How to Zoom!

1. Zoom is a video-conferencing app that has become very popular in the past few months. If you've seen pictures that look a bit like this, you've seen Zoom in action:

2. You can use Zoom on either a computer (desktop or laptop), a tablet (e.g. iPad or Amazon Fire) or a smartphone (iPhone or Android), but **try to use a computer if possible**, as there are some features that don't work on a tablet or phone. (The main drawback is that you can only see four people at once on small screens – the photo above came from a computer, and wouldn't have worked on most phones, or even some tablets.)

3. You can download and install the Zoom app either direct from the website at https://zoom.us or from the app store on your tablet or phone – just search for Zoom.

4. **It's free**. There is also a paid version which removes some of the limitations, but the only significant difference is that the free version restricts meetings to 40 minutes if there are more than two devices connected. *(Note that if there are only two devices connected to each other, then there is no time limit. But you can have up to 100 connections on the free version as long as you don't go over 40 minutes! It's also worth pointing out that the first time you host your own meeting, the time is unlimited however many people are there, but subsequently it will invite you to upgrade.)*

5. When you've installed the Zoom app, **don't worry about all the options** such as contacts or scheduling – you won't need any of those unless you want to start hosting your own meetings, by which time you'll understand the extra stuff.
6. All you need to do initially, if you just want to participate in a meeting that someone else is hosting, is **wait for them to send you an invitation by email**. This will include the date and time of the meeting.
7. The main things to check before the meeting are:
   - You need a **good internet connection** (so if you know there's a room in your house where the wifi is a bit unreliable, don't go there during the meeting!)
   - If there are others in the house using the internet at the same time, ideally ask them to have a break; if they *must* use it, at least try to stop them playing online games, as that will use up most of your bandwidth!
   - Either have your device plugged into the mains, or ensure that there is enough **battery charge**.
8. At the meeting start time (a few minutes before or after is fine), just open your email on whichever device you want to use for the meeting (ideally a laptop or desktop computer, but tablet or phone will do) and then **click on the link in the email and just wait**. If you've already installed the Zoom app, it will open automatically, and you will be taken straight to the meeting (you shouldn't need to use the meeting ID or password at all, although they are included in the invitation just in case).
9. If you're using a tablet or phone, turn it round so it's in **landscape orientation** rather than portrait (see picture).
10. If you are given the option to "Join With/Without Video", choose "with" – otherwise nobody will be able to see you!
11. You will see the other people appear on your screen as they arrive. Be patient, as it can take a few minutes for everyone's audio and video to work.
12. By default, you will be in "speaker view", which means you see a big picture of whoever's speaking, and small pictures of everyone else. If you want to see everyone at once as in the photo above (or four people at a time if you're on a small screen), you need "**gallery view**". If you can see a button that says that, just click it. If not, the quickest way to do it on the mobile app is to swipe left. This should show you four participants at once, instead of just the speaker. To see other participants, keep swiping left. To get back to "speaker view", swipe right until you see it.

13. If you can't find either of those options on your device, don't worry, this is a common issue! Speaker view will work fine, until you've found out how to enable gallery view. It *will* be there somewhere, but it's in different places on different devices. (If you've got some dots at the bottom of your screen, that's a good place to investigate.)

14. If the meeting has more than a few people, it's good etiquette to **mute your microphone** until you have something to say – you will see a "mute" button you can click. (The meeting host has the option to mute you, or to mute everyone at once – they may do this to briefly restore order if it gets too noisy!) In particular, you will definitely need to use this if there is another person sitting next to you participating in the same meeting on their own device, because there will be a nasty feedback loop in that case.

15. After half an hour, you will get a countdown warning you that the the meeting has to end within 10 minutes. If the host wants to go on longer, they may choose to end the meeting and restart it (this can happen as many times as they choose, and there's a new 40-minute limit each time). If that happens, all you need to do to rejoin the meeting is to go back to your email and click on the same link as before.

16. The meeting ends when the host ends it, but if you have to leave early then you can just click "leave meeting" whenever you like.

17. *Finally, Zoom has many features I haven't mentioned because you won't need them at first, but you may wish to investigate later. (NB some of these only work on laptops. Ask if you want to know more!) These include:*
   - *"Share screen" so that you can show the other meeting participants something that's on your device*
   - *Change your background so that people see a starry sky (or any picture you like) rather than your piles of untidy papers*
   - *Text chat – useful if someone's audio/video is temporarily not working and you want to help them, or to share a link*
   - *Record some or all of the meeting*
   - *Raise your hand (virtually) or applaud (virtually)*
   - *Enhance the sound so that it works better for music*
   - *(It is worth noting, however, that sadly Zoom doesn't work well for GROUP music, due to the small but significant time lag; it's fine for piano lessons or similar, but for a choir the only way to rehearse via Zoom is for everyone other than the leader to mute themselves while singing.).*

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