

ZOOM: TOP TIPS FOR ONLINE ENGLISH TEACHING

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Introduction

Zoom is a powerful new tool that everyone is becoming increasingly familiar with. Here are some useful features and some ideas for the classroom.

Sharing screens, video and audio

- **Share a video**

[Location: Share screen → Optimise screen sharing for video clip]

This allows you to play a video in full screen and share it with your students in real time.

- **Share a section of your screen**

[Location: Share screen → Advanced → Share portion of screen]

This enables a section of your screen to be shown. This is useful for guessing the topic/picture/word, e.g. 'It could be/might be/I think it is ...'.

- **Pause share**

[Location: Share screen → Top menu bar → Pause share]

This freezes your shared screen, similar to freeze frame on a projector or interactive whiteboard. Put up a riddle/vocabulary opposites/instruction. Learners do the short activity while you navigate to your next slide. Your learners won't see the 'behind the scenes'.

- **Share computer sound**

[Location: Share screen → Advanced → Share computer sound]

This allows you to play audio files/sound without having to share your screen. This means easier navigation and more visibility of everyone on screen.

Whiteboard and annotation on screen

- **Whiteboard**

[Location: Share screen → Whiteboard → Share]

You can use this the same way as a board in your face-to-face classroom. Participants can also use the tools to write on the board. You can control this by going to the menu bar at the top of your screen, while sharing. Click the three dots (More) and choose 'Disable participants annotation' or 'Show names of annotators'.

- **Annotation**

This enables participants to annotate on a shared screen. The tools available will vary, based on the version of the Zoom desktop client or mobile app and your device type, but participants can draw and highlight on the screenshare. Annotation can be for eliciting error correction, getting participants to 'vote' for/indicate the best ideas on the screen, describe and draw, etc.

Communication separately with groups or individuals

- **Attendee on hold**

This allows the host to temporarily prevent any students who are on hold from seeing and hearing the other students. You can use it for games such as ‘back to the board’, where you share a clue with the group while the person doing the guessing is on hold.

- **Private chat**

This is a useful function for sending praise and prompts to individuals. It’s also useful to replace whispering in a learner’s ear, for example for Charades or Taboo or Pictionary. With a pre-prepared list of sentence halves/opposites/sounds, these can be sent to individuals to find their partner or group.

- **Breakout rooms**

You can use these for pair and groupwork activities. If you give groups slightly different activities, they will be more motivated to listen during a plenary feedback session. Remember to put instructions on screen before putting learners into breakout rooms. Send instructions in the broadcast to all rooms [*Location: Breakout rooms → Broadcast to all*]. When visiting breakout rooms, keep your video and sound off.

Classroom management

- **Rename**

[*Location: Participants → Blue / More button next to the name → Rename*]

Put learners in groups and share the lists on your screen. Ask them to rename themselves according to their group number. Allocate them to breakout rooms by putting all number ones in breakout room one, etc.

- **Virtual background**

[*Location: ^ symbol next to video → Choose virtual background*]

This allows learners to choose their own background. This is good for privacy so that learners don’t have to worry about what’s behind them. You can also use this for language practice. Learners describe where they are to each other; this can include what they have packed to go there etc. Groups can also plan a story around a virtual background.

Things to consider

- **Screen breaks are important:** If you’ve got a class that is running for more than 45 minutes, try to build in some activities or time where your learners are moving or working away from the screen.
- **Practise, practise, practise:** Find some friends and family to practise with. This will help your confidence and avoid technical problems during lessons.
- **Safety and privacy:** Make sure you set up each call with a password which is only shared with the learners on your register. Lock the meeting once everyone has arrived. If someone you don’t know joins the meeting, eject them immediately [*Location: Manage participants → More (next to participant name) → Remove*].