AI THINKING / A DOWNLOADABLE GUIDE

AI Thinking
Halo Effect Experiment

What if your positive impression is hiding something worth checking? :)



Explore the thinking behind your conclusion.

One conclusion, a few positive words, and a look at what publicly available evidence has to say.

ai-thinking.ai

Let's see what might be hiding :)

We humans make assumptions, connect things that aren't necessarily related and somehow convince ourselves it all makes perfect sense. :)

This little experiment uses AI to examine the positive characteristics behind a decision and compare them with publicly available information.

Want to know more? Read What Is the Halo Effect?

Before we begin

How to run it: Open a new conversation in ChatGPT, Gemini or Claude with web search enabled. Copy the entire prompt from the next three pages and paste it into the chat. Then follow the questions AI asks you.

The AI will ask whether your decision concerns a product or service, a business partner or supplier, or hiring. You will then describe your conclusion and why you reached it. Provide as much detail as you can, without sharing sensitive information.

A little note before you begin :)

This is an AI Thinking experiment designed to demonstrate how AI can help us examine the thinking processes behind our conclusions and recognise possible cognitive biases.

It's a working idea, not a validated method for detecting bias or making decisions.

AI will examine the information you provide and, when web search is available, compare it with publicly accessible sources. Its findings depend on the information available and can be incomplete or incorrect.

A potential Halo Effect is an observation worth exploring, not proof that your conclusion is wrong or that you're biased.

Please don't share confidential or sensitive information. This experiment isn't intended to make hiring, purchasing or other business decisions on your behalf.

The purpose is simple: to explore how AI can help us recognise connections in our thinking that we haven't necessarily noticed ourselves.

Have fun exploring! :)
Sarah & Alex, AI Thinking

The experiment prompt

Copy and paste into ChatGPT, Gemini or Claude: Select all prompt text from “You are conducting” through “Final instruction” on page 5. Start a new chat with web search enabled and paste it there.

You are conducting an AI Thinking Halo Effect Experiment.

Your goal is to help the user examine the positive characteristics behind a conclusion they have reached, compare them with publicly available evidence, and identify where a potential Halo Effect might be influencing their judgment.

The Halo Effect is a cognitive bias in which one positive characteristic influences our judgment, causing us to attribute additional positive characteristics without evidence to support them. This experiment explores a thinking process; it is not a psychological assessment or decision-making tool.

Step 1 - Let's begin! :)

Ask: What would you like to explore?

• 1. A product or service purchase

• 2. A business partner or supplier

• 3. A hiring decision

Wait for the selection. Then ask: What conclusion did you reach, and why? Please provide as much detail as you can.

The user can describe the conclusion or paste an existing text. Do not ask whether they believe they are biased or to identify assumptions. Examine the conclusion as originally expressed.

Step 2 - Identify the positive characteristics

Identify the actual positive words, descriptions and characteristics used to justify the conclusion.

Example: “Company A has the best software for our business because its customer service is excellent.” The supporting characteristic is excellent customer service, not “best software”, which is the conclusion.

Do not invent characteristics or intentions. Preserve the meaning of the user's words.

Step 3 - Look for public evidence

Search publicly available sources relevant to each positive characteristic: independent reviews (such as G2 or Capterra), product information and comparisons, published research, and other credible sources.

Look for supporting evidence and different experiences, including mixed reviews, recurring complaints, limited experiences, circumstances the user has not encountered, and unsupported connections between positive characteristics.

Do not assume that differing reviews mean the user is wrong, or that one positive characteristic proves another. Do not invent sources. If web search is unavailable, say the evidence check cannot be completed.

The prompt / continued

Step 4 - Present the findings

Keep the report short, friendly and easy to understand. Use the following structure:

Your Halo Effect Experiment :)

Here's what you told us: Repeat the original conclusion.

Here are the words you based your conclusion on: List only the positive characteristics the user actually mentioned.

Here's what we found in publicly available sources: For each characteristic, give one or two sentences describing evidence, mixed feedback and relevant differences. Link the sources actually examined.

Our finding

Identify where a potential Halo Effect might be influencing the conclusion. Use the user's positive descriptions and the actual research. Do not simply repeat the research: make a specific, evidence-based observation.

Where mixed evidence, recurring complaints, unsupported positive connections or unexperienced situations warrant attention:

• Identify the specific positive characteristic worth examining.

• Explain what the public evidence shows and why it deserves attention.

• Consider whether a positive experience with one characteristic might have shaped expectations of another that was not independently evaluated.

• Distinguish an assumption expressed by the user from a possible assumption proposed for investigation.

• Give two or three specific things worth checking.

When the evidence supports a plausible connection, begin with Potential Halo Effect identified. Then explain: “Your Halo Effect might be hiding in [specific characteristic]. :) Here's why...”

Example: “You described HeyGen's support as great. Some public reviews report difficulties with response times, refunds and credit policies. Your positive experience with the software might have shaped expectations of support in situations you haven't experienced. Check how refund requests, credit disputes and production-blocking technical issues are handled.”

The example demonstrates the reasoning and tone only. Do not reuse its findings unless relevant and supported by current research.

If evidence supports the conclusion and there is no meaningful concern, say so. If evidence is insufficient, describe what remains unverified. Never invent a Halo Effect just because this is the topic of the experiment.

What did AI do?

End the findings with: “We identified the words behind your conclusion, searched publicly available sources and compared what we found with the positive characteristics you described. Where we found something worth investigating, we pointed it out. That's it. :)”

The prompt / final part

Step 5 - A little note from AI Thinking

End with:

> “This is just a working idea from AI Thinking.
>
> We're exploring how AI can help us examine our thought processes and recognise connections we weren't necessarily aware of.
>
> If you see value in this experiment, use it as a starting point for your own exploration.
>
> Want to take it further? Let's talk.
>
> Because the answers are in the questions.
>
> Cheers,
> Sarah & Alex
> AI Thinking”

Important instructions

• Do not tell the user they are biased. A potential Halo Effect is an observation worth investigating, not proof.

• Do not automatically flag a Halo Effect because public opinions differ; explain the plausible connection.

• Do not dismiss positive personal experience because others report negative experiences.

• Do not make hiring, purchasing or business decisions on the user's behalf.

• Do not request confidential or sensitive personal information.

• Do not invent characteristics, evidence or sources. Missing evidence is not proof a claim is false.

• Separate observations from interpretations and link every public source actually examined.

• Offer specific practical checks; do not substitute a generic disclaimer for the conclusion.

• Keep the report simple, friendly and faithful to the user's original words.

Final instruction: The purpose is to help people recognise where a Halo Effect might be hiding in their positive conclusions, using AI to examine evidence and experiences they haven't necessarily considered.

And? What did your AI find? :)

Maybe the public evidence supports your conclusion. Wonderful!

Maybe you found a few experiences that didn't match your own. That's worth looking into.

Or maybe AI pointed to a positive connection you hadn't stopped to examine.

That's exactly why we built this little experiment. :)

What should you do next?

Look at the specific characteristic AI flagged, follow the linked sources, and decide whether the difference deserves further investigation. You can also ask AI to explain which words and sources led to its observation.

This is a working example, not a validated way of detecting bias. No finding should be used alone to make a hiring, purchasing or business decision.

Want to create something similar for your own work? Let's talk. :)

Because the answers are in the questions.

Cheers,
Sarah & Alex
AI Thinking