# Enhancing Education with AI

## Introducing Smart Lesson Generator

Mike Mayor

**Pearson**

**Global Scale of English**
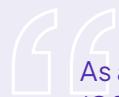Fast-track your progress

# Exploring the science behind the Pearson Smart Lesson Generator

## Introduction

The rise of AI-powered software has impacted all aspects of our lives. Whilst there is no denying the benefits that this technology has brought, there are growing concerns around its use, particularly when it comes to the world of education. AI assistants are often praised for the time and cost savings they enable, but at what price?

Two buzzwords that have entered the AI lexicon are "hallucination" and "AI slop". Both reflect the fact that the outputs of AI-powered systems are not always reliable, trust-worthy or indeed accurate. Whilst the speed with which content can be generated is impressive, this needs to be balanced with reliability and usefulness.

When it comes to creating content for our learners, we have a responsibility to ensure that it is relevant and appropriate to their needs – and genuinely useful in supporting their progress. Much has been written about the limitations of AI assistants in generating appropriate content for language learners. These assistants are notoriously weak in levelling content, especially at the lower levels of proficiency. In order to set learners up for success, we need to ensure that activities are at the right level of challenge to help them move to the next level of proficiency.

> As a teacher familiar with the Pearson Global Scale of English (GSE), you'll find Smart Lesson Generator to be an invaluable AI tool. It creates activities precisely matched to the GSE score you provide, ensuring they perfectly suit your students' needs. You can use it with Pearson's coursebooks or design your own lessons, saving you time. Plus, it's constantly evolving with input from Pearson's experts and educators worldwide, making it a cutting-edge and well-deserved addition to your teaching toolbox.

**Le Dinh Bao Quoc (Dr.)**
*Founder and CEO, Pro.Ed Education Solutions*

**》Pearson**

In order to guarantee that AI-generated content is at the appropriate level for learners, additional safeguards and checks need to be put in place. A filter through which auto-generated content is checked for learning objectives, vocabulary and grammar. At Pearson, that filter is the Global Scale of English (GSE) – a set of frameworks and databases that establish appropriate learning objectives, grammar and vocabulary for each level of proficiency.

The GSE has been used by Pearson English Language Learning for the past ten years to ensure that all courses and assessments are accurately levelled for learners of all ages and stages. As we began exploring the AI-generation of content and activities, it was the logical filter through which everything was passed to check for accuracy and appropriacy. And now, for the first time, we are making this AI filter available to educators via Smart Lesson Generator – a brand-new teaching assistant that saves you time with activity and lesson planning and enables you to personalize the learning pathways of your students, all whilst guaranteeing that the content generated is appropriate for your learners and will fast-track their progress.

> No more stressing over creating tasks that may or may not work; everything is aligned with the curriculum and ready to go. And for those moments when a teacher has to step in last minute? They can customize activities in the first few minutes of class and have an engaging lesson set up instantly. It's a game-changer, making teaching smoother and more efficient while letting us focus on what really matters—our students.

**Hebatallah Morsy**
*English Instructor, consultant and teacher trainer*

# Smart Lesson Generator

Research carried out by Pearson in 2024 reveals that 76% of teachers spend at least one hour of their personal time on lesson planning each week – and for 43%, this figure rises to more than three hours per week. Smart Lesson Generator is an innovative AI-powered tool designed to significantly reduce the time that teachers spend on customizing coursebooks to better meet the needs and interests of their learners. Using generative AI and models of natural language processing, Smart Lesson Generator creates supplemental activities in a matter of seconds based on the learning objectives, topic and vocabulary that you plan to use in your lesson. For teachers who are using Pearson courseware, these materials are designed to reinforce and expand on the core coursebook lessons, making teaching more effective and engaging. The generated materials are aligned with Pearson courses, ensuring they fit seamlessly into the existing lesson flow. For those who are not using Pearson courseware, Smart Lesson Generator will create activities based on the level and topic selected, automatically aligning these with GSE Learning Objectives to ensure the content is at the right level for your students.

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Whilst many AI-powered assistants will create content and activities for language learners, we ensure that Smart Lesson Generator delivers content that is pedagogically sound and created using Pearson's Learning Design Principles. These Principles are based on research into the most effective and efficient ways to learn. We also ensure that the content is appropriately levelled and relevant for your students by passing the AI-generated content through a rigorous quality control process. At the heart of this process lies the Global Scale of English.

> Smart Lesson Generator will definitely upskill students' confidence in communication. Its crafted scenarios created for the "communication starter" perfectly aligned to the GSE will shape their critical thinking while improving their mediation and communication in real- world situations.
> I can't wait to see students shine!

**Maria Jesus Moreno**
*Educator, School Founder, and Teacher Trainer*

# Global Scale of English

The Global Scale of English (GSE) is both a proficiency scale (from 10-90) and a framework of learning objectives describing what a learner can be expected to do at each point on that scale. The GSE proficiency scale is aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the framework of GSE Learning Objectives was developed to extend the CEFR Can Do statements to address the needs of audience-specific learners (e.g. Young Learners, Adult Learners, Learners of English for Professional Purposes).

Like the CEFR, the GSE defines language proficiency in terms of the things that a learner "Can Do" in English and supports a skills-based approach to language learning. Unlike the CEFR, however, which groups learning objectives into broad levels (A1, A2, B1 etc), the GSE Learning Objectives describe what a learner can do at each point on the 10-90 scale. It is this level of detail that enables us to more accurately level content and plan appropriately scaffolded learning pathways.

Whilst grammar and vocabulary knowledge are not the ultimate indicators of proficiency, they are enablers for being able to communicate in English and do need to be taken into consideration when planning appropriately levelled lessons and activities. Unlike the CEFR (which is a framework for all European languages), the GSE database also includes English grammar and vocabulary aligned to the 10-90 scale.

To find out more about the Global Scale of English, visit the website at:
The Global Scale of English for educators | Pearson Languages
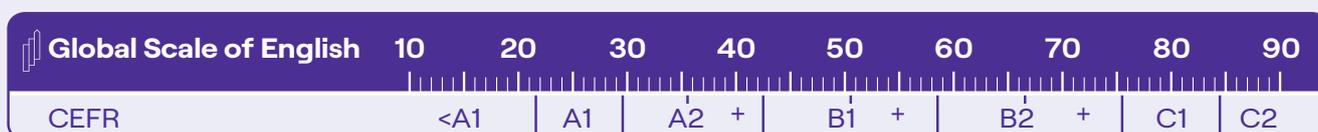
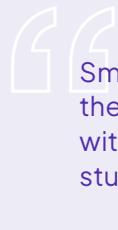**》Pearson**

# The use of GSE in auto-generated activities

When generating appropriately levelled activities for learners, teachers ask themselves a couple of key questions:

- Is the language function (learning objective) at the right level of challenge?

- Is the language (vocabulary) at the right level?

In order to auto-generate appropriately levelled activities, we ask Smart Lesson Generator the same questions, using GSE Learning Objectives and frameworks as both the prompt and the measure:

- GSE Learning Objectives level language functions in detail on the 10-90 proficiency scale

- GSE Vocabulary levels lexical items and usage on the same 10-90 scale

| Global Scale of English | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CEFR | | <A1 | A1 | A2 + | B1 + | B2 + | C1 | C2 | |

> "Smart Lesson Generator, what's not to like about it? Aligned with the GSE and with Pearson courseware, it will provide teachers with activities ensuring they are at the right level for their students."

**Leonor Corradi**
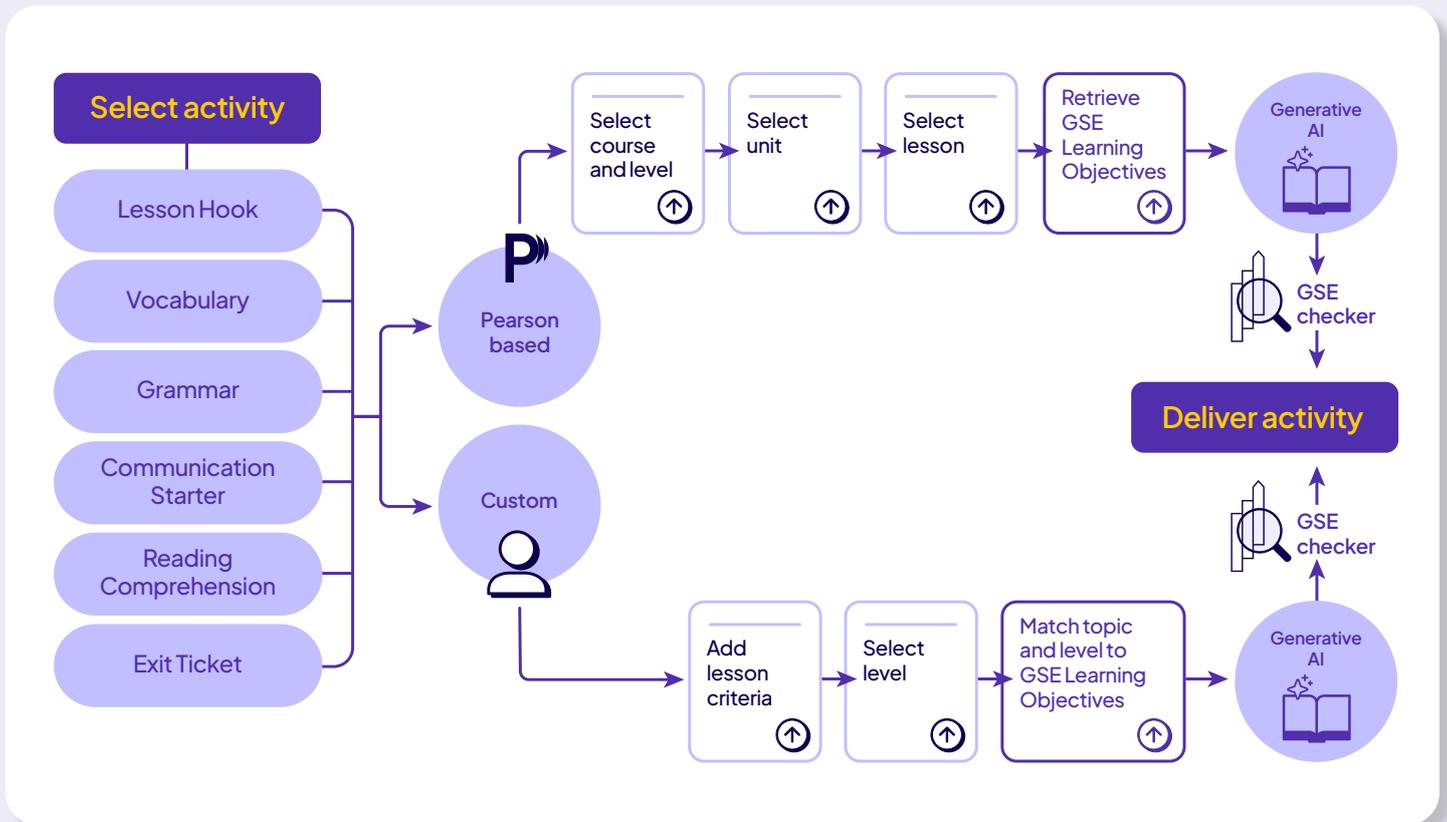*Academic consultant, materials writer, and teacher trainer*

The auto-generation of activities by Smart Lesson Generator involves a three-step process to ensure relevance and appropriacy:

1. Teachers first select the type of activity they want to generate (Lesson Hook, Vocabulary, Grammar, Conversation Starter, Reading Comprehension or Exit Ticket). They then select whether or not they are using a Pearson course (Pearson based) or not (Custom). If they are using a Pearson course, they select the relevant course and level and choose which unit and lesson they want to generate additional activities for. Smart Lesson Generator uses the GSE Learning Objectives from that particular lesson to generate an appropriately levelled activity that supplements the core coursebook content. For teachers selecting the "Custom" option, they enter the topic of their lesson and the level of their learners and Smart Lesson Generator finds appropriate GSE Learning Objectives at that level and returns an activity on the requested topic.

2. AI generates activities from a Large Language Model (LLM) based on the input from the teacher and the generated content is then passed through a number of GSE filters to ensure that the language is at an appropriate level. If anything is off level, it is automatically changed for more level-appropriate content

3. Once checks have been run and changes made, the auto-generated activity is delivered to teachers in Smart Lesson Generator tool to use with their students.

After generating an activity, teachers then have a number of additional options:

- They can adapt the topic of the content and regenerate a new activity
- They can create stretch and remediation activities to supplement the new content

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# The auto-generation of activities



# Less time planning, more time teaching

Creating supplemental materials and activities to customize a coursebook to the needs and interests of students is a highly time-consuming task that adds to the already busy workload of most teachers. It is also an activity that requires a certain amount of expertise and creativity that is not part of everyone's skill set. Smart Lesson Generator supports every teacher in creating additional materials that integrate seamlessly with their course without all the heavy lifting. The ready-to-use activities can be further modified by those teachers who want to adapt the content further. But whether you use the content as is or modify it further, you can be assured of its quality and appropriacy thanks to the GSE checks integrated into Smart Lesson Generator. All of which frees you up to focus on the aspects of teaching and learning that cannot be replaced by AI – those human interactions that fast-track progress and engage learners.

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## About the author

### Mike Mayor

Mike Mayor is Senior Director, Global Scale of English at Pearson. On leaving university, Mike worked as a teacher of English in France before entering the world of publishing as a lexicographer. Mike joined Pearson in 2003 and headed up the Longman dictionaries list until his move to the Global Scale of English in 2013. In this role, Mike works with coursebook and assessment teams to ensure that the Global Scale of English underpins all elements of the Pearson English Journey. He is a frequent speaker at international conferences and teacher training events. Mike has a BA in French and a Masters in English and Applied Linguistics from Cambridge University.

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## Global Scale of English

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