

**Key:**

*Can be inferred:*

2. *... that it will only use ChatGPT if a publisher agrees*
4. *... came under fire on social media for its use of an AI-generated promotional image*
6. *This dude's a total savage, taking down monsters left and right like it's NBD [no big deal]. His skills are on point, and he's got a fearless attitude that's straight-up inspiring. Plus, his adventures are full of epic battles.*
9. *If you're looking for a book that will make you ugly-cry in public, It Ends With Us by Colleen Hoover is your golden ticket.*
10. *The blurb is written with humour.*

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11. Descriptions of books are generally accurate.
13. Rest easy, blurbers and reviewers – you're still needed (at least for now).

Can't be inferred:

1. She thought blurb writing was an art.
3. It will cause outrage.
5. It's full of drama and personal topics. There's no mention of a lack of emotional depth.
7. The blurb was written to appeal to Gen Z, not the poem.
8. It says it rivals Game of Thrones, so no, it didn't.
12. The words they use are clichés.

#### 4. Key language

- a. Ask students to work in pairs. Have them check their answers in the article.

**Key:**

- |      |      |
|------|------|
| 1. b | 6. f |
| 2. d | 7. i |
| 3. e | 8. h |
| 4. g | 9. c |
| 5. a |      |

- b. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the questions. Check answers with the whole class. Then ask students to discuss the questions in small groups.

**Key (answers may vary):**

1. Do you usually play around with new technology?
2. When was the last time that you heard news that had you shook?
3. Have you ever been under fire for saying or doing something controversial?
4. You can take the phone for a test drive and return it if you are not happy.
5. Do you trust the endorsements that are slapped on products?
6. Do you feel overwhelmed when you see people left and right?
7. This camping trip is going to be a wild ride!

8. Do you ever feel that your hair or your outfit are perfect?
9. What did you do to improve your well-being in the face of the COVID pandemic?

#### 5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note their ideas and encourage them to explain their answers. Ask them to discuss the questions in small groups. Elicit ideas from the whole class.

#### 6. In your own words

- a. If students cannot do this in class, set this for homework. If students cannot access a chatbot site, ask them to write their own blurb. Remind students that they need to keep the instructions they gave to the chatbot, the original generated text (or their own first draft), and their final edited version.
- b. Low-tech version: put students into groups and ask them to read their blurbs and guess the book titles.

Higher-tech version: get students to share their generated and edited blurbs on an online board such as Jamboard.