



How to explain AI to a 7-year-old (without lying)

Three honest analogies and two screen-free games — by an AI researcher who is asked this at every family dinner.

ANALOGY 1

The puppy

You don't give a puppy rules for "sit" — you reward tries until it gets it. AI learns the same way: **lots of tries, lots of feedback, zero understanding of Portuguese.**

ANALOGY 2

The parrot with a library

ChatGPT read almost everything ever written, and it's brilliant at guessing which word comes next. **It talks like it knows — the way a parrot sounds like it understands.**

ANALOGY 3

The recipe robot

Show it 1,000 cakes, it learns "cake-ness" and can invent a new cake. It can also confidently serve you a cake with salt instead of sugar. **Taste before trusting.**

GAME 1 • NO SCREEN NEEDED

Train the Human Robot

You are the robot. The child must teach you to make a sandwich using **ONLY** exact instructions — and you follow them literally. ("Put butter on bread" → butter, unopened, on top of the bag.) **Lesson felt, not lectured: machines do what you say, not what you mean. Prompting, basically.**

GAME 2 • NO SCREEN NEEDED

Guess-the-Next-Word

Start a sentence, family takes turns predicting the next word, one point per match with what you actually meant. After ten rounds, reveal: **"that's the entire job of ChatGPT — you were the AI."** Works shockingly well on adults too.

Full version: 10 analogies, 6 games, and a "first chat with AI together" script — in the AI for Families mini-guide.

[BRUNOMELICIO.COM](https://brunomelicio.com)