

# A Guide to Successful Virtual Girl Scout Meetings

Made for Girl-Led Troop Meetings

Virtual, or online meetings, are an amazing and convenient way to connect with friends, especially when you can't get together in person. They can also be used/utilized to meet with your Girl Scout troop. Traffic and other complications do not have to delay you from meeting your fellow Girl Scouts. There are many different platforms and tools available to communicate virtually. In order to have a successful virtual meeting, you and your troop will need to know exactly how the technology works, how to prepare for a virtual meeting, where you can meet virtually, and what tools there are on the platform you are using in your meeting.

In this guide, you can find information on different types of Girl Scout meetings, different meeting platforms to use, and what tools you can use outside the meeting platforms. Another critical part of a meeting is having a meeting agenda, knowing how to prepare before a virtual meeting, and using proper meeting etiquette. This guide provides you and your troop with recommendations for all of the above, as well as ideas for your Girl Scout opening and closing. We hope this helps you understand how to conduct a successful virtual Girl Scout meeting. Please note that you must follow the [Internet Safety Pledge](#) and some topics in this guide may not apply to your troop. We encourage you to be creative and host your meetings in a way that makes sense to you and your Girl Scout troop.



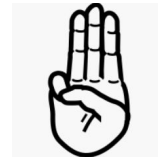
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# Starting a Virtual Girl Scout Meeting

Girl Scout meetings have official opening and closing activities to indicate the start and end of each meeting. Typical opening activities usually start with reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and the Girl Scout Promise. To successfully do this, make sure your camera is positioned in such a way that when you are standing, your whole body is visible to other participants. Each person can say one or two lines of the Pledge and Promise, depending on how many people are in your meeting. If you would like to, have someone hold a flag up into the camera. Some other ideas for opening activities:

- Sing a Girl Scout song
- Show and tell
- Share a story
- Ice breakers



Opening activities should be short and simple, lasting no more than 5 minutes.

Make sure to take attendance and review your meeting agenda/kaper chart (see [Meeting Agenda](#)).

## Types of Meetings

There are many ways to have a Girl Scout meeting. When you are planning a meeting, it is important to know what type of meeting you are going to have so you know how to plan it. Some examples of types of meetings are:

- Ceremony/Celebratory:
  - Bridging, Juliet Gordon Lowe's birthday, World Thinking Day, etc.
  - Earning badges or pins
- Work:
  - Activities related to badges, awards, etc.
  - The presenter can lead the troop members through a step-by-step activity.
- Kick-Off:
  - Define goals for the upcoming year
  - Cookie Season
- Meet & Greet:
  - Introduce new members or say goodbye to outgoing members
  - Forming a new troop




# Video Conferencing Platforms

There are many online tools available for video conferencing. To make the most of your virtual Girl Scout meeting, it is helpful to know the pros and cons of each application. This section will cover the recommended tools for different types of meeting requirements, best practices for using the tool appropriately, and fun features of different tools.



## Recommended Platforms for Different Meeting Requirements

The table below captures our recommendations for conferencing platforms. We have reviewed and considered the ease of setup and use, security, cost, and fun features of many different mil.

Meeting Requirements	 <b>Zoom</b>	 Google Meet <b>Google Meet</b>	 <b>Microsoft Teams</b>
Free*	✓	✓	✓
Presentation	✓	✓	✓
Sharing and/or Editing Documents	✓	✓	✓
Discussion only	✓	✓	✓
Discussion and Chat using chat features	✓	✓	✓
Hands-on Activities	✓	Not Recommended**	Not Recommended**
Limit for participant*	100 <sup>+</sup>	100	250
Accounts Needed	None	Google Account	Microsoft Account

\*This only applies for the basic form of each platform. You might have to upgrade to use more premium features.

\*\*Not Recommended as you can not see yourself while presenting.

+ There is a 40-minute limit on the basic Zoom plan.

^Account needed to host a meeting.

For more information regarding specific tools, please refer to the [References](#) section.

# How to Use Your Video Conferencing Platform Appropriately

## ● Log In

- Log in 2-3 minutes prior to your scheduled meeting time and check your audio/video settings
  - Turn off your notifications otherwise other participants will hear the pings (unless you are muted).
  - Close all unnecessary applications and browser tabs to improve the performance of your device.
- Use an appropriate screen name so that you are recognized by the meeting host and participants.
  - TIP: Use your first name and last initial as your screen name, especially if you are using your parent's device for safety reasons.
- As a meeting host, ensure your meeting is secure.
  - For platforms that require meeting IDs and passwords, set a unique one for each meeting.
  - Send meeting information only to attendees. For security reasons, do not share using public chat forums.
  - Use your waiting room (specific platforms) and only admit recognized attendees. *Do not admit strangers!*
  - As an attendee, if your meeting is not secure, let the host know!



## ● Audio

- Position your microphone close enough to your mouth, but not so close that you are very loud and disruptive.
- When you are not talking, mute yourself to limit background noises and feedback.
- Headphones are recommended as you will be able to hear clearly without disrupting your family members and others.



## ● Video

- Place your camera at eye level by stacking books or board games below the device for extra height.
- Move your camera so that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of your screen is your face. If more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of your screen is your face, you are too close. Likewise, if less than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of your screen is your face, you are too far.
- When possible, look at the camera while talking. This will give your fellow attendees the impression that you are talking to them.
  - Note that if others are not looking at you on screen, they are most likely looking at you in their respective video feeds.



- **Controls for the Host**

- As a host, you may have many different controls for different features of the tool. Use these controls appropriately, or you might be disruptive to your meeting and your Troop Leader might remove that privilege.
- Create a backup communication plan just in case someone is having technical difficulties.
- Ask everyone to turn their video on. This increases the security of the meeting while giving everyone a chance to see you! Also, this helps everyone to focus during the meeting.

## Security and Privacy



Virtual Platforms have the capability to record meetings. This is not a secure option, and if you need to record your meeting, make sure to get permission from each girl/guardian and get council approval (if required) for the recording. If you want to take screenshots or captures of the meeting, please get all participant’s approvals. Get consent from all meeting attendees before taking any photos or videos and/or sharing on social media.






## Fun Features of Different Platforms

USE ONLY AS NEEDED! Don’t distract your fellow Girl Scouts. Some features need specific device requirements.

<b>Platform/Feature</b>	<b>Zoom</b>	<b>Google Meet</b>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>
Chat	✓	✓	✓
Private Messaging	✓	-	✓
Mute + Camera on/off	✓	✓	✓
Screen Sharing	✓	✓	✓
Virtual Backgrounds	✓	-	✓
Translation from other languages	-	-	✓
Surveys/Polls	✓	-	✓
Record Meetings	✓	-	✓
Split into Breakout Rooms	✓	-	-
Captions	✓	✓	✓

## Additional Virtual Meeting Tools

Online productivity tools can help you and your troop collaborate during and outside of your meeting platform. Below are some of the useful tools that we have identified.

Tool	Description	Image
<b>Google Docs/ Microsoft Word</b>	Create documents similar to this one. These tools are very helpful when creating a meeting agenda, kaper charts, and/or planning projects.	
<b>Google Slides/ Microsoft PowerPoint</b>	Create beautiful slideshow presentations. These tools are useful when creating final presentations to publish or share. They are helpful when capturing steps for an activity.	
<b>Google Sheets/ Microsoft Excel</b>	Spreadsheets are used when trying to organize data into categories. They can also be used to manage troop financials, track cookie inventory/sale, and they can also be used to create meeting agendas/kaper charts.	
<b>Google Drive/ Dropbox</b>	These tools provide online file storage and sharing options. You and your troop can store your files in the cloud and access them from anywhere at any time.	
<b>Google Forms/ Survey Monkey</b>	Create forms and surveys to collect and organize information. You can use this within your troop to vote on projects or you can use them to collect information and feedback from others to improve your project.	

# Meeting Agenda

A meeting agenda sets clear expectations for what needs to occur before and during a meeting. It helps team members prepare, allocate time wisely, quickly get everyone on the same topic, and also identifies when a discussion is complete. Your meeting agenda should answer the following questions:

- Who will host the meeting?
  - Who will supervise the meeting?
- How long do you need for the meeting?
  - Does the meeting need a second session?
- What will the meeting be aboutis the?
  - What type of meeting will you be hosting (See [Type of Meetings](#))
- Is there any work to be done before the meeting?
  - What homework were you supposed to do from the last meeting?
- How to join the virtual meeting? (The URL/Meeting ID/Password, etc)
  - This is tool-specific.
- What topics will be discussed and for how long?
  - All of the topic lengths should add up to a little less than the meeting length.
- Who will share what?
  - Will anyone be presenting to the rest of the participants?
- What are the action items, conclusions, and next steps?
  - Who will send out the homework / action items to all attendees? When is your homework due?



## Typical Girl Scout Troop Meeting

The table below lists the main elements of a typical Girl Scout troop meeting and shows how they translate from meeting in-person to meeting virtually.

Element	In-Person Meeting	Virtual Meeting
Opening	Troop members perform a simple flag ceremony and recite the Girl Scout promise and law.	Troop members can still recite the Girl Scout promise and law. Refer to the " <a href="#">Starting a Virtual Girl Scout meeting</a> " section for more ideas on opening your meeting virtually.
Troop Business	Announcements, any paperwork/dues etc.	Provide urls to online forms for paperwork and/or provide addresses where any physical paperwork needs to be mailed to.
Main Activity	This is the bulk of the meeting. It includes any badge/journey work.	Use meeting plans and follow instructions while collaborating virtually
Clean Up	Always leave a space better than you found it	Applies to virtual spaces too :). Save your work, close all other tabs (except for the meeting).
Closing	Closing circle, song, end with a squeeze	The " <a href="#">Closing your Virtual Girl Scout Meeting</a> " section below has many ideas on how to close your troop meeting virtually.

## General Guidelines

- The layout for a meeting agenda should be clear and clutter-free.
- Meeting attendees should not have to search for the information needed to follow the agenda.
- The meeting agenda should be sent out in advance so the participants have enough time to prepare for the meeting.
- All participants should have access to the agenda at all times
- Keep the agenda digital (if possible) so that the participants do not have to worry about losing their print out.
- If possible, fill out the next meeting's agenda at the end of the current meeting.
- There should be a different timekeeper for each meeting
- Specify who will say which lines during the Pledge and Promise, and a Concluding song.
- Make sure that the attendance-taker has been set. Refer to the Kaper chart.

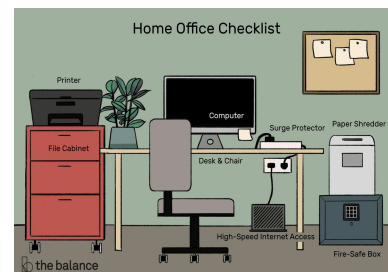
# Example Agenda

Meeting Information:	Date/Time:	The date and time of the meeting
	Elements:	List of Topic(s) to address in each part of the meeting .
	Attendees:	List of Participants who joined the meeting
	Meeting Link/URL:	Link to join the meeting along with ID and password, as needed
	Time Keeper:	One member of the team will keep track of time. (Team members can take turns with this task). Refer to your Kaper Chart.
Meeting Schedule:	Time allotted for each meeting element:	How much time is allocated to each meeting element. The timekeeper's job is to make sure that the topic is not exceeding it's allocated time
Meeting Conclusion:	Action Items/Owners:	Who will do what by the next meeting
	Any Additional Notes	This is for if there are any notes for a later reference. Example; If the team is waiting on something from someone outside the team, or if there is a dependency on someone else's work or it can also be a reminder for an important task/information.
	Next Meeting Info	This section should capture details like the date and topics for the next meeting, to fill the next meeting's agenda.

# Productive Space

A productive meeting space is important to have a successful meeting. This can help you feel more comfortable about showing others what you are doing. It also helps you feel organized and prepared for your meeting. By following these steps, you can set up an effective meeting space.

- Have your materials ready (pencils, computer, paper, craft supplies, etc.) in one neat and arranged pile. Minimize extra items (stuffed animals, fidget toys, etc.), unless required.
- Sit at a desk or table with a comfortable chair. Couches and/or beds do not help with productivity.
- Meet in a quiet space with minimal background distractions. Be sure everything visible in the camera (look behind you!) is neat and tidy.
- Make sure you are in a place where your Internet is stable.
- Close all blinds to cut down on glare; your light source should not be behind you.
- If you are having the meeting with more than one Girl Scout, make sure your screen is big enough.
- AFTER your meeting, make sure to leave your physical and digital space better than you found it.



# Outside of Your Home

When having a meeting outside of your home, such as a library or restaurant, most of the same rules apply. Choose a neat background and a quiet space with minimal distractions.



# Meeting Preparation and Etiquette

Like your normal troop meetings, a little bit of preparation will go a long way to make your meeting successful and fun. This section captures how to prepare as well as some guidelines for how to behave during your virtual meeting.

## Preparation

### Host

- Before the meeting:
  - Share the Meeting ID and Password and/or the link with all participants.
  - Share the meeting agenda with planned activities and materials needed.
  - Send a reminder about homework due.
  - Contact everyone if there is a change in date/time and if you are unable to attend, assign an alternate host.
- During the meeting:
  - Plan an ice breaker for the start of each meeting to have a little fun.
  - Review the agenda one more time and make adjustments, if needed.
  - If attendees are not ready for the planned activities, it is okay to end the meeting.
  - Ensure everyone participates during the meeting; it's ok to ask for volunteers while also calling on others to engage in the meeting.
- After the meeting:
  - Send out meeting notes/homework to all attendees
  - Ensure that the online conference is ended and all documents are closed.

### Participants

- If you are unable to attend the meeting, inform the host prior to the meeting.
- If you are running late or leaving early, inform the host about when you will join.
- Finish your homework on time
- If you are presenting, make sure you are prepared with all the materials needed.

### Everyone

- Know how to operate your device, meeting platform, and other necessary applications
- Know the Meeting ID and Password
- Make sure your device is fully charged and plugged into the wall socket. This helps with video quality.
- Make sure your microphone, speaker and camera are working
- If you have a problem, bad Internet, etc. notify everyone

- Don't walk around with your computer or device; if you need to move, shut off video before you get up.
- If you won't be able to have the camera on or talk during the meeting, notify everyone at the start or in advance
- Eat a snack before your meeting.
- Use the bathroom before your meeting
- Dress appropriately. If your troop wears uniforms during your in-person meeting, wear that during your virtual meeting, too.

## Meeting Etiquette

Meeting Etiquette helps you and your troop member stay on topic and get the most out of your Girl Scout meeting. Following these guidelines can help your troop be kind and respectful during your meeting.

- Arrive on time for your meeting
  - If you arrive late, wait for an appropriate pause, and announce yourself. *Please note that arriving late is quite disruptive to the other participants.*
- Show respect and self-control
  - If you have something to share, raise your hand virtually or physically to communicate to your Troop Leader/ host.
  - Do not take advantage of your host abilities. Don't mute others while they are speaking and give everyone a chance to share.
  - Leave the keyboard alone as it distracts everyone.
  - Don't multitask during the meeting.
  - Follow the guidelines that your troop would have followed during in-person meetings.
- Listen
  - Pay attention and take notes to remind yourself of what you did during the meeting.
- Ask thoughtful questions
  - Everyone in your troop can benefit from insightful questions.
  - Don't be afraid to ask! These are the same people that you have met with in the past.
  - Speak up! Project your voice so that other Girl Scouts do not have to adjust the volume of their speaker.
- Be aware
  - On a video conference, everything is visible.
  - Before sharing the screen on a call, take some time to clean up your browser/desktop. Private information should be hidden or closed.
  - Stay in one spot. Moving around makes other viewers distracted.
  - Food is not allowed. If you have a very long meeting, schedule snack breaks as a part of your meeting agenda.
  - Keep Pets and/or siblings out of the room, if possible.

# Closing your Virtual Girl Scout Meeting

Closing activities signal the end of a meeting. Some activities include singing a closing song and a virtual squeeze. If you choose, each participant can sing one or two lines of the song at a time, depending on the number of participants in your meeting.

Once song(s) have ended, if you would like, you can:

- Stomp (Position your camera appropriately)
- Snap
- Clap
- Make an appropriate noise of your choice
- Hold a thumbs up
- Touch your head, shoulder, etc.
- Send a message on chat (Specific platforms, see [Recommended Platforms For Different Meeting Requirements](#) / [Fun Features of Different Platforms](#))



Once you have completed your action, say the next girl's name. Closing activities should not take more than 5 minutes.

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Virtual meetings are one way to stay connected without meeting face-to-face. Many people will arrive at a meeting not ready and not knowing what to expect, but putting more effort and thought into conducting a meeting will help you and your troop have a better experience. We hope your meetings will be productive and all of your troop members will enjoy it. This online document can be of help for the people attending the meeting as well as the organizers and coordinators. In order to have a successful meeting, you and your troop needs to put extra effort and thought into planning and hosting it. Following these guidelines can help your troop have productive and exciting meetings. Virtual meetings do not have to be difficult to host. With a little bit of research, you and your troop might find a new way of meeting that you like even more! We hope this guide helped you and we wish you many successful meetings!

**NOTE:** These guidelines are suggestions based on our troop's experience and research with virtual meetings. We encourage you and your troop to be creative and host your meeting in the way that makes the most sense to you.

-Troop 2364

Bronze Award August 2020

# References

## Zoom

- Installation
  - Windows: <https://us04web.zoom.us/client/latest/ZoomInstaller.exe>
  - Chrome: <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/zoom/hmbbjdpkobdjplfobhljndfdipjh>
  - macOS: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/203020795-How-To-Install-on-Mac>
- For more information, visit: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/>

## Google Meet

- Web Link: <https://apps.google.com/meet/>
- For more information, visit: <https://support.google.com/meet/#topic=7306097>

## Microsoft Teams

- Installation:
  - Windows: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/download-app>
  - Chrome: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.microsoft.teams>
  - MacOS: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/get-clients> (scroll down to Mac)
- For more information, visit: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>

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