

Carnegie Council Activity on Trade-offs of AI in Diplomacy (30–45-minutes)

Overview

This interactive classroom activity allows students to engage in group conversations around the role that artificial intelligence can play in the field of diplomacy. Students will be asked to think through a series of questions to ultimately come up with their argument as to whether they believe AI should be used for diplomatic purposes. The activity starts with establishing a baseline for the role a diplomat plays in global deliberations. From there, students will decide between the benefits and trade-offs and will provide a recommendation on using these tools.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of engaging in this activity, students will:

- Develop an understanding of the trade-offs of using large language models (LLMs) for diplomatic purposes.
- Evaluate whether these tools are the right ones to adopt for the future of diplomatic engagement.
- Articulate why they would or would not recommend the use of AI in diplomacy.

Carnegie Council principles that the activity addresses:

1. **The commitment to international cooperation** is a moral proposition because it goes to the essence of ethics—recognizing what is common for all, while managing the intrinsic and inevitable differences between and among people.
2. **Fidelity** means honesty, integrity, and a good-faith effort at serving the truth. Rhetoric certainly matters, and in an age of disinformation, leaders must fight against lies, willful deception, and deliberate misrepresentation of facts.

Pre-Activity and Set-up:

To provide background and concepts for this activity, you can use Carnegie Council's [The Trade-offs of AI in Diplomacy communiqué](#).

Once you have provided the foundation for this activity, divide the class in small groups of three to five students. Once they are divided, provide them with the following prompt (5 minutes of brainstorming with their peers and 5 minutes of calling out their answers):

- Imagine you are a diplomat updating your LinkedIn profile. What tasks would you add to your page to best describe what you do?

Below are some answers to help start the conversation:

What is the role of a diplomat?

- Engage in negotiations with multiple parties who have a variety of interests
- Represent their countries and constituents in deliberations
- Expert understanding on the issues they are negotiating and who they are negotiating with

What type of work would they engage in?

- Write briefs and speeches
- Language and translation
 - Translate documents
 - Learn multiple languages to clearly communicate with others around the world
- Research the history of the country or the individuals they are negotiating with

Activity (15 minutes)

Option A:

You are working as a diplomat and are about to enter negotiations with another party. Your team has been instructed to train on a new AI model that is being piloted to provide efficiency in notetaking, research, and repetitive tasks. After the trial period of the pilot is over, you will be asked to provide feedback on the AI tool and whether it should be adopted for future negotiations moving forward.

1. What are the benefits of using AI tools for diplomatic purposes?
2. What are some drawbacks?
3. What could be gained or lost by adopting these tools?
4. What are ethical considerations when using these tools?
5. If you:
 - a. Agree that these tools should be adopted for diplomatic purposes, how would you solve for the ethical considerations?
 - b. Don't agree, understanding the reasons these tools are being piloted, what might be the alternatives?
6. Finally, what would your recommendation be after the trial period and why?

Option B:

You can create scenarios where students evaluate the trade-off of using AI for diplomatic purposes. Examples of scenarios could be:

1. Consular work processing visas and applications
2. Negotiating a bilateral policy brief with multiple stakeholders
3. Using AI to determine how to distribute aid to countries who can benefit from the resources

Student can then answer the following questions:

1. What are the benefits of using AI tools for diplomatic purposes?
2. What are some drawbacks?
3. What could be gained or lost by adopting these tools?
4. What are ethical considerations when using these tools?
5. If you:
 - a. Agree that these tools should be adopted for diplomatic purposes, how would you solve for the ethical considerations?
 - b. Don't agree, understanding the reasons these tools are being piloted, what might be the alternatives?
6. Finally, what would your recommendation be after the trial period and why?

Post-Activity Discussion (15 minutes)

Each group picks one person to answer question 6 of the activity and articulate their group's consensus. Once every group has gone, ask the students about their thoughts after engaging in the activity.

Below are a few key takeaways you can leave the students with after the activity:

- Who is responsible if the wrong information is provided (the owner of the LLM or the diplomat using it)?
- What is lost for the sake of efficiency?
- How do AI agents help with data management?
- Who has the technology to implement this and who does not? (question around equity and technology)
- Education and training (when and when not to use AI tools)

Post-Activity Reading and Video:

- [“Recommendations for Managing the Trade-offs of AI in Diplomacy,”](#) Carnegie Ethics Accelerator, Carnegie Council, 2024 (Communiqué)
- [“The Ethics of AI Agents in Global Governance,”](#) *Ethics Empowered: Leadership in Practice*, Carnegie Council, April 21, 2026 (Event Recording & Transcript)