

Geography

The Line: facts vs promises

Activities objectives

- Understand a megaproject in its geographic context
- Develop a critical view of AI-generated content

Durée :

2h00-2h30

Assessment

Produce a structured oral presentation in a foreign language.

Starter

5/10 min



After listening, answer these questions:

- Do you think this project is real or science fiction?
- Does it sound realistic? Why or why not?
- Would you like to live in this city? Explain your answer.

Ask the AI

30 min



You are working in groups.
Each group will ask the same question to a different AI tool.

The prompt is: **"Describe The Line project and its goals in 300 words."**

Read the AI answer carefully and take notes.

In your group, identify and write down:

- Positive or promotional words (words that make the project look perfect)
- Unclear, vague or unrealistic ideas
- Numbers and figures (population, length, cost, dates, etc.)
- The main ideas of the project

Be ready to explain what your AI says and how it presents the project.

Voici une liste d'IA génératives non exhaustives accessibles en 2025 au grand public.

Une IA n'est pas seulement un outil technique : elle est aussi soumise aux lois du pays où elle est développée. Cela joue sur :

- la protection des données (RGPD , Cloud Act ...),
- le stockage ou non des données,
- l'accès éventuel par les autorités (ex : censure),
- les règles d'entraînement des modèles (droit d'auteur, copyright...).



Mistral
Mistral

Deepseek
Deepseek



Claude
Anthropic

ChatGPT
Open AI



Copilot
Microsoft



Gemini
Google



Reality check

25 min



Now you will work with real and reliable documents about The Line and the NEOM project. Study the documents carefully and discuss them in your group.

Then answer the following questions in writing:

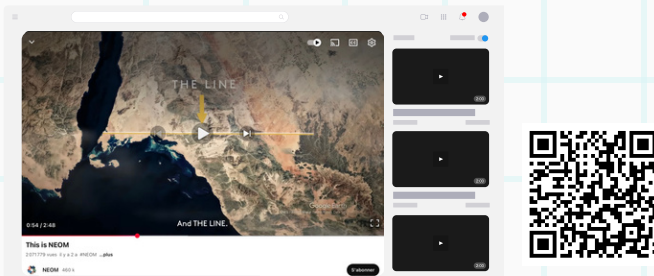
- What does the AI exaggerate?
- What does the AI completely hide?
- Which elements are scientifically unrealistic?

Use precise examples from the documents to justify your answers.



What The Line looks like in 2025

Doc. 1 - Promotional video - This is NEOM



Source : NEOM, Mars 2023.

Doc. 2 - The Line: From Dream to Reality

The Line has an ambitious vision; however, it is already undergoing major alterations owing to* economic challenges and sophisticated construction techniques. The project, initially pegged at** \$1.5 trillion, has already experienced cost increases and as the 2024 budget has not been sanctioned yet by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, there have been working down of scope and schedule. Designed to accommodate 1.5 million people by the year 2030, projections now suggest the city will only be home to around 300,000 residents, and the overall length of the city has also been reduced to 2.5 km.

The scaling back of The Line has raised concerns regarding the overall accomplishment of the undertaking. Even though the grand vision is still attractive, most industry players think it is improbable to attain the desired targets by the year 2030. Sources indicate that employers have started to lay off employees*** from the premises, indicating a halt in development.

Source: S. Sanusha, Saudi Arabia comes to terms with its failure with The Line: Here's what's left of the city, www.econews.com, February 17, 2025.

*because of

**estimated at

*** make people lose their jobs.

Doc. 3 - The Line: a controversial project

Critics argue that the project's scope is unrealistic, and its visionaries have been accused of having suspect political aims and a poor human rights record. Some concerns were even raised about the potential negative ecological impact of the development.

Scrutiny intensified when construction began in October 2022, and reports emerged about the Saudi government issuing death sentences and lengthy prison terms to six members of the Howaitat tribe; a tribe that had long inhabited the proposed site, Jordan and the Sinai peninsula for generations and resisted eviction, tracing their lineage back before the founding of the Saudi state.

By May of the previous year, another group of UN-appointed independent human rights experts expressed concerns following news of the potential execution of three tribesmen who resisted forced evictions. The experts invoked international law, emphasizing that the death penalty should only be imposed for the most serious crimes and questioning whether the actions met this threshold. (...)

Its environmental goals might be deemed contradictory. There would be ecological effects only from its construction. Despite smart cities' claims to be carbon neutral thanks to cutting-edge technologies, The Line shows how many initiatives fall short because the energy and materials required to construct, operate, and maintain such projects are still substantial.

Source: F. Assan, Neom's The Line: Sustainable architecture, or grim dystopian future?, www.lampoonmagazine.com, March 24, 2025.

2 min Oral Presentation

15 min



Your task is to prepare a 2-minute structured oral presentation about The Line. You must follow the structure below:

Part 1 – “What your AI claims” (1 min)

- How does the AI describe The Line?
- What positive or impressive elements does it highlight?

Part 2 – “Reality check and critical conclusion” (1 min)

- What problems, limits or contradictions appear in the documents?
- Does the AI adopt a specific tone (neutral / promotional / optimistic / unrealistic)?
- Can we trust the AI? Explain why or why not.

Make sure everyone in the group speaks. Use clear examples from the documents to support your ideas.

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs improvement
What the AI claims	The AI's description is clear and precise. Positive and promotional elements are clearly identified.	The AI's ideas are mentioned but lack detail or clarity.	The AI's claims are poorly explained or incomplete.
Reality check & use of documents	Documents are used effectively. Problems, limits and contradictions are clearly explained with relevant examples.	Some problems are identified but examples are limited or not always clear.	Few or no real elements are used.
Critical thinking about the AI	The AI's tone is clearly identified and well analyzed. The conclusion shows strong critical thinking.	The tone is identified but the analysis is simple or incomplete.	Little or no critical analysis of the AI.
Quality of language	Language is clear and mostly accurate. Vocabulary is appropriate and varied. Few minor mistakes.	Language is understandable but with several mistakes. Vocabulary is simple but correct.	Many mistakes make understanding difficult.
Oral expression & group work	Clear speech and good pronunciation. All group members speak and share time fairly.	Speech is understandable but uneven. One student speaks more than others.	Difficult to understand. Limited participation.

Exit ticket AI

5/10 min



- AI can give information, but...
- AI is not always reliable because...
- To trust AI, we must...