

VIRTUAL SPEAKING GUIDE

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PREPARING FOR THE EVENT

Before the Event

- ☐ Find a quiet and well-lit space for the event
- ☐ If possible connect **directly** to an Ethernet port to get the best connection. You can find information about the best ethernet cords [here](#).
- ☐ Dress comfortably
- ☐ Avoid wearing bright white shirts, complex patterns, dangly jewelry, and bracelets
- ☐ Have bottled water ready

Camera

- ☐ Position the webcam at or above eye level, no higher than your hairline. Put books or boxes under the laptop to raise it to position so that the webcam isn't looking up from under your chin.
- ☐ Sit (avoid a swivel chair) 1-2 feet away from desktop/laptop, so the webcam can capture your shoulders and face.
- ☐ Sit upright. Keep eye contact with the camera

Sound

- ☐ Close any open windows; turn off phone/computer notifications, or any appliances in the room (fan, heater, etc.)
- ☐ (*Optional*) Connect an external USB microphone to your computer
- ☐ Consider using a wireless headset or earbuds if you'll be in conversation with other presenters during your event.

Lighting

- ❑ Sit in front of a natural light source, like a window; Avoid backlighting (such as windows or strong light from behind), or top down lighting
- ❑ Place a desk lamp behind the left side of your desktop/laptop, and tilt the light toward your face. Amazon and other online stores sell [ring lights](#) or selfie lights that can be used to light your face for video recording.

Background

- ❑ Avoid anything that looks busy or cluttered in the background
- ❑ Be aware of background objects that might protrude awkwardly from your head
- ❑ Be aware that people will be looking at your background- i.e books on the shelf, family photos, diplomas, etc.
- ❑ Use the virtual background feature in Zoom

Additional Best Practices

- ❑ Close the door or block sightlines for wandering pets, housemates, etc.
 - ❑ The morning of a rehearsal or day of the event, restart your computer. This will clear your device's RAM and boost your video quality.
 - ❑ An hour before a rehearsal or the event, turn off all unnecessary apps on your device such as Dropbox or Google Drive. Even if they're not actively in use, it makes a difference to have them off.
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Look Your Best for a Virtual Event: Tips & Tricks



Tip 1: Have a background that reflects a bit about who you are and your area of expertise. Is it a bookcase, a microscope, a moon globe? It should look professional and uncluttered, but personal.

Tip 2: Dress professionally, but comfortably. Avoid all black and tops with checks or thin stripes. Please do wear pants. You never know when you might have to stand up!

Tip 3: Use extra lights! If you've got them, set up a couple of light sources on either side of your computer, just above your eye line and about 3 feet apart.

Tip 4: Position your laptop, monitor, or webcam just above your eye level. This forces it to point slightly down and gives you a more natural look.

Tip 5: Connect with your audience! You may be in your home office, but you're still speaking to a group of people. As tempting as it might be to watch that little video of yourself, eye contact with the camera is important. If you find you're distracted by your own video feed in the corner, you may want to turn it off during the broadcast/recording.

THINGS TO AVOID



Don't let the only light source be your laptop.

Don't sit in front of a window.
This will leave you backlit and put you in shadow.



Don't have a plain white background.
Even having a slice of door frame in the
background can be helpful.



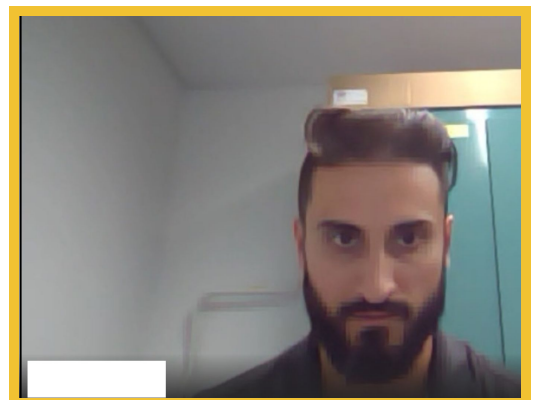
Be mindful of what is behind you.



Don't have your back to the wall.
Try to sit at least 2' away from a wall.



Don't be off-center.



DOWNLOADABLE VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS

Download TC backgrounds

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bswK4lqBeNEFb6KpVanX67q9-xgEsinB>

Download Columbia images (UNI login required)

<https://photos.columbia.edu>

Download other virtual background (from Shutterstock)

<https://www.shutterstock.com/discover/free-virtual-backgrounds>

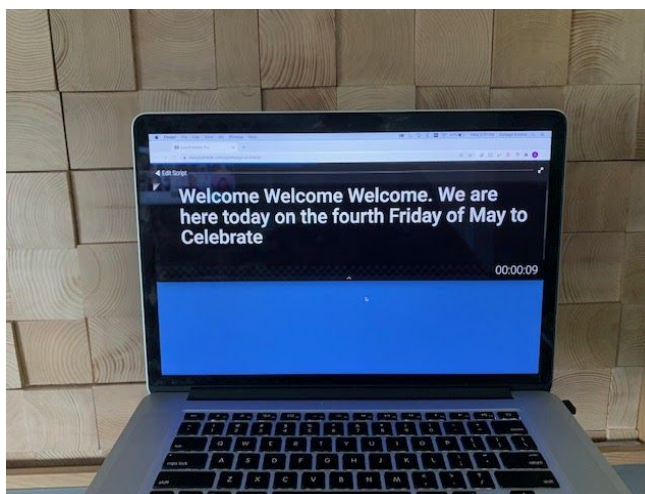
How to set up a virtual background in Zoom

<https://teacherscollege.screenstepslive.com/s/14864/m/72448/l/1224239-virtual-backgrounds>

TELEPROMPTER SOFTWARE

There are a number of teleprompter programs available to help when giving speeches, such as [EasyPrompter](#).

It is important to note that your script or teleprompter program will likely cover a portion or all of your Zoom window. It is important to continue to look into the web camera to avoid the appearance of reading text directly off the screen. You may want to position your teleprompter/document window under your camera so you keep looking in the same general direction as the camera.



RECOMMENDED TECH EQUIPMENT FOR AT HOME BROADCASTING

(Thanks to Mike Mena for compiling this list)

While it is not necessary to purchase any special equipment, the list below is provided for anyone who wishes to upgrade their at home tech set up.

Best “Pro” Microphone (with microphone stand)

- [Rode VideoMic NTG \(works with phone/computer/camera\)](#)

Best “Budget” Microphone options:

- [Movo VXR10 w/ Smartphone Video Kit \(works with phone/camera, NOT computer\)](#)

Best “Budget” USB Microphone

- [FIFINE K678 USB Podcast Microphone \(works ONLY with computer\)](#)

Best “Budget” Light (don’t forget to by a stand for this!)

- [Viltrox LI32T](#)

Best Universal Desktop Tripod (use with light, camera, or microphone)

- [Movo Universal Mini Camera Tripod with Extendable Pole – MV-TI](#)

Webcam

- [Logitech C920 \(not so “budget”, but produces results better than most built in webcams\)](#)

Professional Lighting Kit (Most useful with “real” DSLR camera)

- [Godox SL60W](#)
- [LAOFAS 27.5inch 70cm Deep Parabolic Softbox](#)
- [Manfrotto 367B Basic Light Stand](#)

Best “Budget” Camera (with upgradable path via purchasing better lens)

- [Canon m50 \(check Canon “Refurbished” website\)](#)

Best “ease-of-use” Camera (point and shoot designed for talking head videos)

- [Sony ZVI](#)