



APOLLO  
ACADEMY

An Acton Affiliate

# Family Playbook

2022-2023



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**Welcome**

Your Hero's Journey  
has just begun...



# APOLLO ACADEMY

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# Introduction

The "Acton Way" is best thought about as a game.

## THIS PLAYBOOK IS INTENDED TO:

1. Offer your family a valuable resource to return to when you have questions about how/why we do things a certain way.
2. Clarify how we play this game. Clarify the agreements that we make as we play this game together. \*Agreements are contained in the contracts that are made between learners, parents, guides, and owners.
3. Offer a condensed overview of "The Rules of Apollo/Acton" – or the guiding principles that allow everyone that plays to get the most out of their Apollo/Acton experience.

## HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

- 1 Read it. Write out questions. Refer back to it. Hold **US** accountable.
- 2 Often when you ask us a question, we will refer you **back** to this playbook. Why? It's the Acton Way.
- 3 The "Acton Way" is designed to empower heroes (parents are heroes too!) with choice and trust as they navigate & ignite their life journey.

## KEY



Fun Chat



Reflection



Imperative Info



Family Focus

## WHY THE "RULES" NEED TO BE SO CLEAR:

*Imagine you are playing a game of soccer...*

This is our favorite analogy to help illustrate why the rules of this Acton game must be clear to all of the families and learners who join the community.

Imagine you are playing a game of soccer and someone comes in and starts to use their hands to play. Are you still playing soccer at that point? Perhaps it's a fun game...but if people continue to play with their hands, it is no longer soccer.

Acton is different BY DESIGN. It looks and feels unlike any other school experience. By clearly outlining how we play together, and creating agreements with one another, we can best serve your family and deliver on our promises to you.

# Fast Facts

## Studio Information

- Studio hours: 8:00am to 3:00pm
- Address: 2207 W North A St Tampa, FL 33606
- Website address: [www.TheApolloAcademy.com](http://www.TheApolloAcademy.com)
- Email address: [Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com](mailto:Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com)
- Phone number: 813.443.8596 (Starts in July 2022)

## Staff

- Beth Ann Valavanis, Head of School: [BethAnne@TheApolloAcademy.com](mailto:BethAnne@TheApolloAcademy.com)
- Guides: [Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com](mailto:Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com)

Please address any major concerns to [BethAnne@TheApolloAcademy.com](mailto:BethAnne@TheApolloAcademy.com) and someone will contact you to discuss your concern directly. For any serious emergencies, you may call Beth Ann at 678.787.5446.

*Throughout this playbook, we use learner, hero, student and child interchangeably.*

## Philosophy of our Operations

There are three underlying values that drive every policy and system created for our community to function and achieve our mission:

- 1 Freedom for families. We believe parents, not schools, are in charge of their families and trust you to make your own choices for your families.
- 2 Sanctity of studios as learning spaces for learners only. This includes basic safety as well as protection against interruptions, distractions and the threat of lowering standards of excellence.
- 3 Sanctity of parent/child relationships: We will not come between you and your child.



# Object of the game

All players work together to build a powerful learning community. Together, this community upholds the mission of Apollo Academy: An Acton Affiliate.

In order to play the game together effectively, each player (parents, learners, guides, owners) must agree to the following basic Rules of Play:



- I will intentionally grow
- I will take always responsibility for my learning
- I will practice servant leadership
- I will contribute to and build the community
- I will hold peers accountable & welcome the same
- I will uphold Socratic learning / guiding at Apollo Academy
- I will strive for excellence through drafting & feedback
- I will use technology with purpose & focus
- I will work to purposefully build my family culture (*see Parent Contract*)

NOTE: If any player does not agree to the basic Rules of Play, this may be an indication that this is not the game for them. If you have questions, please speak to Beth Ann.

Our mission is two-fold:

- ① To inspire each person who enters our doors to find a calling that will change the world.
- ② We are a community of like-minded families that desire to **grow...and grow together.**





# Components of the game

At Apollo Academy we promise heroes will find a calling that will change the world by Learning to Learn, Learning to Do, and Learning to Be.

## Component 1

### LEARNING TO LEARN

(Processes)

Learning to LEARN means finding the recipes, processes, and algorithms that help us make better decisions and more deeply embed the right habits of critical thinking.

- Taking control of the learning process
- Time management & goal setting
- Reflecting & iterating until mastery/excellence

## Component 2

### LEARNING TO DO

(Skills & Academics)

Learning to DO means making practical decisions in the real world to accomplish great tasks, as a way to change the world.

- Solve own real-life problems using mastered core skills
- Take a hands-on approach to experimenting & forming conclusions about the wonders of the world
- Purposely explore & discover at-will in a meaningful way

However important the tasks of learning to learn and learning to do, the most important part of finding the Grail in the Hero's Journey is not the Grail itself, but how the hero is changed in the process. This is the essence of Learning to BE.

## Component 3

### LEARNING TO BE

(Character & Matters of the heart)

We want heroes near the end of a successful, satisfying and fulfilling life to have answers to three important questions:

- Did I contribute something meaningful?
- Was I a good person?
- Who did I love and who loved me?

**Fun Chat:** What family habits do we have that are "etching positive character traits into our souls?" What negative habits do we want to work to rub away?



The final "learning to be" promise means finding ways through difficult challenges and decisions to deeply etch habits of positive character traits into each soul, while rubbing away the negative habits that take away from who we are destined to become, if we want to reach our full potential.



# Parent Contract

As parents at Apollo Academy:

1. **We long for our Hero to discover a calling that will change the world**, as promised in Apollo Academy's mission. We will allow our Hero to fail early, cheaply and as often as necessary without intervening, and in the event our Hero struggles, we will refer to the Hero's Journey for Parents note for counsel before reacting.
2. **We welcome Acton Academy as a self paced environment** where Heroes run the studios through the delegation of certain rights by owners and parents, with access to dozens of experts and resources, allowing Guides to focus on challenges and questions.
3. **We will celebrate our Hero's progress in earning Weekly Points, Badges and Journey Trackers** according to a learning plan we create, and act if needed to: remove distractions like gaming, video or social media; lessen resistance or overcome feelings of victimhood so our Hero can soar.
4. **Further, for our own Hero's Journeys as parents**
  - We will remain lifelong learners and each will have an active learning project (such as a book or self-improvement project) at all times to discuss with our children.
  - **Our family will develop and post a Family Plan by September 15th and have Family Meetings at regularly scheduled intervals.** 
  - At least one of us will attend at least two of the three Parent Meetings each year, where Socratic discussions will focus on our Hero's Journey as parents.
  - We will deliver our Hero to campus before 8:30 am and understand Eagles who arrive late may not be able to participate in that morning's activities.

Please sign and date below.



**Reflection Question:** What are you working on that you are excited about? What is the next fun project on your list?

Parent/Caregiver:

Date:

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# Guide & Hero Contract

## As a Guide, I promise to:

- Deliver on Apollo Academy's promises to heroes and parents.
- Provide challenges, mileposts, rewards, and guardrails to inspire and equip our heroes.
- Present processes, frameworks, examples, recipes, and hard questions for heroes to use.
- Allow heroes to learn from failure and natural consequences, when necessary.
- Hold up a mirror so heroes can see themselves (and their impact) and insist they live up to the promises they have made to each other, parents, and guides.
- Affirm hero's gifts, listen to heroes and praise their effort, especially when the path is difficult.
- Celebrate as heroes take on more and more of a guide's responsibilities as they move from being an Independent Learner to Running Partner, Socratic Leader, Project Leader, and Organization Leader.
- If I fail to deliver on these promises, I invite heroes to comment on the surveys, which are taken very seriously by all guides and the owners of the school. Guides who continually fail to uphold these promises will no longer be allowed to serve at Acton Academy.



## As a Hero, I promise to:

- Choose kindness & respect, even when tough-heartedness is at play.
- Work hard and play hard.
- Make courageous choices.
- Develop a hero's mindset and resist the Victim's mindset.
- Be conscientious about what I commit to, keep my promises, admit honestly when I don't, and accept the natural consequences of my actions.
- Do my best to uphold the Basic Rules of the Apollo Game & work to help my fellow learners do the same.
- If I fail to deliver on these promises, I understand that guides may change the studio incentives, or I may suffer natural consequences, which will be laid out in advance. These may include being separated from the community, being asked to stay home for some period of time or even being asked to leave the community.



Please sign and date below.

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Hero's Name

Date

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Guide's Name

Date

# Field of Play

How the game is played depends on the studio you are playing in. Each learning studio fulfills our mission in distinct ways and has their own contract or covenant (created and signed by the learners during Session 1: Build the Tribe.)

## STUDIO ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW



**Guiding Belief:** Play is the important work of the child.

**Character Focus (Learning To Be):** Develop and practice a sense of right and wrong with a foundation in learning to be a good friend. Learn to be part of a community with a focus on collaboration, conflict resolution, curiosity, and creation. Learn to respect and develop a pride for taking care of the environment.

**Academic Focus (Learning To Learn & Do):** Exploration of the natural world, strong reading foundation, develop a real-world math sense through Montessori manipulatives. Most learning in Spark happens through play.



**Guiding Belief:** Exciting challenges foster curiosity and encourage a child to dig deeper.

**Character Focus (Learning To Be):** Develop and practice stewardship of self, space, and time. Learn to more fully consider others and their ideas & needs. Goal setting and maintaining a growth mindset.

**Academic Focus (Learning To Learn & Do):** Project-based exploration in reading, writing, math, and art that encourages natural love of learning.



**Fun Chat:** How can you incorporate the underlying guiding belief from Apollo Academy into some of the ways you parent or lead your family?

# Game Setup: Getting Started

## THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

The first few weeks can be daunting for a new learner joining the studio. Your child may not seem to be “learning anything,” but rest assured that your child is going through a process of learning to be part of the community in the studio. The first five weeks we focus on “building the tribe” where we are establishing processes, guardrails and systems in our learner-driven environment. This time also allows our learners to develop friendships and get comfortable in our space. The focus on learning comes naturally after the process aforementioned. Once your learner has a strong sense of belonging, learning accelerates!

*But...What can I do as a parent?* **Rest assured** that your learner is going through a process of integration with the tribe. This process usually takes about five to six weeks. During this process, the guides will slowly turn responsibilities over, using questions and choices, to the learners. The learners may feel frustrated with this new approach to learning, but rest assured that the guide is aware of the process and will encourage and challenge the learners through it. The guide will not step in to save the learner, but will provide the support that will enable the learner to drive the process of integration.

As parents, provide the support that will enable your child to be in the driver's seat of this process. Here are some suggestions:



1. Brainstorm with your child to come up with ideas on how they can make friends.
2. Encourage your child through stories or even with your own experiences
3. Listen intently to your child's struggles.
4. Provide options or tools of possible solutions.

## WHAT APOLLO ACADEMY IS NOT

1

We are not a teacher-led classroom. We strive to be a learner-driven, learner-governed studio. You may find that the guide seems to be doing nothing, but a lot is going on, and s/he is observing based on a robust framework!

2

We are not here to parent your child. We care about and love your child, and believe they are capable. We intentionally do not engage/help your child when we know they can do it. Often, we turn responsibilities back towards your child so that he/she can exercise decision-making and develop independence.

3

We are not a “you can do anything you like” learning environment. Our studio functions as a place where learners can make choices and do as they like, within the given guardrails, boundaries and safety nets that are in place. The goal is to create ownership and build the studio together as members of a tribe/community with certain basic foundations and pillars.

# Game Setup: Location

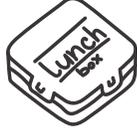
## WHAT TO BRING



**Headphones** Please label these. Computer mouse & mouse pad, if desired. These items can be kept in the cubbies so they are not carried to/from school each day.



**Water Bottle** We have filtered water in our studio and water bottles can be refilled. Cups are NOT provided.



**Healthy Lunch & Snacks** Lunch boxes can be stored in the refrigerator. We are a nut-free campus. Learners may store a frozen meal in the freezer to use in the event they forgot to bring their lunch.

## SAMPLE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time	Minutes	Spark	Discovery
8:00-8:20	20	Goal setting/review (Mondays), Write everyday	Goal setting/review daily, Write everyday
8:20-8:50	30	Centers (building blocks, drama/role play, make believe, art, blocks, loose-parts play, science experiments, music, board games)	
8:50-9:00	10	Circle Time	Launch
9:00-9:40	40	Art/PE	Core Skills
9:40-10:20	40	Guided Core Skills (Lexia on MWF/Khan Kids on TH, Zoo Phonics/Waseca MTWTF) or Centers	Art/PE
10:20-10:30	10	Snack/Break	
10:30-11:10	40	Guided Core Skills (Lexia on MWF/Khan Kids on TH, Zoo Phonics/Waseca MTWTF) or Centers	Core Skills/ Collaborative Core Skills
11:10-11:30	20	Story time or DEAR Bob books	Drop everything and read (DEAR)
11:30-11:50	20	Montessori Math (or Khan or Lexia)	Collaborative Core Skills
11:50-12:40	50	Lunch & free time	
12:40-1:00	20	Mindfulness & Socratic Launch	
1:00-2:00	60	Quest/ Writer's workshop/ Play-based activities	Quest/ Writer's workshop/ Civilization
2:00-2:20	20	Bob books/ Handwriting/ Cursive	
2:20-2:30	10	Studio Maintenance	
2:30-2:40	10	Close	
2:40-3:00	20	Outside Play	

	Core skills
	Independent discovery
	Group Discussion
	Project-based learning

## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

We are currently planning an after-school program for an additional fee. Family interest and commitment will fuel the type of options we offer. We will not offer guide-led afterschool programming, but instead, form partnerships with community organizations that can adequately serve in this capacity. *In order to gauge interest, complete the After School Program section of the enrollment form.*



## ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

Arrival starts at 8:00 am and learners need to be dropped off by 8:30am. Our morning launch/circle time is at 8:50. The carpool lane opens at 7:55 am. Please do not line up prior to 7:55am. We ask that you stay in your car and refrain from socializing with the guides in order to make this process go as quickly as possible for all involved. Our focus is to **get learners safely into the studio** and **get parents quickly through the carpool line**.

Once safely inside, learners write for a purpose, then choose how to spend their remaining time until we launch our day at 8:50 am.



## DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

**Dismissal is at 3:00 pm.** Please wait in your car and follow the carpool lane for efficiency and safety. If you are more than 15 minutes late for three or more occasions, you will be issued a charge of \$25 for each late pickup.

If you are picking up your child at any time other than dismissal, please park and wait near the studio's main gate entrance. A HERO MUST NOT LEAVE CAMPUS WITHOUT CONFIRMED ACKNOWLEDGMENT BETWEEN THE PARENT AND ADMINISTRATOR.

Your child should be confident and knowledgeable about the people who are allowed by you to drive him or her home and, if it changes daily, who to expect them each day. We suggest you make it part of your good-bye routine in the carpool line to remind your hero who will be retrieving them in the afternoon. The guides will only follow the designated arrangements per the Approved Carpool Form (see below), so please be as specific as possible.

For families that carpool, please fill out the **Approved Carpool Form** (<https://theapolloacademy.com/carpool>). If carpool arrangements change, it is each family's responsibility to complete a new form with updated information. If there is no Approved Carpool Form on file, then Apollo Academy guides will only release the child to their caregivers on file in the enrollment forms. *A guide will contact you prior to school starting to confirm your carpool arrangements.*

## FIELD TRIPS

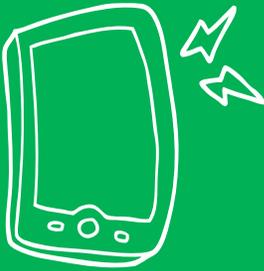
Off-site activities will be organized within the sessions relating to the Quests. Parents are encouraged to join us. Trips will be announced at least one month in advance. If additional fees are required, a parent vote will take place before planning the trip. We will NOT take any fieldtrips the first semester.

# Game Setup: Electronics

With a world of distractions it can be difficult to take time to wonder, discover, and experience things that help one find their passions and start on their personal Hero's Journey. We feel that empowering heroes to use technology well will set them up for a lasting life-balance now and in the future. This challenge is one that we feel passionately about, and we aim to help equip you as we navigate it together. In short, we feel it is most beneficial for heroes to use electronics as "tools not toys," but we encourage your family to be mindful, do research and determine how electronic devices can best serve the family that you are purposefully building.



## ELECTRONIC POLICY



All materials used at Apollo are to enhance education and not for entertainment purposes. This is the standard that will be upheld (and returned to) when there is a question. Apollo Academy is a "video game and recreational video viewing FREE" campus. This standard is set & upheld based on much thought, testing, and research. In the words of a seasoned Acton owner, "[The use of video games and YouTube at school] simply drains the energy from the studio." We feel confident that in upholding this ideal we are taking a step towards improving the safety and health of our sacred learning environment.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



Parents are encouraged to thoroughly investigate which social media outlets they feel are appropriate for their hero to utilize. Google Hangouts is considered Social Media, and conversations about how to appropriately use it are encouraged. Limiting distractions from social media has been linked to more productivity in the studio and in life, as well as decreased risk of anxiety & depression. This is a personal family decision that must be discussed and addressed at home. During school hours, Chromebooks and phones shall not be used for personal social media use.

## APOLLO ACADEMY PROPERTY



Utilizing advanced online core skills learning platforms is an integral part of our studio learning. Apollo Academy provides a laptop (or functioning equivalent) for daily in-studio use. These are the sole responsibility of the hero to care for. Each hero is expected to have a charged, fully-functioning device each day for core skills (and other research). If any part of the school campus is damaged by a hero, he or she will assist in the cost of the repair. Learners are responsible for providing their own headphones & a computer mouse/pad, if desired.

## INTERNET SAFETY & CELL PHONE POLICY



All laptops/devices in the studio have safety measures enabled. SafeSearch or another program that has at least the same level of safety measure will be enabled on all devices.

Learners may bring phones to school; however, during school hours, cell phones and personal technology must be kept in a backpack at all times. Apollo Academy is not responsible for what learners view on their personal technology. The school is not responsible for misplaced or damaged electronic devices brought on campus.



# ELECTRONIC RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Heroes are encouraged to not post anything they wouldn't want friends, parents, or guides to see.



**Reflection Question:** How can you help prepare your child to courageously uphold this standard? What adjustments can be made in your home to help fuel your child's curiosity & wise use of electronics?

Follow the school's code of conduct when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions; however, do it in a respectful way.

Make sure that criticism is constructive and not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the studio is inappropriate online.

Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birthdates, and pictures. Do not share your password with anyone besides your guides and parents.

Linking to other websites to support your thoughts and ideas is recommended. However, be sure to read the entire article prior to linking to ensure that all information is appropriate for a school setting.

Do your own work! Do not use other people's intellectual property without their permission. It is a violation of copyright law to copy and paste other's thoughts. When paraphrasing another's idea(s) be sure to cite your source with the URL. It is good practice to hyper-link to your sources.

Be aware that pictures may also be protected under copyright laws. Verify you have permission to use the image or if it is under Creative Commons attribution.

How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity.

If you run across inappropriate material that makes you feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful, tell your guide and parents right away.

Logging in to another hero's program or account is a violation of Apollo Academy.

Heroes who do not abide by these terms and conditions will receive an Honor Code Violation.



**Fun Chat:** Birthday celebrations are a special event at Apollo Academy! The birthday child is celebrated by receiving handmade notes or pictures from peers. Talk with your child about fun ways to celebrate with their studio (other than treats), such as donate a copy of your child's favorite book to the school library. Parents are welcome to have lunch with their child to celebrate.

# Game Setup: Health Policies

## HEALTH FORMS & SCREENINGS

Please provide a copy of your child's birth certificate and health/immunization records or state exemption from your pediatrician's office in case emergencies. This info is requested to be uploaded on the **Enrollment Form** (<https://theapolloacademy.com/enroll>). Upon admission to Apollo Academy, each family assumes the responsibility for vision, hearing and spinal curvature screenings.

## MEDICATION

Should a learner need medication during the day, parents must hand the medicine and instructions to a guide. For prescription medicine, please send the medicine in the original container from the pharmacy with the child's name on it and a dated note listing the times and amounts to be given that day. Staff will not administer medication, internal or topical, unless it has been submitted by the learner's caregiver. In case of an emergency, staff will contact 911, then contact the family. We have minor first aid materials and some homeopathic remedies that may be administered by a guide as needed.



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## WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME

If your child develops any of these symptoms while at school, we will call you immediately to pick up your child:

- Do not send your child to school if they have had a fever (temperature of 100 degrees F or higher) within the last 24 hours.
- Do not send your child to school if they have vomited within the last 24 hours.
- Do not send a child to school if they have had diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- Children diagnosed with Strep, Pinkeye, or any other bacterial illness must stay home until they have been on antibiotics for a minimum of 48 hours.
- Do not send your child to school with severe cold symptoms which may include: a constant runny nose, especially with abnormal color or consistency (this is especially important if your child is unable to use a Kleenex by him/herself), nasal or lung/chest congestion, coughing that is constant or persistent, or recurrent sneezing that is not allergy related.
- Do not send your child to school with untreated head lice, nits, scabies, etc.
- Do not send your child to school with an atypical rash until a physician has examined the rash and has cleared your child to return to school.



If your child is not feeling well in the morning, please observe them carefully before sending them to school and risking the health of the others. Take their temperature. Children must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.

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# Game Setup: Attendance/ Absenteeism



## ILLNESS POLICY

A learner with any of the following symptoms must be isolated and the parents notified and asked to remove the learner from school as soon as possible:

- Fever of 100.5 F
- Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes
- Diarrhea
- Stiff neck or headache
- Vomiting (with one or more of the symptoms listed above)
- Nausea
- Difficult breathing or wheezing
- severe cough
- Complaints of severe pain



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Students will participate each day in a variety of age-appropriate physical activities designed to achieve optimal health, wellness, gross-motor development and fitness.

Activities will take place both outdoors and indoors throughout the day. Parents agree that their children are physically able to participate in all activities.

Exceptions must be discussed with the staff and documented by a physician.

A learner who misses or plans to miss more than 5 school days due to excused or unexcused absences in a session must meet with her/his guide and parents/guardians to determine a plan to fulfill their goals and studio requirements. If a learner is on track with goals/badges, this meeting may be unnecessary.

Although Apollo Academy is supportive of meaningful absences and understanding of unavoidable absences, it is ultimately the learner's responsibility to fulfill their goals and projects due to absences.

Parents need to be aware that Apollo Academy's curriculum includes much group work and class discussions, both of which are impossible to recreate or replicate. Your child is responsible for their goals and quest responsibilities. If they are not in attendance (or know that they will be gone), they should arrange in advance how to move forward with their group. They may also coordinate to meet virtually with their group during quest time.

**For unexpected absenteeism**, such as a child wakes up and is ill, please send an email to [Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com](mailto:Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com).



## SCHOOL CALENDAR

Apollo Academy follows the Hillsborough County Public School calendar and closures.

# Game Setup: Safety

## DRESS CODE

Apollo Academy expects learners to arrive in clothes that are suitable for learning and playing. Learners are expected to come dressed in a manner seasonally appropriate each and every day and to have shoes suitable for outdoor play. Examples of clothing not suitable for our studio are clothing that advertises alcohol, firearms/weapons, tobacco products or other drugs. We are intentionally not issuing a detailed dress code because we think this is a family matter.

Learners who wear clothing deemed inappropriate by a guide or owner for the aforementioned reasons will be given a warning (slight behavioral infraction) and may be sent home or asked to put on a school-issued sweatshirt/sweatpants. Recurrence of inappropriate dress will result in an Honor Code Violation.



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## SAFETY AT SCHOOL

- The entire staff undergoes a Level II background screening and completes the Florida private school fingerprinting requirements.
- The entire staff will be trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- We perform fire & safety drills.
- We discuss safety as a community in Session 1 (i.e. What to do in an emergency, if someone gets hurt, etc.)
- "Safe zones" are outlined and explained to learners during Session 1.
- NO firearms or weapons shall be allowed within any building or upon any person located on the premises, excluding federal, state or Local Law enforcement officers.

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## STUDIO CAMERAS & PHOTO WAIVER

As part of the Acton Academy Trademark License agreement entered into between Apollo Academy and Acton Academy, it was stipulated that NEST live video feed capabilities be installed in the interior of the school. All Acton schools across the nation are linked to provide accountability, share best practices, and ensure high quality services. Parents acknowledge the use of the NEST Camera system. Occasionally we use photos of our learners on the newsletter, school displays and projects, blogs, school Facebook, school Instagram, or the school website. *Media waiver is included within the Enrollment Form (<https://theapolloacademy.com/enroll>).*

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## SENSITIVE ISSUES

Please be sure to communicate any sensitive issue or special family circumstance to us in order to document and ensure your child's wellbeing. If your religious beliefs do not include a school practice or holiday celebrations, please notify us via [Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com](mailto:Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com).

# Out of Bounds: Honor Code

## HONOR CODE VIOLATION (HCV) SYSTEM BRIEF OVERVIEW

Honor Code Violations are the owner/guide-directed accountability system.

1. Persisting in victim language after being guided toward growth and responsibility.
2. Harassment/bullying/disrespect of any kind, including hitting, pushing, threatening or other physical aggression or verbal abuse.
3. Disregard or disrespect for the Studio Contract (the Studio Contract is different from the Honor Code).
4. Generally, learning how to live within the hero contract bounds happens through peer accountability. An Honor Code Violation would be issued by a guide as deemed necessary for behavior that is defiantly opposing the Studio Contract.
5. Cheating, plagiarizing, or misreporting of accomplished work in any activity.
6. Destruction of school property.
7. Inappropriate language or sexual innuendo.
8. Drug, tobacco, or alcohol use during any school day or activity.



**Fun Chat:** Do you have a mission statement or defined values that guides your family toward a vision? Do you set priorities together and revisit progress on achieving them?

## NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Apollo Academy values, respects, and benefits from the unique identity of each learner and community member, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. As an intentional learning community we expect all faculty, staff, administrators, parents, and caregivers to embrace and foster this inclusiveness.



# HONOR CODE SYSTEM

## FIRST STRIKE *against the Honor Code*

**The learner is removed from the group until they choose to participate again within the community guard rails.**

- Guide sends an email to parents.
- Numbered Strike Form and Behavioral Check-in Form will be emailed to parents and sent home with the learner. Parents must acknowledge they have read and received before beginning the following school day.
- A guide speaks with the learner to ensure he/she understands why he/she is receiving a strike. Guide points learner to Contract and asks "Can you see how holding you accountable for your actions (by issuing the strike) is operating within your Studio Contract of Promises?"
- The guide works with the learner to brainstorm specific strategies to prevent a second HCV strike using the behavioral check-in.

## SECOND STRIKE *against the Honor Code*

**The learner is removed from the group for the rest of the day. The hero does not participate in any group activity, including Quest, Socratic Discussion, etc. The learner will be allowed to come to the Exhibition.**

- Everything from First Strike process above.

## THIRD STRIKE = 1st HCV (Honor Code Violation)

**The learner is sent home. When returning to school the following day (or the day after if the HCV occurs toward the end of the day), the learner will share at launch 2-3 strategies they will use to help them make better choices moving forward.**

- Everything from First / Second Strike process above.
- If the strike occurs at the end of the day, the learner stays home the following day.
- If they are unprepared or unwilling to share at launch, they should remain at home and are placed on a probationary contract.
- Guides will schedule a mandatory Honor Code Violation Conference with parents and learner.
- The studio will celebrate the learner's return and honor the process of learning from failures.

## 2nd HCV + 3rd HCV

**Generally, if a hero receives two honor code violations within an academic year, they are electing to leave the community. This will be decided according to the Head of School's discretion.**

## HONOR CODE VIOLATION CONFERENCE

An Honor Code Violation conference is held when an Honor Code Violation has been issued. The parents, the learner, Head of School, and guide will be invited to a mandatory conference where a Behavior Plan will be agreed to. The plan will direct the learner to improve his/her behavior in order to not commit additional infractions and may include but is not limited to community service, apology, behavior conferencing, restricted freedoms, and community give-back.

Learners who adhere to the plan will not be subject to further disciplinary action. Failure to comply with a Behavioral Plan will, at the Head of School's discretion, result in choosing to leave the community.

## HONOR CODE VIOLATION RESET

Strikes and HCVs are tallied over the academic year and reset at the beginning of a new academic year. Generally, if a learner receives two Honor Code Violations within an academic year, they are electing to leave the community. This will be handled according to the Head of School's discretion. A learner who requires constant redirection and continually dismisses their studio contract has chosen to not be successful within the Apollo Academy learning model. The school administrator has the right to exit a learner immediately from the school if a behavior is deemed extreme without reaching their second or third HCV. However, this is NOT an automatic expulsion.



A Family Behavioral Check-in (Pre-strike Warning) may be given prior to receiving a first strike. This is a parent-led reflection with the hero about their choices and an action plan for improvement.

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## TRANSITION CONTRACT

(Often used when a learner is planning to transition to another school) If a learner is following the letter of the Studio Contracts but damaging the community by sabotaging its values, we will create a personalized Transition Contract with clearer guardrails and more immediate consequences. A Transition Contract is particularly helpful for “agreeable takers” who outwardly act politely but poison the culture with hidden or passive-aggressive acts of sabotage or defiance.

## **PROBATIONARY CONTRACT**

Apollo Academy's learner-drafted and ratified contracts provide a framework for learners to learn self-management and self-governance. When the studio is functioning well with leaders who are committed to the tribe and positively working towards a Hero's Journey, the learning is powerful and occurs at an exponential rate. However, due to the realistic nature of such a framework, there is always the possibility of learner's making poor choices, and the emergence of sub-tribes (small groups of socially powerful cliques) can overwhelm and exhaust the healthier parts of studio culture. Further, because we trust learners to work out many of their interpersonal conflicts and don't report every detail of every struggle, parents can feel blindsided when problems arise that have been building for some time. As a result, we may offer a Probationary Contract that signals a learner will be asked to leave the studio permanently if certain behaviors are continued, even if council has yet to act.

The Probationary Contract will offer a short period of time to cure problem attitudes/behaviors and a period of one to six months to measure long-term success. (Owners reserve the right to ask a learner or family to leave immediately for behavior that is dangerous or especially damaging.) Most of the boundaries in this contract mirror the Apollo Academy studio contracts, but each probationary contract will outline strict conventions that need to be followed in word and deed during the probationary period for a hero to remain at Apollo. A Family Behavioral Check-in (Pre-strike Warning) may be given prior to receiving a first strike. This is a parent-led reflection with the learner about their choices and an action plan for improvement.

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## **WITHDRAWAL**

Parents must notify Apollo Academy in writing their desire to withdraw their child 30 days in advance. Tuition will be charged until the child is formally withdrawn. If a child is withdrawn without notification, parents are obligated to pay a full month's tuition, with no refund for unused funds. Deposits provided at the start of the year will not be refunded for early withdrawal.

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## **DISMISSAL/TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT**

Apollo Academy reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause and without notice. Such a decision would be based on whether it is in the best interest of that child, the other children in the studio, or the overall operation of the classroom. We will make every effort to correct a problematic situation before a final decision is made. The school does not have to give notice when terminating enrollment of a child. If enrollment is terminated, registration fees and other fees are non-refundable regardless of the reason for termination.

# Out of Bounds: Studio Guardrails

## APOLLO ACADEMY COMMITMENTS

These are guardrails that are in place to ensure that the learners are free to struggle, grow, and work in an environment that IS and CAN remain at Apollo Academy. All parents and learners recognize that these guardrails are in place to work within and are not boundaries that are intended to be pushed against by Apollo Academy learners.

### SACRED STUDIO IS CREATED THROUGH...

1. **Stewardship:** The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care
2. **Respect & Kindness**
3. **Intentional Growth:** Do not distract, and minimize distraction

Guides can & will hold these lines, in order to protect our studios as "Acton Academy" studios. This may be as simple as a verbal reminder or, as deemed necessary, a violation. All studio contracts are in addition to these Guardrails.



### EQUIPPING PARENTS WITH LEARNER GOAL SETTING

Apollo is a family journey. We are committed to helping parents help their learners. As needed we can give support regarding Journey Tracker, badge plans, and learner/parent mentor meetings.

## GUARDRAILS



### MINDSET MILESTONES & HABITS

Each Studio will have a structure of learner progression in place. As powerful habits are practiced and proficiency is proven, learners will be granted additional privileges and responsibilities. Should a learner choose to not progress towards proficiency they may be choosing to exit Apollo. These habits may include (but are not limited to): time management, honoring the studio schedule, personal accountability, work ethic/grit, and goal finishing. This also upholds the real-world application that “freedom is earned” and protected by hard work, responsibility and sacrifice.

**Failure: Your child will fail.** This is built into the system so that they can learn from it, improve their processes and grow. When session 3 comes around and milestones have not all been accomplished, it is okay and is part of the learning.

**Honor the Schedule:** At Apollo, we have many liberties. We allow learners to work at their own pace and drive themselves. This freedom is defined as freedom to work ahead and to work towards independent goals/passions during specified times – not freedom FROM WORK or freedom to do ANYTHING YOU WANT WHENEVER YOU WANT. This implies that you are always working towards a larger goal as part of your Hero’s Journey and that you honor the studio’s forward movement as well, which is facilitated by the studio schedule.



### PROBATIONARY / EXIT CONTRACTS

A learner may be offered a probationary contract when they are not living up to their commitments and promises. This contract will outline specific, measurable results that will be expected in order for a learner to continue at Apollo, once a probationary contract is entered into. An Exit Contract is entered into when the probationary contract is not kept.



## LAUNCH/ CIRCLE TIME

Launch/circle time is sacred and EVERY learner is expected to participate EVERY TIME. If a learner is late or asked to leave the circle, they will sit behind the circle and continue to participate through listening and taking notes. Learners should not leave the circle until it has finished and should arrive at circle having taken care of anything (such as bathroom use) ahead of time. Learners are expected to uphold decisions made in circle, even if they are unable to participate. It is a learner’s responsibility to know what is being discussed in circle. Disregarding launch/circle time is a violation of promises made to participate at Apollo Academy.



## BADGE PLANS

**2-3 Year Badge Plan:** All learners will have a 2-3 year span of badges available to empower them to work more effectively at their own pace. This should help eliminate the illusion of “I am done with all of my work”.

**Badge Plan Substitution:** This is available upon approved alternate badge plan and a parent’s signature. CHANGES TO BADGE PLANS MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE and not “after the fact” or close to a deadline to avoid the consequences of procrastination, laziness or distraction.

**Progress:** Progress in “learning to do” and learning to be” is reflected in the badge plan. Annual badge plans are set with parent and guide input and take each individual child into account. When a learner chooses to disregard/follow-through with their plan (for whatever reason), it indicates to us that “something is going on” and may put a learner in consideration for an exit contract. As we allow for badge plans to adjust throughout the year (with parent & guide approval), this should be an unlikely scenario and may signify that a learner is choosing to leave Apollo by not upholding the contract and intentionally growing.



## THE PROCESS FOR GUIDES UPHOLDING GUARDRAILS

1 Guide may hold up a mirror for a hero leader and challenge them to assess the situation and “take a stand” for the hero(es) and the studio.

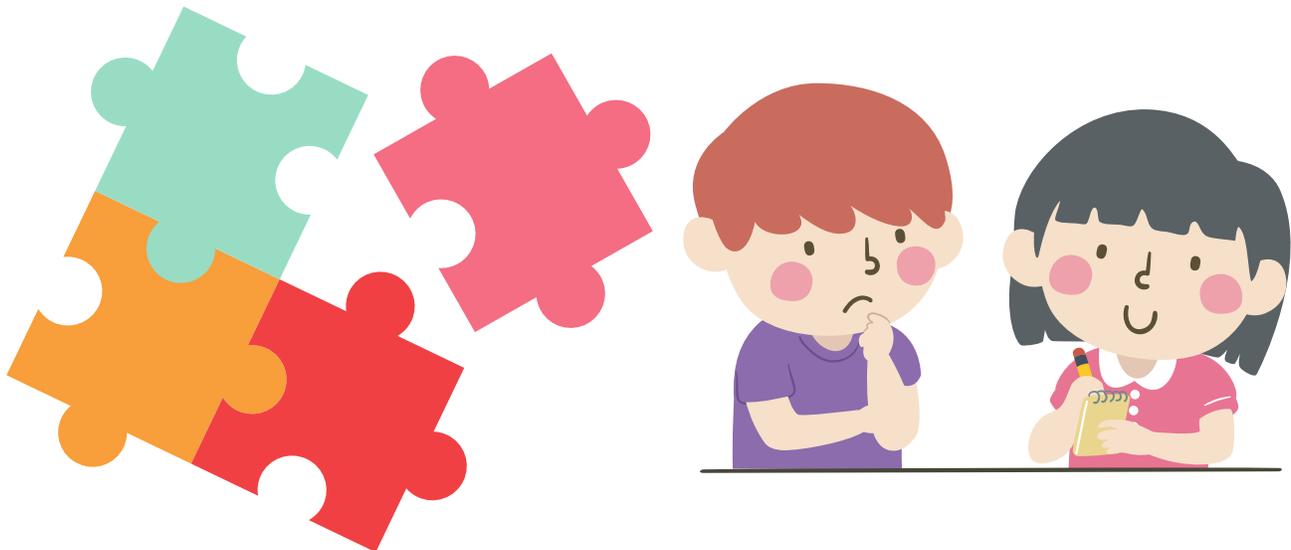
2 Guide may point out the following list (which may also be posted in studio) of potential ways to help hold one another accountable and remind fellow travelers of guardrails and contracts. The hero leader may attempt several ideas (perhaps 3) or come up with their own.

Some possible options:

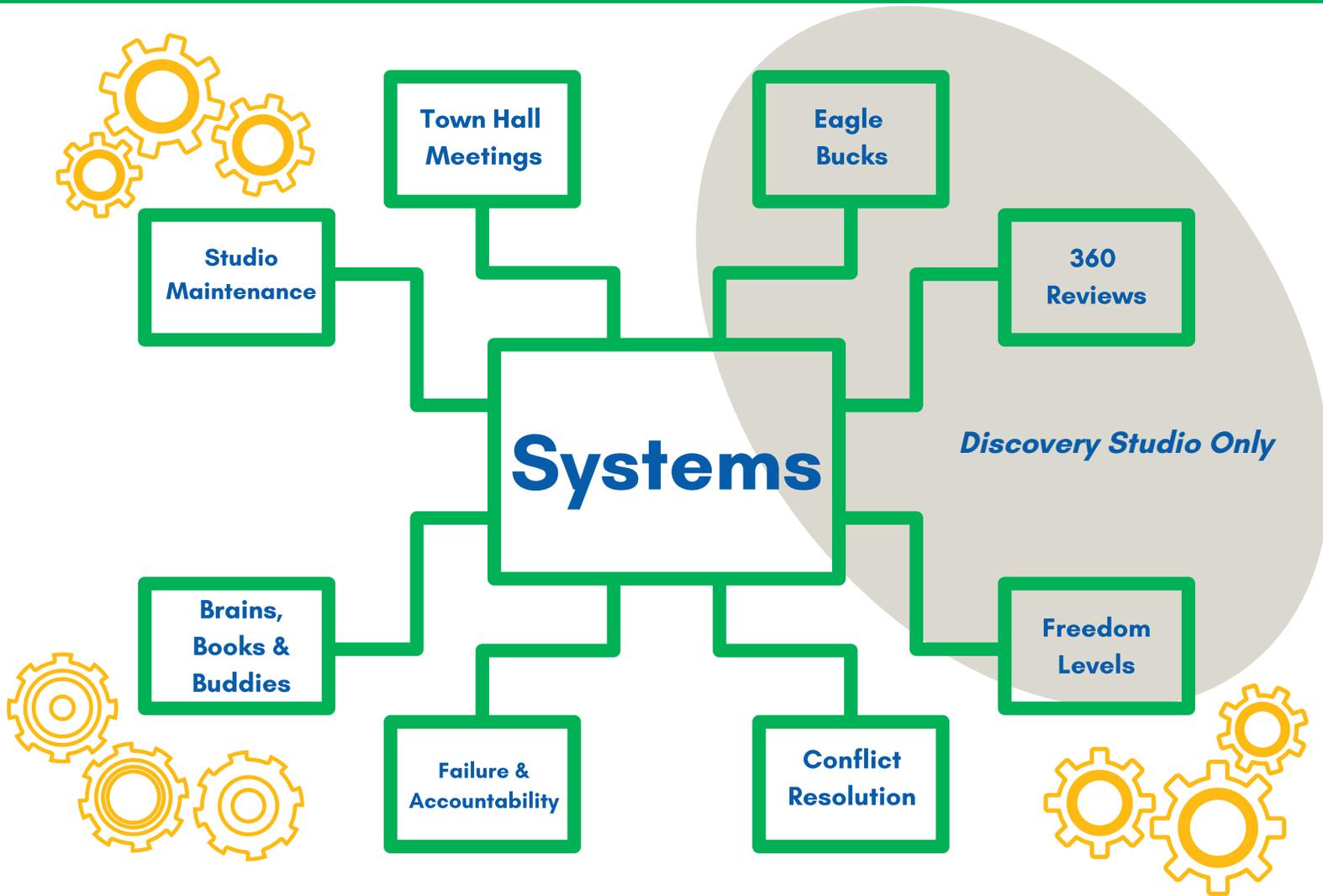
- Take a Hero Buck (follow up with questions about the impact of this).
- Ask the “distracted hero” to remove themselves from the studio or sit at a desk on their own to do silent core skills only.
- Stop all activities in studio (emergency meeting to “declare the impact” on the studio).
- Invite another hero (or a group) of leaders to resolve.
- Ask the distracted hero to address the studio with a plan for being intentional.
- Request that the distracted hero send an email to studio (with parents and guide CC'd on it) with a renewed commitment to the studio and strategies for improvement.
- Request that the hero go home for the day to reset.
- Present your own strategy.

3 The hero shares with the guide and a peer their lessons learned.

4 Guide may encourage the hero to initiate a behavioral check-in with their peer using the Behavioral Check-in Form.



# Game Play: Systems



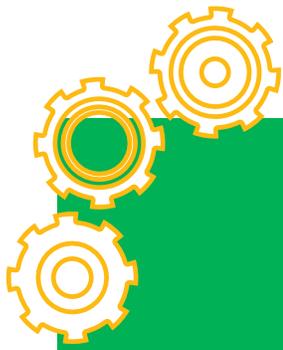
Systems are implemented based upon studio needs. Not all systems may be “in place” in each studio and will vary at times.

## TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Weekly meetings are held whereby learners can propose new rules for the studio, encourage each other through character callouts, or bring up concerns and potential solutions. This is a learner-led meeting that typically occurs weekly.

## STUDIO MAINTENANCE

Learners are required to help maintain their studio through daily Studio Maintenance. This encourages organization and cleanly habits. Jobs are set weekly by learners and tasks can change over time.



## BRAINS, BOOKS & BUDDIES

Apollo Academy is a learner-led and independent environment. Guides do not serve as teachers. Learners learn to teach themselves by developing problem solving skills. Should a learner run into difficulty, they are encouraged to use Brains, Books, & Buddies (BBB). *Note: By nature of material and age, guides provide more direction during Spark Core Skills.*

**Brains:** First exhaust your own knowledge by thoroughly defining the problem and attempting to solve it on your own.

**Books:** What resources do you have available to you that may give you clues or ideas? Learners are encouraged to use in-studio resources, approved online resources, or collaborate with a community expert.

**Buddies:** Who is someone that may have expertise in the area you are struggling in? This is not a time to simply get the answer from a peer but to jointly work to understand how to solve the problem for yourself.

Lastly If a hero has diligently exhausted all three of these options and is still struggling with a concept, they may seek help from a guide for the purpose of brainstorming how the learner could solve the problem.



A foundational principle within the Apollo Academy learning model is to provide opportunities for learners to learn to collaboratively solve hard problems. Perseverance and creativity are developed through this process. Apollo Academy discourages the use of tutors or adults “helping” learners solve problems. Guides never answer questions nor do they teach in the traditional sense with the exception of Spark core skills. Encourage your learner to take ownership if they are facing a hard question and/or challenge, but always point them in the direction of problem solving and perseverance.

## RESOLVING CONFLICT

It is an important part of our learning model to allow heroes to resolve their own conflict by: **1. Controlling tempers & words. 2. Sharing their feelings. 3. Seeing both sides. 4. Focusing on solutions vs. whining, blaming, or complaining.**

If your learner has a conflict within the studio, we encourage you to calmly talk through it with them and empower them to use one of the systems below to handle the matter.

## SYSTEMS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

**Hero Bucks (Discovery Studio):** A learner may request a Hero Buck and follow the process for appropriately doing so as designated in their studio.

**Peace Table:** A learner/guide may call a peace table with involved parties. This process is very powerful and fosters healthy friendship and communication skills through a scripted conversation that allows heroes to:



Express their feelings  
& define the problem



Identify possible  
solutions



Make a plan  
to move forward



### FAILURE & ACCOUNTABILITY

**Failure:** Embracing failure as a teacher of valuable lessons vs. something to be avoided is an important concept to embrace. As parents, our greatest opportunity to influence our children is by modeling the behaviors we hope they develop. Embrace the Hero's Journey and avoid being the victim.

**Accountability:** *"The first and best victory is to conquer self."* - Plato One of the most powerful opportunities a learner has within the Acton learning model are regular chances to learn self-governance, problem solving, discipline, and perseverance. As parents of an Apollo hero, you play a very important part! We encourage parents to use the Socratic Method at home which furthers the learning opportunities of problem solving and mastery of self. If your child is choosing not to work at school or has made decisions that could result in an Honor Code Violation, we encourage you to allow natural consequences to come to fruition.



*Some parents have found it helpful to tie privileges at home to hard work at school. We respect the role of parenting while also embracing each hero's journey toward self-governance and responsibility. Helping your child do their work or shielding them from negative consequences takes away the power of the Acton learning model. Additionally, if your child is encountering a problem within the studio, encourage them to handle the situation for themselves. Without an opportunity for practice, a hero will struggle to develop these lifelong skills.*





## WHAT MAKES A HERO A HERO?

One of the most powerful principles that your child will explore is that of “mindset.” When families and heroes embrace powerful mindsets, we not only see the greatest academic growth, we also see higher levels of emotional balance and joy in learning. **THIS IS A BIG DEAL!**



### HERO MINDSET

Welcome challenges and embrace responsibility. Strive for and celebrate excellence. Praise heroic choices by others, practice frequent acts of kindness, and hold firm boundaries in relationships. Grateful and generous.



### VICTIM MINDSET

Avoid hard work. Look for the easy way out and seek loopholes, rather than delivering their best work. Fail to keep their word, gossip, brag or diminish others. Feel entitled, whine, blame, complain, give excuse for poor behavior or work.

## Read this Article on [Growth-mindset](#)

### DISCOVERY STUDIO ONLY SYSTEMS

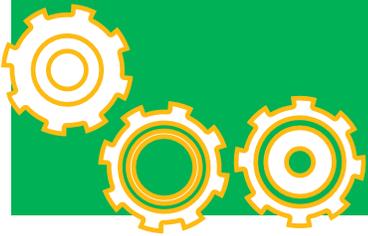
#### 360 REVIEW

Periodically, the heroes receive a questionnaire whereby they are asked to rate studio-mates and/or guide. The rating is based on a scale of 1 to 5 and the ability to write constructive feedback. The feedback can be either positive or an area for growth. The review measures leadership, work methodology, and contribution to the studio.

#### FREEDOM LEVELS

The Acton environment encourages heroes to learn time management and self-governing of tasks to be completed within a certain projected time-frame. When a learner exhibits these attributes, they can earn additional privileges. Each studio’s system may look different from one another and be in place for different reasons.

## EAGLE/HERO BUCKS



Eagle Bucks are the hero-directed accountability system. As learners produce work, they get paid Eagle Bucks. Learners can hold one another accountable by requesting Eagle Bucks for contract infractions. At that point the learner who made the alleged violation may do one of the following:

1. Agree that an infraction was made and pay the bank 1 Eagle Buck, or...
2. Take the matter to the Eagle Buck Committee to seek guidance on how to resolve the matter. The Eagle Buck Committee is a group of elected learners who have agreed to fairly and without partiality help fellow learners resolve their conflicts.

If a learner is in debt to the bank for longer than a two-week period, they will receive an Honor Code Violation (At times, "community service" may be available to learners who are in debt.). Eagle Bucks are used to purchase items in the Eagle Buck Store.



**Reflection Question:** How do you feel about receiving feedback? How often do you ask for it? How can you implement the seeking and receiving of feedback into your life & home as a powerful tool for growth?

## Notes

A series of horizontal blue lines for writing notes, bounded by vertical red lines on the left and right sides.

# Keeping Score: Tracking Progress

We don't "keep score" in the same sense that other schools or sports games do. Your learner will set goals and track progress as a tool to help them grow and improve their skills. Learners can see where their friends are excelling and struggling and they often share these successes and setbacks with one another as stepping stones on their journey. They learn to support, empathize, and to seek and offer help.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND GOALS

We encourage parents to ask their children about their goal setting at the beginning of the week and follow up at the end of the week. This is an important part of your role as an Apollo parent. In fact, you will receive the most information about your learner's journey from your learner once you join Apollo Academy. We encourage you to share your own learning goals with your learner as well.

### Tracking Progress

Tracking Tool	Spark	Discovery
Daily Journey Tracker	Daily	Daily
Points	Daily	Daily
Online Programs	To the minute	To the minute
SMART Goals	Weekly	Daily
Badges	Per session/semester	Per session/semester
Portfolios	Per session/semester	Per session/semester
Exhibitions	Per session	Per Session
Running Partners	NA	Weekly
360 Coaching Reviews	NA	Per Session



## JOURNEY TRACKER & POINTS

The Journey Tracker is the most informative "progress report" that parents will see on a weekly basis. It logs the week's activities and goes home on Fridays. It also is used as the points calculator. See the next two pages for sample tracker.

## ONLINE PROGRAMS & SMART GOALS

Guides and parents alike can log into our online tools at any moment to see how our learners are tracking against American standards. In addition, SMART goals are set and shared with parents to track along with their learner each week.

## JOURNEY REVIEW MEETING

Twice per year, parents will be offered a Journey Review Meeting which includes participation by guide, learner and parent. All meetings must be scheduled in advance, and it is a requirement that parents submit a Journey Review Observation Form prior to the meeting. In addition to the formal review meetings, we have an "open campus" where we invite our parents to observe our studio at any time (see "Cheering from the stands").



# Journey Tracker

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



writing for purpose



Waseca/  
Phonics



DEAR

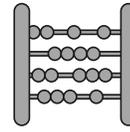


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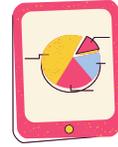
## Monday



Play



Montessori  
Math



Khan Kids  
Math



Play-based  
Activity



writing for purpose



Waseca/  
Phonics



DEAR

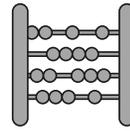


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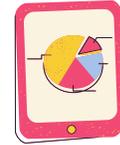
## Tuesday



Play



Montessori  
Math



Khan Kids  
Math



Quest



writing for purpose



Waseca/  
Phonics



DEAR

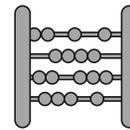


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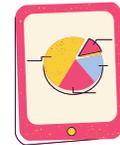
## Wednesday



Play



Montessori  
Math



Khan Kids  
Math



Quest



writing for purpose



Waseca/  
Phonics



DEAR

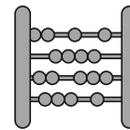


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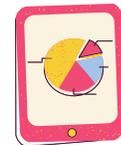
## Thursday



Play



Montessori  
Math



Khan Kids  
Math



Quest



writing for purpose



Waseca/  
Phonics



DEAR

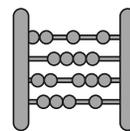


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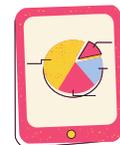
## Friday



Play



Montessori  
Math



Khan Kids  
Math



Play-based  
Activity



# Journey Tracker

## Daily Review

Monday

Highlights:

Points Earned:



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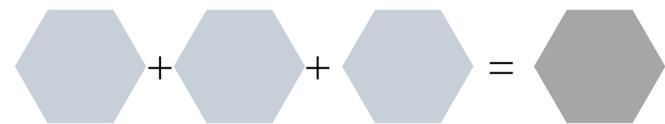
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Tuesday

Highlights:

Points Earned:



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Wednesday

Highlights:

Points Earned:



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Thursday

Highlights:

Points Earned:



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Friday

Highlights:

Points Earned:



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## LEARNING BADGES VERSUS GRADES

*We don't use  
letter grades.*

Milestones of achievement at Apollo Academy are Learning Badges which prove success in completing a long-term series of learning challenges. These Learning Badges will document the entire Apollo Academy learning journey with evidence appropriate for college applications and job interviews of the authentic accomplishments of each graduate.

Learners will receive feedback of the work they produce from their peers, guides and from other sources as appropriate. Their progress will be documented through their achievement of badges in the core skills of Writing, Civilization (Discovery only), Problem Solving (Math), Reading, and Socratic discussions. In addition, Journey Tracker and exhibitions share documentation of learning in the arts and sciences through projects and quest work. The software programs used in our studios track the progress of learning and can be accessed by parents at any time; as milestones are reached, they may also be reflected in Journey Tracker.

The badge plan is created by the learner, parents and guide in October/November of the academic year. It is revisited and edited once per semester. Each badge plan typically looks 2-3 years into the future so that a learner has plenty of runway of learning and cannot simply claim "I am done with my work."

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## SELF-PACED MASTERY OF CORE SKILLS

Learners at Apollo have the opportunity to work at their own pace to complete academic badges, but are expected to be working. We recognize that each child learns at different speeds, and we are watching for consistent and diligent progress. Some learners complete multiple grade badges in a school year while others might take a bit longer. We invite parents to embrace their child's learning speed and embrace the philosophy of, "the only person you should compare yourself to, is you - yesterday." Within the Acton model, learners are provided the privilege and respect of being held to an expectation of excellence and mastery. Learners will not be awarded badges simply by completing tasks, but by mastering them or by working to attain excellence. An expectation of mastery may mean that a learner needs more than a school year to complete grade level work, but families can be assured that their child is not being pushed into more difficult concepts before understanding foundational skills.

# Whole Child Development

Learning does not happen in a linear fashion- its squiggly, curvy and sometimes even circular. You may not see concrete evidence of growth and learning in the first few months, but like a seed, the roots are growing and the foundation is forming for visible growth ahead. As an Apollo Academy parent, WATCH FOR IMPROVEMENT & PROGRESS IN YOUR CHILD'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT. Be on the lookout for growth in the following imperative skills:

## Learning to be and Learning to learn

- Think, speak, and write clearly.
- Persuade others that your course is the right one
- Goal setting and tracking
- Making peace
- Time management
- Finding joy
- Taking responsibility for actions
- Navigating gray area (when something seems unclear)
- Define problems without a guide
- Quickly assimilate needed data from irrelevant info
- Organized workspace
- Socratic discussion participation
- Meeting deadlines
- Being a friend
- Keeping promises
- Being a proactive team member
- Project planning
- Take initiative and work independently
- Ask hard questions, which challenge prevailing assumptions
- Finding focus
- Following a schedule
- Holding to Studio Contract Guardrails
- Communicating clearly
- Persevering through struggle
- Self-motivation
- Modeling kindness
- Understanding instructions (written/verbal)
- Creativity

## ASSISTANCE FROM GUIDES AND STAFF

Acton learners are encouraged to discover their own solutions to academic challenges. If a learner has exhausted their options to understand an academic concept, they may ask a guide for assistance, which will be given through a series of leading questions and demonstrations. Guides are not to provide one-on-one tutoring or lessons to assist with Core Skills progress in our Discovery studio. *Guides provide direction and instruction in our Spark studio for to core skills.*

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

We do NOT believe that standardized testing is a critical component of a quality, meaningful education; however, they may offer guides and parents some useful data. Learners will be given nationally-normed achievement tests to assess progress. Your learner will be guided through the process so that they have a full understanding of the purpose of such tests. These tests are given only to watch for patterns of progress over time. The information may be helpful for your family, but does not necessarily dictate any changes in the academic plan that your learner is using at Apollo. These assessments are given unannounced twice per year.

# INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN

The Acton Academy learning model is not well-suited to support children with certain learning struggles or behavioral challenges. When a guide recognizes that a learner is not reaching their full potential or is showing signs of a learning challenge, a letter will be sent to the child’s parents outlining the schools concerns and recommendations for further assessments. The school, parents, and learner will determine appropriate accommodations and/or interventions to meet the needs of the learner in an inclusive setting.

Apollo Academy does not offer Individual Education Plans & subsequent resources & support (IEP, as defined by the State/Public schools). As a small school, we do not have access to a school counselor, on campus nurse, or special education coordinators. If guides encounter social or emotional needs that may require additional professional support, observations will be provided to parents via email and/or in person, and a suggestion for outside support will be given. It is our ultimate purpose to best service every learner, thus we acknowledge when a child may need additional services. However, if it is determined that a learner’s individual needs interfere with the overall learning community (and studio functionality), the learner may be asked to leave Apollo Academy.

Excellence at Apollo Academy		
Standards	Description	To ask/consider/prepare
BEST WORK	<i>If this is the first time someone has attempted a task, have they certified it as their “best work?”</i>	<i>Do you agree this is their best work? Your best work is achieved after multiple drafts . ask how many drafts they have worked on. How much time was spent on this? Ask the hero if they could improve any areas of the badge.</i>
SHOWS IMPROVEMENT	<i>If this is a task or skill that has been tried before, is this better than last time?</i>	<i>In order to show improvement, you will need both pieces of work. Is their improvement obvious, or did they have to really search for it? Is there a detailed critique favorably comparing their work this time to last time?</i>
COMPARISON TO WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS	<i>As work quality soars and plateaus: How does it compare to a world-class example?</i>	<i>Is there a detailed critique favorably comparing the work to a world-class example? Would you consider their world-class example to truly be a world-class example?</i>
WINNER OF A CONTEST	<i>Did heroes select this as a “best of” example in a vote by the studio, or has it been approved for a public exhibition?</i>	<i>Have they recorded what contest they won? Are they competing against peers at the same level?</i>

# Cheering from the Stands

*"...stop thinking of yourself as the manager of kids' education, and start seeing yourself as their consultant: someone who gives advice, shares expertise, and provides resources while remaining fundamentally detached from the specific outcomes of this process." —Blake Boles*

## APOLLO ACADEMY WEBSITE/ BLOG

This is the central hub for all information. Links to important information, calendars, and community updates are housed here. In addition, our launches, project-based work and special program details are posted to the blog each week. Because there are other types of blog posts on the website, these blog posts will share the tag "Weekly Blog" for ease of finding them.

A blog is posted at the beginning of each week. You can access the current week and all past weeks' blogs at any time via our main website. Please add it to the shortcuts on your phone for easy reference.

## PARENT FACEBOOK GROUP

We use a private Facebook group to share and communicate as a community. Guides will frequently post photos and highlights of our day. Only parents will be allowed to join this closed group. Parents are also able to post comment and share as necessary in this group. Link: [www.facebook.com/groups/apolloacademyparents](http://www.facebook.com/groups/apolloacademyparents)

## CONTACTING GUIDES

Because guides move between studios and have contact with all learners, communication with parents is through a common email noted below. If you wish to direct your email to a particular guide, simply address your note to him or her (example- ATTN: Ms. Wendy) but use the common email address. The information on the emails is kept strictly confidential between you and the guides & owners. The email address is

**Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com.**

## WHEN TO CONTACT A GUIDE

- Early pickup/absence
- Journey review meeting
- To arrange a studio observation
- Emergencies

Being a small staff, time-saving techniques have been established in order to maintain a high level of efficiency. Please avoid asking guides questions at drop off or pickup. Guides will be in "guide mode" at all times while on campus.



Be prepared: Guides are Socratic and rather than answering questions may ask you questions and refer you to resources to help you. You should review this handbook (or other studio procedures before sending an email, as that is likely how you will find your answers anyway). Please understand that we will not be available to talk with you during the morning drop off, during school, or afternoon pick up times.

## STUDIO OBSERVATION

We welcome parents to visit and observe the studio experience to gain further understanding of the learning journey. The studio, however, is a very special environment for the learners, and we want to protect their personal space and privacy. The following guidelines will help ensure that the studio experience does not become diluted by interruptions.

- For the first semester, please email **Guides@TheApolloAcademy.com** ahead of your arrival. This will help us as we are getting to know our families by face and name.
- Please inform your child that you will be visiting to observe and that you will just be watching the group at work.
- When you arrive, park on W North A Street and wait by the gate to be let into the studio by a guide. Do NOT ask a learner to let you into the studio- they have been advised during our safety training to not let anyone into our space.
- During your observation time, you may quietly greet your child, and then find a comfortable place to sit. Enjoy taking it all in! Please do not initiate interaction with your child, the guide, or other learners. If a learner initiates with you, it is fine to interact.
- Parent visitors are asked to abide by the Socratic method, never providing answers to their child or other learners.
- If you are visiting for lunch/free time, you may informally interact with your learner and others who engage with you.
- When you are leaving, please say a quiet good-bye and make a quick departure.

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## WEEKLY SURVEYS

As part of our commitment to families, each family will receive feedback surveys. Your responses will be kept anonymous. We ask that you guide your child to provide helpful input rather than anything personal about another learner. The summary of these surveys will be shared with Acton families and guides periodically. By sharing the results, we uphold our shared value of transparency and accountability to you. The online survey is a place for constructive input and suggestions for how we can better serve your family. The link to submit a survey will be emailed to you weekly.

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## SURVEY FAQ

1. Participating in the survey is not required but greatly appreciated!
2. To remain affiliated with Acton Academy, we must have a yearly average of 4.5 or higher.
3. We ask that you include your child in the survey process.
4. Venting and overly critical comments or nonspecific reviews do not add value to the survey process. Giving specific ideas and suggestions on how to make the school better is greatly appreciated!

# Forming a Team: Parent Journey

## PARENT MEETINGS

Each year we host three parent-only lunch meetings. Part of the Parent Contract includes the commitment for one parent from each family to attend at least two of these meetings each year. Should a parent desire to host/organize one of these events, please contact Beth Ann to arrange this. These meetings are designed to keep a pulse on our community and discuss how we can improve upon fulfilling the vision for our school.

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## PARENT/FAMILY SOCIALIZATION

Feel free to socialize! We want our parents to be highly involved in creating a positive community of family support and friendship. As a small school we will offer occasional gatherings, but feel that each family can positively contribute by planning their own activities/gatherings and reaching out to the Apollo community for comradery. A family directory may be compiled and shared (with permission) for your convenience. Additionally, the Facebook parent's page can aid in getting the word out about Apollo Academy Parent/Family events.



## DEAR WITH PARENTS

DEAR with parents is offered weekly. These hour-sessions are designed for you to spend meaningful time in our studio. We will post the date/time of DEAR with Parents monthly so you can plan ahead. When you arrive, you choose a learner who has signed up for DEAR with Parents- this can be your learner or another learner. If your learner has not signed up, please do NOT attempt to read with them- pick another learner or group of learners. The purpose of this is to create intentional time together with our parents in the studio, but also demonstrate to our learners how important reading is to us.

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## YOUR ACTON JOURNEY

The life of an Acton parent is not always easy, as we are committed to let struggle help our children to grow and become independent and confident learners. As such, Apollo Academy has a deep core belief that parents need to also be diligent in being on their own journey. While this can take on many forms, we strongly encourage that you continue to read and study the Acton suggested books as part of your growth. The more you learn about why we chose Acton Academy and why our systems work, the more meaningful this journey will be for you. You will be better able to notice the “small” victories and feel confident in your hero’s (and your own!) ability to find a calling and change the world!

# Tuition & Upping Your Game

## TUITION

Tuition pays for a hero's space in the studio, and since another hero cannot fill that spot for occasional absences, tuition is not prorated or discounted due to illnesses, personal vacations, observed holidays, inclement weather, school canceling due to imminent or unforeseeable acts of God that may pose a threat of any kind.

Tuition payments are set up on auto-payment and paid in advance of each month on the first business day of the month. Rejected autopayments will incur a \$50 charge to resolve the issue. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the studio.



## Foundational Books

***Courage to Grow*** by Laura Sandefer

***UnSchooling Rules*** by Clark Aldrich

***The Power of TED*** by David Emerald

***Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning*** by Peter Johnston

***Mastery: The Keys to Success and Long-Term Fulfillment*** by GB Leonard

***The Talent Code*** by Daniel Coyle

***An Ethic of Excellence*** by Ron Berger

***Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*** by Angeline Stoll Lillard

***A Thomas Jefferson Education: Teaching a Generation of Leaders for the Twenty-First Century*** by Oliver DeMille

***Work Rules*** by Laszlo Bock

***The Self-Directed Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Child More Control Over Their Lives*** by William Stixrud and Ned Johnson

***Empower: What Happens When Heroes Own Their Learning*** by John Spencer and A.J. Juliani

***Fires in the Mind: What Kids Can Tell Us About Motivation and Mastery*** by Kathleen Cushman



# Important Books



***The End of Average*** by Todd Rose

***12 Rules of Life*** by Jordan Peterson

***Frantic Families*** by Patrick Lencioni

***Tribe*** by Seth Godin

***The Collapse of Parenting*** by Leonard Sax

***Grit*** by Angela Duckworth

***Mindfulness*** by Ellen J. Langer

***The War of Art*** by Steven Pressfield

***E-Myth*** by Michael E. Gerber

***Antifragile*** by Nassim Taleb

*Ungifted: Intelligence Redefined* by Scott Kauffman

***Designing Your Life: How to build a Well Lived and Joyful Life*** by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans

***He, She, We and Inner Work*** by Robert Johnson

***Education for Judgment: The Artistry of Discussion Leadership*** by C. R. Christensen, D. A. Garvin, and A. Sweet

***Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives*** by Peter Johnston

***Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*** by Carol Dweck

***NatureShock: New Thinking About Children*** by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman

***The Power of Moments*** by Chip and Dan Heath

***Flow*** by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

***Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*** by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen

***Build a School in the Cloud*** (TED talk by Sugata Mitra)

***Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*** by Steven Covey

## We think this goes without saying, but just in case...

### BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR ADULTS

While on campus or interacting with members of the Acton Academy community, all adults are expected to adhere to the following values: respect, calm communication (no yelling or cursing), compliance with this Policy & Procedures Handbook, no harassment, and absolutely NO alcohol, tobacco, or drug use. If adults engage in inappropriate behavior, they will be:

- Informed that their behavior is inappropriate.
- Requested to stop.
- Requested to leave school premises if appropriate.

Any faculty or staff member may refuse to place a child in the care and custody of an adult who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If inappropriate behavior continues, the school reserves the right to prohibit visits to the campus and/or reconsider the enrollment of the child(ren) in the school.

# Scoring the Winning Point



**What is the point in providing your child with a world-class education if you do not come out of it with stronger bonds and solid relationships?**

The Winning Point is to truly grow as an individual, a family, and to be your child's #1 fan in this game called life. How?

- Work to remove fear from your parenting by “drilling down to the Why?” Not sure what this means? Beth Ann would love to chat with you about this.
- Be on your OWN journey! Your privilege is to enjoy growing next to your child! Have a project. Share your excitement with your child – they will follow your lead.
- See the genius & the hero. We define heroes as: Someone who gets up every time they fall. This truly heroic approach to life is absolutely enough to change the world for good.

**The Result:** Peace in knowing that your child (like you!) is working to do the best they can with the knowledge they have. You have a clearer picture of their divine, unlimited potential, and you can more readily trust them. Your family grows...and grows together.

Notes

Learn to LEARN.

Learn to DO.

Learn to BE.



APOLLO  
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[www.TheApolloAcademy.com](http://www.TheApolloAcademy.com)