

A FAQ Sheet on Zoom

We have selected Zoom as our video conferencing platform of choice at TOALC.

Why Zoom?

Zoom is a full-featured but easy to use video conferencing tool. People can attend Zoom meetings from desktop PCs and MACs, laptops and tablets, Android devices, iPhones and iPads – almost any computing device you can think of. Its versatility and ease of use have made Zoom the hands-down choice for video conferencing.

Zoom Class Invitations

We will send out Zoom invitations by email to those who have signed up for a class at least two weeks ahead of the first class meeting. Click on the join link to be connected to the class.

Attending a Zoom Meeting

You do not need a Zoom account to attend. If you join a Zoom meeting on Android or iOS devices, you'll be prompted to download the "Zoom Cloud Meeting" app from Google Play or the app store first. Attendees on Windows machines will be able to connect to the meeting without downloading any software at all.

Zoom gives meeting attendees the ability to adjust the sound and picture, even hide their faces if desired. Participants can raise their hands to speak or send questions and comments to everyone or privately to the host or other attendees.

For more on attending Zoom meetings and using meeting controls, see the reference videos provided by Zoom at: <https://learn-zoom.us/show-me-min> .

When attending a Zoom meeting, please join at least ten minutes ahead in order to deal with any last-minute snafus. Test your setup ahead of time by going to <https://zoom.us/test> . If you encounter issues that cannot be resolved by the Zoom help documents, please contact TOALC at info@theoalc.org and describe the problem in as much detail as possible. We will get back to you.

Leading a Zoom Meeting

If you are leading classes on Zoom, contact us if you'd like to learn more about hosting a Zoom meeting. Please keep the following suggestions in mind during a Zoom meeting:

- Please start on time. People will learn to be punctual if they know you start on time. The rest of the class will appreciate it.
- Open the meeting 15 minutes early for chitchat, problem resolution, etc. Then start the class on time.
- Please appoint a co-host or assistant to help with attendance and other housekeeping tasks.
- Co-hosts are especially important to monitor the Waiting Room on Zoom. Use the "Participants" pop-up window to keep an eye out for latecomers. Also, people who lose the connection to the class will have to re-enter. They will show up at the top of the Participants window after any pop-up notices of people waiting in the Waiting Room have disappeared.
- Remember that many of our members have sight and hearing challenges. Please make sure any documents you share in print or online are easily readable. The means you use to display a document online (word processor or browser) may have options to zoom in for an enlarged view.
- In Zoom classes, be aware that there if two people are speaking at the same time, one will not be heard. Allow a short delay before you speak. Also, people may need time to unmute themselves before responding.
- To encourage participation, ask if there is anyone who has not had the opportunity to express their thoughts before moving on to a new subject or topic.
- Encourage people in Zoom meetings to use the "Raise Hand" feature rather than signaling a request to speak by actually raising a hand. The "Raise Hand" feature displays an icon on the person's video and brings them to the forefront of the video gallery. A physically-raised hand may be overlooked.

Zoom Recordings

It is the policy of TOALC not to permit recordings of Zoom meetings. We feel that recording a class might inhibit the free expression of ideas. Also, some participants might not wish to have their likeness captured online.

Is Zoom Safe?

Zoom's popularity has attracted interest from the usual cast of Internet troublemakers. The result has been a lot of scary news stories in the public media. Zoom has gone all out to patch any vulnerabilities and made the safer meeting settings the default. Tech writers have reviewed the dangers and the great majority still recommend Zoom as the best meeting platform available.

Here's what Dr. Jim Vagliardo, TOALC's current president had to say about it when we introduced Zoom in 2020:

The short answer is yes, it is safe. TOALC has been using ZOOM every weekday for meetings for a month without problem. I personally have used ZOOM safely for all kinds of "virtual" connection with friends and loved ones around the world. No problem.

You should also know that TOALC's tech support committee has addressed security of our courses with at least three layers of procedural protection.

I think we will be fine. Of course, if you feel you would rather not participate, I completely understand.

Jim is a professor of Mathematics/Computer Science; an educational consultant, writer, and researcher.

Keeping Zoom Safe

Zoom meeting hosts can prevent intruders from entering a meeting or can eject them if they do get in, disguised as a friendly. But to make the host's job easier, we need to keep meeting access links confidential. Please do not post meeting information on the open Internet.

In addition, meeting leaders need to know whom to expect as attendees. Therefore, do not share confidential meeting information with friends and neighbors. If someone you know wants to attend a class, have that person contact TOALC directly to sign up.