



# VIDEO CHAT GUIDE

THIRD  
GOAL  
TOOLKIT

Video chats are a great way to connect Peace Corps Volunteers in the field and returned Volunteers with Americans. Depending on available internet connectivity, you could explore free video conferencing platforms that allow users to connect with one another from various locations. Some platforms allow up to ten individual screens to interact for free.

## Planning Your Video Chat

- Decide a date and time for your chat, bearing in mind time zone differences.
- Determine your participants:
  - Will you be including Volunteers from more than one country? More than one classroom or group?
  - Will you need a moderator to move from location to location and keep the conversation moving forward?
- Choose a platform, considering:
  - How many participants or screens can the platform accommodate?
  - Can all participants use the chosen platform? Is it blocked? Does it use too much bandwidth?
  - Do you want to record or livestream your chat? Or do you need it to be private?
  - Do you want to use a chat feature for participants to submit questions?
  - Do you want participants to view or to use video? Both?
- Choose a topic or theme for your video chat.
- Test your connectivity and audio/video capabilities and those of the Volunteers in the field.
- Schedule your video chat using your chosen platform. This will require a photo or image, event title, and description of the video chat.
- Determine a back-up plan if the technology fails on the day of the event, such as phone
- [Share your video chat](#) with Peace Corps and help us measure our domestic impact.
- Send viewers relevant links or lesson plans prior to the chat.

## Theme Ideas

- Volunteers at Work: teaching in a classroom, working with their counterpart, or working with a club.
- Volunteers and Host Families: show eating a meal, preparing food, living in a house, or explaining the roles of family members.
- Celebrations: Volunteers with students or locals singing songs and performing dances; talking about holiday and celebrations like birthdays or wedding.
- Classroom-to-Classroom Exchanges: Have students present to students on topics such as holidays, life in their towns, chores they perform, their favorite foods, or activities they like to do in their free time.
- View chats from the [World Wise Schools](#) program for other ideas and examples of formats, etc.



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## Prior to the Event

- Consider collecting questions from the audience ahead of time to keep the conversation moving.
- Gather participant bios so you know their backgrounds and can use them to introduce speakers, if needed.
- Do a test video chat at least one day prior to the scheduled event in order to work out all the kinks. Use this as an opportunity to discuss the event's agenda as well as answer any questions your participants may have.
- All event participants should meet at least 15 minutes before the event's start time to iron out unforeseen issues.
- Discuss how the moderator will introduce participants, either via a lengthy introduction or by having participants state names and introduce themselves.
- Provide participants a chance to prepare by providing countries of service and other information.

## Create a Video Chat Event Space

- Find a quiet space that is free from distracting noises. Use headphones if it helpful in eliminating extra background sounds and any echoes that may occur during the video chat.
- While quiet, the space should still be visually interesting and have good lighting.
- Consider your backdrops – make sure they are not distracting but do reflect the topic of conversation.
- Position the camera a few feet away from your face and leave roughly 1/3 of the screen of a frame of space. Only your head and shoulders should be visible, unless you are joining with more than one moderator.

## Engage Participants

- Guide participants to ask questions they could only get from a Peace Corps Volunteer or community member, rather than general information accessible via the internet.
- Prepare a few kick-off questions to get the group comfortable with submitting their inquiries.

## During the Event

- Ensure only the video chat platform is open on the computer so that other programs' noises and pop-up alerts will not ping during the chat.
- Have a moderator or off-screen person collect questions from participants and keep time.
- If you have multiple students and/or Volunteers participating in the chat, have just one person ask and answer the question at a time.

Have the Volunteer ask questions of the group participants to encourage an exchange of dialogue instead of it being a one-way conversation.

