



## The Skinny on

'askanastronomer' – the Space Centre's handle.

Welcome to your SKYPE session with the HR MacMillan Space Centre. This sheet will provide you with the basic set up and technical information to enable you to SKYPE with us at the Space Centre

### Technical Requirements:

You will need: a computer plus

- One of the following:
  - Skype 4.2 for Windows or higher
  - Skype 5.0 for Mac or higher
  - [Skype on your TV](#)

Make sure you are using the [latest version of Skype](#).

- A high-speed [broadband internet connection](#).
- A [webcam](#). Built in webcam or plug in. Many webcams are available from London Drugs, Future Shop, Best Buy, Apple, etc. No recommendations other than buying the best one that you can afford. Simple will work, but the higher priced ones will most likely have better image and sound qualities.
- A microphone (built into the camera is best)
- Speakers – so you can hear us!
- A digital projector or smart board to project the computer screen in large format for the entire class to see.
- A Skype account – free and easy to create. No need to 'buy' any credits or packages; our Skype sessions use the free computer to computer connection. [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

### Set up your Skype Account:

- Once you have created an account, please keep a record of your Skype name and password.
- Our Skype name is 'askanastronomer' – that is all one word, not case sensitive. You will need to invite **askanastronomer** to your contact list. We will then accept your invitation and we will be ready to Skype.

### Some settings recommendations:

- We recommend that you set your Skype account settings to only allow Skype calls between contacts that are in your contact list. Log into Skype. Choose TOOLS>OPTIONS>PRIVACY SETTINGS. Check '*Only allow people in my contact list to contact me*'.
- Set your options so that calls are answered with VIDEO, not just AUDIO. To do this log on to Skype and choose - Skype TOOLS>OPTIONS>VIDEO SETTINGS – both sections should be marked '*people in my contact list only*.'
- When not using Skype, we recommend exiting Skype manually – find Skype icon at bottom right of computer ICON bar, right click and choose **QUIT**. Otherwise Skype will continue to run in the background.

### **Test Your System: *Prior to the day of the scheduled Skype session.***

AUDIO - Make a Skype 'test' call to the Skype operator to test out your audio/speaker set up. This will ensure that your audio settings are optimized for a Skype call.

VIDEO - To check that your webcam is working correctly with Skype:

- Sign in to Skype.
- In the menu bar, click **Tools > Options...**
- Under **General**, select **Video Settings**. If you have a webcam connected, you should see a live picture from your webcam. You may have to select your webcam from the drop down menu. If you see yourself, your video is working.

For more trouble shooting tips, webcam recommendations and FAQ, please visit the Skype New Users guide: <http://www.skype.com/intl/en-us/support/user-guides/>

### **The Day of your Skype Session**

- Provide us with a phone number (cell or landline) for the room you are in during the session. If we have technical issues we can talk by phone.
- We will provide you with a contact number to use during the session should any technical issues arise. For questions prior to the session please contact Cam – [ccronin@spacecentre.ca](mailto:ccronin@spacecentre.ca)
- If we are ever disconnected during a session, the Skype program will attempt to re-connect the call. If this does not fix the issue **we will call you back**.
- It is advisable to set up your room so that all the **students can see the projection screen/smart board** and position the **web cam so that we can see as many of the students as possible. If possible have the students move their desks or sit in one large group in front of the camera.**
- Back light is not our friend, so try to avoid placing the students with windows behind them. You may need to adjust the lighting with darker lighting near the screen and more light on the students.
- Five to ten minutes before the scheduled Skype session, we will call you to establish a connection. We will then MUTE our side, put up our logo and wait for your students to be ready.

### **During Your Skype Session**

- It is helpful if the teacher can act as a facilitator and be near your microphone/web-cam. They can then repeat questions that come up during the presentation directly to us.
- Question Period – at various points we will open it up to questions from the students. It is best if the students can come forward and speak to us near the microphone/web cam for the best clarity and direct face to face interaction.

### **Trouble Shooting**

- No sound? Check connections are secure. Check volume on computer and on external speakers/smart board.
- No video? In menu bar click **Tools > Options...** then
- Under **General**, select **Video Settings**. If you have a webcam connected, you should see a live picture from your webcam. You may have to select your webcam from the drop down menu. If you see yourself, your video is working.
- If all else fails, restart computer and SKYPE and try again.