

Video Conferencing Checklist

Plan Ahead

➤ **Know how to use the equipment:**

- Have your username and password to log into your account
- Set up/test your audio and video (using the Set Up Wizard if available)
 - ❖ You will need a webcam and a headset with a microphone or a conference speakerphone if you plan to use all the video conferencing features.
- Ensure the webcam is angled properly to capture the participant(s) and the lighting is appropriate so the image is bright and sharp (avoid back lighting, such as a window)
 - ❖ An activity/session can be done as a whole class using one camera, or by having individuals/small groups accessing the activity/session from their own computer.
- The audio should be loud and clear, but not distorted
- Set up an activity and send the invitation to all participants/guests; include a reminder email
 - ❖ Record the session if you'd like to access it for future discussion; ensure everyone is aware of this in advance

Pre-Activity: Prepare your Guest(s)

- Ensure all guests know how to access the activity/session
- Outline what you would like accomplished during the activity, the types of questions that might be asked and any additional information that may be pertinent to the activity/session
- Check your connection with all participants/guest(s) prior to the day of the activity and review the functions of the video conferencing system you will be using
- Conduct a dry run of the activity and make any adjustments as necessary; all necessary documents/resources should be uploaded to the system first

Pre-Activity: Prepare your Students

- Review/practice clearly enunciating and projecting ones voice; speaking slower and slightly louder than normal will be required
 - ❖ Using the record feature is a great way to provide constructive feedback to students
- Decide on a protocol for asking questions and ensure everyone, including guests, have been made aware of the process
 - ❖ For some activities, using the “hand” tool in the video conferencing platform could be a useful way to manage questions.
- Provide an overview of behaviours expected during the activity/session
- Prepare questions to ask of the guest(s)

Student Roles

- Engage your students by providing them with roles during the activity/session. Some examples may include:

Calendar	Responsible for adding date & time of planned videoconferencing session.
Greeter	Greets all guests. Makes initial introduction. Talks about geographic location.
Share	Shares something special about the class, school, city, province or country.
Q&A	Asks specific questions for data collection.
Photographer	Responsible for documenting video conference with still images.
Backchannel Writers	Documenting conversation, questions, answers and classroom happenings during the video conference on a backchannel chat (ex. Today's Meet)
Backchannel Cleanup	Responsible to save backchannel as a document and cleaning up duplicate comments and mark questionable statements to be verified.
Google Earth	Finds location of guests and measures distance in miles & kilometers.
Info Station	Responsible to search for any data questions on the spot. Verifies any questionable information as well.
Elapsed Time	Responsible for noting the time the video conference started and ended, as well as calculating elapsed time.



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(Adapted from original by [Silvia Rosenthal Tolisano](#))

During the Activity

- Arrive early to ensure everything is ready to go
- Have each participant/guest do a sound check at the beginning of the session
- Allow time for introductions and instructions
- Mute the classroom microphone or individual microphones when someone else is speaking (the "Leader" of an activity has the ability to mute all microphones if necessary)
- Minimize background noise (ie. shuffling papers, side conversations, etc.)
- Monitor the pace of the activity/session and stop to ask questions or provide feedback
- Allow extra time for responses as there may be a slight delay
 - ❖ As you become more familiar with the technology, you may want to start incorporating some of the interactive features available in the video conferencing system, such as:
 - chat, surveys, sharing web links, using the whiteboard, annotations, breakout rooms, screen sharing and more.

Post-Activity

- Debrief as a group
- Have students do a reflection of the activity/session
- Share the activity with others (if recorded)
- Thank all guests
- Curriculum extension activities

Ideas

- Speak with content experts (authors, producers, artists, historians, scientists, etc.)
- Connect with classrooms around the world (or close by); compare everyday lives and learn about communities
- Practice interview skills (record for instant feedback)
- Conduct a virtual fieldtrip:
 - o tour a museum - many distinguished museums around the world digitally open up their collections
 - o Conference with a doctor performing a medical procedure
- Invite guest speakers
- Learn about a remote environment

Via (<https://talk.ednet.ns.ca>)

- Via is currently the video conferencing platform available provincially to the public education system in Nova Scotia.
- Contact your school board technology representative to have an account created.
- To access Via, go to the link above and enter your username and password.
- For more information about Via watch the [Via Basics videos](#) or once logged in to Via, download the User Guide from the Home page under “Downloads”.
- For technical support, contact the Help Desk during weekdays between 8:30am - 4:30pm at 902.424.2450.

“...videoconferencing can and does expand the walls of the classroom to transform learning opportunities for students...”

Wesley Fryer, Moving at the Speed of Creativity