



“Zoom-Etiquette” for a Successful Videoconference*

Before your meeting:

Download the software at: <https://usfca.zoom.us/>

Dress to impress.

It’s easy to give in to the temptation to wear sweatpants and an old t-shirt because you’re working from home. However, your colleagues expect you to have a professional appearance. Dress for your video conference the way you would for an in-person meeting.

Control video and audio quality.

Try to hold meetings in quiet, indoor locations to control ambient noise. Use an external microphone if possible. Invest in a quality high-definition EXTERNAL webcam with microphone (e.g. Logitech HD Portable 1080p Webcam C615 with Autofocus, about \$49.00 U.S.). External HD cameras provide better video and audio than your computer’s built-in system.

Adjust your lighting.

Don’t sit directly in front or beside a bright light source, or else all the audience sees is a bright light and a shadowy figure, but don’t sit with the only light behind you or your colleagues will only see a silhouette without your expressive facial features! Experiment with moving lamps and your camera until you can see your brightly-lit face on the screen.

Think about your background.

Try to provide a nice, plain background. Place your pet animals in another room, and mute your home or cell phones. If you have unavoidable background noise (outside construction etc.), consider “muting” your own microphone until it is your turn to speak.

Camera position.

Ensure your camera is framing your image correctly. For a room with several people, zoom out the camera to include all participants in the image (the meeting facilitator should sit nearest the camera so they are clearly visible on-screen to those viewing in remote locations and so the microphone picks up their voice clearly; BUT if the room is large with many in attendance, **focus the camera on the podium or microphone location for a close-up of the speaker.** For

individuals using a desktop system, ensure that you are framed with your head and shoulders in the shot.

Additionally, position the camera at a height as close to your eye level as possible. This ensures all participants can see your face, and avoids unflattering angles such as looking up at nostrils, or down on heads.

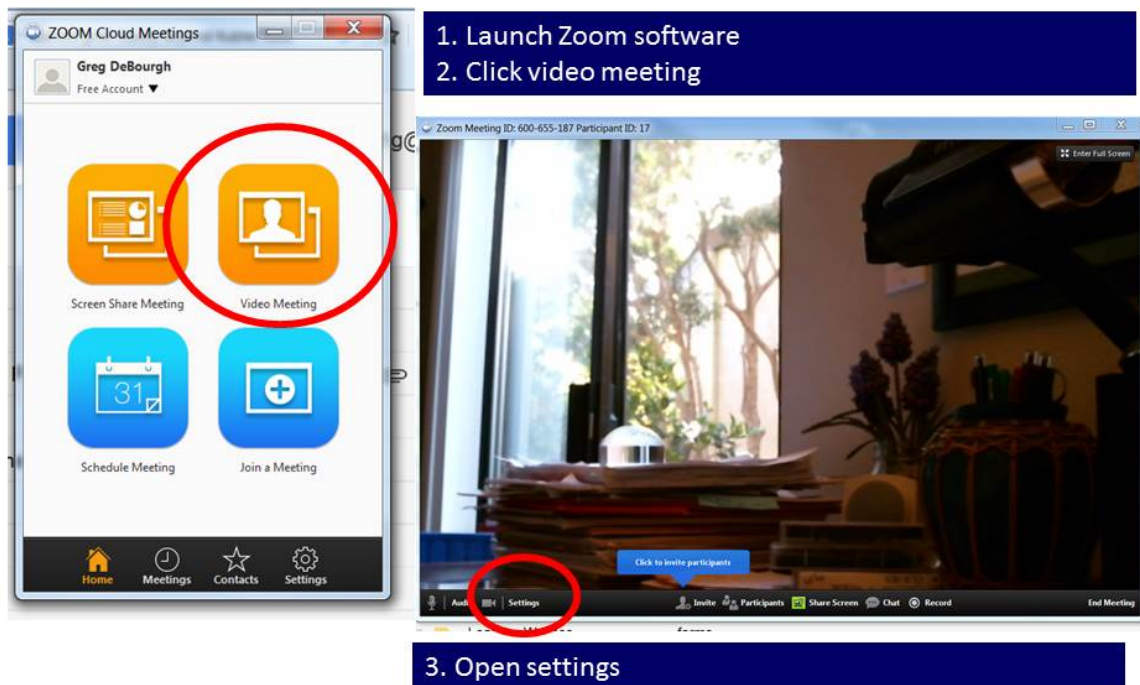
Practice speaking to the camera and not the screen.

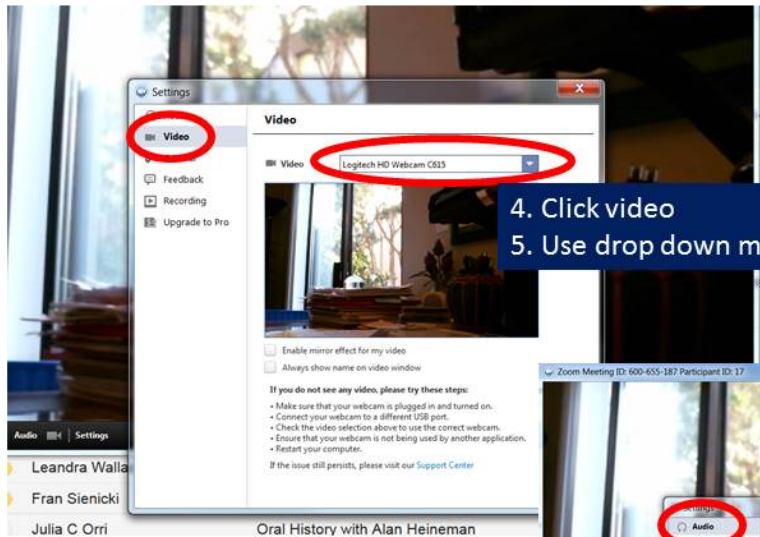
Our tendency is to look at the person on the screen, but you should **look at the camera when YOU speak** so the audience feels like you're talking directly to them.

Optimize Zoom

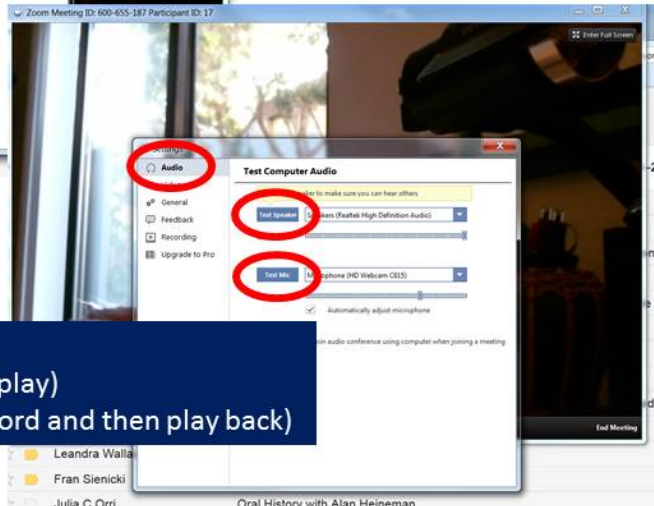
Before you launch Zoom, close all active browsers (email), suspend any downloads in progress, and close all unnecessary programs as these functions will compete for bandwidth during your active Zoom session and cause “freezes” and pixilated images.

Before the Zoom session begins, open Zoom, select “video meeting”, then “settings” to test your video image and sound input.

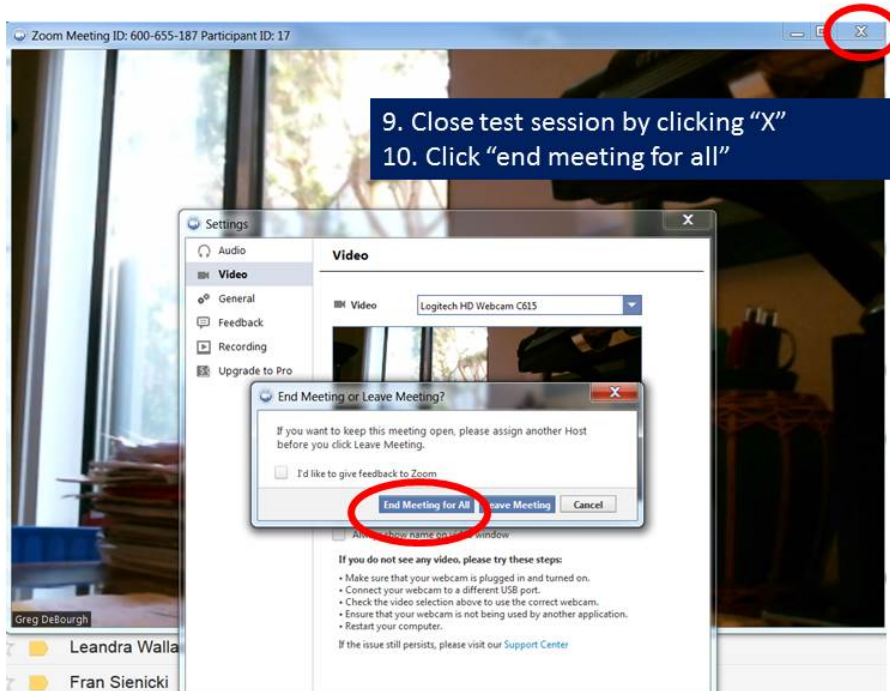




- 4. Click video
- 5. Use drop down menu to select camera to use



- 6. Click audio
- 7. Click test speakers (music will play)
- 8. Click test microphone (will record and then play back)



- 9. Close test session by clicking "X"
- 10. Click "end meeting for all"

During your meeting:

You may “join” a meeting two ways:

1. Click on the URL link within the email invitation the host sent to you (you will likely be prompted by your browser to allow “zoom launcher”); click OK;
2. Launch your Zoom software first, and then enter the meeting I.D. sent to you in the email invitation from the host.

Upon launch of Zoom, select “gallery view” (that way you see all the participants on one screen, and the person currently speaking will have a green box around their image).



Mute your microphone when necessary.

Zoom has a “Mute Microphone” option that cuts down on ambient feedback for the audience. Mute yourself when listening to a presenter, but when there is a lot of back-and-forth discussion you will unmute your own microphone. Muting your own microphone will stop any noises created from fidgeting, shuffling papers, taking notes etc. from being broadcast across the meeting. Remember the microphones are very sensitive and shuffling of papers can almost drown out a speaker for listeners at other locations.

As a speaker these noises are most important to remain aware of, as your microphone will have to remain on. Try to shuffle papers quietly and avoid speaking while you are doing this. Lastly, if you are using a laptop to aid your presenting, be aware that these devices also generate considerable noise if placed close to microphones (for example clicking the keyboard, checking your email, etc.).

Always wait until other speakers have finished before speaking and use names to direct questions to specific people to avoid confusion. Give each person plenty of time to answer your questions or to make a comment. Ensure they have finished before you speak again.

Use the “Raise Hand” Feature

For meetings with large numbers (more than 6) use the “raise hand” feature to signal the host that you have a question (also used to “vote” for a motion when polling).

Sharing your screen

Share content appropriately. Studies show videoconference participants prefer a ratio of **people 80%** of the time onscreen and **content 20%** onscreen.

Generally DO NOT select “Share Your Desktop” (unless you want every pop-up email and private message on display for your audience!). Instead, open up any relevant documents before the Zoom session and share only those during the meeting. Note that when you share, Zoom prioritizes the shared item to the bandwidth. This can reduce the other video feeds’ quality, so don’t share longer than necessary.

Practice hosting.

Zoom is very easy to use, but a live video conference is not the time to explore its features. Practice a Zoom session with colleagues or friends to get used to Zoom and features (settings). Also practice scheduling and inviting people to meetings. Learn how to mute and unmute audience members and re-assign the host role.

Bandwidth.

If you are connecting via wireless router, try to remain close to the router and consider installing a signal booster in areas of low signal strength. When you have the option, choose wired (instead of wireless) for video conferencing.

Use Zoom’s chat function.

You can send a question or statement to everyone or privately to an individual participant during the meeting. This is particularly helpful to communicate with the host, or to point out an unclear discussion point, or to raise a question.

Another option is to establish at the start of the meeting that the host or moderator will observe for participants raising their hands if they wish to take the “floor”; this simple technique can minimize “step over” due to multiple, simultaneous conversations.

Think about your actions on camera.

Always remember that everyone can see you. Someone is watching as you take a big, wide-mouth yawn, stretch, or wander around the room. These exaggerated movements are distracting to the audience and can be disruptive to the speaker. Try to stay still and be attentive – or at least act attentive!

“Hosting” Guidelines

As the “host” or moderator of a videoconference meeting you have the responsibility during the videoconference meeting to “direct traffic”. Announce your agenda at the start of the meeting, facilitate introductions by asking each participant to introduce themselves “on camera” (this also re-tests the microphone function).

As dialog progresses, pause episodically to check in with ALL participants; announcing something like “Johnson, have you any comments at this time?”

Monitor time to ensure all agenda items are addressed.

Last impressions are almost as important as first impressions. Establish closure by summarizing the major discussion points and action items. Ask participants if they have anything to add. When they're done (or after a brief period of silence), say something that brings closure; something like, "Well, that seems about it for today." After this, thank your participants for their time and wish them well. Consider following up with an email to all participants recapping action items developed in the meeting (or send the meeting minutes).

Videoconference Meetings with Groups and in Large Rooms

Connect a large, external LCD monitor or projector, and position the computer (camera and microphone) directly BELOW the LCD screen or monitor to FACE the assembled group (you may need to purchase a USB extension cable to enable correct positioning).



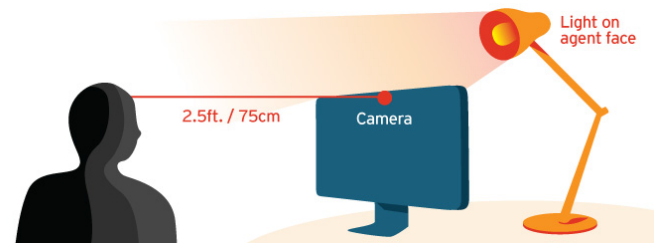
Ensure that the volume of both the microphone and speakers are sufficient for all assembled to hear and be heard. Move the assembled audience as close as possible to the computer microphone and camera.

Often users new to video conferencing feel they need to speak loudly to be heard, often because the microphones are further from them than they would expect. Most video conferencing microphones are extremely sensitive to sounds and are effective up to about 7 feet without a participant speaker needing to raise their voice above a normal conversation.

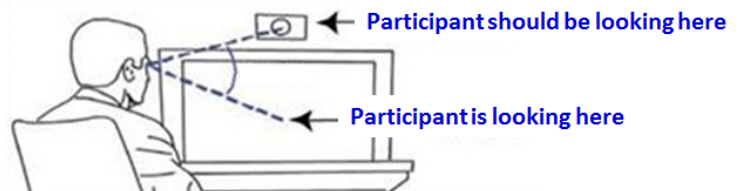
When speaking during a video conference, try to maintain an even volume and speak as if you were conversing with someone else in the room. Excessive volume can be unpleasant to participants at other sites and in some cases can sound distorted, making long meetings unpleasant to listeners, and potentially causing them to lose attention.

Eye Contact

When speaking, remember that looking at the camera is the only way to convey eye contact with your audience, and looking at their image on screen will make it appear as though you are looking elsewhere. This depends considerably on the layout of your room, and is less of an issue when cameras are optimally placed in close proximity to screens.



Do not think that you must remain fixed on the camera at all times, but simply looking at it occasionally helps convey inclusion to your audience, which can help them remain attentive.



*Modified by USF ID team from Greg DeBourgh draft from source: Warren Farmer, Zoom user and Director of Conferences and Events at Behringer Harvard (9-2014)