

Virtual Watch Parties

American English Virtual Watch Parties are sessions with a group of people who come together virtually to watch a previously-recorded American English live webinar through a designated platform. (Platforms such as Facebook and Zoom can be used for hosting watch parties.) **American English webinars** are professional-development sessions based on a variety of topics for English teachers from around the globe.

Preparing for Your Virtual Watch Party

You will want to carry out the following steps when preparing your Virtual Watch Party.

- 1. Choose a webinar.** To prepare for your Virtual Watch Party, first choose a topic you think will be of interest to your target audience.
- 2. Watch the webinar.** View the webinar in its entirety so that you as the host will be familiar with the content.
- 3. Plan ways to make your session interactive.** A Virtual Watch Party can be more engaging with opportunities for interaction. Consider adding pre-, while-, and post-watching activities. (You can find details about pre-, while-, and post-watching activities in the section below.)
- 4. Advertise your Virtual Watch Party.** Make sure your potential participants know the time and date of your Virtual Watch Party.

Planning Pre-, While-, and Post-watching Activities

Webinars can be played straight through during a Virtual Watch Party, but Virtual Watch Parties can be more engaging when participants have opportunities to interact. Participants might interact with you or other participants through the chat box, speaking in turn, or discussions in breakout groups.

Asking questions is an easy way to make a Virtual Watch Party interactive. Most webinars already have some questions that are either written on PowerPoint slides or asked by presenters in the pre-recorded webinar. You can ask your audience the questions that are already in the webinar, your own questions, or a combination of both.

Before Starting the Virtual Watch Party

Before starting the Virtual Watch Party, let your participants know how the session will proceed. For instance, you might let your participants know that you will pause the webinar at certain points to go over key points and allow for questions. You might tell participants that they should take notes during the webinar and write down any questions. Some participants might not be familiar with the technology you are using, so make sure you go over general information on how to use it. For example, you might let your participants know that they can type questions into the chat box.

This publication is available free of charge online: <http://www.americanenglish.state.gov>

Pre-watching Activities

Pre-watching activities can help your participants reflect on what they already know about the topic and what they might learn from the webinar.

Warm-up Questions

One easy but effective way to get your participants into the topic of the webinar is to give them a couple of questions related to the topic.

Sample warm-up questions

1. How can pre-reading activities benefit learners?
2. What kinds of pre-reading tasks have you used in your classroom?

Keywords

Give learners a list of keywords or phrases they will find in the webinar. Participants use these words or phrases to predict what they will learn about in the webinar.

Prediction from the Title

Based on the title, ask participants to predict some of the content of the webinar.

While-watching Activities

While-watching activities can give participants a chance to think through content, ask questions, and share ideas.

Pause and Check

You can stop the webinar at different points to check for understanding and ask questions. At these stops, you can also give your participants opportunities to ask questions.

Note-Taking

Note-taking can help your participants attend to and remember important points. You can encourage your participants to take notes throughout the webinar and write down any questions they might have.

Guided Note-Taking

Guided note-taking can help your participants focus on key points. You can give them specific questions, specific points to listen for, or both.

Sample table for guided listening

Pre-reading activities for young learners

This publication is available free of charge online: <http://www.americanenglish.state.gov>

Sample table for guided listening

Questions	Answers
1. What are pre-reading activities?	
2. What are the benefits of pre-reading activities?	
3. What makes a good pre-reading activity?	

Post-watching Activities

Post-watching activities can be useful for furthering the discussion.

Discussion Questions

You can easily create discussion questions based on the webinar. Discussion questions give participants the opportunity to talk about opinions, experiences, and practices. Discussion questions might also relate to finding solutions to problems or thinking critically about new concepts.

Sample discussion questions

1. How important do you think pre-reading activities are in improving reading skills?
2. Which pre-reading activities do you want to try with your students?
3. Can you share other ideas for pre-reading activities?

Participants' Questions

Participants can create their own discussion questions. You can ask your participants to make a few questions, or you can give participants a few discussion questions and ask them to make one or two additional questions. After participants have made their questions, put them in groups or have them discuss the questions as a whole group (a whole-group discussion might be challenging if you have many participants).

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

At the end of the Virtual Watch Party, you can ask viewers to pose any remaining questions.

Concluding the Virtual Watch Party

Once you have finished the Virtual Watch Party, thank your participants for their attendance. If you have other upcoming webinars or events, announce them at the close of your Virtual Watch Party.