



“OLD’S COOL BACK-TO-BASICS”

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM 2025

OLD’S COOL ACADEMY
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INTRODUCTION

Our “Old’s Cool Back-to-Basics” after-school program is a condensed version of the Academy’s regular curriculum, aimed at introducing middle school-age students to the life-changing joys of a classical liberal arts and traditional crafts education. As with all of our programs the cost is free.

Students meet once a week for eight weeks, from 3 - 5 pm. Sessions are four times per year starting February 1st, April 1st, July 1st (Junior Summer Camp), and September 1st. Enrollment is limited to six students per session.

Since this is an old-school program, we’re going to dispense with cellphones and computers. All work/homework will be written in longhand in white-lined notebooks with Ticonderoga #2 pencils. The traditional crafts will also be back-to-basics, and technology-free.

SCHEDULE

The first session starts February 1st and ends on March 30th. The second session starts on April 1st and ends on June 1st. And then July 1st – August 31st; September 1st – November 31st.

The two-hour classes will be filled with fun as follows:

At 3 pm We’ll recite the “Pledge of Success.” (see below)

From 3 - 3:30 pm A student will introduce and play the music of the week. Another student will introduce the Word of the Week (WoW) – an unusual or instructive vocabulary word that we’ll define and learn how to spell.

From 3:30 - 4 pm A student will read the week’s chosen poem out loud, and we’ll all discuss.

At 4 pm We will take a 5-minute break and either do a few jumping-jacks or a bunch of pushups. A quick run around the block.

From 4:05 - 4:55 pm Invigorated, students will engage in the traditional skills activity which will include penmanship and knife sharpening. Or, anyone and everyone can play a game or two of One Up!*

Five minutes before 5 pm – Class assignments for the following week, and then, “Dismissed!”

LIFE 101

Our motto is Marcus Aurelius’ maxim: “Live in the present, with virtue.” We can’t overestimate the utility of being positive and grateful every day. We’ll try to instill by living example good manners: put your napkin in your lap when you sit down. Stand when a woman enters the room. The power of a hand-written thank-you note. Punctuality is the courtesy of kings.

ENGLISH

English is the most powerful weapon in the world. Twenty-six letters. Nine parts of speech. Grammar matters. Thinking and writing are physical acts. We'll have the students read classic poetry, out loud, to listen to the loveliness of the sounds and feel the joy of words.

8 Poems: *Ode on a Grecian Urn, Leda and the Swan, Sonnet 18, She walks in beauty, If, Ulysses, Life as Meditation, The Red Wheelbarrow, and Lying in a Hammock...*

MUSIC

Nietzsche said: "Without music, life would be a mistake" and we couldn't agree more. Here's our list of the classics in the broadest sense that we've come to love and want to introduce to our students.

Eight Songs: *Beethoven's 9th, O Mio Bambino, Rachmaninov 2, Mozart's Jupiter Symphony, The Flower Duet, William Tell Overture, 1812 Overture, Vivaldi's Four Seasons.*

TRADITIONAL SKILLS

The baking (and breaking) of bread. From scratch. Sharpening a knife. Sewing a beach tote or tool bag from an old army tent/recycled sail. Designing a family crest or flag. Making soap. How to read a map, find North.

THE PLEDGE OF SUCCESS

Today is a new day and a new beginning. It has been given to me as a gift. I can either use it or throw it away. What I do today will affect me tomorrow. I cannot blame anyone else if I do not succeed. I promise to use this day to the fullest by giving my best, realizing it will never come back again. This is my life, and I want to make it a success.

THE HONOR CODE

You will not lie, cheat, or steal (except when playing One Up!) nor tolerate those who do.

CITIZENSHIP AND COMMUNITY

Students will be introduced to *The Declaration of Independence* and the *U.S. Constitution*, the greatest documents ever written. All of us will study and put into practice good citizenship, understand the importance of community and service, and why we strive for "Doing well by doing good."

FUN & GAMES

*One Up! – The Wicked/Smart Word Game is a tremendously entertaining and, more importantly, an educational vocabulary builder that we created ourselves to teach the beauty of words, one-upmanship, abstract thinking, and, more importantly, how to "play the game." Seriously, we believe that being able to write well will make you an almost unstoppable force for good in this world. You can find out all about it here: www.oldscoolacademy.com/store

ABOUT US

The Old's Cool Academy is a back-to-basics school offering a rigorous, one-year Classical Liberal Arts Education, traditional-skills instruction, and paid apprenticeship.

WE LOVED THE ACADEMY* SO MUCH WE DECIDED TO OPEN ONE OF OUR OWN.

Same cast of characters, of course: Democritus, Clytemnestra, Caesar, Virgil, Montaigne, Spinoza, Shakespeare, Nietzsche, Fitzgerald and Frankenstein.

Seriously, the Old's Cool Academy is a traditional, back-to-basics school, offering a rigorous six-month Classical Liberal Arts Education centered on the Western Canon. And the time-honored principles, somehow almost-forgotten today—of virtue, facts over feelings, critical thinking, discipline, and character above all. Damn difficult stuff.

Our students will also discover that manual labor is not only admirable and fulfilling, but almost always translates to a deeper and broader world view. As part of the curriculum every student will either restore a car or motorcycle, or build a boat and drive/sail it away into the sunset, so-to-speak, on graduation day.

This baptism by fire (and fun) will be immediately followed by a six-month paid apprenticeship at one of the many businesses we are partnering with to give our "graduates" an out-of-the-frying-pan taste of the real world.

But the real objective of the Academy will be to provide a timeless and priceless education in the art of how to do good and live well, and to instill in our students the importance of knowledge, curiosity, hard work, math, rhetoric, and integrity. We'll also encourage an Emersonian sense of self-reliance, a can-do attitude that will inspire them beyond Hamlet, oars, and lathes, and help them find meaning and responsibility in their lives.

Unlike most schools, which are either academic or vocational (or specifically-focused on getting the applicant a job), the Academy will have the students immerse themselves in the *Great Books*, to be awed and enlightened by the deeply human and valuable perspectives and answers these classics can still bring to their everyday.

Traditional craftsmanship—e.g. woodworking, penmanship, beer-brewing—the thrill of the drill, the quill, and the still, so-to-speak, is also a part of the curriculum. As well as business etiquette basics, and, although pooh-poohed in today's real-whirled immediacy and relentless pursuit of gratification, so many other simple but enriching life skills like patience, being humble, and truly grateful.

The perfect antidote to the go-to-university-or-you're-a-loser mentality, as well as a lifetime membership in a tight-knit community of like-minded recalcitrants and kings—the Academy is a wicked awesome option for anyone ready to bite the ass off a bear, in a quarter of the time, and at a tenth of the cost of college.

Read all about our motto, *Viriliter Age*, our nickname, *Wiseacres*, and how the classics, character, and calluses can open up not only your mind and endless possibilities, but the door to the career and life of your dreams too.

*West Point