

Ivy College Guru

Dr. Gavin Wittje

gavinwit@gmail.com

616-516-3959

2025 Summer Session Accelerated English Class Syllabus **A 11-week summer session; one meeting per week**

Sunday 5pm-7pm from 6/7- 8/16/2025

I. Theme

The theme this semester will be the supernatural: ghosts and witches. In Western literature, ghosts have to do with unresolved trauma and the recurrence of difficult memories. Witches are even more interesting. Traditionally, they represent the dark side of the feminine: malignant, seductive forces, castrators of men and eaters of children (Hansel and Gretel, Medea, Macbeth). But in recent years, feminism has worked to redeem this term and to portray witch-figures as rebellious women who were forced to suffer abuses under patriarchy.

II. Purpose of the program

Dr. Gavin Wittje has designed the following English enhancement program specifically for talented 8th grade and high school students with the following overall goals:

1. Increasing students' skills in English vocabulary, reading, writing, and grammar
2. Practice ACT for enhancing your test skills
3. Getting an early start in PSAT/SAT tests and college preparations
4. Heighten students' capability to understand and enjoy life
5. Deepen students' all-round knowledge about humanities and social sciences
6. Enriching students' educational experience overall

III. Major Contents of the program

The class will consist of the following specific contents and learning objectives:

1. Massive vocabulary-building in 11 weeks
2. Vocabulary exercise and reading comprehension exercises
3. Guided classic English reading: read four classic novels and many classic poems
4. Guided and graded writing assignments
5. Feedback on each writing assignment for each student

IV. Textbooks and Study Materials

The class requires a number of books that you can get online and a study guide that I will send:

1. *Accelerated English 2025 Summer Study Guide*
2. *Vocabulary Workshop Level E* (ISBN: 978-0821580103)

Four classic literature books:

3. *Beloved* (ISBN: 978-1400033416)
4. *The Master and Margerita* by Mikhail Bulgokav (ISBN: 978-1419756504)
5. *Annihilation* by Jeff VanderMeer (ISBN: 978-1250824042)

V. Schedule of the Ivy Guru Accelerated English Program (11 weeks)

Week /Dates	Reading/Literature/Poems	Writing	Vocabulary Workshop	SAT/ACT
Week1, 6/7	“A Witch’s Life” and “Her Kind” by Anne Sexton; <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> by Zora Neal Hurston	Haiku Writing	Units 1-2	Reading Intro, Reading Passage 1
Week2, 6/14	"Ghost House" by Robert Frost <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> by Zora Neal Hurston	SAT Essay Format	Units 3-4	Reading Tips, Reading Passage 2
Week3, 6/21	“The Hag” by Robert Herrick; <i>Suspiria</i> (1977) <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> by Zora Neal Hurston	First Essay Due	Units 1-4	Reading Passage 3
Week4, 6/28	“Suspiria” by Thom Yorke; <i>Suspiria</i> (2018) “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan	Stone Poems	Units 5-6	Reading Passage 4
Week5, 7/5	“The Unreturning” by Wilfred Owen <i>The Master and Margarita</i> by Mikhail Bulgakov	Comments on Writing	Units 7-8	Reading Passage 5
Week6 , 7/12	“Melville’s Tomb” by Hart Crane <i>The Master and Margarita</i> by Mikhail Bulgakov	Second Essay Due	Units 1-8	Writing and Grammar Questions
Week7, 7/19	"I Think I Was Enchanted" Emily Dickinson <i>The Master and Margarita</i> by Mikhail Bulgakov	Fiction Writing	Units 9-10	Types of Grammar Questions
Week8, 7/26	"The Highway Man" Alfred Noyes <i>The Master and Margarita</i> by Mikhail Bulgakov	Debate Preparation	Units 11-13	Writing and Grammar Passage 1
Week9 8/2	“Kindred” and “Pale Though Her Eyes” by Michael R. Burch; <i>Annihilation</i> by Jeff VanderMeer	Third Essay Due	Units 9-13	Writing and Grammar Passage 2
Week10 8/19	"Congo" Vachal Lindsay <i>Annihilation</i> by Jeff VanderMeer	Debate Preparation	Units 14-15	Writing and Grammar Passage 3
Week 11 8/16	“When You Are Old” by William Butler Yeats ; <i>Annihilation</i> by Jeff VanderMeer	Debate	Units 9-15	Reading and Grammar