

Teaching English to Visually Impaired Learners

Session 2. Tools and Resources

Zoom Platform for Online Classes

Online classes require the use of a platform that allows all attendees to see and interact with the teacher and each other.

There are many on the market, each with a similar approach, but with some specific characteristics. It is necessary for learners to know the basics of the tools that are going to be used, although they will learn some more things through their own use.

We are going to analyse the use of Zoom as a platform; if a different one is used, we need to know the main hotkeys it has, but basic platform functionality will be the same: speaking, muting the microphone, turning the video on and off, speaking and sharing documents through the chat, etc.

Some tips to use Zoom in your online classes with a blind or VI student

- Knowing the shortcut keys makes it easier for the teacher to help the student.
- Students can use the chat and read the chat in class. It's easier for students to read the chat than PPT slides in class, e.g. copy and paste the task instructions into the chat.
- You can also send documents through the chat.
- When there are two chat entries from the same person, only the first one is read by Jaws
- Notice that the blind learners cannot see the teacher's screen and neither use it with their screen reader, so everything projected must be read out loud.
- For deafblind students, whenever they can manage the screen, it is important to add subtitles to the conversation. You can read more about it on [Managing manual captions and watching this video: Zoom Accessible Features Overview \(Youtube\)](#)

- Breakout Rooms: Students prefer chat in the main room rather than in break out rooms. You can read more about it on [Managing Breakout Rooms](#)

Zoom management with hotkeys and Jaws

It is preferable to use Zoom through the app, as some hotkeys may not work on the web and not all the functionalities of video conferencing are operational either.

This guide is for Jaws, in its 2020 versions and beyond.

Remember: if you have several applications or documents open, to switch from one to another without closing them, you can press Alt+Tab and when you find the desired one, release it so that it stays on the screen.

General keys

Once you have Zoom open, you can move through all its options with a tab or access them with hotkeys. Here are the most useful ones for the classes:

- **To browse through all the options offered by Zoom:** tab scroll to find out about them.
- **Microphone on/off:** Alt+a. If you have the microphone muted, you can temporarily unmute it for a quick response with the "space" key and when you release it, it will be muted again.
- **Video camera on/off:** Alt+v
- **See the participants who are present:** Alt+u and up and down arrows.
- **Open Chat:** Alt+h
- **Raise and lower your hand:** Alt+y
- **Read alerts** (notices of who is joining or leaving the meeting, announcement that you have raised your hand, etc...): JAWS reads them every time they occur if you are on Zoom; If you're in another app, but have Zoom open, alerts won't sound. To see them when you return to Zoom: Windows+alt+a
- **Read previous alerts:** Control+1; control+2... up to control+0
- **For other options:** Reach with tab and explore with cursor arrows
- **Exit Any Pop-Up:** Escape
- **Exit the video conference and therefore the class:** Exit: alt+q

Chat management

- **Open the Chat:** Alt+h.
- Once inside the chat, tab to access the chat window and other items and use the down arrow to move through the chat items.
- **Explore everything you can do with chat:** Tab. You'll read: Who can see your messages; send to everyone; file; emojis; more...
- **Reactions** (Clapping your hands, sending emoticons, etc.): Reached with a tab. It is operated with cursor arrows.
- **Read the chat:** Reach the main tab message window (with the chat open). By pressing Tab, it will read you all the messages that have been sent, but only the first sentence. If you want to read everything each person has written, press Enter and scroll down with arrows.
- **To write in the chat:** Go to the chat edit box (you can select send all to a specific person, but in class it will always be send to all), type and press Enter to send.
- **To open a link sent,** go to the chat tab; to the link with arrows and press Tab again to enter the link. Press Enter. The link will open in a new window. When you close it, you'll be taken back to the Zoom chat.
- **Send emoji:** press tab to reach emoji, a new panel will open, and you can use the tab key for the different sections and the arrow keys to move through the emoticons to select the ones you want to send via chat.
- **Send a document:** Tab down to "File. Detachable button." Press Enter. A menu will open with different locations where you want to find the file you want to send (Google Drive, your computer, etc.). Use arrows to search for the one where you have the file you want to upload. Press Enter. File explorer opens. When you find the one you want to send, select it, press Tab to "Open, button" and press Enter or Spacebar to upload it to Chat. You'll get a message that you've uploaded it. Press escape to return to the chat and continue with the class on Zoom.
- **Download a document:** With the chat open, press Enter until you reach the main chat window. Scroll down with arrows to the conversation where the document was shared. Scroll down to the document. Press Enter or Tab and Enter to download it. The file explorer will open to save the document wherever you want.
- **Save Chat:** Zoom allows you to save the entire Chat conversation in a txt document. To do this, with the chat open, press Tab until you reach "More". Press Enter and two options will open: "Save Chat" and "Merge with Meeting Window". Tap Save Chat and the file explorer

will open; You will see in which folder to place the file, or you can select one. Pressing the enter key will save the chat up until the most recent conversation happening at that moment. If there are more conversations later that you would like to save, you will need to save them again. Keep in mind that, when saving the chat, you will be able to reach the links that have been shared from the document that is generated, but not download the documents that have been sent.

- **Merge with meeting window:** Allows you to place the chat to the right of the main video conference window, or to have it in front of you.
- **Go to chat start:** Control+start
- **Go to chat end:** Control+end

[Learn more about the Hotkeys for Zoom](#)

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