

Ivy College Guru

Dr. Gavin Wittje

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2025 Fall Session Ivy-Essential English Class Syllabus

Saturdays, 4pm-6pm from 9/6-12/20/2021

or

Sundays, 2pm-4pm from 9/7-12/21/2021

A 15-week Fall Semester Session; One Meeting Per Week (No classes on 11/28-30)

I. Purpose of the program

Dr. Gavin Wittje has designed the following English enhancement program specifically for talented middle school students with the following overall goals:

1. Increasing students' skills in English vocabulary, reading, and writing
2. Concentrated and comprehensive studies in English grammar
3. Getting an early start in PSAT/SAT tests and college preparations
4. Early preparations for AP English Language and AP English Literature classes
5. Heightening students' ability to understand and enjoy life
6. Deepening students' all-round knowledge about humanities and social sciences
7. Enriching students' educational experience overall

II. Major Contents of the program

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

1. Massive vocabulary-building: acquiring at least 700 words in 15 weeks
2. Guided classic English reading: reading five classic novels (structured loosely around the theme of war)
3. Guided classic poetry reading and analysis
4. Comprehensive studies in English grammar
5. Guided and graded writing assignments in the form of book reports and other writing genres
6. Feedback on each writing assignment for each student
7. Multiple exercises and assignments related to English

III. Textbooks and Study Materials

The class requires a number of books and other materials. Many of the materials will be provided by the instructor free of charge, but you still need to purchase the books at the actual costs of these books.

- 1) *English Fundamentals Study Guide* (for Fall 2025)
- 2) *Wordly Wise 8* (ISBN: 9781438010427)

Five classic literature books:

- 3) *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (ISBN: 9780486266886)
- 4) *The Things They Carried* (ISBN: 978-0544309760)
- 5) *The Woman Warrior* (ISBN: 9780679721888)
- 6) *Slaughterhouse-Five* (ISBN: 9780385333849)
- 7) *Cannery Row* (ISBN: 9780142000687)

Various Instructor Handouts

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

Class	Dates	Reading/Literature/Poems	Writing	Wordly Wise 8
1	9/6 or 9/7	<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson Randall Jarrell Poem: "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner"	Adventure stories	1-2
2	9/13 or 9/14	<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson Wilfred Owen Poem: "Anthem for Doomed Youth"	Essay template	3-4
3	9/20 or 9/21	<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson Ralph Waldo Emerson Poem: "The Snow Storm"	First essay due	1-4
4	9/27 or 9/28	<i>The Things They Carried</i> by Tim O'Brien Yusef Komunyakaa Poem: "Facing It"	Essay review	5-6
5	10/4 or 10/5	<i>The Things They Carried</i> by Tim O'Brien James Wright Poem: "A Blessing"	Comedy /Tragedy	7-8
6	10/11 or 10/12	<i>The Things They Carried</i> by Tim O'Brien Theodore Roethke Poem: "The Waking"	Second essay due	5-8
7	10/18 or 10/19	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> by Maxine Hong Kingston Langston Hughes Poem: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"	Fantasy writing	9-10
8	10/25 or 10/26	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> by Maxine Hong Kingston Mary Oliver Poem: "Wild Geese"	Gender in fiction	11-12
9	11/1 or 11/2	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> by Maxine Hong Kingston Maya Angelou Poem: "Still I Rise"	Third essay due	9-12
10	11/8 or 11/9	<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> by Kurt Vonnegut William Shakespeare Poem: Sonnet 94	Literary allusions	13-14
11	11/15 or 11/16	<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> by Kurt Vonnegut Christopher Marlowe Poem: "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"	Creative writing	15-16
12	11/22 or 11/23	<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> by Kurt Vonnegut Charles Bukowski Poem: "The Trash Men"	Fourth essay due	13-16
	11/29 or 11/30	No Classes		
13	12/6 or 12/7	<i>Cannery Row</i> by John Steinbeck Robert Creeley Poem: "A Wicker Basket"	Debate prep	17-18
14	12/13 or 12/14	<i>Cannery Row</i> by John Steinbeck Robert Lowell Poem: "To Speak of Woe That is in Marriage"	Fifth essay due	13-20
15	12/20 or 12/21	<i>Cannery Row</i> by John Steinbeck John Donne Poem: Holy Sonnet X	Debate	1-20