Does AI make professionals more productive?

Reading + Grammar: **hedging: reporting research cautiously**

1 KEY VOCABULARY

productivity	*n.*	output achieved in a given time
control group	*n.*	the group in a study that does not get the treatment
evaluator	*n.*	a person who judges the quality of work
inequality	*n.*	an uneven or unfair difference between people
limitation	*n.*	a weakness that restricts a study's conclusions
white-collar	*adj.*	relating to office and professional work
hype	*n.*	exaggerated publicity
generalise	*v.*	to apply a result to all cases
fact-check	*v.*	to verify that information is accurate
prompt	*n.*	an instruction given to an AI tool

2 USEFUL PHRASES & EXPRESSIONS

- **The data suggest that…** — *hedge a conclusion*
- **AI may make some workers more productive.** — *modal + limiting word*
- **The gains appear to be real.** — *appear to: cautious claim*
- **in this context** — *limit the scope of a claim*
- **We shouldn't generalise too quickly.** — *warn against over-claiming*
- **Always fact-check the output.** — *professional recommendation*

6 CULTURE & BUSINESS INSIGHT

★ **Read the research, not the hype**

An MIT study with 453 college-educated professionals found that ChatGPT helped them finish some writing tasks faster and with better quality. But the tasks were short and specific, so careful professionals avoid overgeneralising the results.

3 THE KEY POINT

Hedging makes claims more cautious and precise: modal verbs (**may, might, could**), **appear / seem to**, **suggest, indicate, tend to** and limiting phrases (**in this context, for some tasks**).

Strong: AI makes workers more productive. → Hedged: AI **may** make **some** workers more productive.

The gains **appear to** be real **in this context**.

The data **suggest that** AI **tends to** reduce inequality between workers.

4 QUICK PRACTICE

Make these claims more cautious using the word in brackets.

1. ChatGPT improves writing quality. (may)
2. The results apply to all professions. (unlikely)
3. AI reduces the gap between workers. (tend)
4. The effect is permanent. (appear)

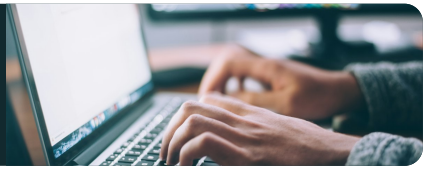
5 ANSWERS & EXPLANATION

Answers: 1 ChatGPT may improve writing quality. · 2 The results are unlikely to apply to all professions. · 3 AI tends to reduce the gap between workers. · 4 The effect does not appear to be permanent / appears to be temporary.

Use a modal + base verb (**may improve**), **be unlikely to** + infinitive, **tend to** + infinitive and **appear to be**. Hedging is essential in reports, emails and presentations about data.

Today's resource: Study finds ChatGPT boosts worker productivity for some writing tasks (MIT News) · https://news.mit.edu/2023/study-finds-chatgpt-boosts-worker-productivity-writing-0714

> *Strong ideas deserve careful words.*



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