



CTL CORNER

Center for Teaching & Learning | 26131 Kuykendahl, The Woodlands, TX 77375 | 832-474-8214

Important Dates

- **September 10 - CTL Parent Orientation**, 6-7 p.m. grades pK-8; 7-8 p.m. grade 9
- **September 10 - Vision and Hearing Screenings**
- **September 17 - School Photos**
- **September 18 - Room Parent Planning Meeting**, 8:30 a.m.-
- **September 20 - International Day of Peace**, 12:00 to 1:00 -
- **Tentative Events Calendar** -
Follow the link to [Tentative Events Calendar](#)



Welcome to a New School Year

The secret of getting ahead is getting started—Mark Twain

Fresh starts are great! After a summer of preparation, we are back in full swing with your children and off to a great start at CTL! Thank you for being such amazing, supportive parents and for sending us great students!

We enjoyed the coming together of our CTL family at *Meet the Teacher* and *Meet & Greet* on August 26 and at *Bingo Night* last Friday night! Thanks to all who attended for making this a night of fun and fellowship. We appreciate Anne Peebles for spearheading the event again this year and all the volunteers who showed up to decorate, contributed to the auction items, and volunteered to assist with the successful running of the evening. What a great night of fun!

Our theme for this year is *Throw Kindness Like Confetti*. In a world where kindness is sometimes difficult to find, our mission is to provide a kind environment that nurtures the kindness in each student so they grow up to be kind citizens. We emphasize that we are all different, to



Important Reminders

*Please have your child at school by 7:55 a.m. every morning so he/she does not miss our Morning Meeting that begins at 8 a.m.

*Please make sure your child has a snack, lunch, and water bottle every day and tennis shoes on PE days.

*Invite your child to show CTL school spirit by wearing his/her CTL t-shirt on Fridays.



appreciate the uniqueness in each other, and to celebrate those differences. Kindness breeds respect and respect breeds kindness—the most important value lesson we can teach our children to be successful in life. To reinforce the theme, teachers will be wearing our kindness team Tshirts each Monday, and you can ask your child to share experiences that demonstrate kindness-- when he/she was kind to someone else or when someone was kind to him/her.

We are excited to launch the high school this year beginning with 9th grade—something we have been planning since we opened the school in 2014. We have a fabulous group of 9th graders and an amazing group of teachers. We have heard nothing but excitement and enthusiasm from all involved. The 9th graders are great role models for the students in grades PK-8, and we are happy they join us during morning meeting to share their celebrations and at morning break and lunch recess to demonstrate that 9th graders like to have fun too.

Thanks to James Milner who last year spearheaded the fundraiser for two new swing sets—one for the front playground and one for the back. All swings are always occupied at recess. Thanks to those who assisted with the fundraising, who donated money, and installed them. Mr. Eric Luger, one of our dads, spent hours putting the swings up and came back this week to shorten the chains so our older students' feet wouldn't drag the ground when they swing.

If you were at Bingo Night you may have heard from some of our 5-6 students who chose, as their passion project, fundraising for a new gaga ball pit for the 5-9 field. They had advocated for and were awarded the opportunity to have lunch prior to recess; however, after a day of having to take turns with the grades 1-4, they voted to go to recess first and eat last in order to have more time in the gaga ball pit. Thanks to Mr. Milner's example and passion project time, they hope they have found the solution. That's problem solving!

We look forward to seeing you at Parent Orientation on the 10th, Room Parent Meeting on the 18th and International Day on the 20th. Thank you for your support of CTL. We love your children and look forward to a fantastic year!

Linda Ellis



Pre-K Class

Our first couple of weeks in Pre-K was a great success. We've spent a lot of time getting to know each other and getting to know the rules and routines of CTL. We have already started reading workshop, and here are a few books we have enjoyed thus far— *The Kissing Hand*; *What Does it Mean to be Kind?*; *Be Kind*; *Stick and Stone*; *The Blue Balloon*, *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?*; and *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* just to name a few.

We have started writing workshop, and I am especially proud of the books they are writing. I am amazed daily by their creativity and imagination.

In math we have also been exploring some of the manipulatives we will be using throughout the year. Many of our activities will focus on number sense and counting.

In social studies we will continue learning about ourselves and our friends. Your children have made some beautiful nature self-portraits. Most of the supplies were retrieved from CTL's playground. Please check them out if you get an opportunity as they are displayed in our hallway.

Upcoming in September we will be looking forward to talking about our five senses, will continue to learn about ourselves and our friends, and will complete a few science experiments.

Beckey Billings

K-1 Class

We are off to a fantastic start in kindergarten. We have been building our community and establishing routines and procedures for work and for play. The K-1 class has so quickly adjusted to the routines of the school day.

This will be a year of growth and discovery as the children learn to become more independent and as they develop efficiency as learners and discover their passions. We have an incredible group of students who are already confident and comfortable in our learning environment. I look forward to an outstanding year together.





I strongly encourage you to read to and with your child each and every day. I will begin sending home books with the children very soon each Friday on their reading levels.

I am dedicated to providing your children with the best possible learning experience, and we will also have lots of fun! I look forward to meeting each of you at the CTL Parent Orientation.

Cathy Sagar

1-2 Class

It has been a refreshing start to the new school year. The students are starting to get to know each other and enjoying their time together. Each of the first and second graders shared some interesting facts about themselves. We have spent a good deal of time going over procedures and expectations in the classroom, the school and on the playground. We talked about the importance and expectation of being kind. The class is starting to come together by learning organization and respect for our supplies and belongings.

In September we began to dive into our curriculum. This will include completing some baseline assessments within the subjects to see where students are in their learning. I have begun our Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to determine where each student is in reading. Students will begin to take book bags home with books from our classroom library. They are asked to read at least 20-30 minutes every night. Please read the information in their book bags describing the procedure and some ideas to help your child at home with his/her reading. Please be patient as I work to complete the assessments/observations to find out more about each child's strengths and challenges. This is crucial to my planning differentiated instruction throughout the year.

Since school started, the class has been settling in to our reading and writing workshops. They are learning how to share strategies in our math talks and have had the chance to do some experiments where they can exhibit some of the science safety they have learned. They are still working to understand how to use science and math tools as well.

Our Jungle Binders are an important resource for communication as well as important information. Make sure you read through it thoroughly. I think you will find it very helpful throughout the year. Please have your child bring it to and from school every day. Also, make sure you sign up for



the Remind App if you have not yet done so. This is a great way for me to send you quick announcements and reminders for our class. It is not meant for you to send me messages. I ask that you kindly send any messages for me via my CTL email.

We are looking forward to our upcoming Parent Orientation night. We will be sharing our curriculum and classroom information with you. Check the CTL Wednesday Bulletin for details. I hope you will attend. I am excited to have another great school year in the Explorer classroom!

Lisa Lipar

3-4 Class

Hello 3/4 families! It has been a wonderful start to the new school year. Your students have been adjusting well to new routines and procedures. I am anticipating amazing learning for our class this school year.

Currently our class has been focusing on rules and expectations. My philosophy at the start of school is to build a strong foundation of kindness and positive culture. Students have been getting to know each other through group work, games, sharing in the author's chair and more! Within reading and writing workshop we will continue to practice procedures while I observe and conference with each student in order to learn his/her specific skills and areas of growth.

As mathematicians students will continue to participate in daily mental math starting with addition and moving to subtraction. You will be amazed by the end of the school year with the mental math your child can solve! Our topic focus for September is place value to the millions and 100 millions place. We have had fun learning and playing math games about place value concepts. As I observe students playing, thinking, and working together, I am able to pinpoint known skills and areas of growth for your student. With this knowledge I can plan accordingly for individuals within math concepts.



Social studies for the past two weeks has been about getting to know each other and our classroom and CTL rules and expectations. Coming up in social studies we will begin learning about the geography of the United States.



As scientists, students will be learning about plant structures and then plant and animal parts. I am excited to conduct some interesting labs!

Thank you for all of your support! As a CTL family we will enjoy a wonderful school year.

Corrie Sheldon



5-9 Reading Writing Workshop

I am so delighted to be the homeroom teacher for Grades 5-6 this year. We have a wonderful group of students this year, and I am excited to see how much they develop and blossom. For our class read aloud, I have just started reading one of the books that has been nominated for the Bluebonnet Book Award this year, *Ghost Boy* by Jewell Parker Rhodes. It is a deep book that is going to take us on a journey to experience racism vicariously through the eyes of a young African American boy. The students are also enjoying their independent reading time and have settled into the routine remarkably well.

In writing workshop we have just started the process of generating ideas for topics to write about. The students are enjoying the process so far, and in a week or so they should have a large collection of ideas to write about and several free writing pieces begun.

It is fantastic to be back teaching Grades 7-8 again this year, and I am excited about our class read aloud, *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak. We are all intrigued by the opening section. The author has done a great job of hooking us in.

Everyone has settled into their independent reading time extremely well. They have made good book choices, and I am already conferencing with everyone in order to provide one-to-one support to develop their thinking-reader minds.

In writing workshop we are at the prewriting stage. We are busy creating a number of images and maps in order to dig into our unconscious and uncover all those amazing memories hiding in there.



I am excited also to be teaching the Grade 9 English course, and the students are all engaged in taking their reading and writing skills to the next level. Our class read aloud is the classic novel, *A Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. Through this text we will discuss literary devices, narrative voice and structure, identify themes, and much more besides. During individual student-teacher conferences, students will then be supported to transfer this knowledge to the books they are choosing to read during independent reading time.

In Grade 9 Creative Writing we have begun to work on our first genre, reflexive and memoir writing. Students are working with me to delve into their memory banks and begin to sift through and find ideas that will kick-start their creative minds into action.

Caroline Harrison

5-9 Math Workshop

Fifth through ninth grade mathematics investigations are underway. These mathematicians begin every class period with a mental math activity. Our goal with mental math is to develop strong computational efficiency and number sense. Students are replacing cumbersome and inefficient strategies with their own approaches that are constructed through recognizing patterns and developing number sense. All grade levels have been concentrating on building our community of learners. Mathematics requires risk taking, and our classroom is no different. All students are encouraged to think and share in a safe, secure learning environment.

Grades 5-6 students have been challenged with working in a Rubik's cube factory. They have sorted their inventory into units, long boxes, pallets, and shipping boxes. They determined what size truck would be required to haul one million Rubik's cubes and if that truck could actually fit down the road. By embedding our math into contextual learning, students are more invested in extending their thinking about place value and constructing their own ideas about the decomposition of numbers.

Grade 7 mathematicians kicked off the year by revisiting operations of fractions. Students helped Aunt and Uncle seed different sections of their farm and also calculated road trip driving times. Some students designed and created their own gardens while others performed calculations for recipes. We are striving to construct meaning behind fractions and their operations.



Our eighth and ninth grade students are tackling algebra this year. Students have already been challenged with arithmetic and geometric sequences as well as investigating linear functions. One of our favorite activities was watching short videos and sketching corresponding graphs. Students graphed the barbell's distance from the bench during bench press, the bum height of a girl sliding down a carnival slide, and the distance of a guy from the camera who was spinning on a merry-go-round. These mathematicians have really matured over the summer and have come to CTL ready to think!

Claire Want

5-9 Science Workshop

Grades 5-8 students are hard at work on their first unit called *Structure of Matter*. The students are expected to develop models to describe the atomic composition of simple molecules and extended structures. We started our unit with a fun exploration of the periodic table and are fast on our way now with combining molecules! This group has had a great start to the year!

Grade 7 has started this year in their unit called *Cells*. In this unit students conduct an investigation to provide evidence that living things are made of cells—either one cell or many different numbers and types of cells. We have already pulled out the microscopes to analyze living and nonliving items under the lens. They have mastered the knowledge that cells equal life! What a strong start to the year for this group!

Grade 9 Biology's first unit this year is called *Cell Division and Complex Organisms*. The students are expected to use a model to illustrate the role of cellular division (mitosis) and differentiation in producing and maintaining complex organisms by the end of the unit. We started with groups collaborating to put the life of a cell in order and using each other's knowledge to do so.

Now this group has plugged into their first high school project for science and is looking strong! I am excited to see the great research turn into awesome storyline projects.



Laura Wellbrock



5-6 Social Studies Workshop

We are off to a flying start in our social studies class exploring Ancient Civilizations. Our year ahead will have us studying Greece, Rome, Egypt and Asia, but to start with we will be learning research skills and problem identification as well as problem solving. The first project for the school year is about early humans and how they lived, when they lived, what they ate and what they did. We are doing this first research project as a collaborative study in groups of three. I have been really impressed by their work ethic and diligence and how much they have enjoyed looking at primitive humans.

After this we will explore how society became civilized, so use it as an opportunity to tell them to use their knives and forks at dinner!!!

James Milner

7-8 Social Studies Workshop

Grades 7-8 social studies is already blowing me away! This class has jumped straight into the project-based learning style. We are currently studying *The Legacy of the Roman Empire* and each group has chosen a topic under this umbrella to research and present to the class. We have three and a half weeks of working on this before our presentations on September 18th.

Laura Wellbrock

Grade 9 World Geography

World geography is a subject that will explore every corner of the earth and how we as humans interact with each other and the environment around us.

Before we begin our major research project exploring Canada and the U.S.A., we have been developing our geographic knowledge and skills. Maps contain a lot of information and conform to many rules and expectations that help us understand and makes sense of the world we live in. We have learned all these rules and have used them to make large detailed maps of the North American continent.

These maps will be a living resource for each student as we progress through our project-based learning this trimester. They will use and interact with this map as we move into Unit 2 and our first in-depth study of Canada and the United States.

James Milner

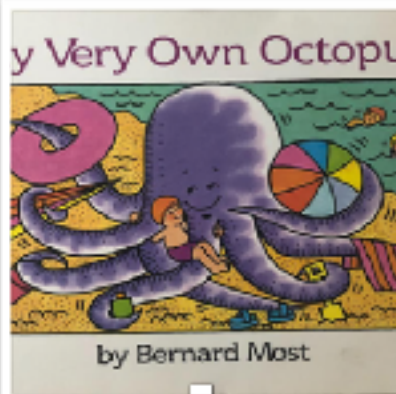


PreK-2 and Grade 9 Spanish

It's been an exciting two weeks in Spanish class. Colors, numbers and the way we communicate have been the priority. Laughter, songs and many jumps have been another priority.

Grade 9 students have worked hard to be able to begin the learning process. Each student has his/her name in Spanish, and they enjoy learning to speak and converse in Spanish! Great projects for the next few months with a lot of work and joy!

Bethy Meixeiro



PreK-8 Art Workshop

Artists and authors served as inspiration for this week in art. I read to Pre-K students *My Very Own Octopus* by Bernard Most. Students then continued by exploring the depths of the ocean and drew an adorable octopus. Our underwater friend had a dome-shaped head. The tentacles were patterned with broad stripes. Circle bubbles filled the background. Warm colors gave our octopus a colorful personality.

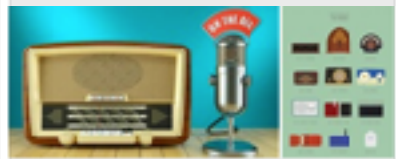


To kindergartners I read the rhyming book *Rumble in the Jungle* by Giles Andreal and David Wojtowycz. Then the adventures began with students learning to draw a strong, beautiful jaguar in the rainforest. We started the drawing with a basic cat face, and we added spots. We completed our jungle scene by creating jungle foliage to the background.

Grades 1-2 and 3-4 examined the colorful paintings by pop artist Romero Brito. Then we illustrated a fun, family portrait that featured a mix of common, household pets. Our pet family included a bunny, cat, mouse, and dog. Our animals were detailed with pleasant expressions and bright colorful patterns like Romero Brito's paintings.



Grades 5-8 were introduced to the legendary Dutch artist M.C. Escher. Students learned that Escher created many graphic pieces based on symmetry. His tessellation patterns were incredibly mind-boggling and showcased his cleverness in transforming one object into another. We emulated his tessellation patterns in our own drawing. Students were also exposed to an extensive list of art terms such as tessellation, positive and negative space, morph, transform, pattern, reflect, warm and cool colors, to name just a few.



Future art lessons during the month of September will focus on drawing a rainbow with the proper color order, sun face, and airplane in Pre-K and Kindergarten. A backpack still life, a drawing of a gumball machine, and sandwich graphic for Grades 1 through 4. Grades 5-8 will also draw a gumball machine, study Frida Kahlo, and create a batik featuring a bird.

Pam Mayo, Young Rembrandts

5-8 Drama Workshop

We are off and acting in drama. The 7-8 drama students have taken an immediate hands-on role in mentoring and challenging the new students and our Grade 5 students. I have been really impressed with the skills, confidence and ability of our new drama students. They are already talented actors and readers and have seized their first roles with open arms. We are rehearsing *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Trial of the Big Bad Wolf* and *The Fairy Godmother's Assistant*.

We hope to present these plays soon to our Pre-k and kindergarten classes.

James Milner

Grade 9 Media and Communication

The goal for this new course is that students start their own radio station early next year, but to achieve this there is a lot of work to do. We have started by researching the role of media as well as tracking the history of radio. The students got hands-on with a valve radio from the 1930's and were really enthusiastic as they tuned the dial and listened to the stations on the am spectrum. We have some more research ahead of us about rules and regulations for broadcasting and the role of the FCC.

I would also like to make a request for some sound equipment. I really want the students to be hands-on playing with records, CDs, cassettes and all things that produce audio. If you have any old speakers, turntables, CD players, records, cassettes, or compact discs, please contact me to see if we can use them in class.

James Milner

PK-8 Music Workshop

Hello CTL Parents! I am happy to be back for another wonderful year with the CTL music classes! Each of our music classes have been listening to a variety of music selections and learning to identify musical elements. The PreK and K



classes have focused on the difference between slow and fast tempos, while the Grades 1-4 students have been playing rhythm games and exploring the concepts of mood in music. The Grades 5-8 class has been engaged in discussions about musical genre classifications and how music has changed over the years. We look forward to the next few weeks when we will begin to prepare for our next musical performance.

Melanie Garcia

PK-4 Physical Education Workshop

It was so nice to see everyone's smiling face. Back-to-school is such an exciting time to welcome back our friends and welcome our new friends. Our first day back in P.E. we spent time going over *Safety, Rules and Expectations*. Every child should be prepared for P.E. class on Mondays and Wednesdays with outdoor shoes, hair-ties and water bottles. Parents, please remember to apply sunscreen and bug spray on your children so they are protected.

Grades PreK-4 are currently working on locomotive skills (walking, running, jumping, hopping, galloping, marching and skipping). We will continue working on these skills and playing tag games relative to locomotive skills for the month of September. In addition to locomotive skills, Grades 3-4 students have also started a team-building exercise which implements physical coordination, team cooperation, communication and planning skills. It teaches them how to problem solve and learn how to be a better team player. I'm looking forward to a fun and active year with your children!!

Sarina Eckhardt

5-8 Physical Education Workshop

Grades 5-8 P. E. students have spent our first two classes covering class norms and learning all the rules about our first unit of study. Our first unit will be six-weeks long, and the students will be playing Ultimate Frisbee. We love starting with this sport because it exemplifies teamwork and playing with integrity.

Laura Wellbrock

