How to Create a Video Recording with Zoom: Production Best Practices

[CLICK HERE FOR A QUICK START VIDEO](#)

Once you have identified your learning objectives and goals, you can start to create and build content for your short video. This process may require several iterations of practicing and recording before you have produced an effective video. See our resource on [creating effective education videos](#) for more tips and strategies.

This page takes you through the process of set up, recording your presentation, editing and publishing your video, and other technical considerations. CTL [Learning Designers](#) are available to assist you.

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Storyboarding

Storyboarding serves as a visual template that will help guide you through the recording and editing process. Match your dialogue alongside the visuals you intend to use.

Download:

- [Storyboard Template](#)
- [Example Storyboard](#)

Before You Record

Setting up the room and camera

Room Considerations:

- Make the room as quiet as possible. Turn off anything that produces unwanted sound such as air conditioning, water coolers, or overhead lights that produce a hum; the microphones will pick up those noises.

Screencasts:

- When screencasting use a solid colored image or background on your computer desktop and close any programs not in use. Turn off notifications and remove or hide any icons you wouldn't want visible in your video.

Camera:

- Avoid a cluttered background to ensure that your viewer's attention remains focused on you. You can achieve this by removing any distracting elements or by hanging a fabric or paper backdrop behind you.
- Keep the camera at eye level. A camera placed looking up at your face creates an unflattering image. If using a laptop with a built-in webcam, use books or another level surface to raise the camera up to eye level.

Avoid placing the camera too low, looking up at the face as shown in the top-row images. The bottom row images show the correct placement with the camera at or just above eye level. Note the use of a backdrop as well.

Lighting

- Use soft, evenly balanced light such as a simple desk lamp with soft-white bulb. Consider use of a lamp shade or paper cut-outs to diffuse the light. This will help eliminate any harsh shadows. (Note: Incandescent bulbs get hot! Consider using fluorescent bulbs or LED bulbs instead. A low-cost LED light panel is also a great option.)
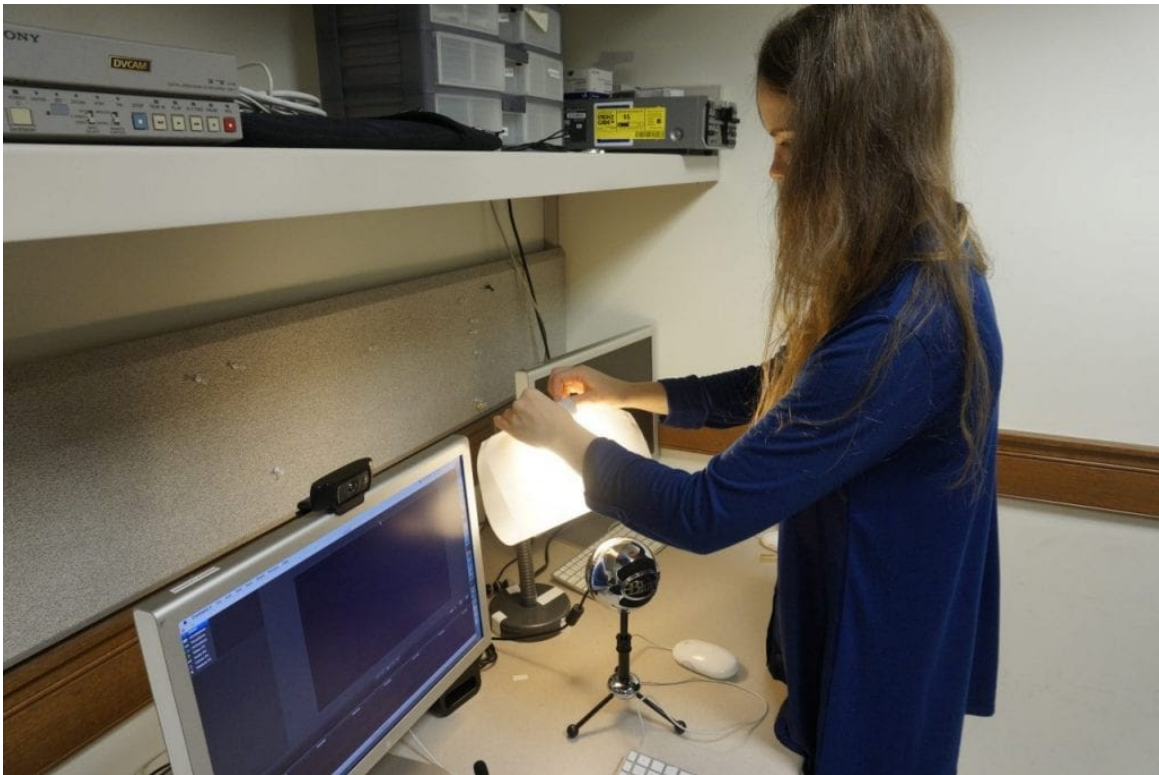
A simple desk lamp (left) with a fluorescent or LED light bulb is a great option for lighting. Use paper cutouts or a lampshade (right) to further diffuse the light.

- DO keep the light source facing you. DO NOT place main light source behind you. Back lighting subjects will be silhouetted and in shadow.

The photo at left features a backlit subject. In the photo at right, the light source is facing the subject.

Audio

- Good quality audio is just as important as the video quality. Consider using a quality USB microphone such as [Blue Snowball](#) or [Yedi](#). No one will watch your video if they're unable to hear or understand you!
- Use a headphone mic when recording audio only and no video. Mute your computer output volume to avoid feedback or echo during the recording.
- Position microphone in front of you at roughly a half arm length away.
- Use speakers or headphones to test your recorded audio levels. Conduct a test before you start recording.

The photo at left shows examples of USB microphones. The photo at right shows the set up for a well-placed microphone.

Recording Your Presentation

- Rehearse your presentation as many times as needed.
- Keep videos around 3 to 6 minutes.
- Speak to the camera—that is your audience!
- Don't be afraid to do multiple takes. you can always pause and restart your recording.
- Once recorded you can edit your video to remove any unwanted sections.

Recording using Zoom

Even though Zoom is a video conferencing tool, you can use Zoom to record your presentation without an audience or participants.
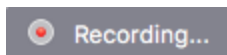
Starting a local recording

Start a Zoom meeting as the host.

1. Click the option to **Record**.

2. If there is a menu, select **Record on this Computer**.
   Hosts will see the following recording indicator in the top-left corner while recording is active.

   Participants will see the following indicator in the top-left corner while the recording is active.

3. After you have finished presenting you can stop the recording and end the meeting, Zoom will convert the recording so you can access the files.
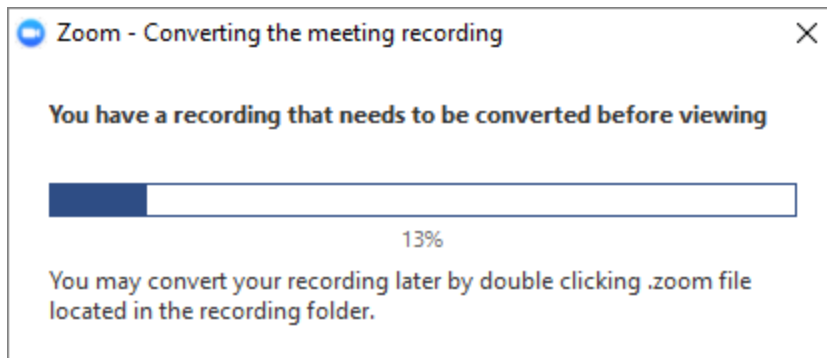
4. Once the conversion process is complete, the folder containing the recording files will open.
 Note: By default, the audio/video file (MP4) will be named **Zoom_0.mp4**. The audio only file (M4A) is named **audio_only.m4a**.

Note:

- If the meeting unexpectedly shuts down or if the conversion process is interrupted, the recording files could become corrupted and non-recoverable. Restarting or shutting down your computer, putting the hard disk to sleep, or closing your laptop will interrupt the conversion process.
- If the conversion process is not successful after the meeting has ended, you can try to convert the files again by navigating to the recording location and double clicking the recording files.
- You can record the meeting in different layouts including active speaker, gallery view, and shared screen. Learn more about recording layouts.

Stopping or pausing a local recording

During a Zoom recording, a participant can **Stop** or **Pause** the recording. If a participant stops the recording and starts it again, a **new** video file will be created for the next recording segment. If a participant pauses the recording and starts it again, Zoom will record to the same video file for the recording segment.

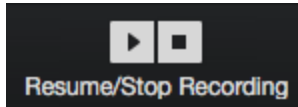1. After a recording has been started, click Pause or Stop Recording at the bottom.
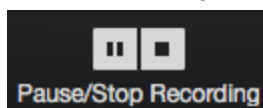
 The recording can also be stopped or paused by clicking the indicator in the top left corner.
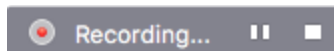
2. When a recording is paused, the following indicator will be displayed in the meeting.

3. To resume the recording, click **Resume Recording** at the bottom

The recording can also be resumed by clicking the indicator in the top left corner.

# Accessing and converting local recording files

By default, all recordings will be placed in a Zoom folder found in the following file path on these devices:

- **PC:** C:\Users*User Name*\Documents\Zoom
- **Mac***:* /Users/*User Name*/Documents/Zoom

To access and convert recording files:

Note: For versions 4.6.10 or higher, you can't convert local recording files by double-clicking the Zoom files. You must follow the steps below to convert the files. If you're issues converting a local recording, see our troubleshooting suggestions.

1. Open the Zoom desktop client and click **Meetings**.
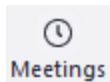
2. Click the **Recorded** tab and select the meeting with a local recording.
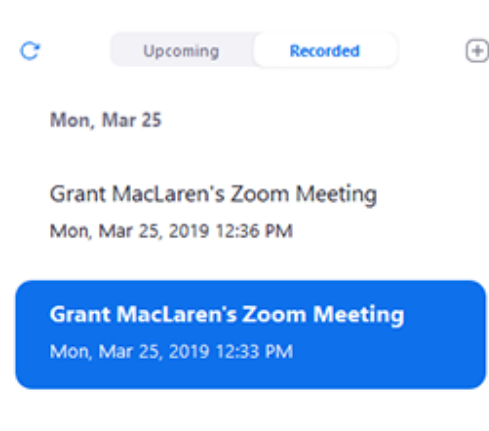
Note:

- ○ If you have a local recording that hasn't been converted to a video file yet, click **Convert** to convert the recording to a video file and display the options below.
- ○ If you only see the **Open** option, it means the recording is a [cloud recording](#).
3. You can access these options to manage your local recordings:
    - ○ **Open**: Open the folder that contains the recording files.
    - ○ **Play Video**: Play the recorded meeting using your computer's default media player.
    - ○ **Play Audio**: Play the recorded meeting audio with your computer's default media player.
    - ○ **Delete**: Remove the meeting from the recording list on the Zoom client. This does not delete it from the computer.
    - ○ Refresh icon ⟳ : Refresh the recording list if you don't see your recording.
4. (Optional) Follow the steps to [share a local recording](#) if you want others to see your recording.

Note: If there are issues opening or playing the file, check the default recording location and ensure the files are in the correct place.

Recording file formats

Zoom recordings use the following file formats:

- **MP4**: Audio/Video file that is named **zoom_0.mp4** by default. Each subsequent recording is in sequential order: zoom_0, zoom_1, zoom_2, etc.
- **M4A**: Audio-only file that is named **audio_only.m4a** by default. Each subsequent recording is in sequential order: audio_only_0,audio_only_1, etc.
- **M3U:** Playlist file to play all individual MP4 files (Windows only). Named **playback.m3u** by default.
- **TXT:** Text file that is named **chat.txt** by default. This file contains the [in-meeting chat](#) messages. A chat file saved locally will include chat messages sent to everyone and any chat messages sent to/from the participant who saves the chat.

Note: Screen sharing recording uses about 20MB of storage per hour while video recording uses about 200MB of storage an hour. This is an approximation, since the resolution and types of video or screen sharing content could change the amount of storage used.

Changing local recording settings

To change local recording settings in the Zoom client:

1. Open the Zoom client and click **Settings**.

2. Click the **Recording** tab.
    This will open your [recording options](#) that you can change using the client.

    Note: Setting the default location to a cloud syncing folder (such as Dropbox, Google Drive, or One Drive), an external drive, or network storage device may cause issues with saving and converting the local recording. Zoom strongly recommends keeping the default location on a local drive for recordings.

Recording multiple audio files

When recording locally, the host can record all participants' audio streams as separate audio files, one file for each participant. To enable this option:

1. Open the Zoom client and click **Settings**.
2. Click the **Recording** tab.
3. Enable **Record a seperate audio file for each participant**.
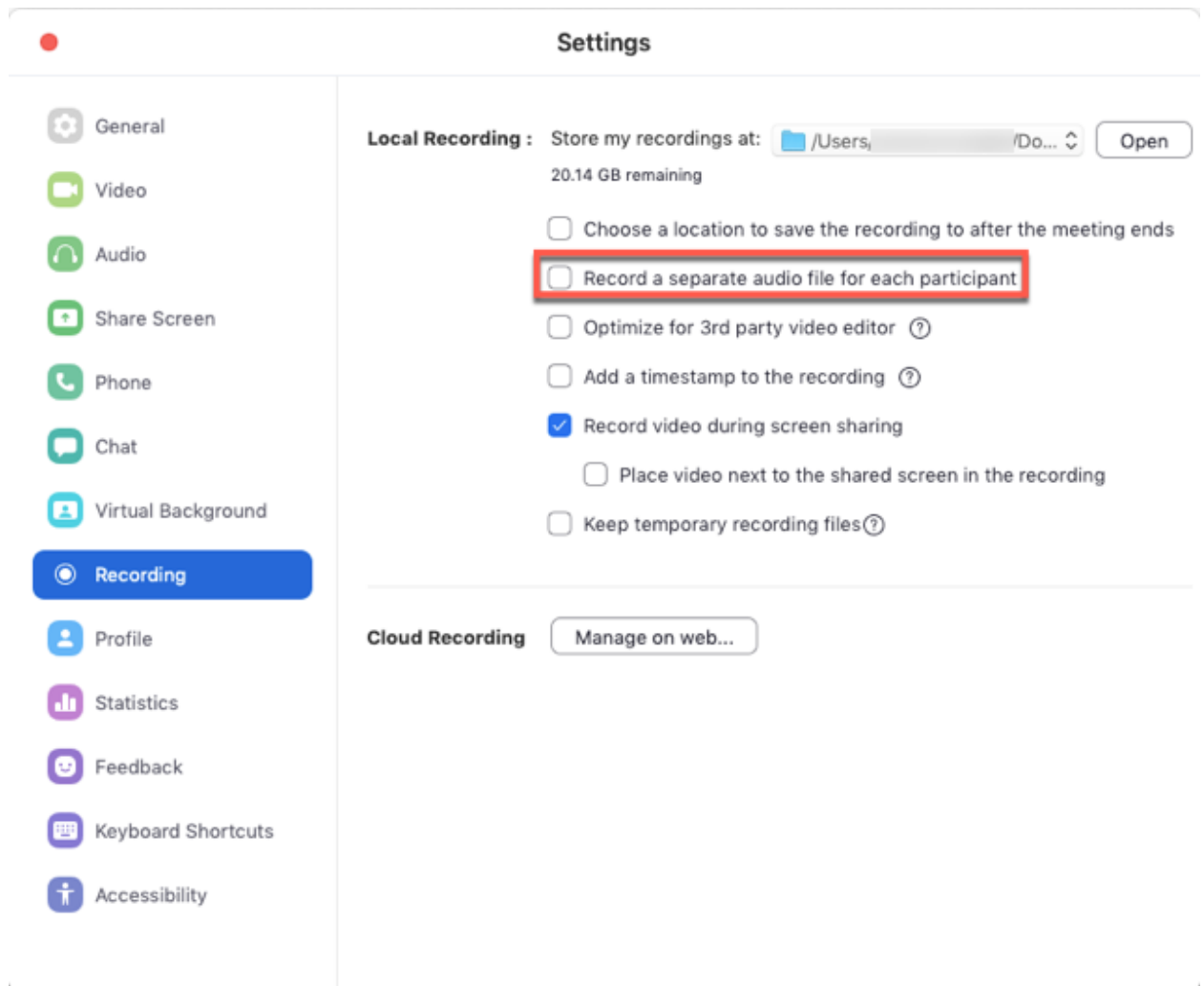
4. Record and save the meeting to your computer.
5. Once the meeting is over and the recording has processed, open the recording folder.
6. Within the folder, open **Audio Record**.
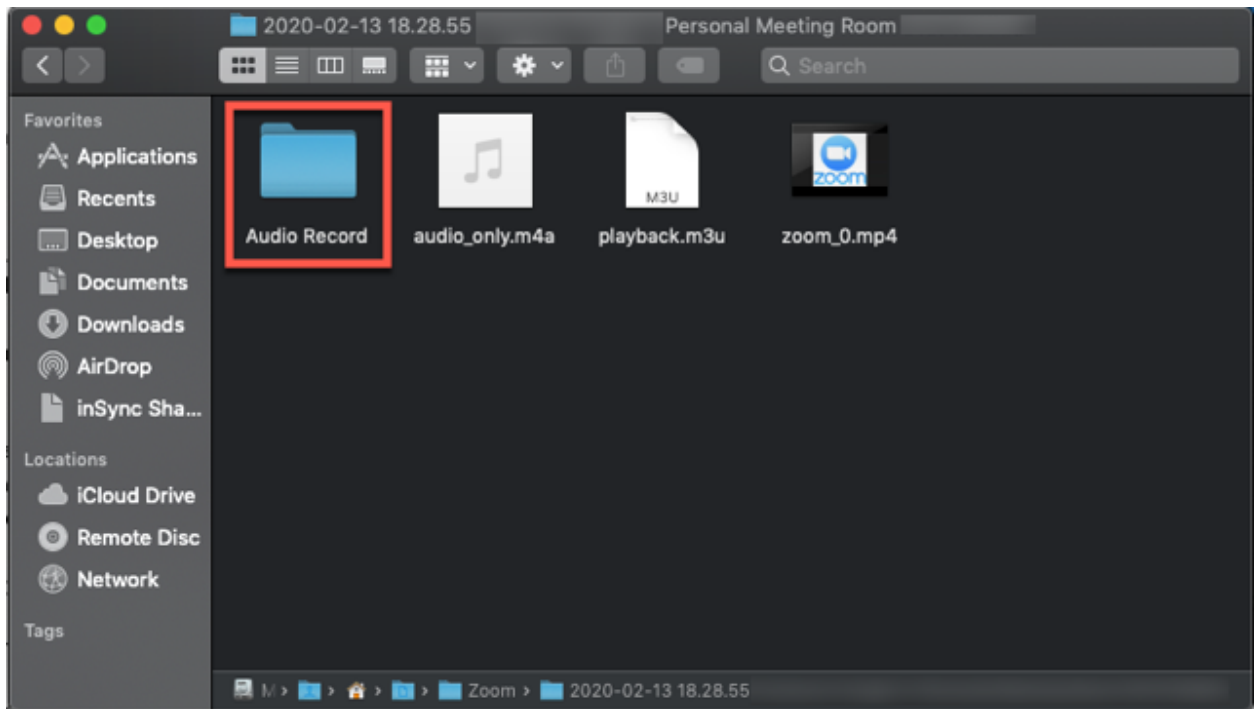
7. Once in the **Audio Record** folder, each participant's audio track will be listed as its own file in with the file name ending in the participant's name.
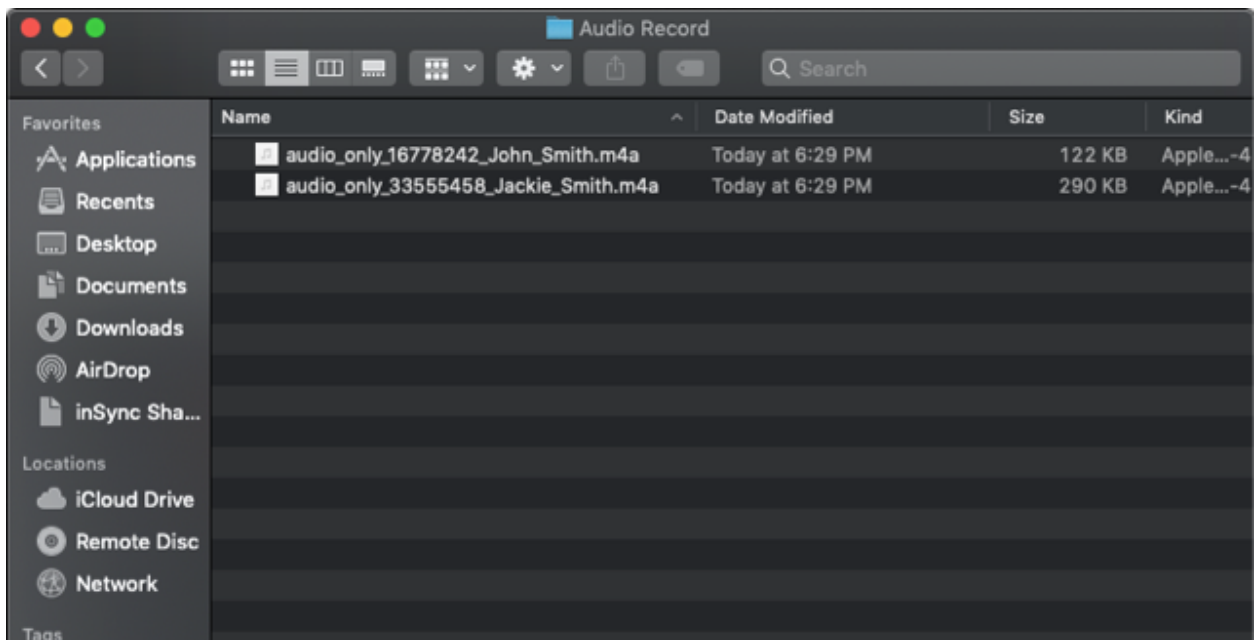
Publishing Your Video

- Consider where you intend to share your video. Will it be private or public?
- Common video platforms include CourseWorks (Canvas) and Panopto.

Media File Types

Source files are the media file formats used in the editing application and project development.

- Common camera recording formats: AVCHD (common in video cameras); mp4 (Zoom or iPhone, iPad recorded video)

Export (sharing) files are the media file formats used for sharing and publishing the final video.

- Editing: Adobe Premiere for more complicated edits or Quicktime to trim the beginning or end of the video.
- The video can be exported and saved to a cloud service such as Google or locally to the computer or external hard drive.

Explore teaching with do-it-yourself video ideas.

- Creating Effective Educational Videos
- Do-It-Yourself Media Production Spaces
- Tools for Do-It-Yourself Video
- Video Production Best Practices

Explore teaching with technology.

- Teaching With Technology
- Instructional Technology Projects
- Massive Open Online Courses

The CTL researches and experiments.

The Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning provides an array of resources and tools for instructional activities.

[Overview](#)