



Turtle Island Tribute

October 2025



October 6th - Student Success Meetings
October 13th - Thanksgiving - No classes
October 15th - Picture Day, PM

Faculty and Staff

ursa Teaching Team For 2024-2025

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Principal Message



As the cooler days and vibrant colours of October arrive, I want to take a moment to celebrate the wonderful start we've had to our school year. Our online learning community continues to thrive, filled with dedication, perseverance, and creativity from both students and teachers. Whether in Grade 1 or Grade 12, the passion for learning is evident in every class, project, and interaction.

October is a month of change—just like the season itself. It's the perfect time to reflect on progress and look ahead. For our younger learners, this means strengthening foundational skills in reading, math, and curiosity. For our high school students, it's about preparing for the future, setting goals, and embracing opportunities that will shape both academic and personal growth.

This month, we're encouraging students to focus on goal setting and self-discipline—skills that build success not only in online learning, but in life. I encourage each student to take ownership of their learning, set achievable goals, and celebrate the small victories along the way. Remember, your teachers are here to support you every step of the journey.

In the spirit of the season, let's also celebrate our sense of community. While we may be learning from home, we remain connected through our shared commitment to excellence. Supporting one another makes us stronger as we navigate this exciting year together.

Finally, a reminder that Monday, October 13th is **Thanksgiving Day**—a well-deserved opportunity to spend time with family and reflect on gratitude.

Thank you for your continued partnership in learning. Let's make this October a memorable and meaningful one!

Student Success Meetings – October 8

Our first Student Success Meetings of the year will be held on **Wednesday, October 8th**. These meetings are a wonderful opportunity to connect with teachers, celebrate progress, and discuss next steps for your child's learning journey. Teachers will be reaching out directly with information on how to book your meeting time.



We especially encourage families of students with Individual Program Plans (IPPs) to attend, as this is an excellent time to review goals and ensure we are working together to best support your child's success.

Ms. Guest



What a great start we have had to the new school year. Assessments have been completed, plans are coming together for exciting activities for the rest of the year, and our students are getting settled into the routine of their online classes.

In ELA, we are moving into our regular rhythms with new letter sounds in the youngest grades, building sentences and paragraphs in the middle elementary grades and starting our spelling and writing practice with our oldest elementary students after the first month, focused on getting to know one another and building community in our online classes.

In all the elementary classes, we use Epic Books, an online library of over 40,000 digital books, including read-to-me and audiobooks. At school, we utilize the free school subscription, which grants students access to the library from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm on school days, in the time zone where they are logging in. If you are interested in accessing Epic beyond these time limits, reach out to me, as we have a 25% off the family subscription code that I can pass along to the students we have signed up through their class. This brings it to about \$65 for the year.

Other educational platforms we use include education.com and prodigy.com. These are used for assignments, assessments, and as additional or support work for students seeking extra practice through a gamified interface. Your child should be signed up for their classes online. These programs are available at all times for your students to work on, not just during school hours. If you are having any technical difficulties with these programs, reach out to your teacher, and then the tech support on their websites, which have been very helpful in the past.

In Math 1-2, we will be starting to use our Jump Math workbooks and also will be working a fair bit with creating and continuing patterns over the next while, so keep those pipe cleaners and pony beads handy. Students will be asked to create and maintain certain patterns throughout the year, so ensure you have a diverse assortment of bead colours and pipe cleaners available.

The Science 1-4 class is well into our materials unit; you may have seen them running around your house collecting the most random things as they show what they know through real-time scavenger hunts. Fridays are often days when we encourage science students to explore the world offline and outside. These are days for experiments and observations, where we check in at the beginning of class and will require them to go outside at some point over the weekend to complete their work.

Mrs. Parish

ELA 3-4

In September, we established a routine, met new friends, and began our yearly learning. Creating great sentences will be a top priority for our writing. What do you need for a great sentence? What does MINTS stand for? Each day, I encourage you to have your child write one sentence focusing on the highlighted points we discussed in class.



Math 3-4:

Math facts... the dreaded words that most math students do not want to hear. Have them use this website to practice at their own pace and work on the fact they want to focus on. Make it relaxing or create a challenge with a time limit. Working on these facts will help their everyday math.

<https://webmathminute.com/>

Social 1-6

Grade 2/3/4 – What is the sentence they were taught to help remember the provinces? Reviewing this sentence every day will help them learn to name these provinces.

Grade 5/6 – Focusing on map reading and creating maps has been our latest focus. Use this website to help them with these skills.

<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/map-skills-for-students/>

Social 7-9

Grade 7 – Our focus has been on 3 main Indigenous cultures and comparing their lifestyles to one another. This will be our starting point on the timeline for the creation of Canada. What other events can they think of that may fall on this timeline?

Grade 8 – The Italian Renaissance – so many scholars, philosophers, astronomers, and artists emerged out of the era. I had them step into the role of Michelangelo to create their “Sistine Chapel”. Try creating a masterpiece with your child, using the lesson that I shared.

Grade 9 – We focused on many aspects of the Canadian government. Lobbying was our focus. How would they create a bill? What bill did they create in class? Why was this important to them? Is there another issue that they would like to change or add?

Mrs. Bhavra



In health class, we have been focusing on time management skills. Students are learning how to use both monthly and daily planners to organize upcoming assignments/quizzes/tests, set goals, and manage their time effectively. These skills also help students prioritize their tasks, allowing them to focus on what's most important and use their time wisely. This will help students manage their workload effectively and reduce stress. We will be talking about procrastination in the upcoming weeks.

In Genius Hour, we started exploring nature through owl pellets. Students have begun measuring, examining, and dissecting owl pellets to discover what these fascinating birds eat. Over the next few weeks, we'll continue our investigations, recording data and making connections to food chains/webs and ecosystems.

Take a look at some pictures below:



Extended Study Trip

From September 22–24, our grade 9-12 students had the opportunity to explore central Alberta during our Extended Study Trip. With Camp Caroline as our home base, we ventured out to **Wild Horse Ranch** and **Fort Normandeau** for hands-on learning and new experiences. Students spent time with horses, brewed their own sarsaparilla tea, and learned about the history and significance of the wild bison hunts.

Beyond the activities, one of the trip's greatest highlights was the friendships that were formed and strengthened. Students connected with one another in new ways, building bonds that will

carry into the school year.

It was a memorable trip filled with discovery, teamwork, and connection—thank you to everyone who helped make it such a success. We are already planning our next adventure!



Ms. Mackinnon



ELA 7

Welcome to October! Students have been busy in the first month of school. Now, we are going to apply what we've learned in the Short Story: Who Am I? Unit to write our own short stories. We will focus on story arcs, characters, suspense, foreshadowing, and grammar development.

Get published! Students can choose to use their stories written in class to enter a contest 😊

The moment has arrived! The Kids Write 4 Kids Creative Challenge is officially open for entries. If you're in grades 4-8 and have a tale to tell — whether you're a budding novelist, a poet, or an imaginative storyteller — this is your moment to shine.

Why Enter?

- **Get Published:** Winners become published authors.
- **Give Back:** Proceeds from book sales benefit the winner's chosen charity.
- **Join the Panel:** Winners serve on next year's judging panel.

Writing Contest Deadline: **March 31, 2026**

ELA 10

Students will begin reading [The Secret Life of Bees](#) shortly. Bees are the overarching symbol in this text, but did you know that bees fly more than once around the world to gather a pound of honey and that the average life of a honeybee during the working season is about six weeks?

You can learn more about [Bumble Bee Recovery](#) from Wildlife Preservation Canada.

Film Study is an essential unit in English Language Arts. Students can explore the literary elements of storytelling and the visual elements of composition. Students will explore the film Finding Neverland (2004). Watch the trailer [HERE](#). The familiarity of Peter Pan unleashes opportunities for

students to delve deeper into the themes of the power of imagination and creativity, dealing with loss and grief, the enduring importance of family and love, and the magic of childhood innocence.

ELA 12

The focus of writing in our first unit was to make personal connections to the text; now, we will focus on analysis with the novel, *The Book Thief*. The backdrop of World War II sets the stage for this rich story of the power of words, humanity's duality, mortality, love and hate, and the juxtaposition of kindness and cruelty.

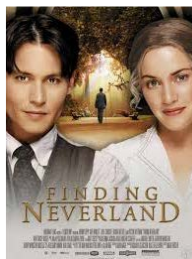
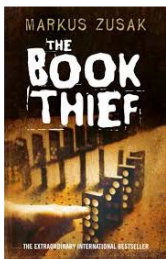
Scholarship Corner

Are you interested in receiving some financial support to attend post-secondary studies? Did you know that your child could access hundreds of scholarships?

Scholarships Canada <https://www.scholarshipscanada.com/Index.aspx>

Student Awards <https://studentawards.com/>

Scholarship Partners https://portal.scholarshippartners.ca/s_Login.jsp



Mrs. Gilluley

Our Grade 8/9 students have been busy diving into the world of short stories! After reading and analyzing several classics, students are now in the process of writing their own original short stories. We're excited to see many of these works submitted to the ursa Short Story Anthology later this month.

For those who want to share their writing more widely, here are a few **short story contests** students may be interested in:

- [Youth of Canada](#)
- [Polar Expressions Publishing Student Writing Contest](#)
- [Scholastic Arts & Writing Awards](#)

In addition, students are beginning work on their first book report of the year, building important skills in comprehension, analysis, and communication. We look forward to seeing the creativity and insight that emerges from both of these projects!



Mr. Ingram



We're happily moving right along in Math 10C. Students have just wrapped up our **second unit**, and I'm proud of the steady effort and growing confidence I'm seeing. Nicely done, team!

Next up: **Unit 3 – Factors & Products**, beginning the **week of October 6**. We'll delve into prime factorization, greatest common factors, and least common multiples, exploring how these concepts underpin smart algebraic thinking. Translation for kitchen-table math chats: we'll be breaking things down and building them back up—LEGO-style, but with numbers.

A gentle reminder: please continue encouraging your child to reach out whenever they need help—in class, during extra help times, or via email. Questions are not a detour; they're the road.

Early check-ins make a significant difference, and I'm always happy to support them.

On a personal note, being part of the **extended study trip** was a real highlight. It was a pleasure spending time with our students outside the usual routine—sharing conversations, laughs, and a few “wow” moments. It gave me the chance to get to know many of them better, and for them to get to know me a little better, too. Experiences like that strengthen our classroom community and show up in the way we learn together.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership. Your encouragement at home complements the work we're doing in class perfectly. Here's to a positive start to Unit 3!

Warmly,

Mr. Dean Ingram

(If your child needs a hand, please nudge them to ask—my door and inbox are open.)

Mr. Snook

Over the past few weeks, our math classrooms have been buzzing with energy and discovery!

In **Math 30-1 and Math 31**, students have been diving deep into mathematical connections using the Desmos online graphing calculator, sparking curiosity and excitement as they see concepts come alive on the screen.



Meanwhile, our **Math 20-1** students have been engaging through Lumio, where they've had the chance to demonstrate their understanding in real time—giving everyone, including me, immediate feedback and fostering a supportive learning environment. In **Math 30-2**, we've been exploring set theory and connecting it to real-world examples, helping students see how these abstract ideas apply in meaningful ways. It's been inspiring to watch each class embrace both the challenges and the joy of learning mathematics. I'm so proud of their effort, enthusiasm, and willingness to try new approaches as we continue to grow together.

We also enjoyed our **first homeroom session**, which began quietly but ended on a joyful note when my dog, **Teddy**, made a surprise appearance. That sparked a wave of sharing as students introduced us to their own pets, creating a warm and fun sense of community. It's been wonderful to see not only academic growth but also the relationships and excitement building in our classes.

Mrs. Alexander



"Pure mathematics is, in its way, the poetry of logical ideas." — Albert Einstein

What We're Working On

- **Math 10-3** → *Unit Pricing*: applying ratios and costs in everyday shopping. Students completed the Ice Fishing Shelter project and are now moving on to the Party Planner project.
- **Math 20-3** → *Graphical Representation*: exploring how data is displayed and interpreted. Students finished the Terrain Park project and are beginning the Tourism Brochure project.
- **Math 20-2** → *Puzzles and Games*: analyzing patterns and strategies through reasoning. Their culminating research project will bring together all units as a real-world application.
- **Online Science Explorers** → Recently explored *Spaceships*: students designed and launched paper rockets, measured and compared distances, and kept a *Captain's Log* to record learning. Each week brings a new theme—next up is **Amazing Animals!**

Open Houses: A Head Start for High Schoolers

Attending post-secondary open houses in Grades 10 and 11 is an excellent way for students to explore future possibilities early. Visiting campuses allows them to see different programs, talk with professors and current students, and learn about admission requirements and scholarships. This early exposure helps them make informed decisions about high school course selections while also sparking motivation and excitement for their educational journey ahead. Since Grade 12 is often very busy with diploma exams, final projects, and applications, attending earlier gives students the time and freedom to explore without pressure.

Upcoming Post-Secondary Open Houses

- **SAIT** – Oct 17–18 → sait.ca/open-house
 - **MRU** – Oct 18 → mtroyal.ca/Admission/OpenHouse
 - **UCalgary** – Oct 25 → ucalgary.ca/open-house
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Mr. Ash

ELA Grade 5 and 6

This year has started very well. The students are settling in and getting used to the routines. We have started the year by going over how to use Canvas, submit assignments, and complete work on the screen.

Students have been learning about the differences between declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences. We have talked about predicates, subjects, and how to use conjunctions to combine simple sentences into compound sentences. Students have been adding descriptions to their writing and have been demonstrating a positive attitude towards their learning.



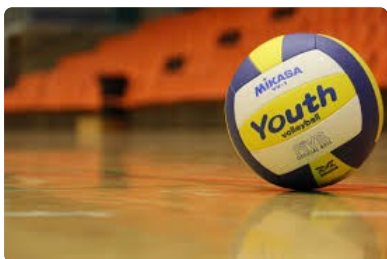
[Free English Grammar Books \(PDF\)](#)

Math Grade 5 and 6

Students have been understanding simple multiplication and practicing their basic facts. We have been learning to examine how patterns can occur in our world in various ways. Students see how they exist within number sequences and shapes and can identify variables.

We are beginning to discuss place value and regrouping in large numbers, up to millions, and will progress to billions. Understanding through problem-solving is our goal for the next few weeks. Students will be able to demonstrate their learning through application-based problem-solving.

[Math | Khan Academy](#)



Extra-curricular Activities

The grade 7 and 8 girls' volleyball team has had a great start to their season. They recently picked up their first win of the season, and the girls demonstrated such high energy and a positive attitude!

The grade 8 and 9 volleyball team also picked up their first win of the season vs Rundle Academy and the girls have been working hard and they are demonstrating such great teamwork and sportsmanship.

Go Ravens!

[Calgary ISAA Junior High - \(Calgary, AB\) - powered by LeagueLineup.com](#)

High School Homerooms

Our next High School Homeroom will take place on **Monday, October 20 from 1:00–2:00 pm**. This month's focus is on Post-Secondary & Transition Planning. Students will explore Alberta post-secondary options, application timelines and scholarships, apprenticeships and non-traditional routes, and financial aid basics.



This is an important session to help students begin thinking about their future pathways and the many opportunities available after high school.

Picture Day



For those who wish to have a school picture for this year, please reach out for an appointment using the link below. There was an earlier email sent out regarding this.

When: Wednesday, October 15th. Afternoon, by appointment.

Where: East Campus, 400 Prince of Peace Way, Rocky View

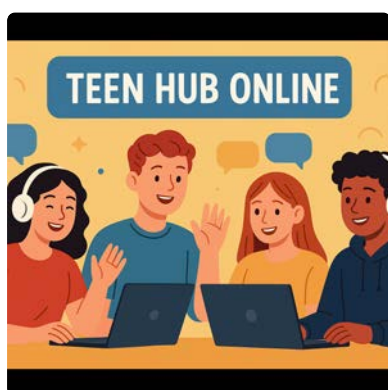
Note: Parents will be emailed the appointment booking link at the beginning of October.

Proctorio

In order to add another layer of security to our online assessments for our junior and senior high students, **ursa** has implemented a platform that enhances our ability to monitor students while they are completing the assessments. Proctorio is used globally by many institutions worldwide and has proved successful. This platform will be used for all **ursa** junior and senior high online assessments during the 2025-26 school year. More information on the requirements is provided in the updated Parent Handbook.



Teen Hub



As students grow into their teenage years, developing connections with peers becomes increasingly important. However, we understand that home-educated teens may not always have access to the same social opportunities as their peers in traditional school settings. That's why we're excited to continue our peer-to-peer mentoring program for students in grades 7-12 enrolled in ursa's Distance, Parent Directed, and Shared Responsibility programs.

This program will provide a fun and interactive space for your child to meet and connect with like-minded students. Using platforms like Kumospace, participants will have the chance to engage in meaningful conversations, share experiences, and make lasting friendships. Our program will be led by a teaching professional who will guide the students through these interactions in a structured and supportive way.

We believe this mentoring program will help your child develop important social skills while giving them the opportunity to make new friends and feel part of a larger community. It's a chance to explore new connections, learn from peers, and build a positive online experience—all while staying in the comfort of home.

Please fill out this form to let us know if you are interested:

<https://forms.gle/4qT9CKN2f1kobeN79>

We're excited about the possibilities this program will offer and would love for your child to be a part of it. If you have any questions or would like more details, please don't hesitate to reach out to our coordinator.

Alisha Brignall BGS, B.Ed M.Ed
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Trivia Club!

Introducing the ursa Online Trivia League

Ready to flex those brain cells and have some fun with friends across the ursa community? Say hello to the ursa Online Trivia League—a year-long, school-wide competition where curiosity counts, laughter is encouraged, and bragging rights are very real.

Who can join?

Every ursa student! Players will be grouped by age/grade level so matches are friendly, fair, and full of great rivalries.

How it works

- Play all year: Short, fast-paced trivia events run throughout the school year. Join a single match or compete regularly and climb the standings.
- Solo or with friends: Jump in on your own or team up with classmates—either way, you'll meet new people and sharpen your trivia game.
- Fresh themes every round: Pop culture, science, sports, history, music, world wonders, wild card rounds—you name it.
- Prizes & glory: Win spot prizes during events and collect points toward end-of-year awards for each division (plus ultimate ursa bragging rights).

Why join?

Because this is about more than questions and answers. We're building a vibrant online community outside the classroom—a place to hang out, cheer each other on, and enjoy friendly competition with schoolmates you might not see in your daily classes. Think quick matches, lively chat, and a steady stream of "I totally knew that!" moments.

All levels welcome

Never played trivia before? Perfect. The league rewards teamwork, creativity, and bold guesses. If you're curious and up for a good time, you'll fit right in.

Getting started

Watch for the signup announcement from ursa, grab a friend (or fly solo), and pick your division based on your grade level. We'll share event dates and simple joining instructions—just bring your best guess and your best emoji reactions.

Let's make this the most connected, welcoming, and delightfully nerdy corner of ursa. See you on the leaderboard!



High School Homeroom Initiative



New for 2025–2026: Monthly Homeroom Classes for Grades 10–12

This year, we are excited to introduce monthly Homeroom classes for our students in **Grades 10–12**. These one-hour sessions will be held on Mondays and are designed to support students in both

their academic journey and personal growth.

Each month, homeroom will focus on a different topic, including:

- Goal setting
- Post-secondary planning and transitioning
- Scholarships and funding opportunities
- Career awareness and exploration
- Volunteering and giving back
- Study skills and learning strategies
- Mental health and wellness
- Financial literacy

Homeroom is a valuable opportunity for students to connect, prepare for the future, and gain skills that extend beyond the classroom. Homeroom teachers will share the schedule of days and times directly with their students.

We look forward to seeing our high school students grow through these new sessions!



Dean Ingram

Dean is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

