Meta launches Muse Spark Open model

LEVEL B2


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I. WARM-UP

1. What AI tools have you used, if any?
2. Should powerful AI be open or closed? Why?
3. Where could AI help you study or work?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

launch
to start or release a new product or service

rival
to compete with someone or something of similar strength

outperform
to do better than another person, product or group

parameter
a value in a system that controls how it behaves

modify
to change something in order to improve or adjust it

safeguard
a rule or tool designed to prevent harm or misuse

optimise
to make something work as well and efficiently as possible

partnership
a working relationship between two organisations

III. READING

Meta has launched Muse Spark Open, an open-weight AI model it says can rival, and sometimes outperform, leading Chinese systems. The company says it excels at multi-step reasoning, complex software engineering, and is built for coding and agentic work.

Unlike closed models such as Anthropic's Claude or OpenAI's ChatGPT, developers can download the model's parameters (the weights and biases) and modify them. Chinese developers have been leading the open-weight field in recent years, with Alibaba's Qwen, Moonshot AI's Kimi K3 and Z.ai's GLM seen as frontrunners.

Meta argues its model now competes on a similar level. It also says "strong safeguards" are integrated to reduce misuse. Muse Spark Open is optimised to run on Apple's new M5 Ultra chips, signalling an unusual partnership between the two firms.

The model requires significant computing power: according to Meta, users can run it on two Mac Studios with M5 Ultra chips to create a desktop "supercomputer". The launch comes days after Meta announced a new closed model that it says rivals the most advanced versions of ChatGPT and Claude.

Meta had been focusing on open models, but it is now pushing to compete more directly with OpenAI and Anthropic across both approaches.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Meta releases Muse Spark Open, a new...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of AI model is Muse Spark Open?
2. How is an open-weight model different from a closed one?
3. Which Chinese models are named as frontrunners?
4. What hardware is the model optimised to run on?
5. What unusual desktop setup did Meta describe for running the model?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should powerful AI models be open-weight? Give reasons.
2. Does Meta's partnership with Apple surprise you? Why or why not?
3. Do strong safeguards make you trust AI more? Explain.
4. Is high computing power a fair barrier to using advanced AI?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Past perfect continuous

Use had been + verb-ing for an action in progress before a later past point. Common cues: before, by the time, for/since. Form: had been + -ing.

"Meta **had been focusing** *on open models before it announced a closed one."*

"For months before release, teams **had been prototyping** *tools."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete the sentences with the past perfect continuous.

1. By the launch, reviewers (compare) ___ systems for months. _____
2. Until the release, developers (fine-tune) ___ safety prompts for days. _____
3. By the time chips shipped, teams (configure) ___ rigs for weeks. _____
4. Before adoption, many labs (download) ___ weights for hours. _____
5. By then, moderators (review) ___ safeguards for weeks. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading, 8–10 minutes comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check: open-weight vs closed, parameter, safeguard, optimise, partnership. Use quick concept checks about what users can and cannot change.
- Run the reading as a skim for the main idea, then a scan to find the Chinese models and the Apple detail. Pair students for comprehension, then confirm as a class.
- For discussion, start with quick polls (open vs closed; trust with safeguards), then make mixed-opinion pairs to push for reasons, examples and real-world cases.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Start with a show of hands, then pair students with opposite views to find two pros and two cons.
2. Elicit why it might be unusual (Apple's hardware tie-in), then ask for examples of rivals cooperating.
3. Board what "safeguards" means in the text, then ask for two conditions that would increase trust.
4. Refer back to the two-Mac-Studio example; have groups propose one low-cost alternative each.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In two teams, prepare 5 minutes of arguments for or against releasing powerful models as open-weight, then hold a timed debate.

Writing: In pairs, write an 80-word email advising a manager whether to test Muse Spark Open on two Mac Studios and why.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Past perfect continuous

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of AI model is Muse Spark Open?
   An open-weight AI model.
2. How is an open-weight model different from a closed one?
   Developers can download and modify its parameters; closed models do not allow that.
3. Which Chinese models are named as frontrunners?
   Alibaba's Qwen, Moonshot AI's Kimi K3, and Z.ai's GLM.
4. What hardware is the model optimised to run on?
   Apple's M5 Ultra chips.
5. What unusual desktop setup did Meta describe for running the model?
   Two Mac Studios combined into a desktop "supercomputer."

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete the sentences with the past perfect continuous.

1. By the launch, reviewers ___ systems for months. **had been comparing**
2. Until the release, developers ___ safety prompts for days. **had been fine-tuning**
3. By the time chips shipped, teams ___ rigs for weeks. **had been configuring**
4. Before adoption, many labs ___ weights for hours. **had been downloading**
5. By then, moderators ___ safeguards for weeks. **had been reviewing**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use had been + verb-ing for an action in progress before a later past point. Common cues: before, by the time, for/since. Form: had been + -ing. (Examples constructed.)

> *"Meta* **had been focusing** *on open models before it announced a closed one."*
>
> *"For months before release, teams* **had been prototyping** *tools."*