

The Ivy College Guru

Dr. Gavin Wittje

gavinwit@gmail.com

616-516-3959

2025 Summer Session Junior English Genius Class Syllabus A 11-Session Summer Class

Friday 6pm-8pm from 6/6 to 8/16/2025

or

Saturday 1pm-3pm from 6/7 to 8/17/2025

I. Purpose of the program

The class is intended to give 4th and 5th graders a strong start in their appreciation of classic stories and poetry through proper and expert guidance. The benefits of exposure in early ages to the classic canon and the reading and understanding of these works will enhance their language ability and reading comprehension. By taking this class, 4-5th graders will be well prepared for their upcoming academic challenges in middle school language arts classes.

The intent of the class is to achieve the following overall goals:

- 1) Increasing students' skills in English vocabulary
- 2) Reading and appreciating classic books in their original or adapted versions
- 3) Enhancing students' reading, writing, and grammar skills
- 4) Heightening students' capability to understand and enjoy life
- 5) Deepening students' all-round knowledge about humanities and social sciences
- 6) Enriching students' educational experience overall

II. Major Contents of the program

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

- 1) Intensive vocabulary-building
- 2) Guided classic English reading: read classic books/novels and classic poems
- 3) Guided and graded writing assignments
- 4) Feedback on each writing assignment for each student

III. Textbooks and Study Materials

The class requires a number of books and other materials:

- 1) *Ivy College Guru Classic Tales Study Guide* (Summer 2025)
- 2) *Vocabulary Workshop Level A* (ISBN: 978-0821580066)
- 3) Classic Books and Short Stories:
 - Something Wicked This Way Comes* by Ray Bradbury (ISBN: 978-1501167713)
 - The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman (ISBN: 978-0060530945)
 - Selected Short Stories from Brothers Grimm and Edgar Allan Poe (In the Reader)
- 4) Various poems and other materials provided by the instructor

5) Schedule of the Junior English Genius Program (11 weeks)

Class	Dates	Reading/Literature/Poems	Writing/Discussion/on Writing and Poetry	Vocabulary Workshop Level B
1	6/6 6/7	Margaret Atwood poem "The Girl Without Hands" "The Story of a Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear," "Iron John," and other stories from <i>The Brothers Grimm Complete Fairy Tales</i>	Instructions on Writing; Lesson One: Using Descriptive Words	Units 1-2
2	6/13 6/14	Edgar Allan Poe poem "The Raven"; "Fitcher's Bird," "Goose Girl," "The Juniper Tree" and other stories from <i>The Brothers Grimm Complete Fairy Tales</i>	Lesson Two: Words to Avoid When Starting a Sentence	Unit 3, Review Units 1-3
3	6/20 6/21	Joyce Sidman poem "Welcome to the Night" from <i>The Dark Emperor</i> ; "The Black Cat" by <i>Edgar Allan Poe</i>	First Essay Due; Lesson Three: Writing What You Like and Know	Units 4-5,
4	6/27 6/28	Walter De La Mare poem "The Listeners"; by <i>Edgar Allan Poe</i> <i>Something Wicked This Way Comes</i> by Ray Bradbury	Comments on Writing; Lesson Four: Showing a Story (Not Just Telling)	Unit 6 Review Units 4-6
5	7/4 7/5	Claude McKay poem "The Outcast"; <i>Something Wicked This Way Comes</i> by Ray Bradbury	Lesson Five: Making Your Words Flow	Units 7-8
6	7/11 7/12	Robert W. Service poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee"; <i>Something Wicked This Way Comes</i> by Ray Bradbury	Second Essay Due; Lesson Six: Writing Prompts	Units 9, Review Units 7-9
7	7/18 7/19	Robert Frost Poem "Acquainted with The Night"; <i>The Graveyard Book</i> by Neil Gaiman	Lesson Seven: Structure in Writing	Units 10-11
8	7/25 7/26	Billy Collins poem. "Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House"; <i>The Graveyard Book</i> by Neil Gaiman	Story Writing (2)	Unit 12, Review Units 10-12
9	8/1 8/3	Johann Wolfgang von Goethe poem "The Erl-King"; <i>The Graveyard Book</i> by Neil Gaiman	More discussion on writing	Units 13-14
10	8/8 8/9	John Keats poem "Belle Dame Sans Merci"; <i>The Graveyard Book</i> by Neil Gaiman	Third Essay (Book Report) Due	Unit 15, Review Units 13-15
11	8/15 8/16	Emily Dickinson poem "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain" "The Cask of Amontillado" by <i>Edgar Allan Poe</i>	Story Themes	Full review Units 1-15