

Dr. Gavin Wittje
Junior English Genius (grades 4-6), Fall Semester

Sundays, 1:30pm-3:30pm from 9/6-12/16/2026, or
Sundays, 4pm-6pm from 9/6-12/19/2026
(No classes on the Thanksgiving weekend: 11/26 – 11/29)

I. Purpose of the program

I'm very fond of my students and want to do whatever I can to improve their chances at a bright and happy future. I wish to give them not only a step up in their preparation for high school and standardized testing but also a positive outlook on English in general so that they can excel in their regular classes and in life.

II. Major Contents of the program

The course will enhance students' grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing through targeted drills and discussion. I make every effort to ensure that the readings challenge them without being too difficult and class itself is enjoyable and productive. This semester's theme is childhood and coming of age.

III. Textbooks and Study Materials

The class requires a number of books and other materials. Many of the materials will be included in the study guide, but you still need to purchase the books from Amazon.

- 1) Junior English Genius Fundamentals Study Guide (Fall 2026) (pdf)
- 2) Patterns of Revision Grade 8 (free pdf)
- 3) Wordly Wise 8 (ISBN: 978-0838877081)
- 4) 4) Classic literature books:
 - ☐ *The Alchemist* by Paolo Coelho (ISBN: 978-0062315007)
 - ☐ *The Golden Compass* by Phillip Pullman (ISBN: 978-0440418320)
 - ☐ *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling (ISBN: 978-0199536450)
 - ☐ *Donald Duk* by Frank Chin (ISBN: 978-0918273833)
- 5) Various Instructor Handouts

IV. Schedule of the Intermediate English Program (15 weeks)

Class #	Dates	Reading/Literature/Poems	Writing	Wordly Wise	Grammar
1	9/6	Life and Works of Nikki Giovanni	Adventure stories	8 Lessons 1-2	Section 1-3

		Nikki Giovanni's Poem "Choices" Life and Works of Paolo Coelho <i>The Alchemist</i> by Paolo Coelho			
2	9/13	Life and Works of Christina Rossetti Christina Rossetti's "What is Pink" <i>The Alchemist</i> by Paolo Coelho	Essay template	Lessons 3	Section 4-5
3	9/20	Life and Works of Walt Whitman Walt Whitman's Poem "O, Captain! My Captain!" <i>The Alchemist</i> by Paolo Coelho	First essay due	Review for Lessons 4	Section 6-7
4	9/27	Life and Works of Robert Louis Stevenson Robert Louis Stevenson's Poem "My Shadow" Life and Works of Phillip Pullman <i>The Golden Compass</i> by Phillip Pullman	Essay review	Lessons 5	Section 8-9
5	10/4	Life and Works of William Wordsworth William Wordsworth's Poem "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud" <i>The Golden Compass</i> by Phillip Pullman	War in fiction	Lessons 6	Section 10-11
6	10/11	Life and Works of Mary Oliver Mary Oliver's Poem "Alligator Poem" <i>The Golden Compass</i> by Phillip Pullman	Second essay due	Review for Lessons 7	Section 12-13
7	10/18	Life and Works of Emily Dickinson Emily Dickinson's Poem "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" <i>The Golden Compass</i> by Phillip Pullman	Playwriting	Lessons 8	Section 14
8	10/25	Rudyard Kipling's Poem "The City of Sleep" Life and Works of Rudyard Kipling <i>The Jungle Books</i> by Rudyard Kipling	Science and Math in fiction	Lessons 9	Section 15
9	11/1	Life and Works of Billy Collins Billy Collins's Poem "Child Development" <i>The Jungle Books</i> by Rudyard Kipling	Third essay due	Review for Lessons 10	Section 16
10	11/8	Billy Collins's Poem "Introduction to Poetry" <i>The Jungle Books</i> by Rudyard Kipling	Literary allusions	Lessons 11	Section 17
11	11/15	Billy Collins's Poem "The Art of Drowning" <i>The Jungle Books</i> by Rudyard Kipling	Creative writing	Lessons 12	Section 18-19

12	11/22	Life and Works of Frank Chin <i>Donald Duk</i> by Frank Chin	Fourth essay due	Review for Lessons 13	Section 20
13	12/6	Life and Works of Ted Hughes Ted Hughes's Poem "Esther's Tomcat" <i>Donald Duk</i> by Frank Chin	Debate prep	Lessons 14	Section 21-22
14	12/13	Life and Works of Henry Sambrooke Leigh Henry Sambrooke Leigh's Poem "The Twins" <i>Donald Duk</i> by Frank Chin	Fifth essay due	Lessons 15	Section 23
15	12/20	Life and Works of Jack Prelutsky Jack Prelutsky's "Homework" <i>Donald Duk</i> by Frank Chin	Debate	Review	Section 24