Belfast Senior College
Zoom Guide for Participants

Welcome to virtual learning! For over a year we have been offering courses via Zoom with great success. If this is your first Zoom class, there are some simple instructions that will facilitate your participation and enjoyment of your Zoom class.

Note: You do not need to purchase a Zoom account to participate in a Zoom class.

You will need a broadband internet connection, either wired or wireless. You will also need a computer with a camera and microphone either built in or attached. Optionally, you may also want to use a headset or earbuds. Useful tip: If you use a headset or earbuds with a microphone, be sure to plug those into your computer before joining the Zoom meeting.

About a week before your class begins you will receive information regarding your class from the class "host". The host is essentially the class administrator and assists the instructor with technology issues, as needed. The host will briefly describe the procedures followed in the class such as muting yourself upon entry, using Zoom features including the "chat" function, and offer any assistance you may need. Your class host will be happy to review the Zoom functions and offer suggestions to enhance your experience. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your host by replying to their e-mail.

The day prior to the class your meeting host will provide the URL link to the Zoom meeting via e-mail. A few minutes before it is time for class you will need to join the meeting. The link in the e-mail, if highlighted, can be clicked on and it will take you to the classroom. Alternately, you can copy and paste the URL into your browser of choice.

After joining the Zoom meeting, you will be prompted to join the room's audio. Click "join audio by computer." Zoom allows audio participation through your computer's internal speakers, a headset, or a phone line. We do not recommend using a separate phone line unless you have severe problems with your computer audio. The class host can assist you, if needed.

Your classroom host will review simple Zoom functions and class procedures prior to the beginning of class. The video and audio icons in the Zoom window can be used to allow your face (if you have a camera) to be seen and your voice to be heard. Many hosts and instructors will ask that you mute yourself by clicking on the audio mute icon, usually in the lower left corner of the Zoom window (PC) or at the top on an Apple product. You are muted if you see a red line through the microphone icon. Muting is an important feature because Zoom only allows one participant to be heard at a time, usually whoever is loudest. Please use Zoom etiquette and mute yourself when not speaking. This will prevent ambient noises like barking dogs, ringing telephones and other background noises from interrupting the class.

Keep an eye on the Chat Box – if there is a message in it a number will show up. Clicking on the Chat Box icon will open the message(s). You can also use the Chat box to communicate with others in the meeting.

The class Instructor will also send you an introductory email prior to the beginning of the class that may contain a syllabus and/or a reading list. Procedures will vary somewhat for one-day classes.

Cameras are optional to use Zoom. If we tell people they need a camera we are creating a barrier – do we want to do that?