# Tech

At this point, you have probably used some technology to keep in contact with friends and family and maybe for teaching as well. For more information, you can go to your year’s Learn page. From a student perspective, this is what we’ve found using different technologies.

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| Teams |
| [Get started with Teams](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/comms-and-collab/office365/teams/get-started) |
| * Good chat feature * You can search other students by name * Able to use online * Chat supports voice notes when using the mobile app |

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| Zoom |
| [Quickstart Guide for Zoom](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/comms-and-collab/zoom/quickstart-guide) |
| * No need for an account (easy to use with people outside the university) * Good for lots of people (breakout rooms are good for organisation of smaller groups) * Least amount of audio interruptions from cross talking (helpful in social situations when everyone is chatting) |

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| Skype |
| [Skype website](https://www.skype.com/en/) |
| * Video calls as well as possibility to call mobile phones and landlines * Good chat feature * Less functionality when it comes to raising hands, taking notes, etc but more relaxed atmosphere * Able to use online and in app on both computers and mobile devices * Need to know other people’s information |

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| Facebook Messenger |
| [Messenger website](https://www.messenger.com/) |
| * Easy to call/video call someone you are already messaging * Funny filters and games to play with friends and have a good time * Audio quality not great with more than 3-4 people * Available for mobile devices as well as in browsers * New Room functionality: able to join link without a Facebook account * Planned: Able to contact people from Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp as an easy contacting tool |

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| Houseparty |
| [Houseparty website](https://houseparty.com/) |
| * Fun app for having games nights etc as the games are integrated in the app * Annoying with an odd number of people (cuts off weird bits of video) * Works on mobile devices, mac OS and Chrome * Uptake was significant at the start of lockdown but the userbase then reduced as a consquence of privacy concerns. |

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| Discord |
| [Discord website](https://discord.com/) |
| * Can support a lot of people * Easy to organise conversations by topic * Good for creating a community * Servers are invite only * Works online or in app * Similar to Teams |

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| Gather.town |
| [Visit the website](https://gather.town/) |
| * Combines 2D video game with video calls * Parallels meeting up in real life as you see the video and can talk to people who are close to you on the map * Only works on Chrome or Firefox * Don’t need an account * Has integrated mini games * Quite fun but also a bit weird because people keep disappearing when they move too far away |

## Best Practice

When using the different technologies, there are some general things everyone can do to make everyone’s life a little easier:

**In (video) calls**

* Turn your microphone off to avoid unnecessary background noise (especially if you’re eating or there’s some other noise around)
* Only turn on your camera if you feel comfortable
* When using your camera don’t move around too much

**In emails or other written communication**

* Keep it short
* Highlight important information such as deadlines by making them **bold** or *italic*
* Consider the audience: what’s appropriate to message/post to the people who can see your message?
* Where possible, reference critical information in the subject

**Voice notes**

* Permit asynchronous communication of a more personal kind than email
* Don’t include important information in the middle of a 7 minute recording