

USE THE ZOOM APP FOR WINDOWS TO TEST YOUR MICROPHONE, EARBUDS AND WEBCAM

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Zoom is an internet video teleconference application. As of March 2020 it is the standard for virtual meeting held by the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS) and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) of George Mason University. Zoom is also used by Northern Virginia Community College and many other organizations for virtual meeting activities featuring video of the meeting leaders, speakers, and in some cases the audience as well.

Read the PATACS PDF document **How to Join a Zoom Meeting** to learn how to install the Zoom app on your Windows computer. You do not need to create an account with the Zoom organization in order to install and use the app.

That PDF document and many other useful PDF documents about Zoom appear at <https://www.patacs.org/zoom.html>

This doc assumes you have installed the Zoom app on your Windows computer.

Before you use the Zoom app to join a **Zoom teleconference**, you can do tests of the three things you need for participation in a teleconference:

Webcam

Microphone

Earbuds, headphones or speakers

ABOUT AUDIO FEEDBACK

Audio feedback is an undesirable result of placing a microphone very close to amplified speakers that are connected to the microphone. This can happen during a **Zoom teleconference**. Audio from your speakers is picked up by your microphone, sent back to the Zoom system servers, and then sent to your speakers again.

Echoes are often the first symptom of feedback. Feedback can get loud quickly and often involves high-pitched sounds that can be uncomfortable.

In a **Zoom teleconference**, the most common cause of audio feedback is that some participant listens to the meeting on loudspeakers, and has a live (*unmuted*) microphone.

The easiest way to avoid audio feedback is to listen on earbuds or headphones, especially if you want to speak or are required to speak during the **Zoom teleconference**. These days, if you own a cell phone, almost certainly you received wired earbuds with the phone. If you have not mislaid them or thrown them out, then this is the time to put the earbuds to good use.

You can connect the earbuds plug to the round green socket on a Windows desktop computer. If it is not visible on the front of the desktop computer, then check on the back of the computer. On a Windows laptop, the earbud connector is round but is not color-marked.

Stereo headphones work too, and can be connected to the same socket. Stereo headphones may be less comfortable than earbuds, but work more effectively with a hearing aid.

ABOUT THE MICROPHONE AND WEBCAM

Most Windows 10 consumer laptops have a built-in microphone and a built-in webcam, usually along the top of the laptop screen frame.

You will be able to see the webcam, if it is there. It is a small lens in a hole in the top center. Microphones appear as very small holes on one or both sides of the webcam.

Most Windows desktop computers do *not* have a built-in webcam. You may be able to buy a webcam online or for contactless curbside pickup at local consumer tech retailers. A webcam usually sits atop a monitor, connects to the computer via USB, and includes a microphone. The webcam may be powered by USB power, or may require power from an included AC power supply.

The rest of this doc assumes you have the webcam, microphone and earbuds connected to your computer.

TESTS USING THE ZOOM APP FOR WINDOWS

Step 1. Start the Zoom app. The Zoom application window will include an upper right corner similar to the version shown in **Illustration 1**, which is the version for Zoom account holders.

Note the blue arrow points to the **Gear** icon in the upper right corner of the window. Click on that **Gear** icon.

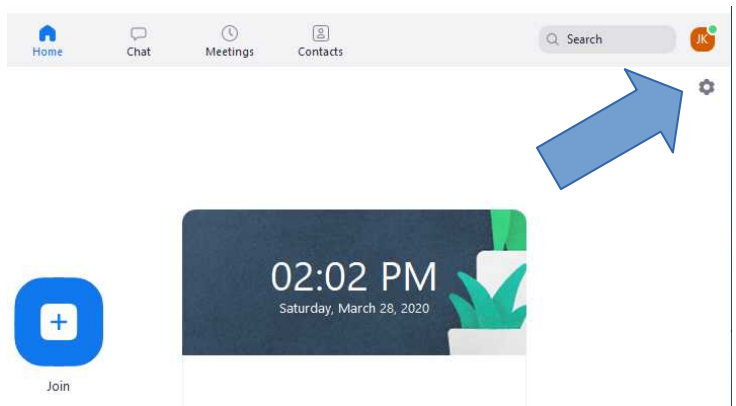


Illustration 1

Step 2. The Zoom Settings window appears, shown in **Illustration 2**.

Note the menu in the left pane. Below the **General** choice, the **Video** choice and the **Audio** choice provide the tests that you need. Those two choices are circled in **Illustration 2**.

Click on the **Video** choice.

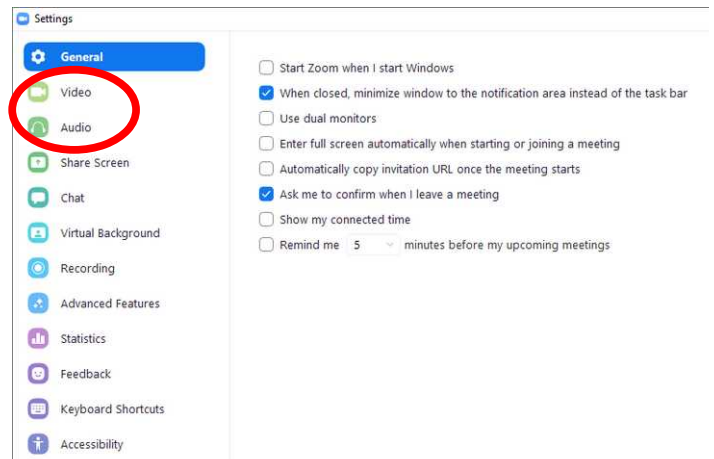


Illustration 2

Step 3. The Video window appears, shown in **illustration 3**.

If the webcam is connected and working, then the rectangular view will show the output of the webcam. Here you see your author. If the webcam is not connected and working, then the rectangular view will be solid gray.

The left pane menu remains visible. Click on the **Audio** choice.

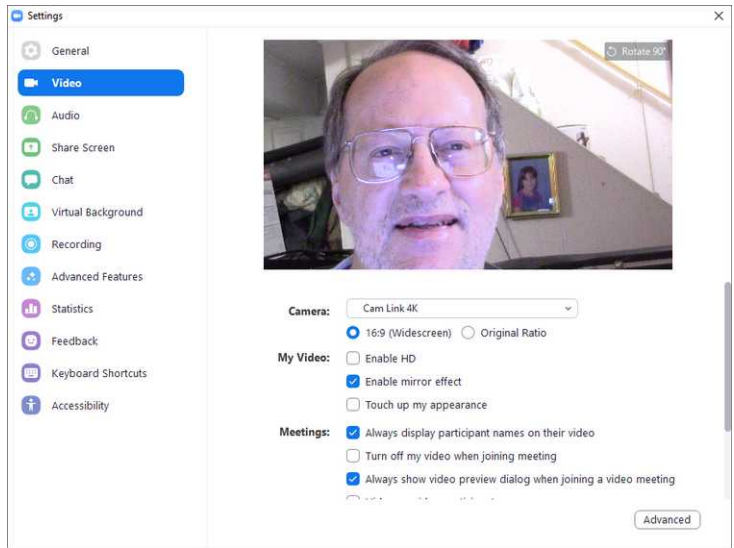


Illustration 3

Step 4. The Audio window appears, as shown in **Illustration 4**.

This window includes two separate tests. The top area provides a test for your speakers, earbuds or headphones. If you have earbuds or headphones, then attach those to the computer now, and put them on.

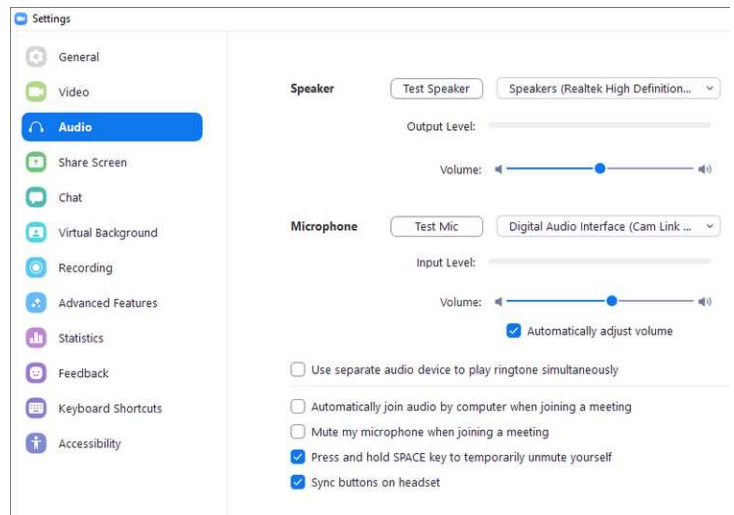


Illustration 4

Click on the **Test Speaker** button. The Zoom app plays a short melody, and the label on the **Test Speaker** button changes to **Stop**, as shown in **Illustration 5**. The melody repeats until you click on the Stop button.

If you can hear the melody, then your speakers, earbuds or headphones are connected and are working.

Click on the Stop button.

Step 5. Below the top area for testing speakers is the area for testing for your microphone. If you are using an external microphone, then attach it to your computer now, and keep it near your mouth.

Click on the **Test Mic** button, which is shown in **Illustration 6**. The Zoom app begins recording, so you must speak into the microphone.

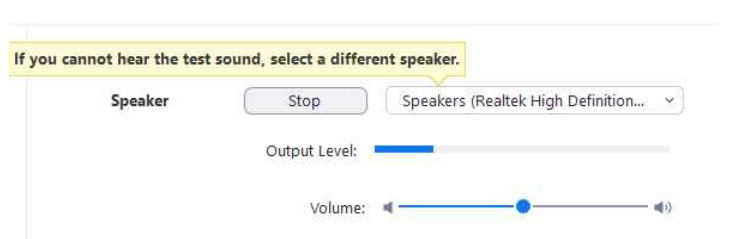


Illustration 5

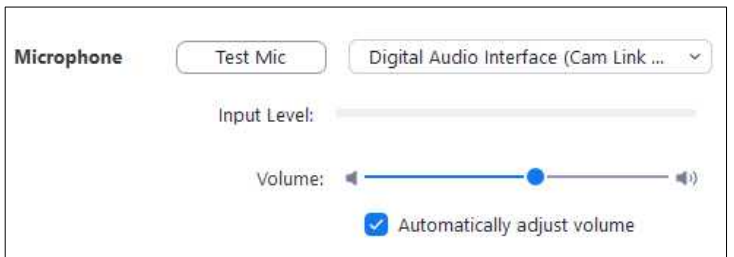


Illustration 6

The button label changes to **Recording**, as show in **Illustration 7**. The Input Level meter may show a blue bar indicating the volume of your voice.



Illustration 7

After about five seconds, the button label changes again, to **Playing**, as shown in **Illustration 8**. At that point you can stop speaking, and listen. If you hear your own voice, then the microphone is connected and works.

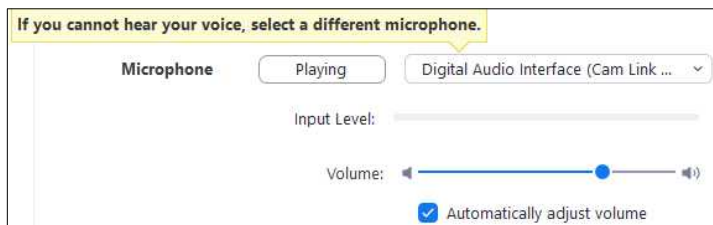


Illustration 8