



Published on *DoD STARBASE* (<http://dodstarbase.org>)

[Home](#) > Extra Robotics Lessons for Quizzical Kids

---

## Extra Robotics Lessons for Quizzical Kids

CAMP GUERNSEY JOINT TRAINING CENTER, Wyo. - Wyoming STARBASE Academy opened its doors for four days in June to 20 students who expressed a desire to learn more about robotics after being introduced to LEGO Mindstorms robots during their school's visits earlier in the year.

This was the academy's first-ever camp. Fifth-grade students who attended the academy during the school year were given an opportunity to attend by entering an essay contest. Twenty students were selected for the "Fear Factor"-themed program that offered advanced skills training with the LEGO robots and some "scary" challenges and snacks.

STARBASE instructor Sandy Graham said the students who wrote essays really enjoyed their time at the Guard-sponsored program that emphasizes a number of science skills, not offered at public schools.

"They wanted to take it further than the two hours allotted for robotics [during the STARBASE course]," she explained. "A lot of them are gamers and really enjoyed this section. These robots cost more than \$300, so not everyone can afford them."

The robots and programming software used for the camp were more advanced than what was introduced to the general student populace. The campers not only learned how to program and build a robot to navigate simple obstacles, they can now customize them for varied events such as drag racing and sumo wrestling.

"Each day of camp, we previewed what the next day's event would be," Graham said. "We show how it works and give them the rules. They are choosing to research and look at YouTube videos of what others have done. Some of these kids are very competitive. They're having a ball. They come in early and one kid said he was up until midnight getting ideas."

Tori Smale, 11, from Dildine Elementary School, said her sumo bot could see its opponent.

"It can then turn around," she said. "I have to tweak the program just a little because its claws block its eyes."

Here are some of the reasons these students, who enter sixth grade next school year, wanted to attend, as excerpted from some of the submitted essays.

"I will get to enhance my learning without actually going to summer school. I learned so much from getting to do Starbase Academy, and it was so much fun that it didn't feel like school," wrote one.

Another penned: "I would like to create friendships with students from other schools. I would get to have even more fun in my summer!"

And still another said, "I think of being an inventor. When I found out about the STARBASE Fear Factor, I felt like I was going to flip in midair! As I read the article about this, I found out that this had to do with Lego mindstorms which I love! Now that you know how I love Legos and that I am an inventor, it is time to wrap it up. The first time at Starbase we did mindstorms,

and I wish I could do more. But this is my chance. I hope I can go to STARBASE Fear Factor.”

The STARBASE staff added “Fear Factor” elements to the camp with with snacks such as “booger bars” and “worms and dirt.” Creepy bugs and spiders were in abundance, but none of that could wipe the smiles off faces eager to learn and experiment.

Original Article, Click [Here](#). [1]

Posted July 2014

---

**Source URL:** <http://dodstarbase.org/articles/extra-robotics-lessons-quizzical-kids>

**Links:**

[1] [http://www.dvidshub.net/news/135458/starbase-academy-offers-extra-robotics-lessons-quizzical-kids#.U9qNy\\_IdVg2](http://www.dvidshub.net/news/135458/starbase-academy-offers-extra-robotics-lessons-quizzical-kids#.U9qNy_IdVg2)