

Volunteers,
English language learners
and conversation clubs

Running conversation clubs online

A guide for volunteers





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Introduction

When the pandemic-driven lockdowns of 2020 brought face-to-face English language provision to an abrupt halt, many organisations were quick to establish some form of online support for learners, including conversation clubs. For many, this was a first venture into online support, and seen only as a stop-gap until face-to-face provision could be resumed. Perhaps surprisingly, the experience proved positive in many respects, and it is clear that volunteer-led online support can help organisations extend their offer, reach new learners, and attract new volunteers.

In 2019/20, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government commissioned Learning and Work Institute (L&W) and Learning Unlimited to research and develop resources and guidance to support volunteers and organisations running conversation clubs for English language learners. The free-to-download '**Volunteers, English Language Learners, Conversation Clubs**' (VELLCC) resources, developed prior to lockdown in March 2020, were launched during the summer of 2020. This supplementary guidance has been developed specifically to support volunteers facilitating conversation clubs online.

From additional research undertaken to inform this guide it is clear that, like face-to-face conversation clubs, online conversation clubs can be very popular and effective, and are likely to remain part of the English language offer beyond the pandemic. Organisations and volunteers report that online conversation clubs have many benefits for participants.

The benefits for participants include:

- developing valuable digital skills alongside English language skills
- widening participation, especially for those who face barriers due to isolation, caring responsibilities, or health conditions
- reducing costly and time-consuming travel
- offering more flexible session times which can be easier to align with other commitments
- being able to participate while doing something else e.g. supervising children or domestic work
- being able to participate, using different kinds of devices, from a wide range of locations e.g. a garden or park and across geographical boundaries e.g. from outside the local area, or even another country

Wherever you see this icon click to go to the VELLCC resources online



How to use this guide

This guidance aims to provide a range of useful information, ideas and activities. It includes guidance for getting started online, tips for planning and managing online sessions, ideas for games and activities which work well online, organisational considerations for providers to reflect on and links to additional useful resources. It is divided into four main sections and users are encouraged to dip into the sections which are most relevant to them, and to use this guidance alongside the original set of *VELLCC* resources.

If you are new to providing support and running conversation clubs online, start with **Section 1 Getting started online**. This includes detailed guidance on choosing and using some of the most popular platforms and apps, and recognising and addressing some of the key digital barriers which you and participants may face.

Section 2, Planning and managing online sessions will be useful if you are new to running conversation clubs, in general, or new to running them online. This section identifies some of the key differences between running sessions online rather than face-to-face and provides suggestions for making the most of the benefits which online sessions can provide. Strategies and approaches to getting round some of the challenges are also included. If you are already using Zoom with participants, Section 2 provides tips on adapting the *VELLCC* materials for online use.

Section 3, Online games and activities, includes ideas for games and activities that work well online, as well as suggestions for adapting popular face-to-face learning activities. This section will be useful for new and experienced volunteers looking for ideas to bring some variety into conversation club sessions.

Section 4, Additional useful resources provides supplementary links to those in the original *VELLCC* resources, with links to information, guidance and resources which are specifically related to online support and sessions.

Volunteers and conversation club organisers may also find the companion resource useful: **Running conversation clubs online: a guide for organisers**. This guidance includes key considerations and suggestions for organisations which are providing and supporting volunteer-led online support for language learners. The final section, **Additional useful resources**, is the same in both online guidance documents.



Getting started online

Part 1

1.1 Considerations for volunteers and skills needed

Some volunteers and conversation club participants may already have high levels of skills, knowledge, experience and confidence in using a range of online platforms and apps. Others may need support and guidance to get started and build their confidence in engaging with others online. This section is primarily aimed at volunteers who are new to facilitating conversation clubs online.

Although this guidance includes quite a lot of technical information and advice, it is important to try and not feel daunted by technical wizardry.

You can gradually introduce, for example, screen sharing, breakout rooms or the online whiteboard as your skills and confidence grow. In online conversation clubs, as with face-to-face conversation clubs, the most important thing is authentic communication. The volunteer's role is to help get the conversation going, keeping it as natural as possible, and to help create a friendly, welcoming online space that participants enjoy coming to.

Here is a quick list of possible questions and issues, with some possible solutions and suggestions for finding out more:

Questions	Possible solutions and suggestions for finding out more
I face some digital barriers as a volunteer - what can I do?	<p>If you don't have access to a suitable digital device, you could ask your organisation if they have one you could borrow, or if they have any sort of help-to-buy scheme. There may be local charities which are repurposing old devices. If the cost of a contract/data is an issue, again, ask your organisation first if they can help. Otherwise there may be local or national charities or organisations you can approach.</p> <p>If you need training or similar support getting online, ask if the lead organisation, or perhaps a more experienced volunteer, can help. There are some suggestions in Sections 1.2 Getting participants online and Section 1.3 Recognising and addressing digital barriers.</p>
Which platform should I use?	<p>It's always a good idea to use a platform you are already familiar with. However, your organisation may have a subscription and/or a requirement for one particular platform to be used, e.g. Zoom, Skype or Microsoft Teams. Find out before you start. It is also a good idea to use platforms that participants either already use or will want to use in other life contexts.</p>
How can I learn how to use different technology - and what support can I get?	<p>If you need to use a platform or app you are not familiar with, you could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go to YouTube and search for "How to use (e.g. Zoom). There are lots of helpful training/how-to videos on YouTube.• Ask if you can have a 1:1 support session with someone from the organisation or a more experienced volunteer.• Explore whether a more experienced volunteer is happy for you to sit in on an online session and have a follow up chat on how they use the different platforms and apps. <p>Take things step by step. You can gradually try out and include additional functions on each platform or app as your experience and confidence grow.</p>
Which resources can I use?	<p>This guidance includes ideas on how you can adapt <i>VELLCC</i> resources for use online. There are lots of ideas for other activities and resources you can use, including using everyday objects in people's homes.</p>

1.2 Getting participants online

For organisations offering English language classes, one of the biggest challenges throughout the pandemic has been getting people to participate in online learning. In 2020, L&W's Adult Participation in Learning survey of 5,000 adults showed that 43% participated in some kind of learning during lockdown. However, adults in lower socioeconomic groups, adults who were out of work or those who left school at the first opportunity were much less likely to participate¹.

For some people, moving language classes and conversation club activities online has made them more accessible, but the pandemic has also exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities in online access and digital participation. According to the Lloyds UK Consumer Digital Index 2020, 9 million people (16%) are unable to use the internet by themselves with 3.6 million (7%) 'almost completely offline'².

A big challenge for providers is identifying who may be missing out on online participation and putting suitable strategies in place to increase inclusion and reduce barriers. Challenges faced may include:

- Lower level language and/or literacy skills
- Lack of digital skills
- No access to digital devices
- Not having Wi-Fi or data
- Childcare issues for those with young children at home
- Privacy issues
- Negative prior experiences of education
- Lack of trust in technology



Jamboard with 'digital divide' issues identified and discussed by learners at English for Action

*For guidance on using Jamboards, see Section 1.7, Other useful apps

¹ Learning and Work Institute (2020), Learning through Lockdown. Findings from the 2020 Adult Participation in Learning Survey <https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/learning-through-lockdown/>

² Lloyds UK Consumer Digital Index 2020, p.7 https://www.lloydsbank.com/assets/media/pdfs/banking_with_us/whats-happening/lb-consumer-digital-index-2020-report.pdf

1.3 Recognising and addressing digital barriers

Conversation club participants can face a range of barriers to participating online. Here are some ideas for addressing some of them.



Reflection: How many of these barriers impact on your conversation club participants or people who would like to join but are presently unable to? Is there any further action you can take to address these?

Feeling concerned about being online

- Try to find out why participants are wary of participating online.
- Some participants may prefer to take part with their camera off, at least until they become familiar with the technology and how the online sessions are run. Although not ideal in the long term, if it enables people to build enough confidence to take part, it can be worth considering.
- Some participants may have legitimate concerns about privacy, for example they may not want other people or children in the home to be seen. You could help participants find a suitable place to join and ensure they are aware of what the camera is showing. Depending on the platform you are using, find out if there are options to blur the background or set a virtual background, and show learners how to use these features.
- If for any reason a participant is worried about protecting their identity, there is no need for them to use their real name on screen. (See tips below for guidance on name changing).
- Spend time in the club discussing the technological challenges and possibilities, being open about your own technological proficiency, finding out more about the problems and solutions experienced by the members.

Low level digital skills

- Set up a 1:1 meeting on Zoom, or other platform you will be using, and support the participant over the phone in joining you in the meeting. Once in, you can show them other features, so they are prepared for their first online conversation club.
- Phone participants to talk them through opening the invitation link to a platform or downloading an app.
- Beginner participants can get support building digital confidence and skills from other participants who speak their main language, family members or friends.
- Share guides and videos in other languages, e.g. [multilingual videos to getting started](#) on Zoom shared by [EFA](#), created by [Xenia](#) and [JCORE UK](#).
- Include small bits of digital training on the platform you are using as part of your sessions.
- Develop and send out paper-based cartoons, visual/translated guides to using and installing different platforms and apps (See [Section 4, Additional useful resources](#)).

Childcare responsibilities

- It's generally easier to distract a child for short periods of time, so shorter, more frequent online sessions might help parents/carers. You could suggest sessions take place around nap times, or in the evening when children are more likely to be in bed.
- If participants take part with a child on their knee or playing in the same room, just ask them to mute themselves if it gets too noisy.
- You can consider using family learning approaches, by including activities that parents/carers and children can do together, or which can keep a child busy at the same time, e.g. doing a drawing linked to the same topic. Conversation clubs can also be structured around homework or supporting children with schoolwork.

Limited or no access to the internet

- Explore possible support for additional funding or access to devices, for example:
 - Check if your organisation can help fund support, e.g. top up phone credit/ data packages or give/lend devices to participants in need.
 - Your organisation may be able to apply for grants to help with digital access or consider fundraising such as crowdfunding.
 - Some local and national charities and organisations support people to get online with new or repurposed devices, broadband discounts or credit. Signpost if you can.
 - If participants have school-aged children, ask them to speak to their children's school. Many schools have been given extra funding to ensure their pupils are able to get online at home.
- When possible, participants can meet up to work in pairs - sharing a device can work well.
- As Zoom and other video conferencing apps allow 'joining by phone', include these instructions when you send the invitation. Although without video, participants can still listen and be heard.

It can be liberating to share any concerns you have around facilitating an online session with the group. Letting them know that you are far from an expert, both in terms of running a conversation club and mastery of the technology, opens up an equal dynamic where the participants share their own skills and take a lot of the initiative.

Conversation club volunteer

Conversation club idea:

Many participants and volunteers alike, have had to grapple with learning how to use new platforms and apps. This can be an interesting and useful conversation club topic. You could read out or share this participant's observations and ask participants to compare with their own - before, now and what next.



Conversation club participant

1.4 Choosing your video conferencing platform and apps

There are a range of platforms and apps you can choose from, with varying costs and features. Although Zoom and WhatsApp are the most popular and frequently used platform and app, there are alternatives, e.g. *Skype*, *Microsoft Teams*, *Google Classroom*, *Blue Jeans*, *Signal* and *Telegram*.

An effective approach is to choose the platform your participants currently use or are most likely to go on to use in their everyday lives. Some important considerations include:

- Is it free? If not, what are the main differences between free and paid for versions, e.g. minutes, numbers of people who can participate
- What privacy and security features does it have, e.g. waiting rooms? Is communication end-to-end encrypted?
- What other features does it offer, e.g. breakout rooms, whiteboard, polls?

Here we compare Zoom, Skype and Teams platforms and provide guidance and top tips on using them*.

Feature	Zoom	Skype	Teams
Breakout rooms	Yes	No	Yes
Chat facility	Yes	Yes	Yes
Screenshare	Yes	Yes	Yes
Security	You can enable many security features in settings	Skype uses 256-bit AES keys for each session	Organisation-wide two-factor authentication
Number of participants (free version)	100	50	300
Waiting room	Yes	No	No
Time limit	Up to 40 mins for a free account. Longer periods for a subscription option.	None	None



* These features were correct at the time of writing. For further information check each platform's website: <https://www.zoom.us/>; <https://www.skype.com/en/>; <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>

1.5 Introduction to Zoom

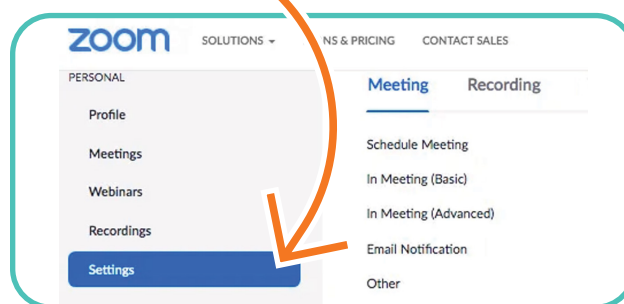
Our research showed that Zoom is the most popular video-conferencing platform for conversation clubs and seen as less 'corporate' than Skype or Teams. Also, it is important to use platforms and apps that participants are more likely to use in their daily lives. This also helps them to build transferable digital skills. Although this guidance includes in-depth guidance and tips for Zoom, most of these tips will be also relevant for other video-conferencing platforms.

Getting started

For guidance and help getting started with any platform or app, check the provider's own **guidance** or 'how to' videos on YouTube, like [this one](#).

Settings

To check and adjust your settings, it is easier to go to the website (<https://zoom.us/signin>) (rather than trying to do this from the desktop or mobile app) and then go to **Settings**.



Scroll through settings and select your preferences. The most important settings are:

Waiting room	Using a waiting room is more secure, as it allows you to see people's names before they enter the meeting. You can also use it to start sessions smoothly, by letting everyone in at the same time.
Password	Include passwords in the joining link for ease of entry.
Automatically turn on participants' video on entry	This stops people needing to find and turn on their video, although some participants may prefer to control their video themselves. If you know there are some learners who don't want to join with video, you might want to make sure it this setting is disabled.
Mute on entry	A good feature to use to reduce disturbances or background noise, if you have latecomers and/or a large group.
Allow participants to share the screen	This is vital if you want people to do this in breakout rooms. N.B. You can also change this mid-session.
Allow participants to annotate	This is necessary for any activities in which participants can add notes themselves, such as whiteboard (share screen option) and shared documents.
Enable breakout rooms	Breakout rooms allow you to put participants into small groups, maximising opportunities for participant speaking time and interaction. N.B. Only the host (not co-hosts) can create and manage breakout rooms.
Automatically save the chat	Selecting this option is useful, as keeping a record of the chat can help you plan future sessions. Chat will automatically be saved to your 'Zoom' folder in documents or in your Zoom account.
All participants can message each other in chat	You have the option to disable this feature so participants can only message everyone and the host.

1.6 Zoom tips

It is always a good idea to try and share digital tips together - with other volunteers and participants. Here are some Zoom tips divided into two main sections - beginners and more advanced.



Image: Lucie Vynnáková

Zoom tips (getting started)

Basic features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train participants how to use the basic key features of Zoom, such as mute, unmute, video on/off, chat. Remind participants to mute themselves if there is a lot of background noise or let them know that, if necessary, you may need to mute participants. Make sure everyone knows how to unmute themselves when they want to speak. Check that participants know how to change and move the 'view' (e.g. gallery/speaker).
Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As Zoom looks different on different types and models of phones, tablets, laptops and PCs, try joining a meeting using different devices to better understand and support participants with issues.
Supporting participants with low level skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the range of language, literacy, digital literacy and, specifically, Zoom skills in the group and plan activities and support around these. (See tips below for guidance and ideas). At least initially, some participants may be unable to find 'chat' or accept the invitation to join a break-out room. To support those new to Zoom or with very low digital literacy skills, arrange 1:1 practice before their first session. If participants have a relatively low level of English, it can help to find someone to support who shares their language or share the multilingual guides.
Co-facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are many benefits of volunteers working together in pairs - or even in threes. One person can admit participants from the waiting room as they arrive, add to and monitor chat, support newcomers while the other facilitates the session, keep the session going if the other volunteer has connection problems and helps to support breakout rooms. For maximum support, make sure each volunteer is a co-host. Remember that a co-host cannot open breakout rooms, only the main host can, so it's worth agreeing in advance who will do that.
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about your own background in advance. You can use a virtual background if you want to keep your personal space private. Check lighting and avoid sitting directly in front of a window.



Zoom tips (tools and tricks)

Share screen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Share screen' means you or participants can quickly find and share something that comes up in conversation, including webpages, documents, images and videos. • To save time and make pre-planned sharing as easy and smooth as possible, have pages or documents open already. • To help with visibility, especially for those joining on phones, make sure images are centred, large and clear and that font size is large. • Regularly check that participants can see any shared content clearly and use the slider at the bottom of your screen to maximize size, if needed. • Bandwidth and internet connections can affect the quality of shared video or audio content.
Whiteboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Click 'share screen' then select 'whiteboard'. • You can write on the board using the text box or the draw tool, which appear on the toolbar above the board. • If you enable 'annotate' in the settings, participants can write (annotate) on the board, too. • To save a copy of the whiteboard (into the 'Zoom' folder in your documents on your computer), click save on the toolbar above the whiteboard.
Screenshots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be useful to take a screenshot to show people where certain features are. For example, you could take a screenshot of your Zoom screen to show where the microphone is and share it to show people what you are talking about. You could also circle it using your device's annotation tool. • How to take a screenshot varies from device to device - try searching Google for instructions for your own device.
Audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you want to share audio from your computer or the internet - remember to tick the 'share computer sound' box at the bottom of the 'share screen' page. • Check that everyone can hear you and each other well. Some participants may need help adjusting the volume on their device. • Headphones with a mic help if there is a lot of background sound.
Video features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you feel like having some fun, everyone can try out some different 'video features' including backgrounds, hats, masks and eyebrows in Zoom using the drop-down arrow next to the video icon. Make sure everyone knows how to turn these off. N.B. They can obscure any objects you hold up.



1.7 Other useful apps

A shared messaging app can be very useful to use alongside a video conferencing platform. The suggestions below are based on WhatsApp but there are several other messaging apps which work in a very similar way, e.g. Signal and Telegram, which you and your participants may prefer to use instead and some practitioners believe to be more secure.



WhatsApp

As the number of people on a WhatsApp video call is capped at four, its use is limited to 1:1 or small group support or conversations. However, as an extra resource it can be invaluable. Why?

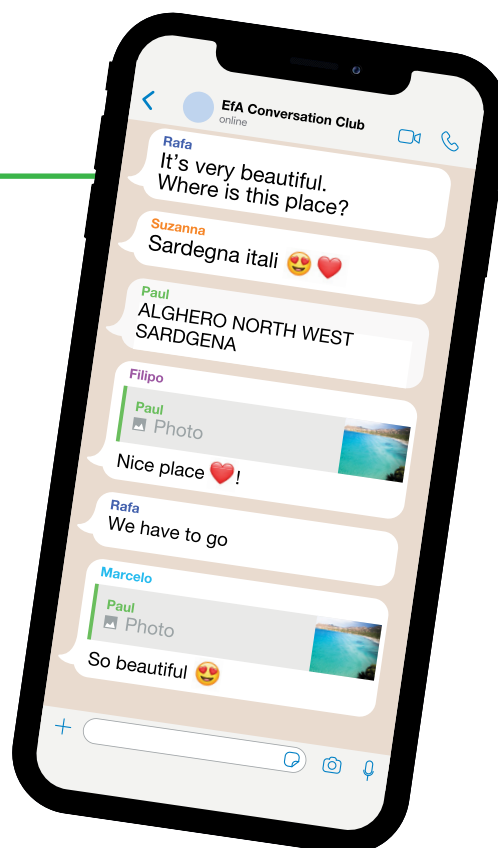
- People can chat in between sessions.
- Most people are familiar with it.
- Participants can send voice notes or use the transcription option (see below) instead of writing.
- It is easy and free to share photos, videos and gifs (little videos).
- WhatsApp can be a more accessible way to share documents than Zoom or Skype.
- It can be useful for sharing links, during or between online conversation club sessions.
- You can use it to share the whiteboard or the chat from the Zoom sessions as a useful record of the discussion or new vocabulary.

Getting started

You can download the app on your phone from the normal place you find apps (Google Play store or Apple App store) and then use these helpful [instructions](#) from WhatsApp's website.

WhatsApp Top tips

- Setting up a WhatsApp group can be really helpful both logistically (arranging sessions, sharing links etc.) and to build the group community (see screenshot).
- As well as sharing key words, phrases or chat from sessions on the WhatsApp group, you could briefly summarise the session. This can provide a useful record and help to validate the group's discussion and individual contributions.
- WhatsApp voice notes (green mic) can help participants to practise their listening and speaking in English. You can also press the small grey mic underneath for transcription of spoken messages.
- Everyone can use the WhatsApp group between sessions to chat, share articles, pictures and news.
- If you download WhatsApp on to your computer, you can easily access it while video-conferencing. (See [WhatsApp FAQ - How to download WhatsApp Desktop](#))

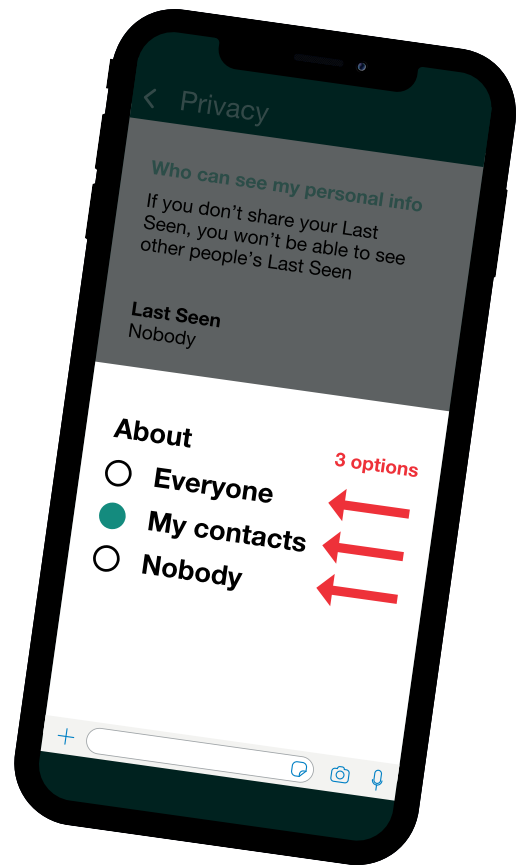




Important safeguarding and privacy note:

It is important to cover any data sharing/privacy issues with participants before suggesting they sign up to an app. In relation to WhatsApp groups, explain to participants that their mobile numbers will be displayed with their name unless they change their individual WhatsApp settings. Other apps, such as Signal, do not reveal numbers as default and do not have access to your contacts. If you are using WhatsApp, you can show everyone how they can change their settings before setting up the group:

1. Click on the 3 dots in the top right of your screen
1. Select **Settings**
2. Select **Account**
3. Select **Privacy**
4. Select **About**
5. Choose who can see your phone number with your name: **Everyone**, **My contacts** or **Nobody**.



Google Jamboard

Another very useful online tool is **Jamboard** - a Google document which can be used like a blank piece of flipchart paper and post it notes.

Similar to an interactive whiteboard, you and participants can make and edit notes, add drawings, images, sticky notes, text boxes and circles in real time.

Getting started

Jamboards are very user-friendly and intuitive. Google has some very easy-to-follow **instructions**³ on getting started and there are also a range of **useful videos**⁴.

Why are Jamboards good for conversation clubs?

- You can make a record of discussions to refer to later.
- Participants can use it themselves (although it's easier to do this from a computer than a phone).
- Scribing a discussion can help people understand and participate, especially if their reading is more advanced than their speaking and listening.
- It can slow down discussion which might help the lower level participants.
- The Jamboard can be shared with everyone after the session.



³ https://edu.google.com/intl/en_uk/products/jamboard/

⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_3b9cuxoSI

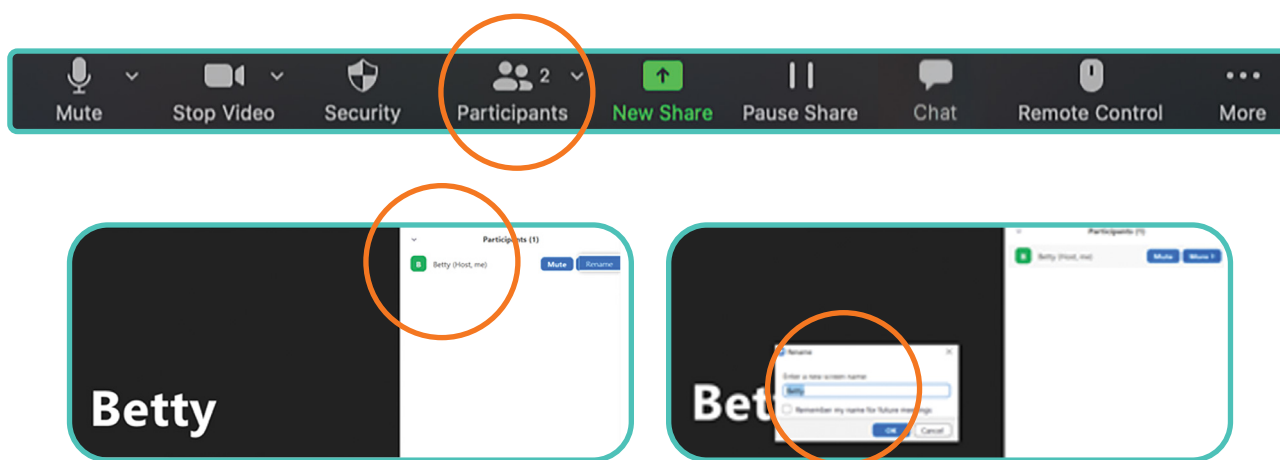
1.8 Privacy and safety options

There are a number of important considerations in relation to online safety and creating a safe online space for conversation club participants and volunteers.

It is important to spend time supporting participants to familiarise themselves with features of the online platforms and apps you are using so they can make their own choices relating to their own privacy and safety. For example, on Zoom, you could cover the following five features:

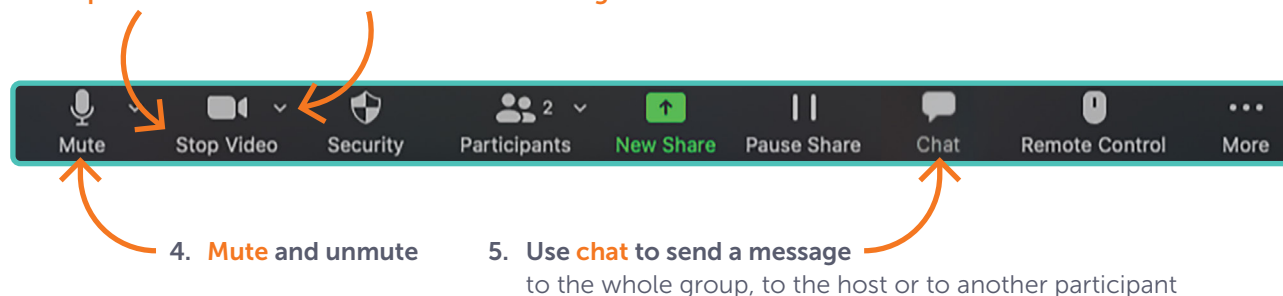
1. Rename

Participants (from bottom toolbar) > **More** (next to name - top right) > Select: **Rename** > Enter name



2. Stop and start video

3. Use a virtual background



4. Mute and unmute

5. Use chat to send a message

to the whole group, to the host or to another participant

There are more actions you can take as the meeting host:

- unchecking 'join before host' option
- using a waiting room and allowing entry to known participants only
- unchecking the option which allows participants to record through the app
- disabling private chat and screen sharing by participants
- switch off video/audio and remove from the session for any uninvited participants.

It can be useful to discuss privacy and safety together in the group. This can include:

- not sharing the conversation club meeting ID and password on public forums
- some people like using Facebook Messenger but this might not work for everyone because it involves participants sharing their personal Facebook identities, if they have one
- not sharing information about other participants or what they have said.

1.9 Other important privacy considerations

- Participating from home might be good for some but difficult for others. Some people will have limited space, noisy family members or housemates and privacy issues to deal with. This might be why some participants prefer to turn off their video.
- Some participants may have to consider who is within earshot and be careful about what they say. For example, some conversations may be inappropriate for children to hear. Participants can also use chat to indicate they are unable to speak for whatever reason.
- Think about your own privacy, too. Close any tabs or windows you don't need for the session, such as personal emails or online banking. It's easy to share the wrong window by mistake.

Conversation club idea:

When new participants join the group, you can ask the whole group to explain the ground rules as well as some of the platform features you frequently use.

Alternatively, you can ask for another participant to give some peer support, possibly using a shared main language.

1.10 Group agreements

An interesting topic to discuss together is how to help everyone feel safe, welcome, and able to participate comfortably in online conversations within the group. This can include discussing and comparing language cultures and attitudes towards, for example, interrupting, agreeing and disagreeing etc. From this, the group may want to reach some agreements, on, for example,

- including others in conversations
- polite ways to interrupt (e.g. putting up your hand)
- turn-taking
- not recording sessions or taking screenshots of each other
- if session links or passwords can be shared or not
- whether participants can choose to have their video on or off. N.B. You could flag up that it is far better for everyone to be able to see each other but sometimes people may have valid reasons why they need to turn or keep their video off for all or part of a session.
- what people can share in conversation club sessions or on the group's messaging app.

N.B. Occasionally people may share scams or inappropriate content and it is easier to ask people to delete content if you have already discussed this together and have an agreement in place.



2.1 Session duration

The duration of conversation club sessions can range from 30 minutes up to 1.5 - 2 hours. Most people agree that online sessions are more intense than face-to-face interactions. So bearing this in mind, you might need to shorten the session or plan for at least one break.

2.2 Planning an online session

Approaches to planning conversation club sessions vary across organisations and volunteers. The amount of planning needed also depends on the language level of the participants. For beginners, sessions are usually more instructional with managed support, whereas for higher level learners they can be a lot more flexible, responsive and participatory.



The advantage of detailed planning, especially for new or less experienced volunteers, is that it can help you to feel more confident about facilitating sessions. The planning process can also help you to identify strategies or resources to help keep the session lively and engaging as well as any potential pitfalls and how to avoid these. However, sticking rigidly to a plan can sometimes mean that naturally occurring opportunities for learning, interesting interactions or follow up conversations are missed. Not planning at all, can mean that the participants themselves are more in charge of the content and direction of sessions, and conversations can develop naturally and feel more authentic. However, if sessions feel directionless for participants, or perhaps one participant is allowed to take it in a direction not everyone is happy with, this can be demotivating and could impact on attendance.

The **VELLCC Guidance for units** provides a basic structure with clear stages to support session planning. This works just as well for online sessions.

Even without a detailed plan, it is useful to organise any input or resources you might need linked to the topic, such as picture prompts, an interesting short video that will get people talking or maybe even a song. You can have these all open on your browser, so you are only a 'shared screen' away from showing participants the input.

When you are facilitating a conversation club online you have the whole internet at your fingertips. This leaves more greater scope for spontaneity and emerging content than before. This can be useful to find pictures to immediately show participants new vocabulary or pictures to provoke conversation. The participants might be in break-out rooms and you can spend a few minutes to find a poem about childhood, for example. The possibilities are endless."

Conversation club volunteer

Welcome	A warm, personal welcome for each participant. If required, participants sign in or you record attendance on a register.
Opening chat/ circle time	Introductions for anyone new. General chatting. Anything to follow up or report back on from the previous session? Any news from anyone?
Getting started	Introduction to the topic. One or more warm up activities linked to the topic. Questions to get the conversation started and find out which aspects of the topic participants are most interested in talking about.
Conversations	One or more main conversations linked to the topic, possibly from several perspectives and with supporting activities.
Closing chat/ circle time	Feedback about today's topic and conversations. Discussion around ideas for any follow up action or research for taking the topic further, e.g. discussing the topic more, arranging a visit to a local place, inviting a speaker in, etc. Sharing ideas and agreeing the main topic for the next session. Information and reminders about any important dates/events coming up.



VELLCC Guidance for units (Page 4)

2.3 Topics

Where do you get topics or content for conversation clubs from?

1. Use the VELLCC resources

There are 15 topics in the **VELLCC** Conversation club units and Guidance for units, plus a model for running conversation clubs which can be adapted to any topic at all whether online or face-to-face.

2. Ask participants to generate a list of topics they are interested in

You can ask this at the beginning of the conversation club or periodically. The advantage of this approach is participants feel validated and listened to.

Tips:

- Open the **VELLCC** topics pages in your browser and then share your screen. Ask participants which of these topics they might be interested in and, even better, ask them to suggest topics and ideas for discussion.
- Why not use the WhatsApp group to encourage conversations about topics?



3. Go with the flow

You might want to start with a general chit-chat or a round of introductions where participants share an experience, feeling, anecdote or something that has interested them since the last session and see what emerges. This approach is more frequently used by more experienced volunteers who have the confidence to identify topics as they emerge and react quickly with activity ideas or resources to help get the most from the topic. Having the internet at your fingertips makes it much easier to find and share content instantaneously so 'going with the flow' in online conversation clubs becomes easier.



"Go with the flow"

"You can spend hours preparing a perfect session, working up different materials, but the key thing is to be present in the moment, alert to new openings and creatively different directions, but relaxed enough to be able to go with the flow. Be ready to ditch the plan if it's not going well or change direction if something suddenly sparks participants' interests. Yes, you may be the facilitator, but remember that in the end, if it's successful, the club belongs to everyone."

Conversation club volunteer

4. Invite visitors

Visitors to online sessions can make for really stimulating content. In many ways this is greatly facilitated by the online format. Instead of trekking half-way across a city, a visitor can now click a link from the comfort of their own home. They can pop into a session, even if only for a short time, when in the past, a visit could have taken half of their day. Why not invite a doctor to take questions on health, a local expert to take questions on education or housing, someone to talk about their job or someone to talk about local community action?

5. Talk about the tech

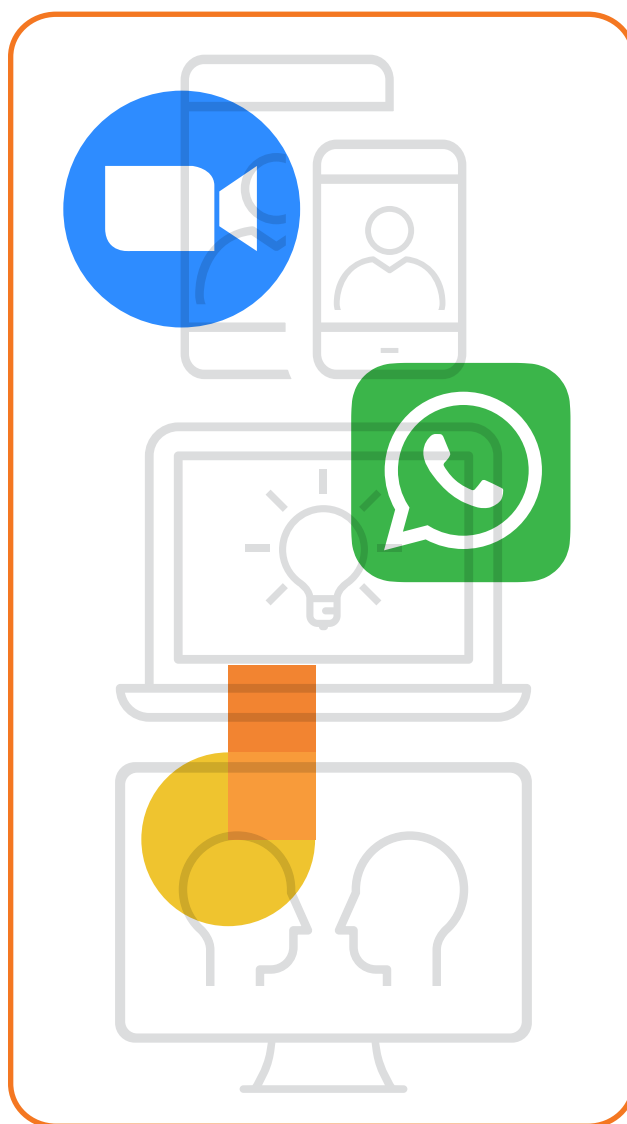
Technology is a good topic in itself. For example, why not have a session discussing the pros and cons of Zoom or whichever platform you are using. You can revisit this discussion from time to time as participants' skills and confidence grow. You could ask participants:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of online conversation clubs as opposed to meeting face-to-face?
- What is different about it?
- How do you feel when you talk to other people on Zoom/Skype?
- Do you feel more or less confident? Why? What could help you feel more confident?

Discussing tech is an opportunity for skills sharing, too. You can make participants co-hosts and ask them to explain different functions for others to try out, such as:

- Screen sharing
- Reactions
- Creating breakout rooms
- Using chat
- Turning video off and on
- Mute/unmute
- Speaker view/gallery view
- Video features (frames, hats, etc.)
- Changing your name

Providing opportunities for participants to develop their digital awareness and skills helps to increase the range of activities and interactions you can incorporate into the online sessions, as well as supporting participants to develop crucial skills to use in other aspects of their lives.



6. Feedback

If you ask for feedback on your online sessions regularly, this will help you to build a strong sense of what participants enjoy talking about, plan topics and activities for the future, find out how they are managing online sessions and whether any digital support may be helpful for them. Participants can feedback orally in the whole group, or from smaller breakout room groups. You can also ask participants for individual feedback using chat or WhatsApp or you could create a simple Google form and send it round on the WhatsApp group.

2.4 Adapting the VELLCC resources for use online

The pictures, prompts and resources to support conversations, games and speaking activities in the **VELLCC** units and the *English Conversation Practice Toolkit* generally work well online either as they are or by taking a few small steps:

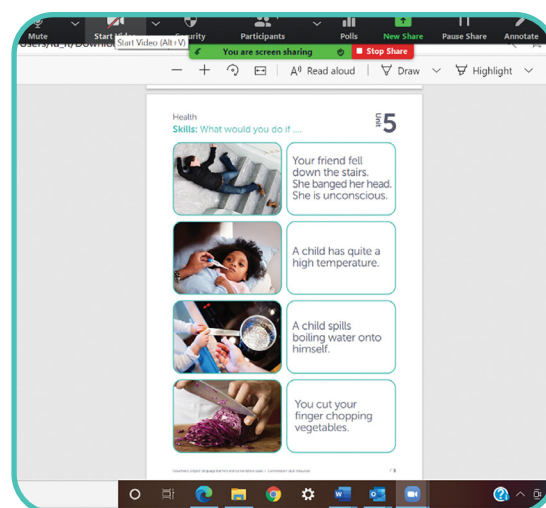
1. Share a resource as it is:

Share the selected page with everyone in the main online space. Be aware that how it looks will vary across devices, so always check that everyone can see and/or read the resource clearly.

To share a screen in breakout rooms, you can:

- Ask participants to take a photo of the shared screen in the main space before going into breakout rooms, and look at it there
- Ask participants, or at least one participant from each group, to 'Print screen', paste onto a word document and then share screen with the word document in the breakout room
- Go into each room and share a screen
- Save the page and send it to everyone on WhatsApp.

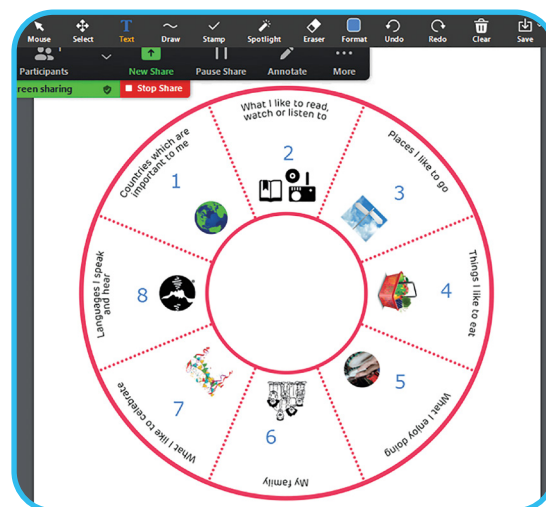
N.B. You cannot share a screen from the main room directly into breakout rooms on Zoom.



2. Adapt a resource

You can easily adapt resources when sharing a screen by using the annotate tool. For example, with the **Culture wheel** (*English Conversation Practice Toolkit*, p. 35), you can:

- Display the wheel using screen share
- Add numbers to each segment using the annotate tool (see example).
- Use a random number generator (Google does this, search "random number generator") to generate a random number between 1 and 8 to determine which segment each participant should talk about.



3. Replace images with actual objects

VELLCC Unit 4 Culture and Creativity suggests a conversation based on discussing objects with cultural value. This works well online. You can display the images of the objects using 'shared screen' and run through the questions with the participants. You can also ask participants to find an object that's important to them in their home (or a photo of one) and share the questions in the chat (copy and paste from the Unit) for group work or pair work. If participants are working in small groups in breakout rooms, you can also paste the questions in chat.





4. Display two resources side by side

As long as you are using images and text that are clear, simple, big and bold, you can use 'Print screen' and paste the two documents side by side on a word document and share this instead. See the example, from *VELLCC Unit 4 Culture and Creativity*.

Culture and creativity
Getting started: Picture pack - objects



Unit 4

What's this?

Where is it from?

What's it made from?

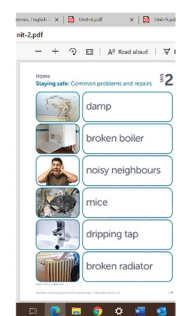
Do you like it?

Can you make this?

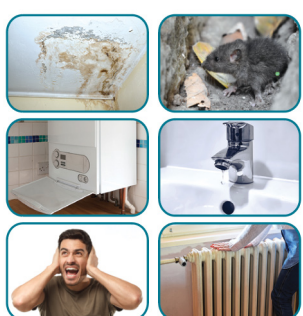
5. Adapt matching activities

The *VELLCC* units include a lot of matching activities which were designed to be printed and cut up so that participants can match words and images etc.

One option is to copy and paste the page(s) you want to use onto a word document. Crop the document so that just the images are visible. You can also use 'annotate' to number the images. Then copy and paste or write the words in chat in a different order, and participants can call out the answers. See example, using the matching activity from *VELLCC Unit 2 Home: Number 1 is damp*.



VELLCC resource



Cropped resource

6. Copy and paste prompts and questions

The *VELLCC* units and the *English Conversation Practice Toolkit* include a lot of prompts and questions. You can copy and paste these into chat to send to everyone, named participants or to breakout rooms, or you can share the screen.

In your experience, what's bad about this?

In your experience, what's good about this?

Who?

Where?

When?

Why?

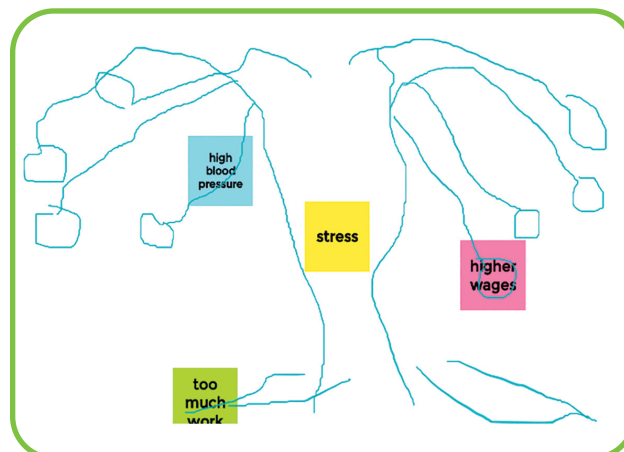
What?

How?

7. Use Google Jamboard instead of flipchart paper

The *VELLCC* units sometimes use **participatory tools** like the 'problem tree' in *Unit 5 (Health)* on dealing with stress. The instruction is to draw a tree on flipchart paper, labelling the roots with causes of stress, the branches with consequences and the fruit with actions we can take to combat stress. This is all do-able on a Google Jamboard.

Use the pen tool to draw the outline of the tree or insert an image and then use the sticky notes to label the roots, branches and fruit. Participants can do this themselves or a volunteer (or a participant) can act as scribe for the group.



2.5 Key words and phrases

A key aspect of successful online conversation club sessions is the active participation of all participants. In order to join in, participants need to understand what people are talking about, how they can join in and/or what they are expected to do. Take time to flag up and check understanding of key words and phrases including instructions and technical terms such as click, breakout room, mute/unmute.



Tips:

- A good way to check if participants have understood, is to ask them to summarise together what you have just said.
- If you have beginners in your group, encourage other participants who share the same main language to help explain key words, phrases or instructions, as needed.

Supporting absolute beginners

Running an online conversation club for absolute beginners can be challenging and may not be the most effective way for people who need greater support to improve their English. If you do have a conversation club for complete beginners, here are some tips:

- Keep the group small and/or have a high ratio of volunteers to participants.
- Use lots of real objects, pictures, visual prompts or symbols, e.g. question marks, speech bubbles, etc.
- Sometimes very simple written instructions in chat can help participants understand spoken ones.
- Encourage participants to use their other languages with each other and with facilitators (where possible) to help understanding and communication. This is especially helpful for instructions and technical issues.
- Go slowly and take frequent breaks.
- Use lots of repetition.



What we like about the Conversation Club is that our English is not judged.

Conversation club volunteer

2.6 Equal participation

It is not unusual for groups to have very vocal participants as well as those who say less. In some ways this can become much more evident online. This raises the question of how to best establish an online space which encourages and supports equal participation.

Unequal participation is, of course, not unique to online groups but existing inequalities can be exacerbated as it becomes easier for people to be left out. Involve participants in discussing and agreeing how to make participation more equal. Participants in one of EFA's conversation clubs came up with these tips for making discussions more equal:

What you need to do	What you can say	Online considerations
Include others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What about you, Luz?</i> <i>Do you agree, Vera?</i> <i>What's your opinion, Amin?</i> <i>What do you think?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mute yourself when you're not speaking if there's background noise. If your name is showing as something else, e.g. the name of your device, rename yourself so that people can more easily bring you into the conversation.
Interrupting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sorry, can I add something?</i> <i>Could you let her finish, please?</i> <i>I agree with you but ...</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise a hand or use a reaction. Put a hand up in chat to show you'd like to speak. This can help the facilitator order who speaks next.
Defending your turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Hold on!</i> <i>Just a minute, please.</i> <i>Let me finish, please.</i> <i>Can I finish, please?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It can be easier to defend your turn online because the technology actually facilitates this as only one speaker can ever be heard, i.e. those not indicated by the yellow border (zone) are silenced.



2.7 Turn-taking online

One of the most difficult things about facilitating an online conversation club can be managing turn-taking. For example, should you:

- take control and nominate speakers or leave participants to it?
- write names in a circle on the whiteboard or in chat or just sit back?
- use chat to encourage people to speak up?

There are some participatory tools that can helpfully address unequal participation and can be easily adapted for online use:

1. Speaking and spectrum lines

For a “speaking line”, use the whiteboard to write the names of the participants in text boxes (in Zoom, this is a big T in the toolbar above the whiteboard). Draw a line across the screen using the diagonal line which is one of the **draw tool options** (next to the T).

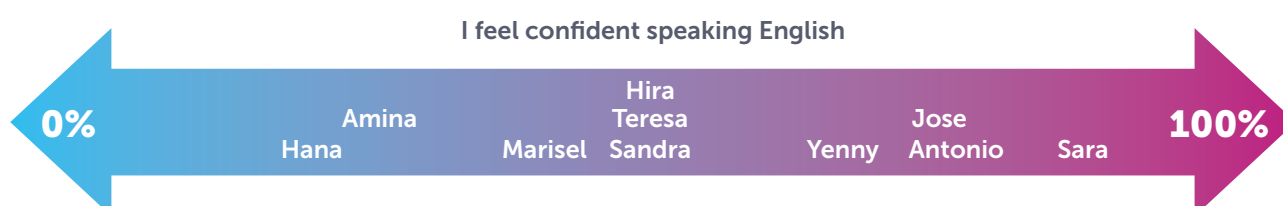
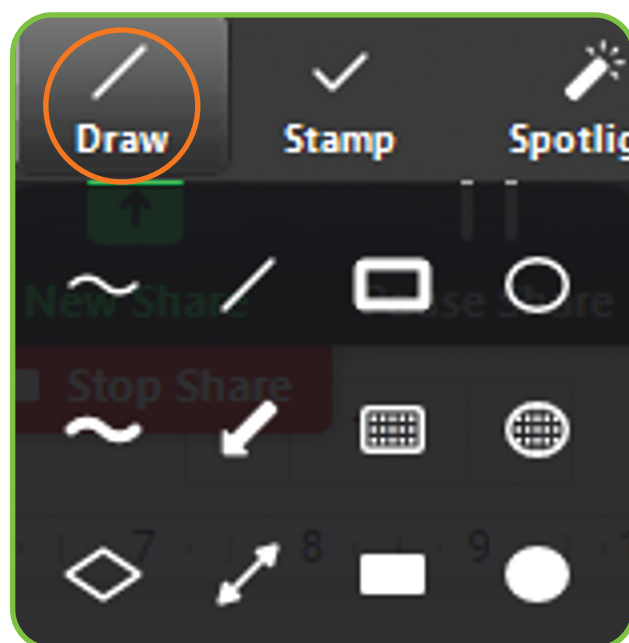
Then arrange the names from left to right along the line in order of who spoke the most to who spoke the least (see below). It’s important to say to participants that it’s not a criticism. It’s normal and natural that some people speak more and less than others. But if it’s the same people at each end of the line all the time perhaps that’s more of an issue. You can then ask the participants what the people at the left end of the line (speaking a lot) can do to encourage and support the people at the right.

Similar to the speaking line in terms of preparation, with spectrum lines, participants arrange themselves along the line that runs from 0% to 100% in terms of their response to a statement, such as “I feel confident speaking English”. They should be able to do this by dragging the text boxes around the whiteboard screen but if they can’t you can do it for them, following their verbal instructions.

Reflection: Think about the pros and cons of each approach to turn-taking.

Conversation club idea:

Have a conversation in the group about how to make sure everyone feels included and can speak if they would like to.



2. Speaking wheel evaluation

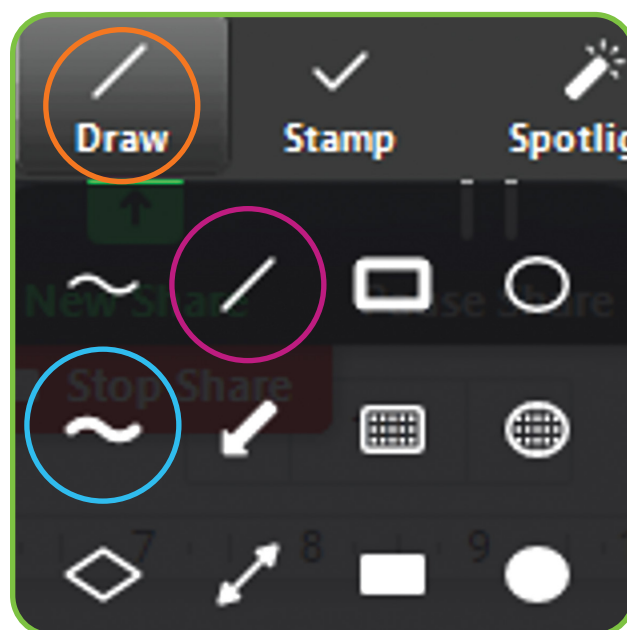
- Draw a circle on the whiteboard using the circle tool in 'Draw'.
- Then draw segments for as many people you have in the group using the **line** tool also in 'Draw'.
- Tell participants they can colour in their segment using the **squiggly line** according to how happy they are with their personal participation. For example, if they're 100% happy they colour in the whole segment and if they are not happy at all they leave it blank. Then they can write some comments using the text box. This is all relatively easy to do from a phone or a computer with a bit of practice.

It is a rich experience, there is a sharing of culture, it is as if we were traveling through the person.

Conversation club participant (Leicester)

For me all these activities have been great opportunities to improve my English in a pleasant way. Despite all the miles that separate us, while I am online I do not realise that I am not in a classroom nor the distance between us. I feel as if we were in the same place. And I think everyone feel the same.

Conversation club participant (Brazil)



2.8 Increasing opportunities for social interaction

Something people miss about meeting face-to-face in classes and clubs is the informal chat on their way into the room or as they leave. One way to replicate this online is to schedule the meeting for longer than the actual session, adding extra time before and/or after the usual start and end times. If you disable the waiting room, participants can enter before the host and/or stay longer at the end of a session. Alternatively, you can go into the Zoom room early, open 3 or 4 breakout rooms before the session starts, and then put people into the breakout rooms as they arrive. At the end of the session, you can put people in breakout rooms (or one room) as well, and leave the meeting open so that participants can decide when they leave.

I've done this quite often and noticed that two or three people are still chatting half an hour after the session has ended.

Conversation club volunteer

2.9 Co-facilitation

Delivering a conversation club with another volunteer can make it more fun, less stressful, safer and if for any reason one of you is unable to attend, the session can carry on. Online conversation clubs benefit in many ways from volunteers working in pairs or even threes:

- There can be a lot for just one person to think about and manage - from organising the tech, managing the waiting room, welcoming new participants, greeting everyone as they arrive, listening to participants' speaking and organising the next activity.
- Sometimes an individual will need 1-1 help with something, like turning on their microphone or finding the chat.

- One volunteer might want to join a breakout room to support a specific group or participant while the other flits between them.
- One volunteer can stay in the main room to welcome latecomers or help people who can't get into the breakout room.



Tip:

Ask participants to explain to each other how to join a breakout room, i.e. click 'join' when the invitation comes onto the screen.



2.10 Challenges and strategies

Sometimes online sessions present challenges for volunteers and participants. The most important tip is not to worry, and talk about any issues together with the participants. Here are a few strategies to help address some common challenges.

Challenge	Strategies
Your technology isn't working!	Relax! These things happen. No-one will be upset or angry. Message the group via WhatsApp to explain there's a problem that you're trying to sort out. If it's a computer problem, try joining from your phone - it's better than nothing. If it's not possible to recover the session, follow up with participants to explain and confirm the next session.
A participant's tech isn't working	Don't worry too much. If you are facilitating alone, you may not be able to resolve this. Sympathise with the participant but focus on those who can take part. If you can, follow up with the participant afterwards.
Participants can't annotate, share screen, use the chat or some other function they need to use	This will always happen! Reassure participants and explain, perhaps they can just listen/watch and try again next time. It is also a good idea to gradually introduce new features and provide plenty of modelling, support and practice. Also, avoid using too many functions at the same time. If you know you are going to be using a new feature in a session, you can send a screenshot/link to a 'how to' video by WhatsApp before the session.
There is conflict or a dispute	This can be hard online as turn-taking becomes more and more difficult if people become heated and talk over each other. Sometimes people do get upset and it can help for everyone to take a short break. If someone has behaved inappropriately or aggressively, follow up in line with your organisation's policy or code of conduct. If you don't belong to an organisation, you could seek advice from a more experienced volunteer. In a very serious situation, you can remove the participant and explain to them afterwards why you did this.
No-one is speaking!	Sometimes it is important to allow some quiet time for participants to consider their responses or what they want to say. However, if it is clear a particular topic or conversation just isn't working, it's fine to move onto something completely different. It is always a good idea to have a backup idea or resource in case the conversation stops. You could: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quickly introduce a fun game or activity (see next section) - share an image and ask a few questions to get a new conversation going - ask participants to write down (or think up) questions to ask each other about a new topic - put participants in small groups in breakout rooms to ask and answer the questions - play a short video or piece of music and ask for feedback and responses - share a personal photo and invite questions.

Online games and activities

Part 3

3.1 Games

This section includes ideas for games and activities that work well online, as well as ideas for adapting popular face-to-face activities for use online.



Games are often just what you need to set the tone, punctuate the session or inject some energy when people are feeling a bit flat. You might think that games may not work as well online but actually they are more important than ever. There are a lot of ideas for activities in the **VELLCC** units and *English Conversation Practice Toolkit*. Many work well online with a few tweaks. If you are not familiar with any of these, you can find simple instructions in the *English Conversation Practice Toolkit*:

Activity/ Toolkit page	Online tweak						
Alphabetical order (Page 4)	Ask participants to rename (click the three dots above your image) themselves with an animal or a flower they are happy to be called temporarily (not everyone would want to be a dog or donkey for example). Participants then ask each other their real names. Each time someone answers you write their names in a text box on the whiteboard. When all the names are in text boxes, ask the participants to move them so they are in a circle in alphabetical order. When the circle is ready, start at 12 o'clock with the first participant introducing themselves and saying something about themselves in addition to their name and then continue round the circle.						
The name game (Page 4)	To replace the ball you can mime 'passing or throwing the object'. Ask everyone to choose an object that is important to them (it could be a book, a pen or some jewellery, for example). They pass the object by moving it slowly towards the camera and saying the name of the recipient who then pretends to take it (or catch it if it is thrown).						
Find someone who ... (Page 4)	<div>Create a 'Find someone who' table based on your knowledge of the group and share it on your screen or display the cards provided.</div> <table><tr><td></td><td>Name</td></tr><tr><td>Speaks more than 3 languages</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Lives in Streatham</td><td></td></tr></table> <div>You can either put participants into small groups in break out rooms to ask each other the questions. Alternatively, if everyone has reasonably good literacy in English and IT skills, participants can use chat to send private messages to each other to get answers. Participants keep track by writing notes on pen and paper. After 10 minutes (or when people seem to have finished), everyone can call out names for each answer while you or participants fill in the table.</div>		Name	Speaks more than 3 languages		Lives in Streatham	
	Name						
Speaks more than 3 languages							
Lives in Streatham							
I went to the market ... (Page 4)	Put the participants into a 'circle' by using names in a circle on the whiteboard or simply writing all the names into the chat. If the group is large, use two breakout rooms.						
Kim's game (Page 4)	Instead of showing everyone items on a table or tray before covering them up, you can display an image with a specific number of objects clearly visible. Then put participants into small groups in breakout rooms to work together to remember all the items.						

Many other popular games work well online with a few adaptations:

Activity/ Toolkit page	Online tweak
ABC object hunt	<p>Distribute the alphabet to as many people as there are in the session by using the chat. For example, write in chat: <i>Saleha ABC, Sara DEF, Jose GHI</i> etc. Explain that they have to find an object starting with each of the letters they have been allocated in their house/room e.g. an apple, a ball and a cat and bring it back to show everyone on-screen. The winner is the first person or group to get back to their seat with all their objects. Give participants a chance to show and say what objects they collected. Alternatively, you can put participants into small groups and allocate a cluster of letters to each group. Give everyone 3 minutes or so to work together in their groups to gather one item for each letter then bring everyone back to the main group and go through the alphabet with people holding up their item for each letter.</p> <p>* If a participant is not at home, or is in one room or a shared space, suggest they can search for photos of objects on their phone and share them.</p>
Pictionary	<p>Brainstorm words belonging to a particular category, e.g. <i>'Things you can do in summer'</i> or <i>'Jobs at home'</i>. You might need to explain some of the words that emerge or give people a chance to look them up. Keep a list of the words (on paper, or a document you don't display). Split the group into two teams to compete with each other but keep everyone together in the main room. Give the first player a word by writing to them privately (use the chat or WhatsApp). The player then has 30 seconds to draw the word on the whiteboard (using 'annotate')*. Their teammates need to guess and if they guess correctly within the time, their team gets a point. The members of the other team keep their microphones on mute. The teams alternate, with each team member having a turn to draw. You can also use the whiteboard to keep score.</p> <p>Team A III Team B II</p> <p> *Everyone should be able to use the whiteboard unless you have changed the Zoom settings.</p> <p>Tip: Test that the whiteboard is working for everyone before you play.</p>
Charades/ articulate	<p>A variation of Pictionary is to act out or mime the words (charades) or describe the words without using the word itself (articulate). With charades you need to make sure the nominated participants are within camera shot - it is very easy for people to make themselves disappear!</p>
One, two, three, buzz	<p>Arrange participants into a circle on the whiteboard. Explain that they are going to count with participant A saying "one", participant B, "two", participant C, "three" etc. but, all multiples of four (4, 8, 12, etc.) and all numbers including the number 4 (14, 24, 34, etc.) need to be replaced with the word "buzz", i.e. 1,2,3, buzz, 5, 6, 7, buzz etc. When anyone goes wrong, they are out. Play for several minutes or until there are just two people left. N.B. Numbers like 14 and 24 are just buzz (not buzz-teen or twenty-buzz). If you get as far as 40 (buzz), it's then buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz, etc. until you reach 50.</p>
Playback	<p>This is a theatre game that works well online. Make up a category for activities that can be mimed e.g. <i>"Things I did yesterday"</i> or <i>"Kitchen activities"</i>. One participant volunteers to start. They mime an activity for a few seconds only and then say: <i>"Lights, camera, action!"</i>. The rest of the class need to repeat the mime (play it back). They then need to guess what the action was. Each participant takes a turn to do a mime and watch it played back to them.</p>

3.2 Adapting popular learning activities

You can easily adapt popular learning activities for use online.

Activity/ Toolkit page	Online tweak
Role play	<p>Role play can work just as well online. Working in pairs is probably easier than bigger groups but group role play can work, too. People can make their role clear by using props or dialogue or renaming themselves. Ask participants watching role-plays to turn off their camera.</p> <p> Tip: A telephone works well as a prop to show when people in a role play are not in the same space. For example, participant A (playing a worker) can phone participant B (playing their boss).</p>
Pair work and group work	<p>Dividing participants into pairs or small groups considerably increases their opportunities to speak. Online it is even more important, as it can be harder for some people to participate in the whole group discussions. Decide on the size of each group and then you can either assign people manually or randomly. You can let participants get on with their conversations and easily monitor them by entering each breakout room just for a few seconds to see if people are on track and have the resources they need to do the task. Also, be aware that for some participants, chatting in small groups may feel less pressurised than being put into a breakout room with just one other person.</p> <p> Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you click on 'breakout rooms', you can send messages to all the rooms. - Show participants how to ask for help from a breakout room - it is one of the meeting controls on the bottom of the screen.
Matching	<p>Matching pictures to pictures, pictures to words or words to definitions can work well online with a whole group. Save the activity on a document on your computer and then share your screen. Ask participants to annotate or annotate for them following participants' instructions. A lower tech alternative is to label the items to be matched with numbers and letters and ask them to write the answers down, e.g. 1-d, 2-a, 3-f etc. You could share the document with the matching activity via WhatsApp or other messaging app, or drop it in the chat or share your screen.</p>
Picture prompts	<p>You can share your screen to show pictures from the internet or photos from your computer. If you want groups to be able to access pictures prompts, it's probably better to send them via WhatsApp, or another messaging app.</p>
Taking notes and reporting back	<p>Although the main focus in conversation clubs is speaking and listening, taking brief notes and reporting back to the whole group can sometimes be a useful activity because it involves a range of skills, recycles language and extends it. There are a range of ways to take notes online; you could encourage participants to use the chat, use a Google doc or a jamboard, or the old-fashioned way: a pen and paper.</p>

Additional useful resources

This section includes useful resources additional to those detailed in the original VELLCC resources (see A Guide for Volunteers).



Part 4

Digital access, inclusion and support

- BT:
<https://newsroom.bt.com/bt-to-help-disadvantaged-children-with-home-schooling-offering-six-months-free-internet-access/>
- Choose - Fair price comparison:
<https://www.choose.co.uk/guide/free-computer-schemes-on-benefits.html>
- Creating online communities
<https://cityofsanctuary.org/2020/04/02/creating-online-communities/>
- Citizens Online:
<https://www.citizensonline.org.uk/>
- Digital access for all:
<https://digitalaccessforall.co.uk/>
- Digital Unite:
<https://www.digitalunite.com/>
- Future dot now:
<https://futuresdotnow.uk/devicesdotnow/>
- Good Things Foundation:
<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/areas-of-work/digital-inclusion>
<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/projects/connecting-families%20>
- Gov.uk:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Jamboard getting started: [Instructions](#) and [video](#)
- Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index 2020:
https://www.lloydsbank.com/assets/media/pdfs/banking_with_us/whats-happening/lb-consumer-digital-index-2020-report.pdf
- NCVO Knowhow (Page last edited 4 April, 2019) How to build an engaged online community <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/how-to/how-to-build-an-engaged-online-community>
- Refugee Learning Stories: [Supported mobile learning in the "Third Spaces" between non-formal and formal education for displaced people – Refugee Learning Stories](#)
- Time Bank: [The answer to getting our learners online? Bicycles! - TimeBank](#)
- WaveLength: [WaveLength](#)
- WhatsApp getting started: [Instructions](#)
- Zoom getting started: [guidance](#) and [video](#) and [multilingual videos](#) (with thanks to EFA, Xenia and JCORE UK)

Digital skills and learning online

- Digital Unite: [Technology guides | Digital Unite](#)
- Jamboard: [Getting Started with Google Jamboard \(Web Version\) Tutorial - YouTube](#)
- Leeds Asylum Seekers Network: <https://lassn.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-remotely/delivery-technology/>
- Signal: [Signal for Beginners. For some reason, people have gotten... | by Martin Shelton | Medium](#)
- WhatsApp checklist: [Microsoft Word - WhatsApp Checklist \(literacy.org\)](#)
- WhatsApp, getting started: <https://www.whatsapp.com/coronavirus/get-started/?lang=fb>
- WhatsApp FAQ: [WhatsApp FAQ - How to download WhatsApp Desktop](#)
- ZOOM features: [Polling for meetings – Zoom Help Center](#)

Online safety

- **Palanac, A.** 'A 'safe space' in 'cyberspace'? Refugee students in synchronous online EAP classes' <https://eap4socialjustice.net/2020/05/14/a-safe-space-in-cyberspace-refugee-students-in-synchronous-online-eap-classes/>
- **Palanac, A.** (2020). 'Creating a safe space. Towards a trauma-informed ELT pedagogy for refugees.' *Language Issues*, 30(2), pp. 3-14
- **Digital Unite (2020)**, Internet security: <https://www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides/internet-security>

Resources

- Leeds Asylum Seekers Network: [Teaching Remotely - Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network \(lassn.org.uk\)](#)
- Learning and work, Volunteers, English Language Learners and Conversation Clubs: <https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/volunteers-english-language-learners-and-conversation-clubs/>

Translation/Multilingual guides

- City of Glasgow College - BURC: [How to use Zoom in different languages – BURC](#)
- DeepL: <https://www.deepl.com/en/translator>
- Google translate: <https://translate.google.co.uk/>
- The Jewish Council for Racial Equality (Translated guides for using Zoom) [English](#), [Amharic](#), [Arabic](#), [French](#), [Farsi](#), [Kurdish Kurmanci](#), [Kurdish Sorani](#), [Lugandan](#), [Polish](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Tigrinya](#), [Turkish](#), [Vietnamese](#).

Volunteering

- **Volunteers in ESOL forum:**

Discussion forum for volunteers and co-ordinators in the voluntary ESOL sector, hosted by Jiscmail and moderated by NATECLA. To subscribe, email the owners and request to be added to the mailing list:

VOLUNTEERSINESOLFORUM-REQUEST@JISCMAIL.AC.UK

Websites and apps

- Flipgrid: [Flipgrid | Empower Every Voice](#)
- Flippity: Flippity.net: [Easily Turn Google Spreadsheets into Flashcards and Other Cool Stuff](#)
- Kahoot!: [Kahoot! | Learning games | Make learning awesome!](#)
- Marco Polo: [Home - Marco Polo](#)
- Padlet: [Padlet](#)
- Quizizz: [Quizizz - The world's most engaging learning platform](#)
- Quizlet: [Learning tools and flashcards - for free! | Quizlet](#)
- Wordwall: [Wordwall | Create better lessons quicker](#)



Volunteers,
English language learners
and conversation clubs

Running conversation clubs online

A guide for organisers

For any queries please contact
enquiries@learningandwork.org.uk

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Published February 2021

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**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government**

Created by Giant Arc Design
www.giantarc.co.uk