

# A Guide to Microsoft Teams for Sign Language Interpreters

Microsoft Teams is a tool for people to connect and work with others inside and outside their organization. It contains dozens of features like meetings, phone calling, document collaboration and connection to countless other applications. Organizations using Teams can enable/disable features and settings for their users and guests as needed. This customization is useful for organizations but can be a challenge for interpreters to navigate.

The following guidance is written specifically for interpreters. We will walk through the typical steps of signing in and joining a Teams meeting, while highlighting features that are useful for sign language interpreters. Here are the features included in this guide:

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*IMPORTANT NOTE: This document was created by an independent interpreter as a resource for other interpreters. The information contained herein is not endorsed by Microsoft.*

## Downloading Teams

There are two versions of Teams for desktop users: Home and “Work or School”.

	Interpreters who do <u>not</u> have either (1) an account associated with the company/organization or (2) a Microsoft 365 business account must use <b>Teams for Home</b> . **All meetings must be joined via web browser
	Interpreters with organization-joined accounts or a Microsoft 365 business account should use <b>Teams for Work or School</b> .
All versions of Teams are available here: <a href="#">Download Microsoft Teams Desktop and Mobile Apps   Microsoft Teams</a>	

\* Teams is also available on Android, iPhone or iPad. This guide does not include instructions for mobile.

## Signing In

Typically, interpreters joining Teams meetings are “guest” users and do not have full access to all the Teams features as an employee user. This can cause barriers to access, particularly when joining meetings at organizations that have highly restricted access settings for guest users. However, when an interpreter “guest” user has gone through a few initial setup steps, they may find their experience on Teams greatly improved.

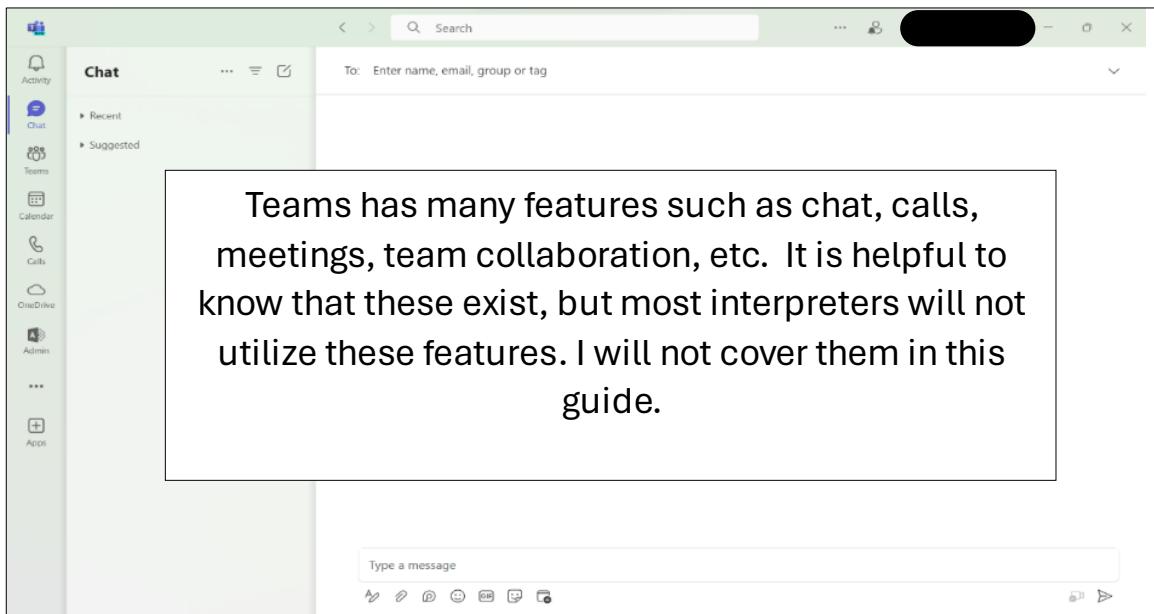
If the interpreter does not have an email account at an organization, it is *still* helpful to sign in as an authenticated user with a Microsoft account. Signing in can allow access to Teams Chat, which enables Deaf professionals and Interpreters to communicate over IM.

For interpreters who don’t already have a Microsoft account, here are two options:

	Pros	Cons
<a href="#">Outlook.com account</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Free</li><li>• Potential access to Teams IM with Deaf professional, depending on their org settings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only available on Teams for Home</li><li>• Must use web browser to join meetings</li><li>• Limited meeting features</li></ul>
<a href="#">Microsoft 365 Account for Small Business</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is an authenticated Teams for Work account</li><li>• Can use Teams Desktop</li><li>• Improved access to meeting features</li><li>• Access to Teams IM</li><li>• Access to Teams collaboration features</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subscription fee (similar to cost of Zoom account)</li><li>• Additional account to manage</li></ul>

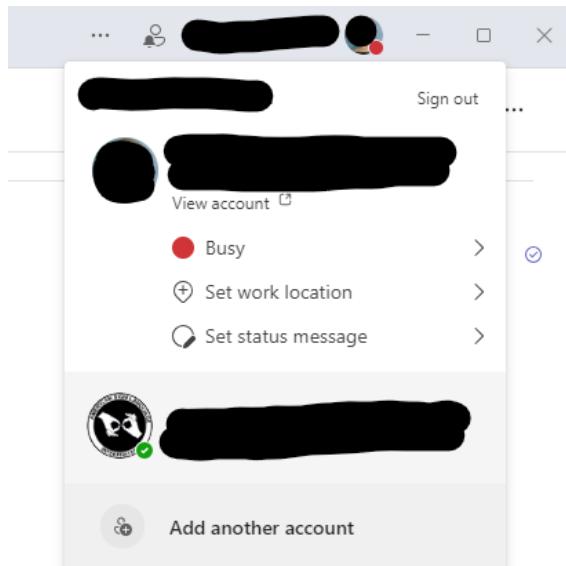
To sign in to your Microsoft account, you must use Microsoft Authenticator app on your mobile device. [Sign in to your accounts using the Microsoft Authenticator app - Microsoft Support](#)

## Teams Desktop App Features



## View Profile and Switch Accounts

For those with access to multiple organizations, there is an option to switch accounts in the top right corner of the app window.

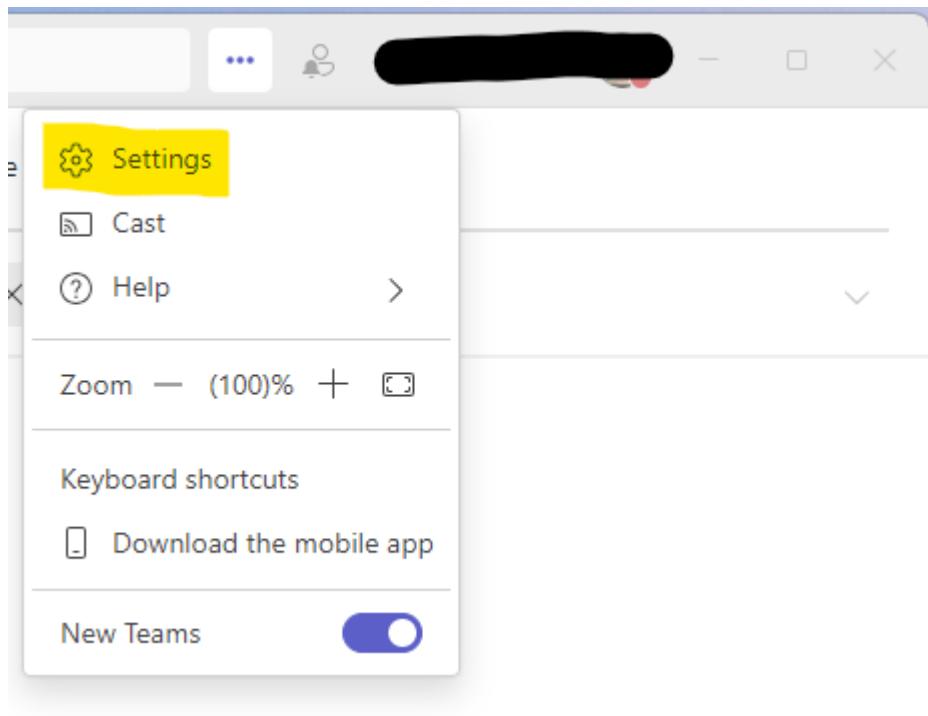


## Useful Settings for Interpreters

Here are a few recommended settings for interpreters.

### DESKTOP USERS – Accessing Settings

To access the Settings menu , click the 3 dots button in the top right corner.



### WEB USERS – Accessing Settings

Settings can only be applied in the pre-meeting lobby or during an active call. The following pages will indicate where each setting can be found on a web browser.

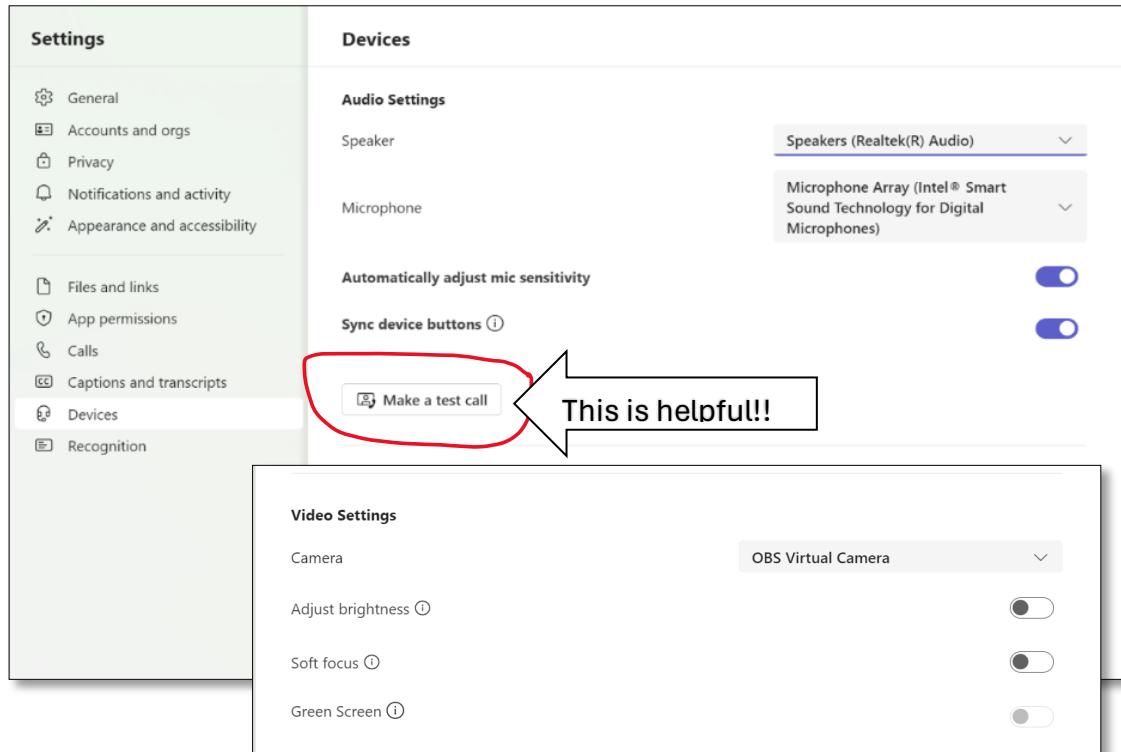
## Device Settings

### Set Video and Audio Devices prior to joining a call

#### DESKTOP USERS

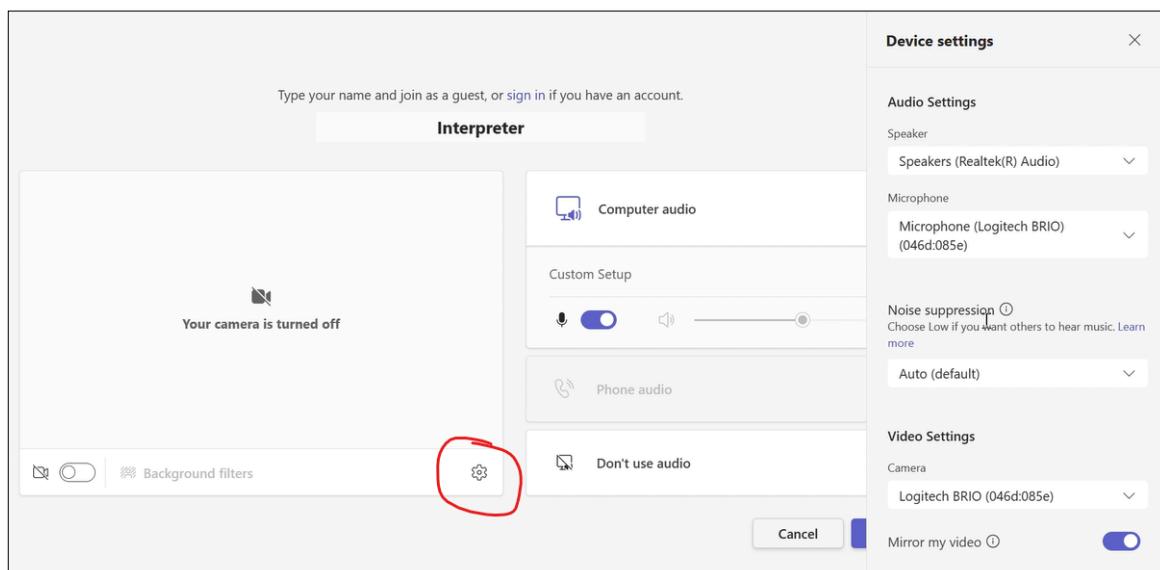
To set devices outside of a meeting, use **Settings > Devices**.

Devices can also be selected in the pre-meeting lobby or during an active call.



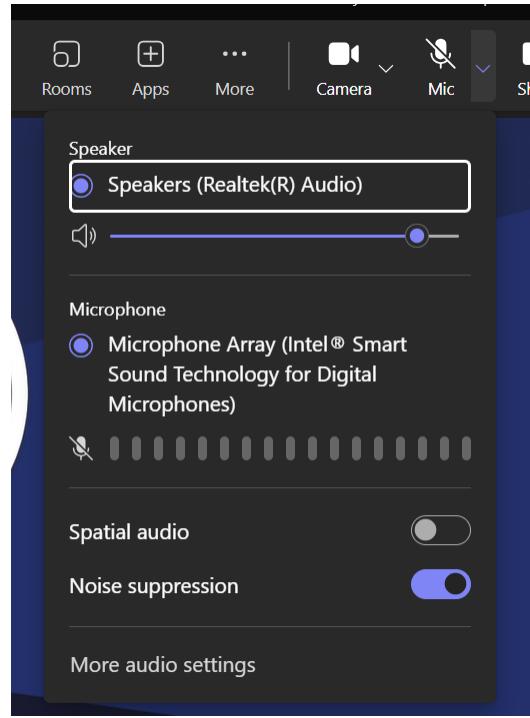
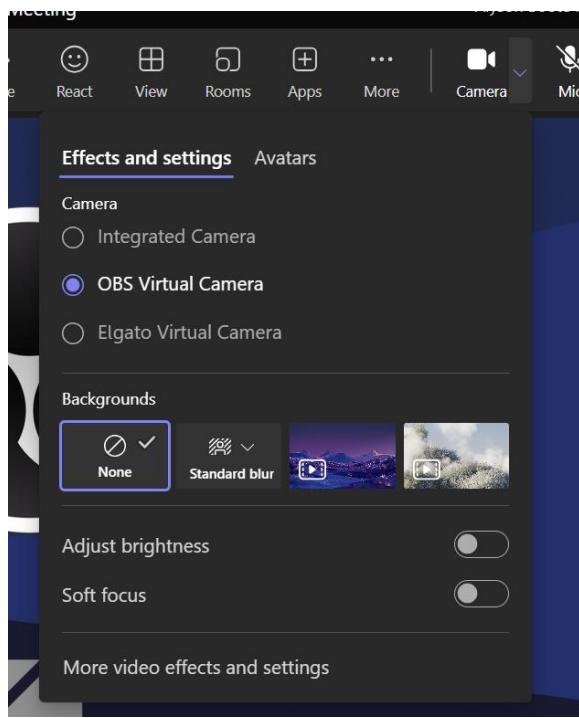
#### WEB USERS

Choose settings in the pre-join “lobby”.



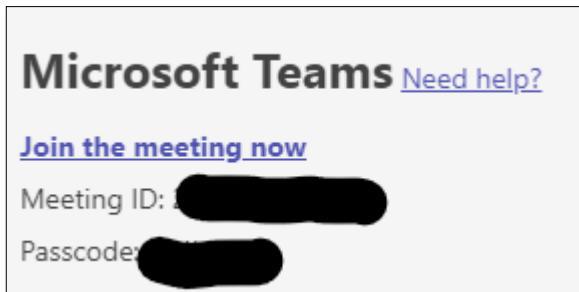
## Set Video and Audio Devices during a meeting

During an active call, users can change video and audio devices by clicking on the down-arrow next to the Camera and Mic buttons.

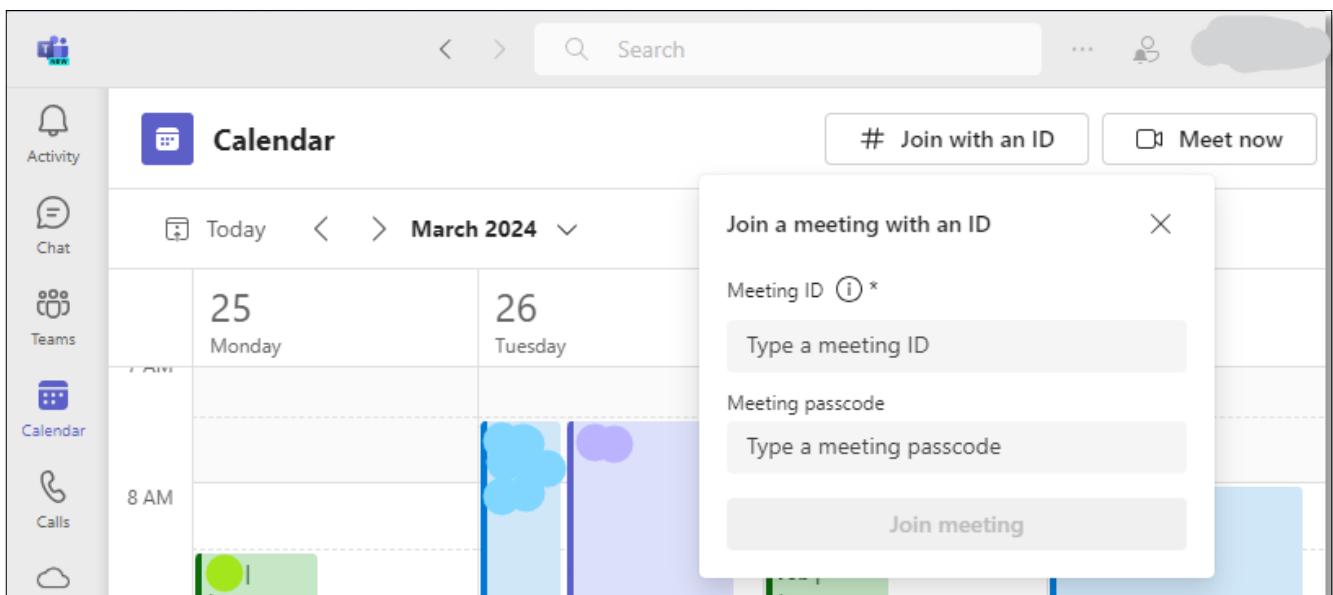


## Joining Meetings

Use the meeting link

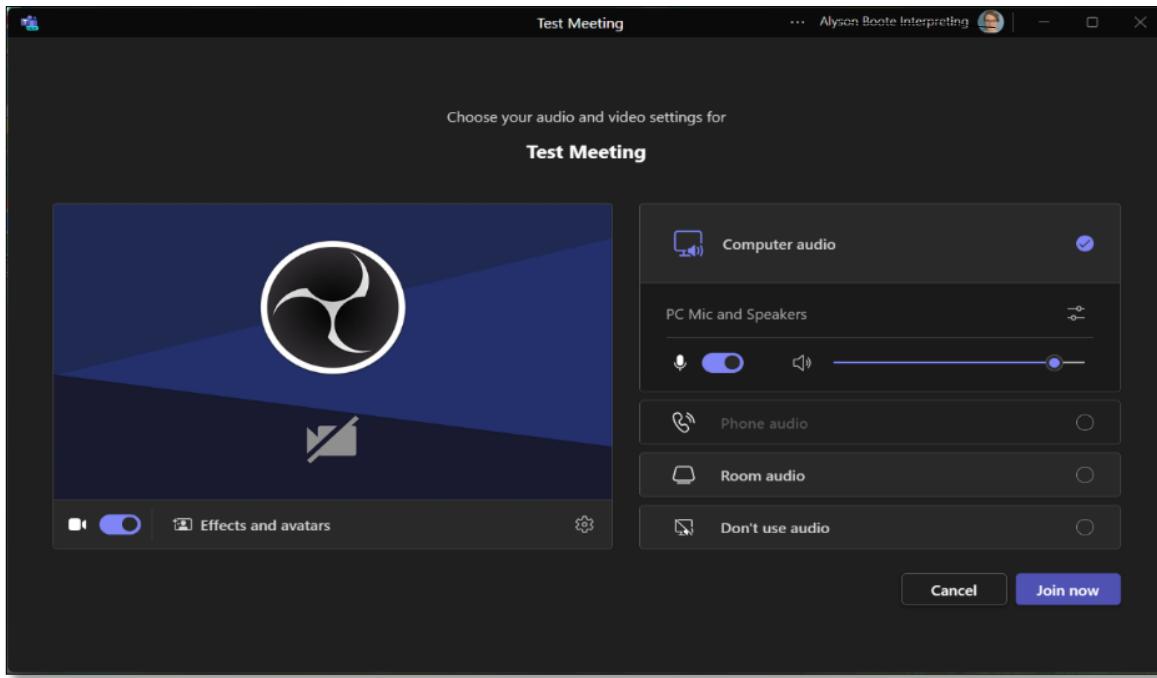


In the Teams Calendar, click "Join with an ID". Enter the meeting ID and passcode.

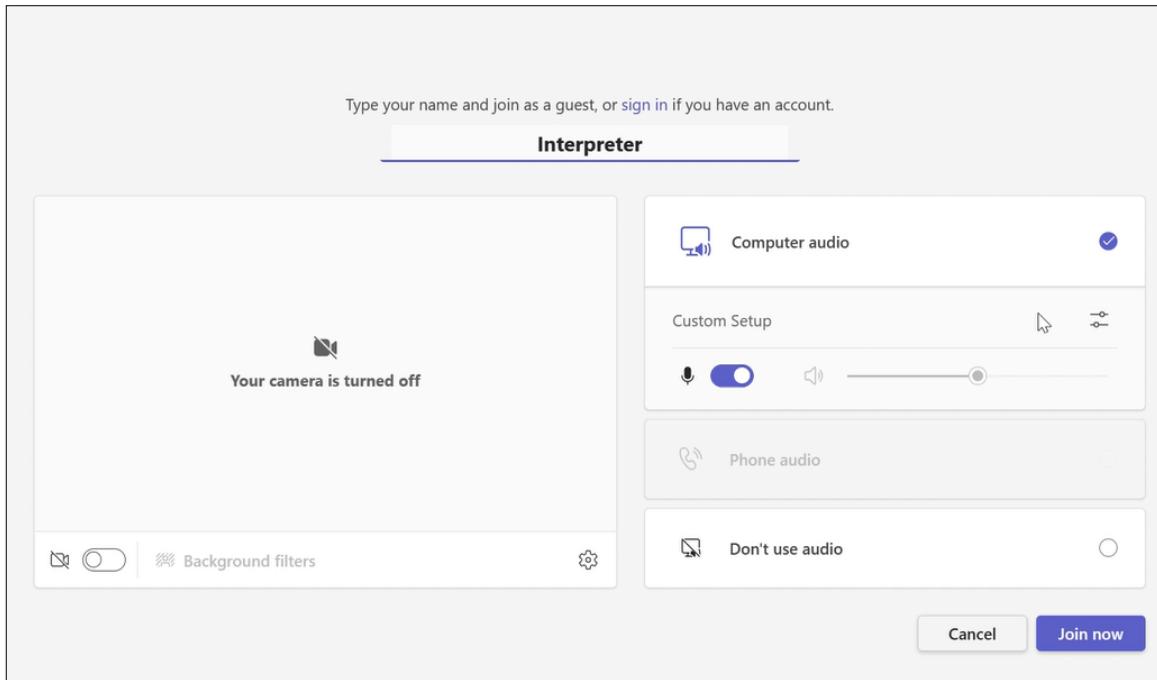


## Meeting Lobby

### DESKTOP USERS



### WEB USERS



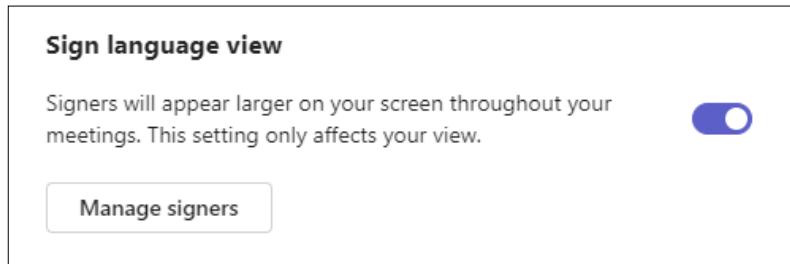
Guest users can also change their display name here. (Authenticated users in an organization will not be able to change their username.)

Guest users may be placed on hold in the lobby until they are admitted into the meeting.

## Sign Language View

Sign Language View was built by Deaf people for Deaf people using interpreters. It's very useful!

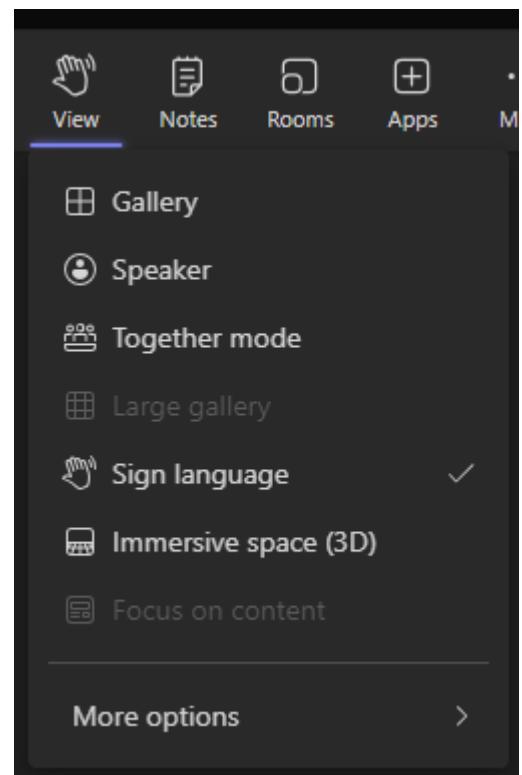
To read more: [Use Sign Language View in Microsoft Teams - Microsoft Support](#)



What Sign Language View does:

- Allows a user to designate any participant as a “Signer”, keeping their video feed in full view at all times.  
\*Settings will only apply to an individual user’s view.
- When screenshare is used during a meeting, those designated as a “signer” will be displayed in corner of screen. Users can click on the signer’s video to bring it back to center stage again.
- Signers can be designated from within Teams general settings, so that any time a signer-user joins a meeting, their video will be prioritized.
  - Deaf users can use this to set a list of interpreters or Deaf coworkers.
  - Interpreter users can set a list of Deaf people and team interpreters.
  - NOTE: Users must have organization authenticated accounts for this feature

To access Sign Language View, you must first enable the feature in settings.



## DESKTOP USERS – Enable Sign Language View

Settings > Appearance and Accessibility > Sign Language View

Settings	Appearance and accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> General</li><li> Accounts and orgs</li><li> Privacy</li><li> Notifications and activity</li><li> Appearance and accessibility</li></ul>	<p><b>Theme</b></p> <p>Light </p> <p>Always use dark theme for meetings and calls </p> <p><b>Chat density</b></p> <p>Comfy  Compact </p> <p>Show message previews in your chat list </p> <p><b>Sign language view</b></p> <p>Signers will appear larger on your screen throughout your meetings. This setting only affects your view. </p> <p><a href="#">Manage signers</a></p>

Appearance and accessibility > **Manage signers**

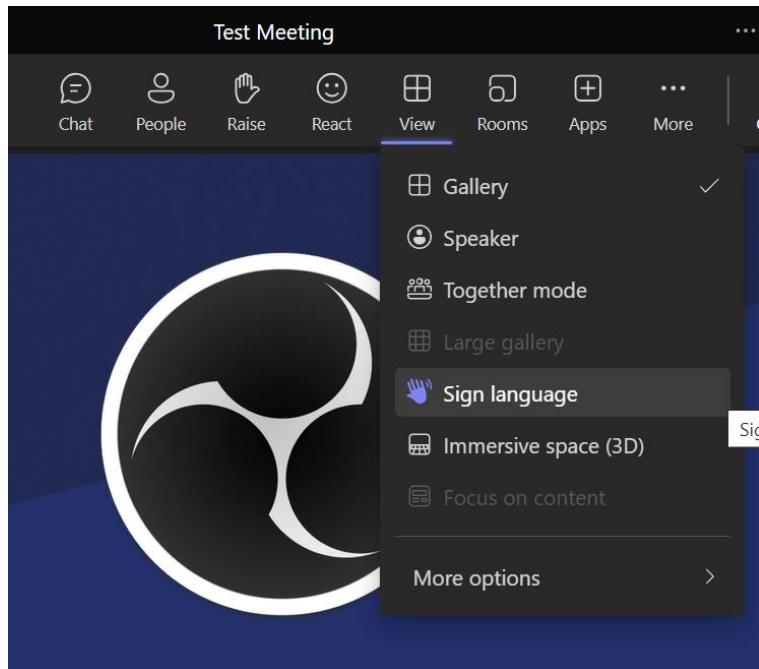
**Add people as signers**

Signers will be prioritised on your screen in meetings when your view is set to Sign language.

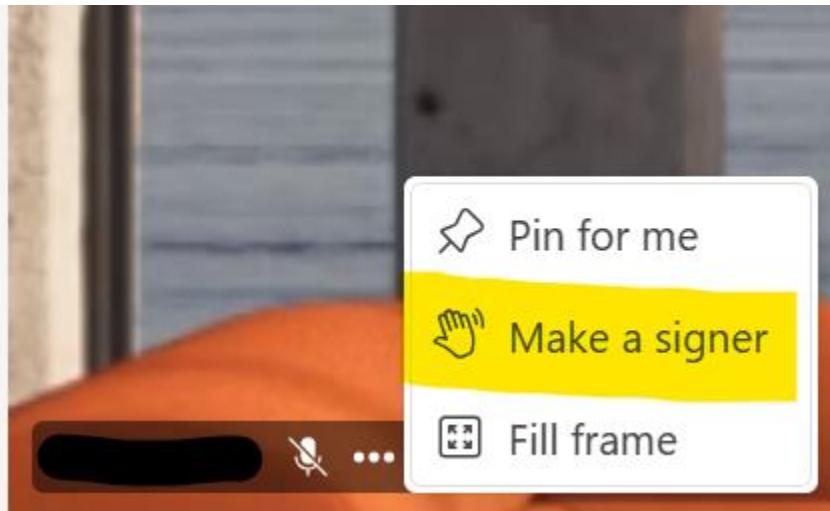
 

## Enable Sign Language View during an active meeting on Desktop

View > Sign Language



Select a user's video feed and click the 3 dots, or right click to bring up menu

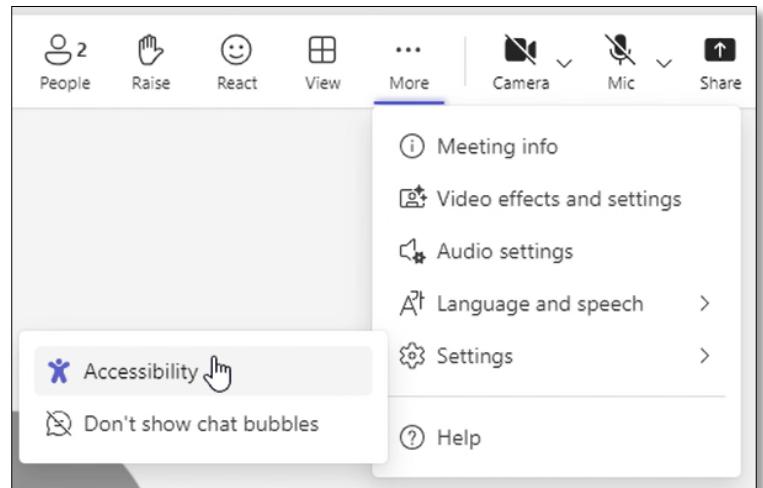


## WEB USERS – Enable Sign Language View

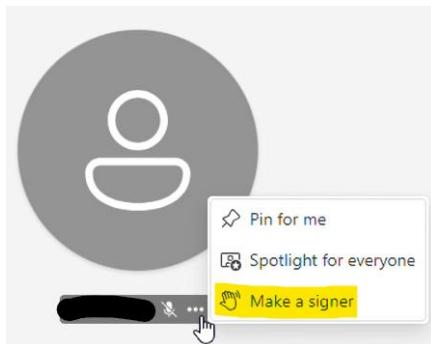
### 1. ACTIVATE Sign Language View

Settings > Accessibility > Sign Language View

Note: Web users must activate Sign Language View for every call. Feature can only be activated from within the active call.

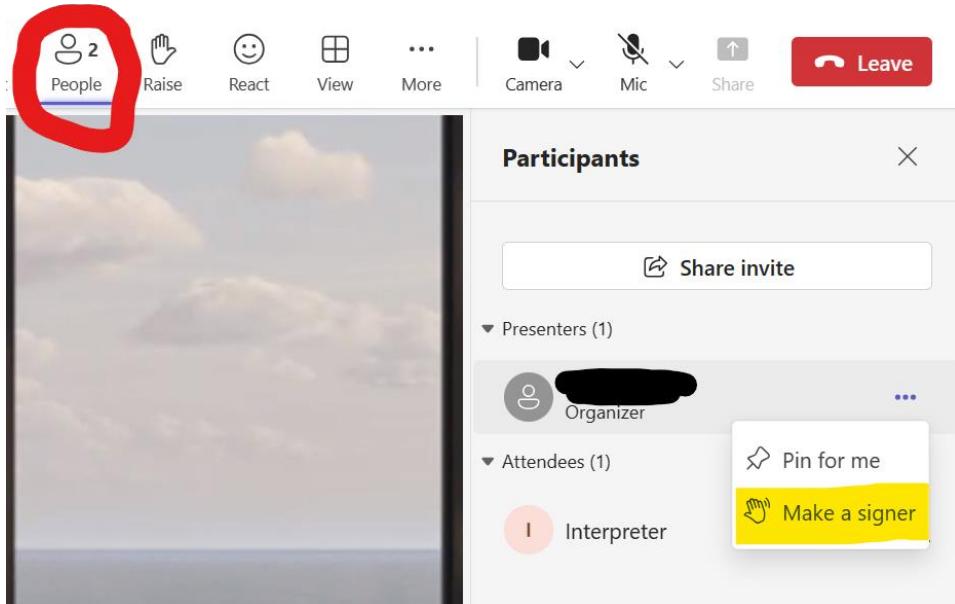


### 2. Once the feature is activated, designate a meeting participant as a signer.



Click the 3-dots menu next to a person's name OR right click on their picture

OR

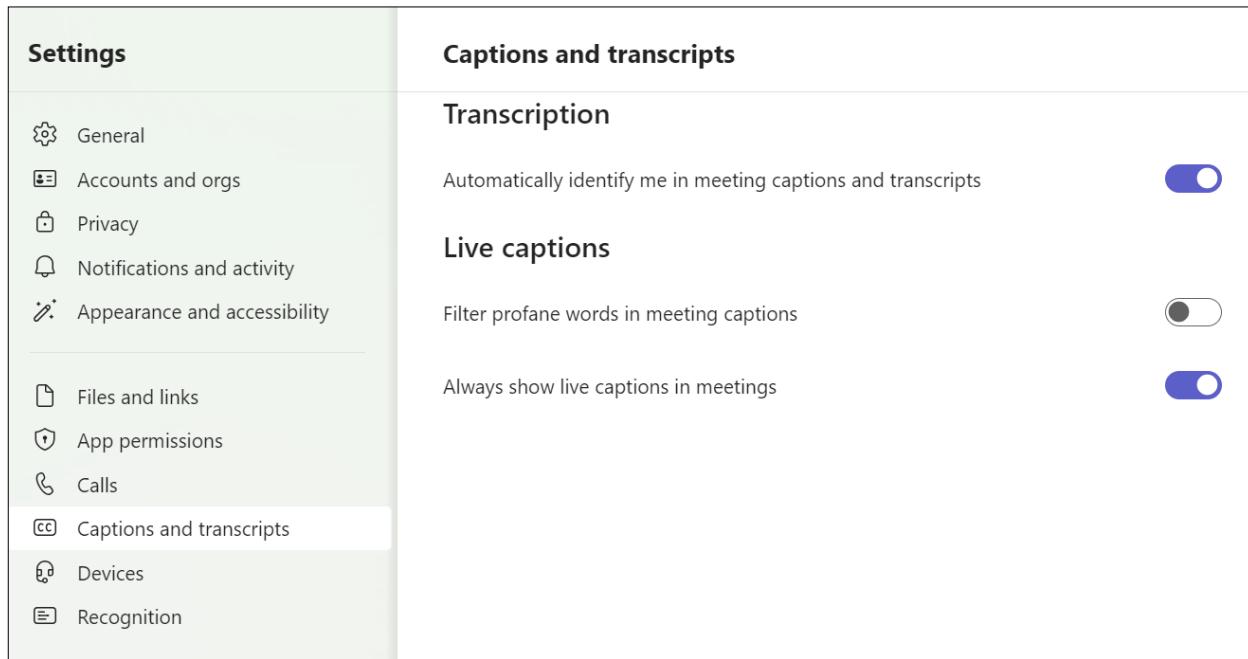


## Live Captions

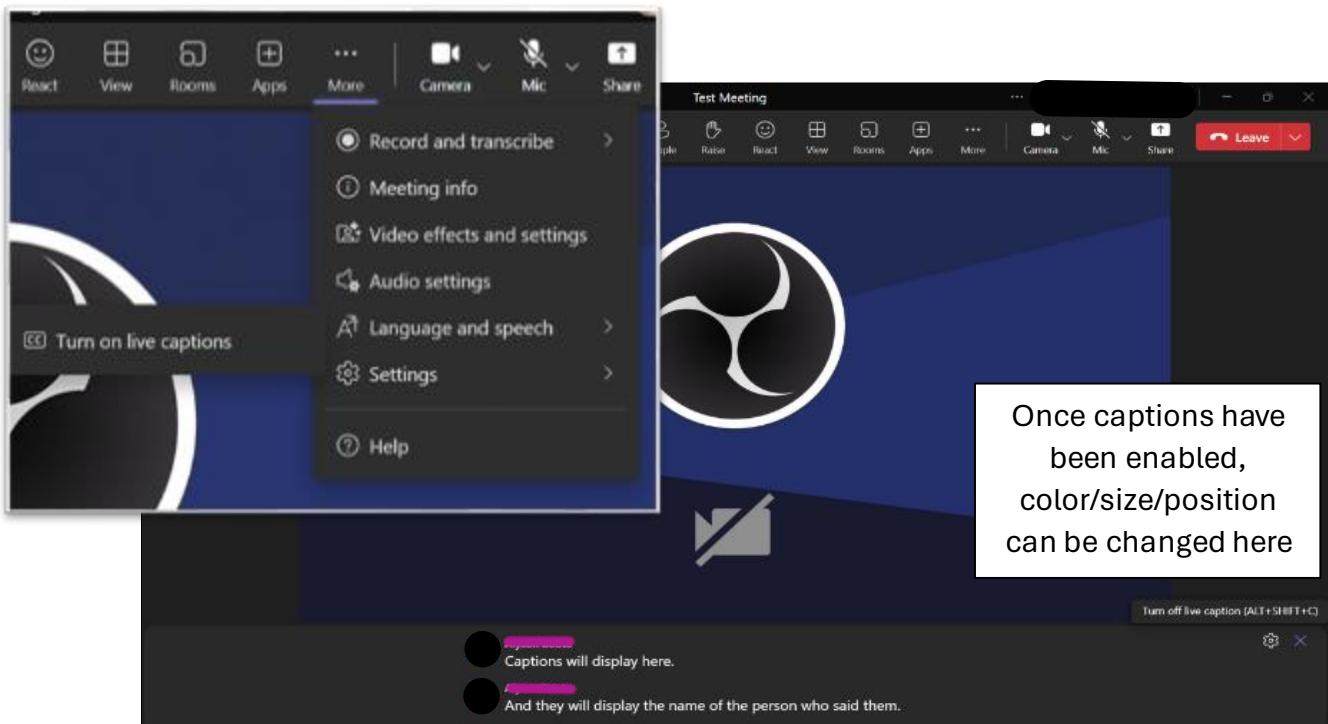
Another useful feature for interpreters is live captions.

### DESKTOP USERS – Enable Live Captions

Outside of a meeting: Settings > Captions and Transcripts



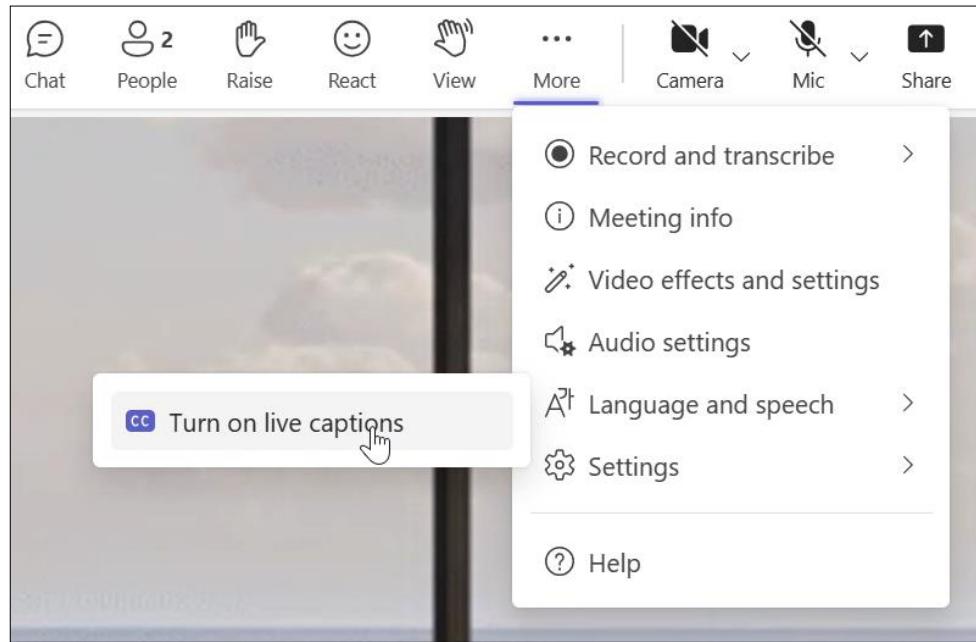
### Enable Live Captions during an active meeting on Desktop



## WEB USERS – Enable Live Captions

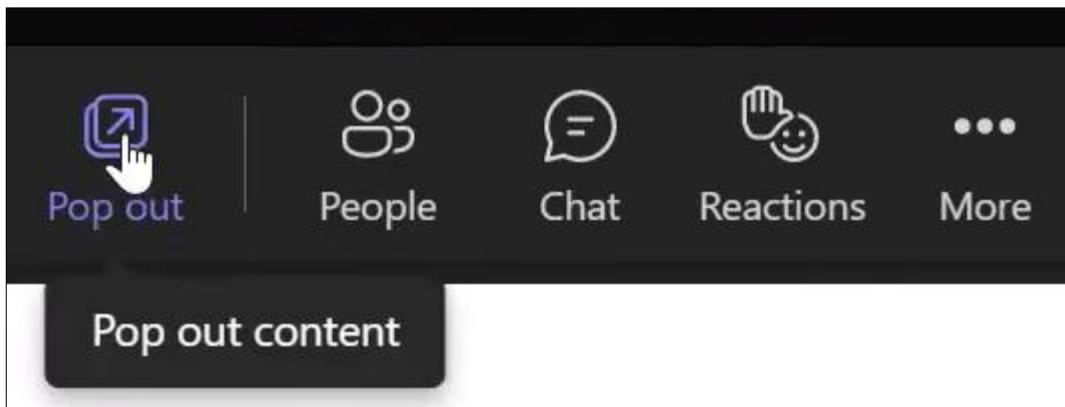
\*Only accessible within active meeting settings

Settings > Language and speech > Turn on live captions



## Screen Share Pop Out

When a presenter shares content in a Teams call, Desktop users can select “Pop Out” to open screen share in a separate window. This can be a very useful feature when it is critical to view a Deaf person and the screen share at the same time.



A couple things to note about using Pop Out:

- This feature is only available on Desktop
- Activating and deactivating this feature can take a moment. Be prepared for it to interrupt your view of a Deaf person’s video feed for a few seconds.
- Captions will be visible in both windows
- This feature can use up additional processing power on your computer, so it may slow things down.
- If you will be using this feature for an important meeting, it is advisable to test it out first.