



# Distance Learning Technology Guide

## Equipment Basics

**Laptop/Desktop/Smartphone/Tablet with Camera/Mic:** You will need a device with a camera and microphone. A laptop or desktop with a built-in or external webcam offers the biggest viewing window and most versatile platform support. Smartphones and tablets also have cameras and microphones that support video conferencing.

**Reliable High-Speed Internet Connection:** Cable, fiber, and high-speed DSL are the best options, but a cellular network can work as well. For home internet, you will need a Wi-Fi or ethernet cable connection. Google search 'speed test' and run a speed test to check the speed of your connection. Look for download speeds of 3-4 mbps or more and upload speeds of 1 mbps or more.

## Equipment Upgrades

**External speakers** or over-ear headphones can enhance the quality of sound you hear. A Bluetooth speaker is one of the most common external speakers. Sometimes external speakers can create audio feedback issues, however.

**External Cameras** can provide more flexible camera placement, wide angle shots and higher resolution.

## Before You Begin

**Connect Device to Power Source.** Make sure your computer/device is plugged in. These things take a lot of battery power!

**Update Your Computer.** Make sure that your computer/device is up to date on software. Installing any updates helps prevent glitches and problems with video conferencing software.

**Create accounts** with the platform you and your teacher select. Some of the most common platforms are Zoom, Google Hangouts Meets, Skype, and FaceTime. See below for details on these platforms.

**Practice using platforms in advance** either with a friend, family member or your teacher. Most platforms are relatively easy to use once you try them out a few times.

**Disconnect other devices from the wireless network** if you are using one. This includes cell phones, Wi-Fi TV, Amazon Echos, etc. Ask other people on your network not to stream video like Netflix. This will help maximize the quality of the video conference stream. Using an ethernet cable will also help with a higher quality stream.

**Do Not Disturb.** Set computer/device settings before the lesson to “do not disturb” so the student doesn’t get distracted by alerts.

## During the Lesson

**Use mute for meetings with more than one person.** In meetings of three or more people, turn off your mic when you are not talking by clicking ‘mute’. This helps keep the audio clear for everyone. Remember to unmute yourself when you want to talk again.

**Wear headphones** if you’re experiencing a lot of audio cutting out. When the software hears sound coming from your speakers, it may think that you are talking even when you are silent. This can create unwanted cutting in and out of sound.

**Keep your volume only as loud as you need** to clearly hear. This minimizes the audio cutting in and out caused by your microphone hearing sound from your speaker.

## After the Lesson

**Take notes** of any issues or troubleshooting problems.

**Reach out if you’re having trouble!** Don’t hesitate to ask for help if you just need to test things out or if you’ve encountered a major snag. Email our Registrar Samara at [smartin@winchestermusic.org](mailto:smartin@winchestermusic.org)

# Free Platforms for Video Streaming

## Zoom

- Go to [zoom.us](https://zoom.us) to create an account and download the software. (It works best to use the program on your device instead of via a browser window.)
- If using MacOS, you may need to go through a few extra steps to get our microphone working with Zoom: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360016688031-Using-the-Zoom-Client-and-Zoom-Rooms-with-macOS>

## Skype

- Here's a comprehensive article on setting up and using Skype <https://mashable.com/2014/07/09/skype-for-beginners/>
- For those of you who prefer videos <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQpltHBztB0>
- Both the student and teacher must have the software or application downloaded and an account set up to use.

## Google Hangouts Meets

- Accessed via your Google Account. If you have Gmail, you have a google account. If you don't have Gmail, it's easy to get. Go to [gmail.com](https://gmail.com) to set it up.
- Directly access Google Hangouts Meets at [meet.google.com](https://meet.google.com) (You'll have to log in, use the same login info you use for your Gmail account.)

**FaceTime:** Only available on Apple products (iPhone, MacBook, iPad, etc.) Both individuals have to have an Apple product for this to work.

- <https://www.imore.com/how-place-facetime-call-your-iphone>

**Duo:** similar to FaceTime, but available on Android AND iPhones (and some computers) via the PlayStore, Appstore, or wherever you get your apps.

Basic Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1iqNioVhno>