

Top Ten Zoom Tips for Class

(selected and ranked by Hanover College students)

- 1. Battery** - Make sure your battery doesn't run out in the middle of class – plug in your computer and/or have a recharger handy before class starts.
- 2. Muting** - For classes or meetings with more than five people, mute your microphone except when you have something to say. Otherwise, ambient noise (like traffic and chair squeaks) will be disruptive. If there are five or fewer, and you're not in a noisy environment, leave the microphone on so interactions are more natural.
- 3. Privacy** - Protect other people's privacy and your own when possible. If you can, have class in a quiet room with the door shut so that roommates, family members, or pets aren't joining the class. Also, if you're going to be sharing your screen, you don't want to accidentally share more than you intend. So close any programs you don't want everyone in class to see, and change your desktop wallpaper if you don't want everyone to see that.
- 4. Multitasking** - Don't multitask! If classmates can see you looking at your phone, they'll think you're not paying attention. Also, your professor (or the host of the meeting) can set Zoom to notify them when participants have switched away from Zoom to another program for more than 30 seconds. Don't forget the camera stays on you. If you switch apps, you won't see yourself, but everyone else will still see you.
- 5. Eating** - Don't eat on camera, and especially don't eat things that are messy or noisy. Eating is more intrusive when you're on camera and a microphone is picking up every crunch, so many people find it annoying (though some don't mind, as long as it would have been okay in the face-to-face class).
- 6. Lighting** - Before class starts, check that you're clearly visible. You may need to move lamps or adjust shades so that most of the light is on your face (coming from behind the camera). If there's a strong light behind you or to the side, you'll be hard for people to see clearly.
- 7. Framing** - Keep your camera on unless you have connectivity problems. People feel more connected to you that way. Most people would prefer for you to sit close to the camera so that your face fills most of the zoom image. You'll look more engaged, it will be easier for us to read your facial expressions, and your surroundings will be less distracting. (Some would rather you sat far enough away

that you're visible from about the waist up, so that we can see your gestures and body language more.) Keep the camera at eye level. Use a desk or table instead of putting your laptop on your lap or holding your phone below your chin.

- 8. Drinking** - Don't drink on camera, and especially don't drink things that evoke alcohol consumption (beverages in beer-style bottles, beer-style cans, cocktail-style glasses, etc.). Consider using the "stop video" button for a moment if you need to take a drink (though some don't mind drinking on camera, as long as it would have been okay in the face-to-face class).
- 9. Visuals** - Make sure you look like a college student – remember there's a spotlight on you, so don't wear pajamas or look sloppier than you would for a face-to-face class. Many people think microphone headsets look silly, so if you have a relatively recent laptop and a quiet room, that will be fine and you'll look more natural. Of course, if a headset is necessary for your particular situation, everyone understands that.
- 10. Engagement** - Make eye contact with the camera! This will feel really weird – making eye contact with the people on your screen makes you feel connected to them, but it will feel to them like you're not looking at them. Also, exaggerate the visuals of engagement so we can tell you're following the conversation. (Unless you nod your head and maintain eye contact with the camera and the screen, you'll look like you're not paying attention.)