



Yousef El Turk

AI Builder · Grade 12

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About Me

I am...

A high-agency builder and Grade 12 student with a passion for building things that contribute to the ever-growing world of AI. Specializes in ML research, AI agents, and robotics.

"I'm a big believer in winging it."

Anthony Bourdain

I'm most proud of...

A first-author paper that placed Top 40 globally at the Global Research Challenge 2026, and 1st-place hackathon wins at ADU and Alibaba Cloud's Qoder AI Hackathon.

I'm proficient in...

Python, PyTorch, scikit-learn, LightGBM, XGBoost, CatBoost, Hugging Face, vLLM, LoRA fine-tuning, LangChain, LangGraph, reinforcement learning, Gymnasium, MuJoCo, Isaac Sim, and Git.

Education

Liwa International School Al Mushrif

High School Senior (Grade 12)

Class of 2027 · Abu Dhabi, UAE

Grade 11 Term 2 average: 92.8%

Programs

The Junior Academy

New York Academy of Sciences.

Selected for the 2026–27 program.

NYUAD University Prep Program

Application workshops, July 2026.

MBZUAI Hybrid Intelligence Bootcamp

Built and pitched a mini startup to MBZUAI professors and the IEC president.

INSEAD NextGen Bootcamp

Co-founded Vertigrow (vertical farming) and pitched it to judges from Samsung, NVIDIA, Tiffany and Cartier.

Certificates

Stanford Code in Place (completed), Stanford Probability for AI (in progress), and the Google AI Professional Certificate (Coursera).

Community

Future-Proofing in the Age of AI

Lead Keynote Speaker & Workshop

Lead · 2026

Delivered the lead keynote to 100+ Grade 10 and 11 students on starting projects, getting into labs, and careers in AI.

Synthica

Associate Researcher & Editor, CS/AI Research Team · 2025 – Present

Reviewed CS and AI papers from students worldwide, checking code, writing, and claims against the experiments.

Research Experience

Global Research Challenge 2026 · Top 40 Globally · GRC26-G5XH86

First-Author Paper 2026

Steering Cellular Attractor Trajectories via Continuous-Time Vectorized RL. Investigated how to order multi-step gene edits so each edit lands safely on a cell the previous one already changed. Built an AI model of cell trajectories and a GPU simulator that runs 4,000+ paths in seconds on public Perturb-seq data. Code on GitHub.

Independent Study

How Much Does the Page Move Sep 2026

Measured 3,056 page elements across 65 window widths to test whether responsive layout shifts are learnable. Built a boosting model with a 7.3px median error, beating a one-line CSS rule (26.7px) and a linear model (44.1px).

NYU Abu Dhabi · Prof. Farah Shamout & Costanza Armanini

Robotics Summer Program 2026

Researched a soft, snake-shaped search-and-rescue robot that reaches into collapsed spaces a rigid robot cannot enter. Built the heartbeat and signal model used to locate people. Learned MuJoCo and Isaac Sim.

Projects & Competitions

Qoder AI Hackathon · Alibaba Cloud × ZAKA at Ai Everything

UnderGrid · 1st Place, Champion Award Oct 2026

Won 1st place and the Champion Award (8,000 Qoder credits). Built UnderGrid, a 3D digital twin of Abu Dhabi's underground pipes, where AI agents predict which pipe will fail and plan the repair before the street breaks.

ADU Engineering Hackathon · Abu Dhabi University

Technical Lead · 1st Place, AED 5,000 2026

Led a high-school team to 1st place against university teams from across the UAE. Built Bondly, a family AI platform with 5 voice modules, encrypted on-device so no audio reaches a server.

Fish Tank · Hub71 × Cognition (Devin AI) Hackathon · Shot at \$65K

Qalaa Sep 2026

Built Qalaa with two teammates, a switch that grants and revokes AI agents' power over government and enterprise systems. Presented to judges from OpenAI, Palantir, Cognition, MetisJean and NYU Abu Dhabi's startAD, as one of the youngest teams there at 16.

NEXUS Incubator Builder Workshop · Khalifa Fund & MZN Hub Abu Dhabi

Outlaw Sep 2026

Built Outlaw, an agentic system that protects critical infrastructure: AI agents pen-test, patch and resolve issues. Evolved it into Qalaa.

eVoost × Cursor Abu Dhabi AI PropTech Challenge

Global Hackathon · 6th Place Jun 2026

Built Xpand to find service gaps across 39 UAE districts, forecast 12 months of demand, and draft investor-ready RFPs with K2 Think V2.

Cerebras × Gemma 4 Hackathon

24-Hour Global AI Hackathon Jun 2026

Built Cue in 24 hours: four Gemma 4 31B agents on Cerebras inference that watch live Shopify data for commerce incidents.

Kaggle · kaggle.com/yousefturk

Five Competitions 2026

Placed top 31% of 6,807 in the Pokémon TCG AI Battle with a self-play agent that clones winning decks. Applied vLLM inference, LoRA fine-tuning of NVIDIA Nemotron, and LightGBM, CatBoost and XGBoost ensembles.

Leadership

Liwa International School Al Mushrif

Lead Organizer, AI Fair 2026 – 2027

Took the initiative to launch the school's first AI Fair, where middle and high school students will build projects in agentic AI, robotics, ML and RL.

Liwa International School Al Mushrif

Vice President, Robotics Team 2026 – 2027

Led robot design for the Grade 12 team, keeping mechanical and programming work in sync so sensor systems stay aligned. Wrote autonomous navigation control code and mentored 15+ younger students weekly in coding and mechanical design.