

## Remote Tutoring with Literacy for Life Techniques and Resources

“Quarantutoring” in 2020-21 resulted in learners, tutors, and staff becoming more comfortable with remote instruction. For some learners and tutors, remote instruction will always be the most convenient option. For others, it might be a useful if occasional supplement to in-person tutoring.

If you need support with remote tutoring, please contact Mary Lynch at [melynch@wm.edu](mailto:melynch@wm.edu) or (757) 221-3325.

### Zoom

Zoom is a free, easy, and functional platform for virtual meetings. (Other options include Google Meet and Microsoft Teams.) Zoom works on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. (The larger the screen, the easier it is to view shared documents.) With Zoom, you can see and hear each other, and you also have the option of sharing what you’re seeing on your screen—so a tutor and learner can simultaneously look at a document, virtual whiteboard, website, or video.



Examples of Zoom tutoring activities:

- Writing: Send your learner a writing prompt by text or email. The learner completes the writing assignment prior to the meeting (or during the meeting, if she needs guidance). The learner shares her screen so you can see what she has written. Discuss. The learner can make real time corrections/revisions while you watch and assist. (Note: An easy way to view a document simultaneously, and *both* make edits, is by using Google Docs.)
- Math: The learner completes math assignments online using a program such as Khan Academy. The learner shares his screen with you so that you can see the material. Alternatively, you can scan documents and share them on your screen, or just use books (best if you each have a copy). Use the Zoom whiteboard to demonstrate methods, or just write on an actual whiteboard or piece of paper and hold it up to your camera!
- Reading: Use a website such as *News for You Online* as source material. Prior to a session, agree on which article(s) to study. (You can send a link to an article by text/email.) Before the session, review the teacher guide for teaching ideas, and the learner can pre-read the article. When you meet on Zoom, share your screen, discuss the article, and complete activities. Complete the weekly crossword puzzle together as well! Less fancy: Just use books. Scan to PDF and share on your screen, or just hold up a book to your camera as needed!

- Zoom is great for any application where it's beneficial to share what's on your screen.
  - A learner might show you her child's homework assignment, so you can help the learner understand the material and be better prepared to help her child.
  - You can watch a YouTube video together, then discuss it. (Note there's a special check box to share audio when you're sharing your screen.)
  - You can look at a document/story together and read it aloud together, or take turns.
  - You can practice vocabulary with an ESL learner by sharing pictures of target vocabulary.

Note: Literacy for Life instructors offer ESL classes on Zoom. Tutors are welcome to observe a class to get a sense of how Zoom works, or just to observe ESL teaching in action.

### **WhatsApp / FaceTime**

WhatsApp is a free app that can be used for video calls, voice calls, and texting (including photos & documents). WhatsApp is widely used by ESL learners because it functions well internationally. WhatsApp works seamlessly between Apple and Android devices, as well as between computers and smartphones.

FaceTime also works well for video calls but requires that both users use Apple devices.

Examples of WhatsApp/FaceTime tutoring activities:

- When using a book or any print material, the tutor or learner can hold the material up to the camera as needed.
- An ESL learner can practice common vocabulary with their tutor ("Show me something green").
- The tutor can invite a friend to join the call, and the learner can practice asking and answering questions with someone new ("Where are you from? What do you do?").
- A tutor and learner can do an activity together. For example, they might cook something together, or draw something, or build something. The learner can practice giving or understanding directions, and the pair can see each other to demonstrate.
- Practice listening. You dictate a word or sentence, and the learner texts you with that word or sentence.



## Texting

Texting is great for quick exchanges and is familiar for most learners and tutors. Texting is an easy way to stay connected and practice writing; you can just send a friendly greeting and ask a question every now and then. ("Hello, did you go to your English class on Zoom today? Tell me something that you learned.") You can also get creative:

- Use the camera to practice vocabulary. "Text me a photo of something round."
- Help your learner practice multiplication tables every day. "What is  $4 \times 7$ ?"
- Practice verb tenses. Text: "Today I feel great, but yesterday I \_\_\_\_ sick." The learner responds with the word "felt."



## Email

Learners tend to be more connected via texting than email. Also, many have smartphones but not computers, so typing full paragraphs/essays may be cumbersome. For those with a keyboard, email remains a great way to write back and forth.

- Commit to writing letters to each other regularly. Be sure to respond to the content in the learner's previous note, and subtly correct mistakes in your responses. For example, if the learner writes, "My dauter do his homework every morning," you might respond with, "I am happy to hear that your daughter does her homework every morning! What is her favorite class?" Be sure to end each email with a question for the learner to respond to.
- Agree that you and the learner will watch "American Idol" every Monday night. Assign the learner to write a paragraph about his favorite performance: Describe what the singer looks like, describe the performance, and explain what you liked about the performance. You can give yourself the same assignment, then share your paragraphs with each other. Select something you will both enjoy!
- Every Monday, send a link to a GED extended response practice prompt. The learner writes a response and emails it to you for feedback.



## Phone

- Brainstorm a list of questions in advance, and send the questions to the learner by text. He can practice his answers in advance, look up needed vocabulary, etc. Then call the learner and ask him the questions.
- If you both have a copy of the same book or article, call and read the text aloud while the learner follows along (or vice versa). Then discuss what you have read.
- Assign something to read, watch, or listen to. Call to discuss the content.



