2026-2027 Regional Tournament Study Guide – Academic Bee and Bowl

Instructions: This study guide should be your first step in preparing for the Regional Academic Bee and Bowl tournaments. Many of the facts below are found in this year's Academic Bee and Bowl questions. Other facts in the study guide may come up in other IAC question sets this academic year. **However, the majority of questions in the tournament are not referenced in the study guide.** The study guide is meant to help you get started. It is not meant to be fully comprehensive, as the essence of academic competition is not memorizing a list, but having wide-ranging knowledge.

As the questions are all short paragraphs on a particular topic, if a topic is found below, then it is a good idea to learn more about it (since additional facts about a topic will also be referenced in the question). It is also helpful to read the introduction of a Wikipedia page on a topic. Good luck!

Note 1: Unlike our History, Science, and Geography events, the Academic Bee and Bowl cover every subject: history, literature, fine arts, mythology, religion, philosophy, science, math, and geography. Literature and the arts are where students are most often caught unprepared, so this guide gives them extra space and ends with a section of tips for studying them.

Note 2: Dates of people's lives are provided mostly for reference. With very few exceptions (e.g. mentioning the year of an assassination), birth and death dates are almost never directly mentioned in questions. Please do not waste time trying to memorize any dates if they are only provided in parentheses below.

U.S. History

1. Thomas Paine (1737-1809) argued for American independence from Britain in his 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense*.
2. Sacagawea (circa 1788-1812) traveled with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, also called the Corps of Discovery, which explored the lands of the Louisiana Purchase and reached the Pacific Ocean.
3. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, and it was ruled unconstitutional in the 1857 Dred Scott decision.
4. The Battle of Antietam (1862) was the bloodiest single day in American history.
5. Juneteenth is a federal holiday marking the end of slavery in the United States.
6. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall took bribes from oil companies in the Teapot Dome scandal, which damaged the presidency of Warren G. Harding (1865-1923).
7. Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) enacted the New Deal, a series of programs that included the Civilian Conservation Corps, to counter the Great Depression.
8. Rosa Parks (1913-2005) sparked the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 by refusing to give up her seat on a bus.

World History

1. King John (1166-1216) of England sealed the Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215.
2. Henry the Eighth (1491-1547), who had six wives, broke with the Catholic Church and made himself head of the Church of England.
3. Elizabeth the First (1533-1603) rallied England against the Spanish Armada, which failed to invade England in 1588.
4. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) was finally defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.
5. Toussaint Louverture (circa 1743-1803) and Jean-Jacques Dessalines are known as the "Fathers of Haiti" for leading the Haitian Revolution.
6. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) pioneered modern nursing during the Crimean War (1853-1856).
7. After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the British crown began ruling India directly instead of the East India Company.
8. Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) led military campaigns that helped complete Italian unification.
9. Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864) led the Taiping Rebellion against China's Qing dynasty, one of the deadliest civil wars in history.
10. The Berlin Wall divided East and West Berlin from 1961 until 1989, two years before the Soviet Union collapsed under its last leader, Mikhail Gorbachev (1931-2022).

Ancient History

1. Sargon of Akkad was the first ruler of the Akkadian Empire in Mesopotamia.
2. Cyrus the Great (circa 600-530 BCE) founded the Persian Empire and allowed exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem after capturing Babylon in 539 BCE.
3. The pharaoh Akhenaten promoted the worship of the Aten, or sun disk, in ancient Egypt.
4. The Roman emperor Hadrian (76-138) built a wall across northern Britain and rebuilt the Pantheon in Rome.
5. Augustus (63 BCE-14 CE), the first Roman emperor, began the Pax Romana, a long period of relative peace.
6. The Parthenon, a temple to Athena on the Acropolis of Athens, was badly damaged by an explosion in 1687, and many of its sculptures are now in the British Museum.
7. Gladiators fought in the Colosseum, an arena in Rome.

Literature

1. William Shakespeare (1564-1616), who was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, staged many of his plays at London's Globe Theatre, and his collected plays were published in the 1623 First Folio.
2. Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey* follows Odysseus's ten-year journey home after the Trojan War.
3. The Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, one of the oldest surviving works of literature, follows a hero who searches for immortality after the death of his friend Enkidu.
4. Geoffrey Chaucer (circa 1343-1400) wrote *The Canterbury Tales*, in which a group of pilgrims hold a storytelling contest.
5. Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) wrote *Don Quixote*, whose title character attacks windmills he believes are giants.
6. Jane Austen (1775-1817) wrote *Pride and Prejudice*, featuring Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy.
7. Mary Shelley (1797-1851) wrote *Frankenstein*, subtitled *The Modern Prometheus*, about a scientist who brings a creature to life.
8. Charles Dickens (1812-1870) created the miser Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*.
9. Victor Hugo (1802-1885) wrote *Les Misérables*, in which Inspector Javert pursues the former prisoner Jean Valjean.
10. Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) wrote *War and Peace* and drew on his own service in the Crimean War in his writing.
11. Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) wrote *The Scarlet Letter*, named for the "A" worn by Hester Prynne.
12. Captain Ahab seeks revenge on a white whale in *Moby-Dick*, a novel by Herman Melville (1819-1891).
13. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) wrote the 1852 abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
14. Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) of Amherst, Massachusetts, wrote poems such as "Because I could not stop for Death."
15. Robert Frost (1874-1963) wrote "The Road Not Taken" and became the first poet to read at a presidential inauguration when John F. Kennedy took office in 1961.
16. Franz Kafka (1883-1924) wrote *The Metamorphosis*, in which Gregor Samsa wakes up transformed into a giant insect.
17. F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) wrote *The Great Gatsby* (1925), in which Jay Gatsby throws lavish parties on Long Island during the Roaring Twenties.
18. Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), a writer of the Harlem Renaissance, set much of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in Eatonville, Florida.
19. John Steinbeck (1902-1968) wrote *Of Mice and Men*, about the migrant workers George and Lennie.
20. A haiku is a short Japanese poem with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern, a form mastered by Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694).
21. Foreshadowing is a literary device in which an author hints at later events, while an allegory is a story whose characters and events carry a deeper meaning.

Fine Arts

1. Impressionism takes its name from Claude Monet's (1840-1926) painting *Impression, Sunrise*, and its artists painted outdoors to capture changing light.
2. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) painted the *Mona Lisa*, which hangs in the Louvre in Paris.
3. Michelangelo (1475-1564) sculpted the marble *David* and painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
4. Rembrandt (1606-1669) was a Dutch master painter whose works include *The Night Watch*.
5. Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), a founder of Cubism, painted *Guernica* (1937) about the bombing of a Basque town during the Spanish Civil War.
6. Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) was a Mexican artist famous for her self-portraits who was married to the muralist Diego Rivera.
7. Andy Warhol (1928-1987) was an American Pop artist known for his paintings of Campbell's soup cans.
8. Architect Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926) designed Barcelona's Sagrada Família, the tallest church in the world.
9. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a German Baroque composer who wrote the *Brandenburg Concertos* and many works for organ and harpsichord.
10. Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) wrote *The Four Seasons*, a set of four violin concertos depicting the times of the year.
11. George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) composed the oratorio *Messiah*, which includes the "Hallelujah" chorus.
12. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was an Austrian child prodigy who composed the opera *The Magic Flute* and *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*.

13. Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) first dedicated his Third Symphony to Napoleon, and his Ninth Symphony includes the "Ode to Joy."
14. Richard Wagner (1813-1883) wrote the four-opera cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung*, which includes the "Ride of the Valkyries."
15. George Gershwin (1898-1937) combined jazz and classical music in *Rhapsody in Blue* and wrote the opera *Porgy and Bess*.

Mythology, Religion, and Philosophy

1. In Norse mythology, the world tree Yggdrasil connects the nine worlds, and Odin hanged himself from it to gain knowledge of runes.
2. In Greek mythology, Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, must spend part of each year in the underworld with Hades after eating pomegranate seeds.
3. Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea, lost a contest to Athena to become the patron of Athens.
4. The ancient Greeks considered Delphi, home of a famous oracle of Apollo, to be the center of the world.
5. The Greek king Sisyphus was condemned to push a boulder up a hill for eternity.
6. The Bhagavad Gita, part of the Hindu epic the Mahabharata, is a dialogue between the prince Arjuna and the god Krishna.
7. Followers of Shinto, the native religion of Japan, pass through torii gates to enter shrines dedicated to spirits called kami.
8. Confucius (551-479 BCE) was a Chinese philosopher whose sayings were collected in the *Analects*.
9. Socrates (circa 470-399 BCE), the teacher of Plato, was executed by being forced to drink hemlock, and Plato later described prisoners who see only shadows in his allegory of the cave.

Science

1. Mitochondria, often called the "powerhouse of the cell," produce most of a cell's energy in the form of ATP.
2. In photosynthesis, plants use chlorophyll in their chloroplasts to turn sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide into glucose and oxygen.
3. Rosalind Franklin (1920-1958) and her student Raymond Gosling captured Photo 51, an X-ray image that helped reveal the double helix structure of DNA.
4. Edward Jenner (1749-1823) developed the first vaccine using cowpox, and vaccination later eradicated smallpox.
5. Marie Curie (1867-1934) won Nobel Prizes in both physics and chemistry for her work on radioactivity, including the discovery of radium.
6. Charles Darwin (1809-1882) proposed the theory of evolution by natural selection.
7. Isaac Newton (1642-1727) described his laws of motion and the law of universal gravitation in the *Principia*.
8. Antoine Lavoisier (1743-1794), the French chemist who named oxygen and hydrogen and supported the law of conservation of mass, was guillotined during the French Revolution.
9. Alfred Wegener (1880-1930) proposed continental drift, a forerunner of the theory of plate tectonics.
10. Sedimentary rocks such as sandstone, shale, and limestone form through compaction and cementation, and they contain most of the world's fossils.
11. In about five billion years, the Sun will swell into a red giant large enough to engulf Mercury and Venus.
12. Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) and Galileo Galilei championed heliocentrism, the model in which the planets orbit the Sun.
13. Nikola Tesla (1856-1943) helped develop alternating current electricity and invented the Tesla coil.
14. Jane Goodall (1934-2025) studied chimpanzees at Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania.

Math and Technology

1. Euclid, the ancient Greek "father of geometry," wrote the *Elements*.
2. Archimedes (circa 287-212 BCE) of Syracuse supposedly shouted "Eureka!" after discovering how to measure the volume of a golden crown.
3. The Fibonacci sequence begins 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, with each term equal to the sum of the two before it.
4. The sieve of Eratosthenes is an ancient method for finding prime numbers.
5. Grace Hopper (1906-1992), a U.S. Navy rear admiral and computer scientist, is linked to the term "computer bug" after her team found a moth inside a computer.
6. Johannes Gutenberg (circa 1400-1468) introduced the movable-type printing press to Europe.

Geography

1. Shanghai, China's most populous city, has a famous waterfront area called the Bund along the Huangpu River.
2. The Mekong River flows through Southeast Asia and is joined by waters from Cambodia's Tonle Sap at Phnom Penh.
3. The Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean contains the Challenger Deep, the deepest known point on Earth.
4. The Colorado River carved the Grand Canyon in Arizona.
5. Machu Picchu, a citadel in Peru nicknamed the "Lost City of the Incas," was publicized by Hiram Bingham in 1911.
6. The Burj Khalifa in Dubai, at 828 meters, is the tallest building in the world.
7. The Okavango Delta in Botswana is a large inland river delta.
8. The Ring of Fire is a chain of volcanoes surrounding the Pacific Ocean.
9. Serengeti National Park in Tanzania protects a large area of savanna.

Terms for Further Study

1. Grigori Rasputin
2. G.I. Bill
3. Boer Wars
4. Stamp Act
5. Challenger disaster
6. Byzantine Empire
7. Weimar Republic
8. Prague Spring
9. Marshall Plan
10. Klondike Gold Rush
11. Great Zimbabwe
12. cuneiform
13. feudalism
14. Tetrarchy
15. *Beowulf*
16. *Paradise Lost*
17. Toni Morrison
18. T. S. Eliot
19. Edgar Allan Poe
20. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
21. Beat Generation
22. *Invisible Man*
23. Tennessee Williams
24. O. Henry
25. *The Phantom Tollbooth*
26. El Greco
27. Diego Velázquez
28. ukiyo-e
29. Bauhaus
30. Zaha Hadid
31. Claude Debussy
32. Giuseppe Verdi
33. *Carmen*
34. existentialism
35. *The Prince*
36. Round Table
37. endocrine system
38. Horsehead Nebula
39. Coriolis effect
40. Mary Anning

Further Skills: Studying Literature and the Arts

1. **Learn the essentials for each major work.** For every book, play, or poem in this guide, know the author, the main characters, and the most famous scene or setting. Literature questions usually end with a clue like "George Wilson shoots a character named Jay in his swimming pool in what F. Scott Fitzgerald novel?"

2. **Read short works in full.** Poems (Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Edgar Allan Poe), short stories (O. Henry, Poe), and myths take only a few minutes to read and are easy to remember once you have read them yourself.

4. **Know the vocabulary of literature.** Learn common literary devices (foreshadowing, allegory, irony, metaphor) and forms (a sonnet has fourteen lines, a haiku follows a 5-7-5 syllable pattern, an epic is a long poem about a hero).

5. **Connect works to their time and place.** Group authors by country and movement, such as the Harlem Renaissance, the Beat Generation, or Russian novelists like Tolstoy, since questions often use these as clues.

6. **Look at the art and listen to the music.** For each painter, look at their two or three most famous works and learn their titles. For each composer, listen to one well-known piece. Titles, subjects, and nicknames of works are common clues.

7. **Learn the major myths.** Know the main Greek gods and their Roman names, the major figures of Norse and Egyptian mythology, and the heroes of epics like *The Odyssey* and *Gilgamesh*.

8. **Use adaptations carefully.** Movies and musicals (*Les Misérables*, *Wicked*, *West Side Story*) can help you remember a story, but questions are typically based on the original works, so check the details.