



LANGUAGE SOLUTIONS

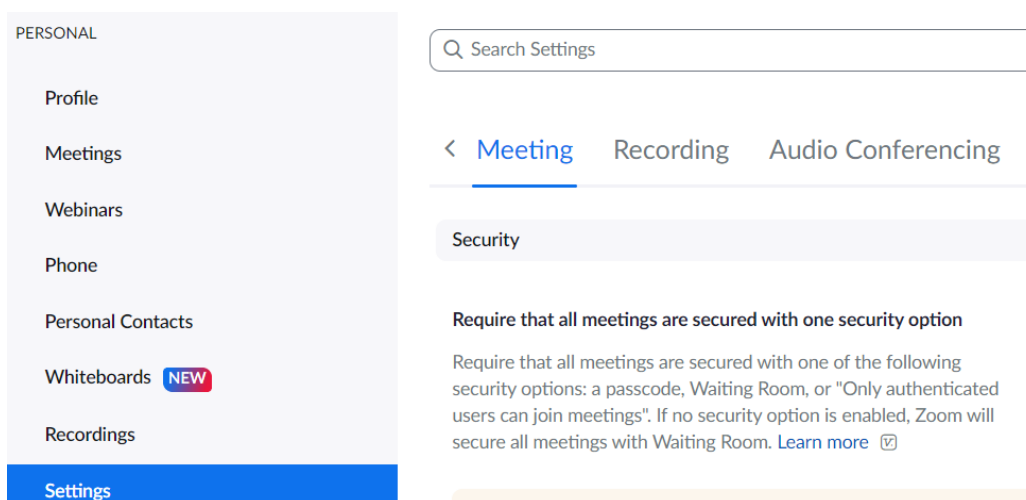
Inside Zoom’s Sign Language Interpretation Feature

<u>Table of Contents</u>	<u>Page(s)</u>
I. Activating Sign Language Interpretation for an Account	1-3
II. Enabling Sign Language Interpretation for Individual Meetings	3
III. Activating Sign Language Interpretation Within a Meeting	3-7
IV. Accessing Sign Language Interpretation as a Viewer: Desktop Client	8-10
V. Accessing Sign Language Interpretation as a Viewer: Mobile	10-11
VI. Considerations for Interpreters and Hosts	11-16
VII. Additional Resources/Acknowledgements	15

I. Activating Sign Language Interpretation for an Account

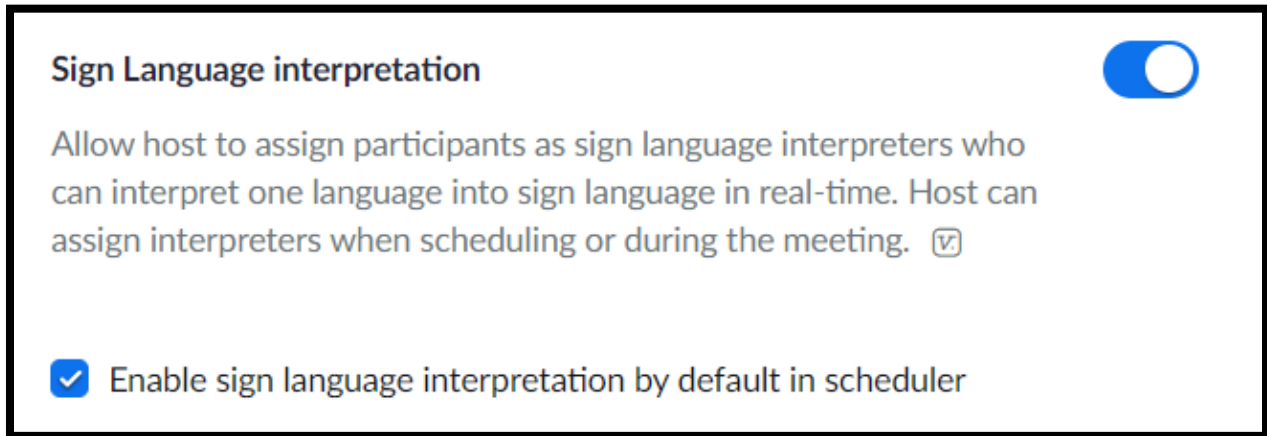
Information on the basic requirements and steps to activating signed interpreting for an account can be found in Zoom’s [guidance on enabling sign language interpretation](#). This document will deal with activating sign language for an **individual account** once Zoom’s backend activation of the feature has taken effect. Some of the steps outlined in the document above are supplemented here with visuals.

1. Sign into your account and select Settings from the menu on the left margin. Click the “Meeting” tab along the top row of the screen.

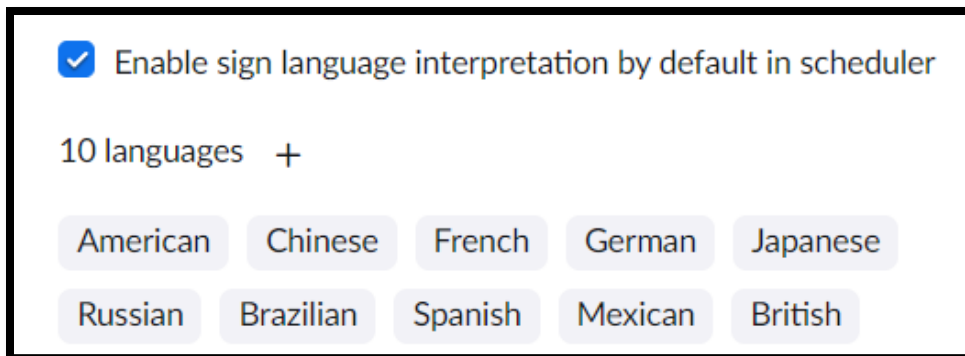


2. Scroll down to the section labeled “In Meeting (Advanced)”

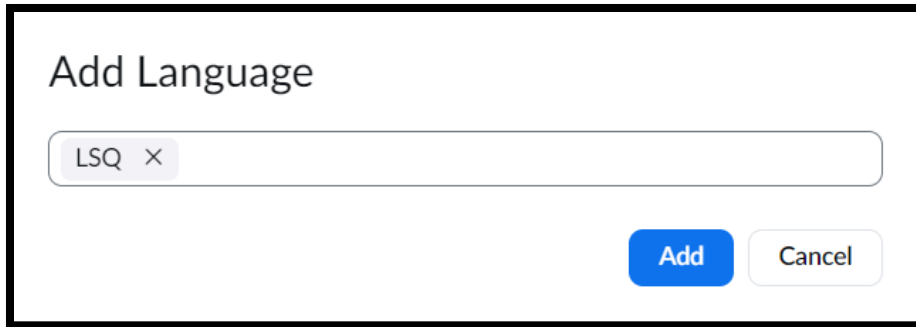
3. Locate the “Sign Language Interpretation” field and toggle the radio button to turn it blue



4. Check, “Enable sign language interpretation by default in scheduler” as shown above if you want this option to be enabled in all meetings automatically with no additional steps required when setting individual meetings.
5. The Sign Language feature is automatically set up for the 10 sign languages shown below:



6. To add a language to the list, click on the + sign above the language lists and type in the language you’d like to enable, then click “Add.”



Shout-out, Québec

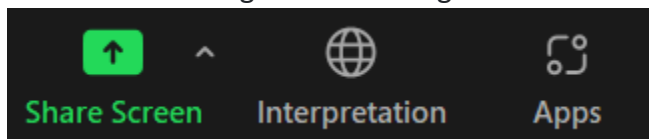
II. Enabling Sign Language Interpretation for Individual Meetings

Follow the steps in the section labeled in Zoom’s [document on managing sign language interpretation](#).

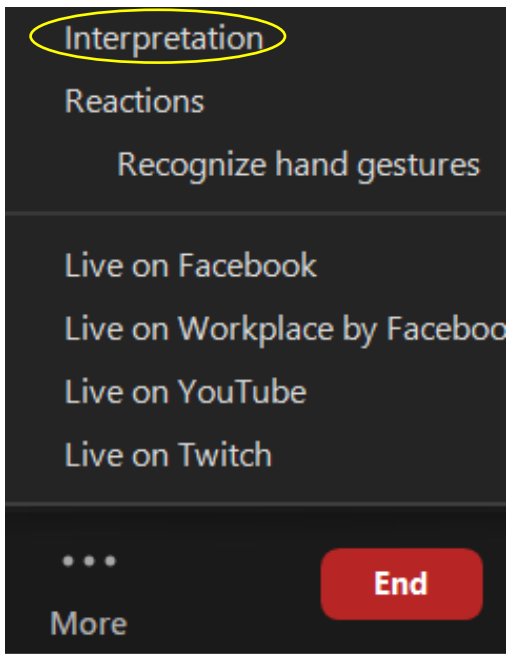
III. Activating Sign Language Interpretation Within a Meeting

Important reminders:

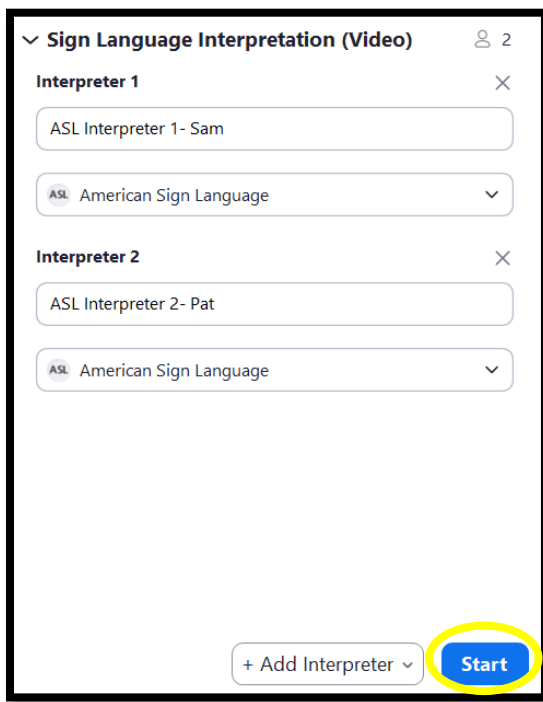
- Like spoken language interpretation, sign language interpretation can only be **managed** via Zoom’s desktop client for Windows or Mac, NOT on a mobile device (cell phone or tablet). Mobile devices are, however, compatible with interpreting or viewing Sign Language.
 - Launching/managing interpretation (spoken or signed) is only available to the meeting **host** (not co-hosts). Please note, however, that the role of host can be handed off to different participants in a meeting as needed and reclaimed by the original host.
1. Once a meeting is open, if interpretation (spoken or signed) was properly enabled, its host should see a globe icon along the bottom row of the screen.



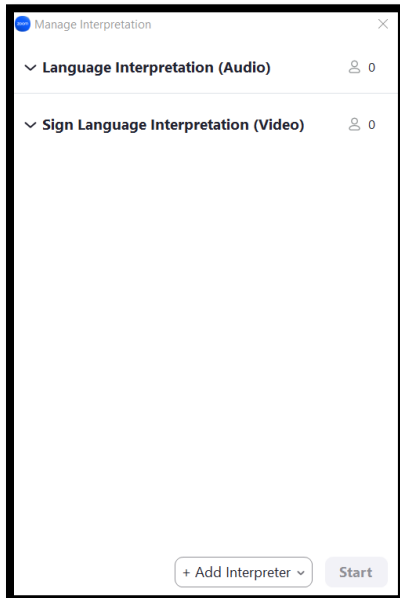
If the globe is not immediately visible, expand your Zoom window to allow more icons to appear or click the three dots labeled more and select “Interpretation” from the text menu that appears.



2. Click on "Interpretation" via the globe icon or the text menu. If interpreters were assigned at the time the meeting was set and they log in correctly such that the system recognizes them, they should appear in the next window with their language listed and all the host has to do is hit "Start" to launch the feature.

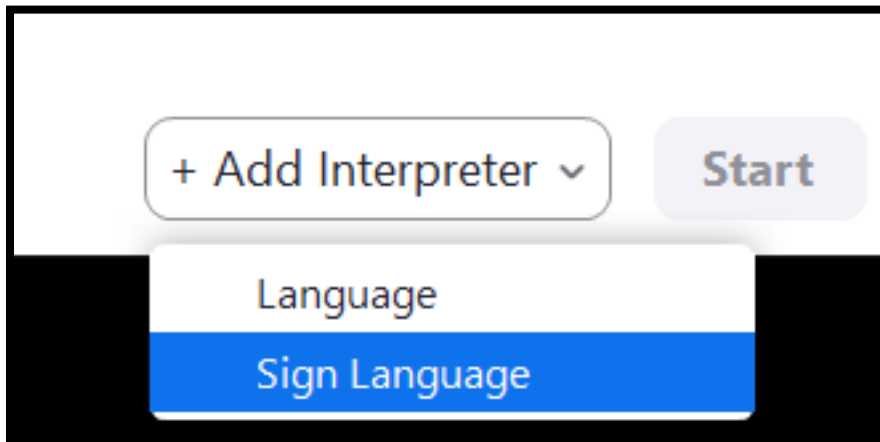


2b. If no interpreters were assigned before the meeting, the “Manage Interpretation” window will be blank once the host opens it.

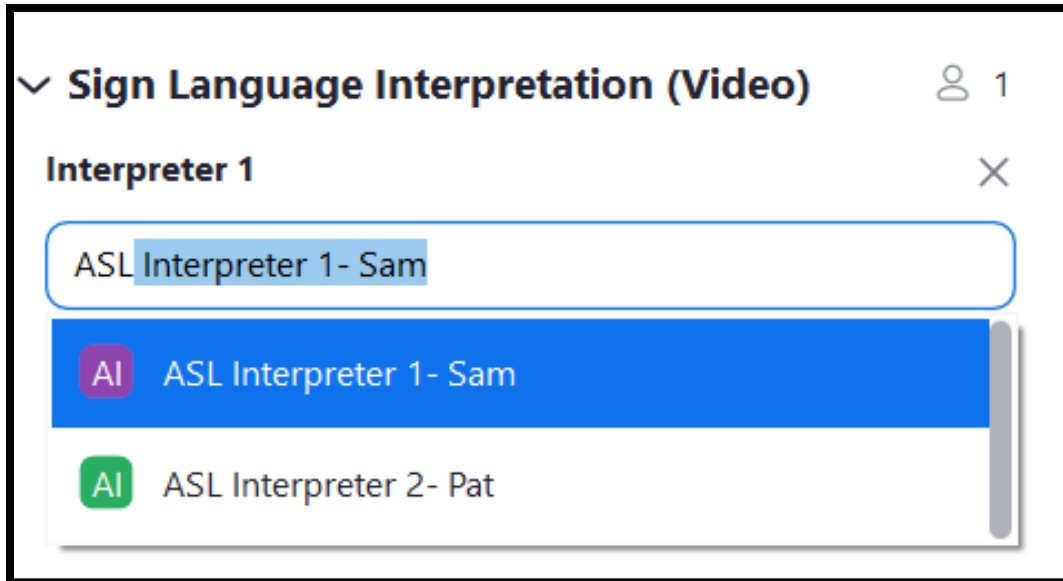


Note that the “Start” button will remain greyed out and cannot be clicked on until you have at least one interpreter and language enabled.

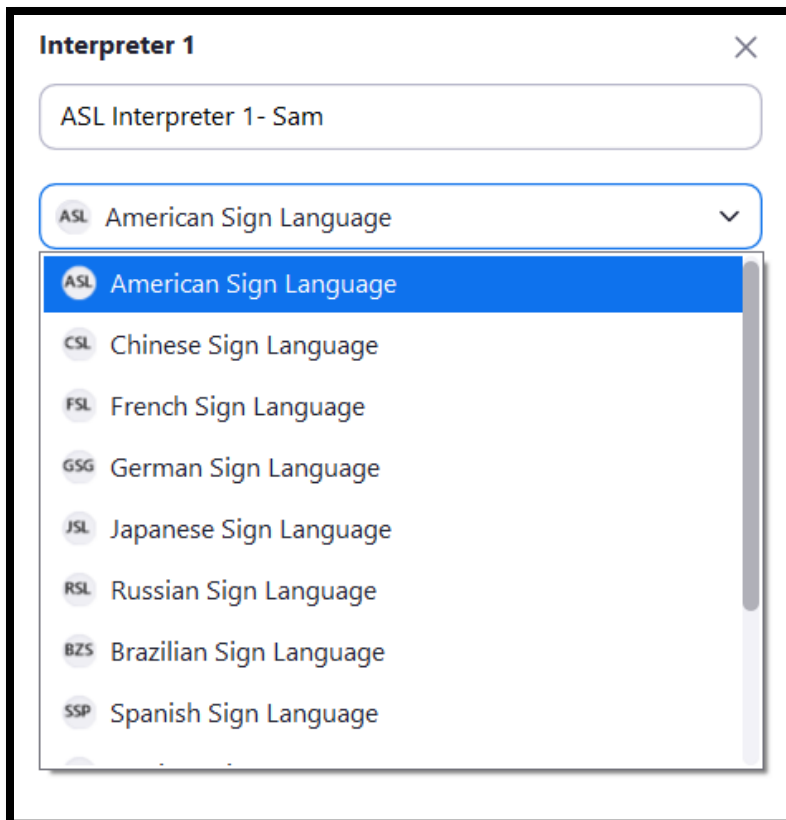
3. Click “Add Interpreter” at the bottom of the screen and specify that you want a Sign Language (not “Language”) interpreter (Important!)



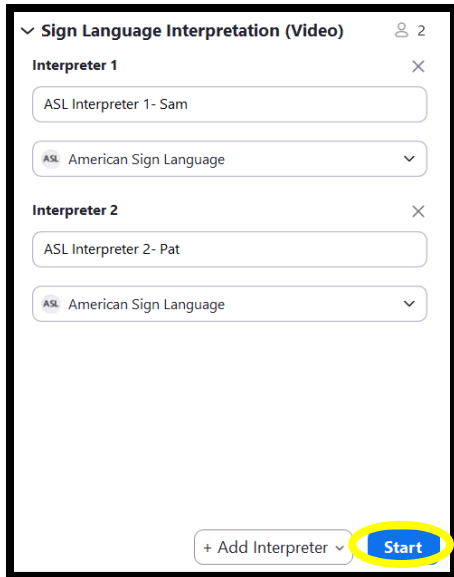
4. A field will appear under “Sign Language Interpretation (Video).” Under “Interpreter 1,” begin to type the name of the meeting participant you wish to assign and click on their name



5. Click on the Field below the interpreter's name to set their language. Scroll down for additional options.

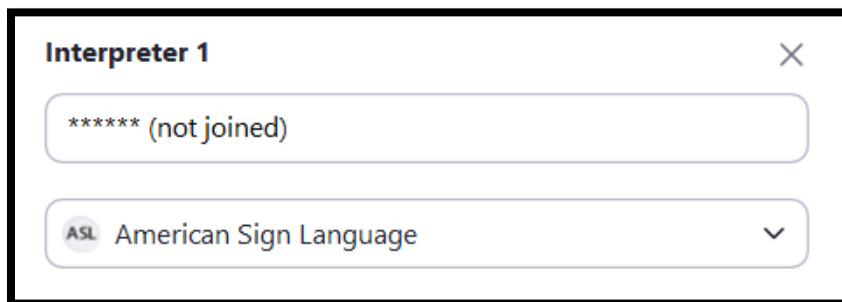


6. Repeat the steps above to add a second interpreter. Add additional interpreters and languages as needed.



- Once all necessary interpreters have been assigned, click the blue “Start,” button at bottom right.

Troubleshooting note: If interpreters were pre-assigned, but are not being recognized by the system, they will appear thusly:



This can message may appear if:

- The pre-assigned interpreter is not in the meeting
- The pre-assigned has in fact joined the meeting, but is not being recognized by the system because they are not logged in to a Zoom account linked to the email under which they were pre-assigned
- The pre-assigned interpreter is running an older version of Zoom that is not compatible with this feature and needs to update before rejoining the meeting

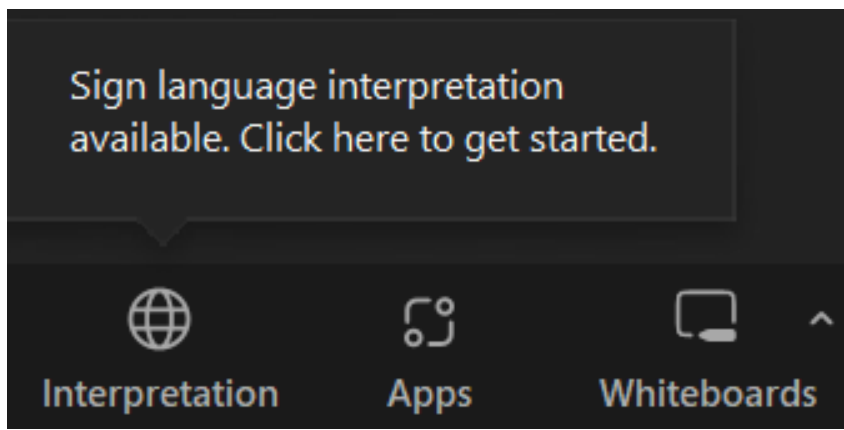
To assign an interpreter manually from among meeting participants, click the field below “Interpreter 1” and follow the instructions above starting with step 4.

IV. Accessing Sign Language Interpretation in a Meeting as a Viewer: Desktop Client

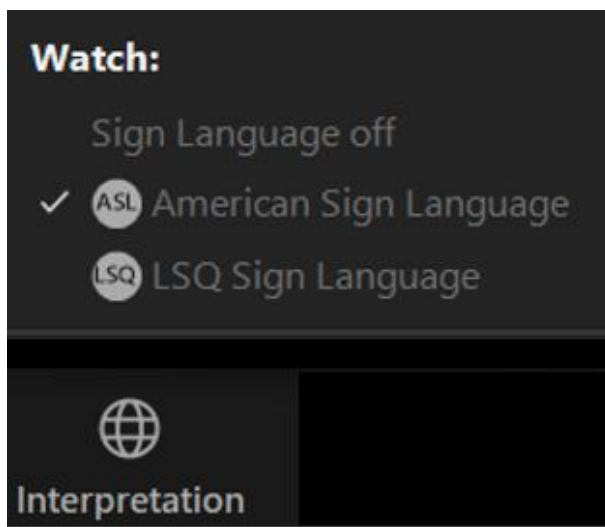
Important Reminder: Participants must update to a version of Zoom that is 5.11.3 or higher for desktop and 5.12.0 or higher for mobile to be able to view Sign Language interpretation.

Also, by default, assigned Sign Language interpreters will ONLY be visible to participants who select a Sign Language channel as shown above.

1. For users **connecting from a computer**, once a meeting host has configured and launched Sign Language interpretation, a globe icon will appear with a prompt to participants who wish to access signed interpreting, as shown below. **Please note that the interface for Zoom on mobile devices is different and requires a different procedure to select a channel, as outlined below.**



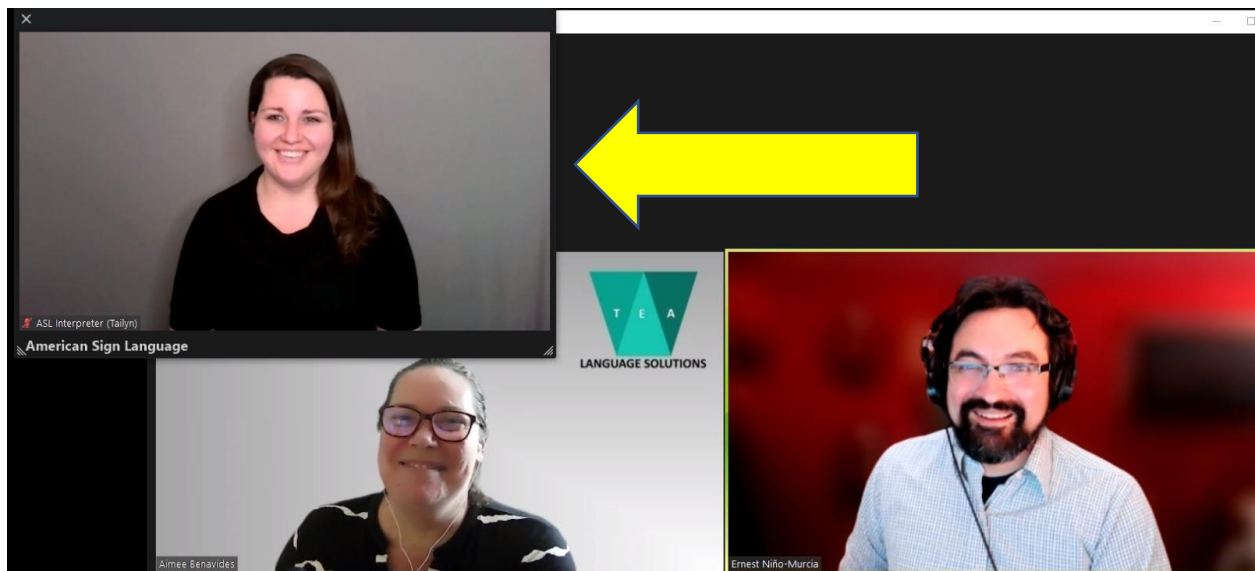
2. Once users click on the globe icon, a menu will appear allowing participants to enable Sign Language interpreting, choosing from among different visual channels if multiple teams of interpreters are working in a meeting.



Note that in meetings with both spoken and signed interpretation enabled, the menu may look like this:



Once Sign Language interpretation has been activated by hosts and selected by participants, Sign Language interpreters will appear in a floating window that can be resized or moved at will, even outside of the main Zoom window. Important note: Interpreters will be visible according to the order in which they're assigned by the meeting host in section III.7. By default, whoever is assigned in the "Interpreter 1" field will be the first to appear to viewers. This has implications for how interpreters work as a team, as detailed below in section VI.

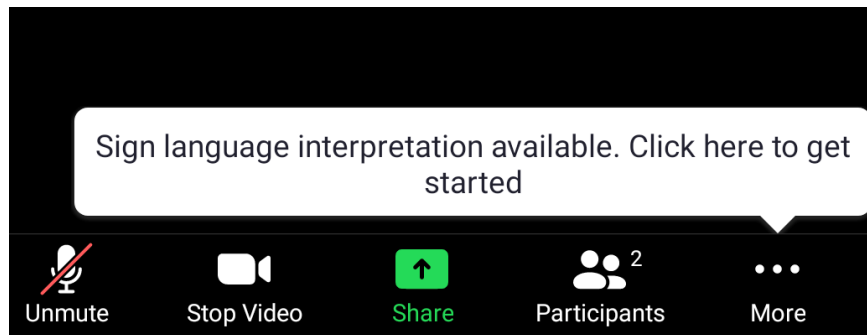


Please note that closing out of this window (“X” top left corner) will cancel the participant’s channel selection and they will have to re-activate Sign Language interpretation to continue viewing it.

Also note that the Sign Language interpretation function is not available in breakout rooms

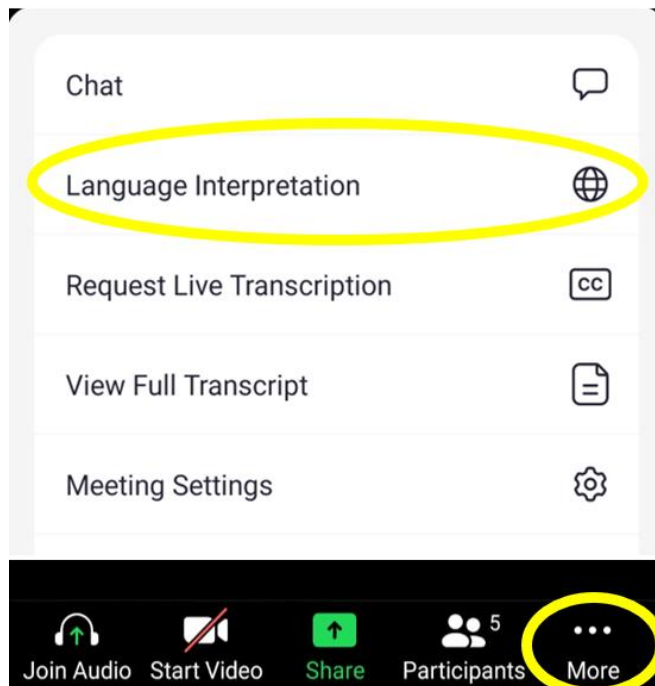
V. Accessing Sign Language Interpretation in a Meeting as a Viewer: Zoom App for Mobile Devices

1. On a compatible mobile device, users will be prompted as shown below once a meeting’s host has launched Sign Language interpretation.

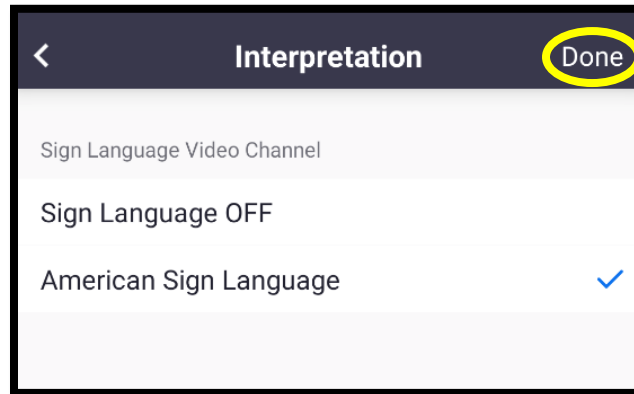


*Note: screenshots shown are from an Android phone. The features depicted here may appear differently on different devices depending on operating system and screen size.

2. Click on the three dots labeled, “More,” and select, “Language Interpretation.”



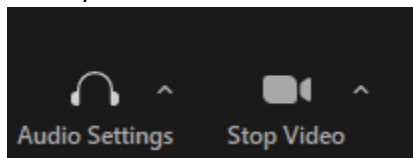
3. From the next window that appears, select your signed language of choice and hit Done to confirm your selection. Please note that your selection will not take effect until you have hit the, “Done,” button at top right.




Viewing Sign Language interpretation on a mobile device is not recommended. Due to limited screen real estate (on an Android smartphone, at least) the Sign Language interpreter appears next to the active speaker at the time, but cannot be seen on top of shared content. A viewer on mobile would have to choose between seeing the interpreter and seeing the shared content (slides, for example).

VI. Considerations for Interpreters and Hosts

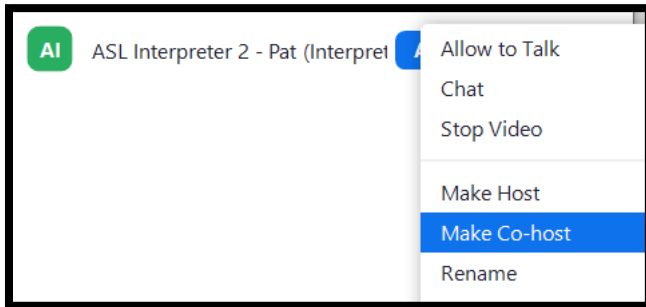
- Once assigned, sign language interpreters do not have the ability to activate their microphone. Note the absence of a microphone icon to mute/unmute below:



Also by default, assigned Sign Language interpreters are only visible to participants who have selected their channel as shown in previous sections. Thus, participants in the main meeting who have not selected to view Sign Language will by default NOT see interpreters once they are assigned. The latter part of the notification that appears for interpreters at the top of their screen when initially assigned is not true in every case:

 Your video is now broadcasting in the American Sign Language channel and main meeting

- For Sign Language interpreters to be able to activate their microphone or be visible to participants in meeting (not just those who have enabled Sign Language), the meeting host must **either** designate that Sign Language interpreter as a meeting co-host:

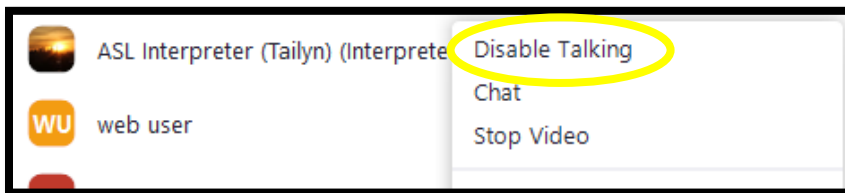


or select “Allow to Talk” for that interpreter:



(Screenshots taken from the host’s Participant List interface)

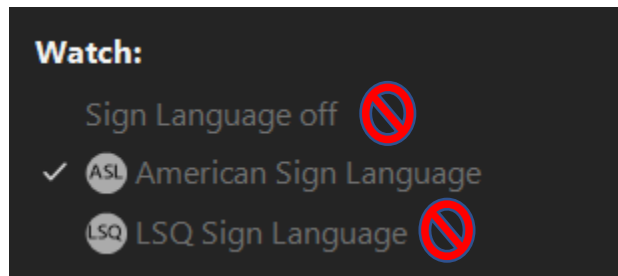
Both “Allow to Talk” and co-host privileges can be revoked by the meeting host.



- Granting Sign Language interpreters privileges to be visible to the meeting at large is essential for them to provide instructions to participants on how to navigate the channel selection process outlined above. An assigned interpreter who is not also visible in the meeting at large cannot give instructions on how to access the Sign Language interpretation feature. In that situation, the interpreter would only be visible to participants who had already completed the necessary steps (and thus, would not need instructions). Conversely, the interpreter would NOT be visible to the participants who actually needed guidance on selecting the Sign Language view.
- Interpreters can see their own version of the video window with the option to be minimized, show only the active interpreter or show a thumbnail view of other interpreters. When they are on, interpreter 1 can use this function to see their partner and coordinate trading off, but interpreter 2 cannot do the same when they are on (explanation below)



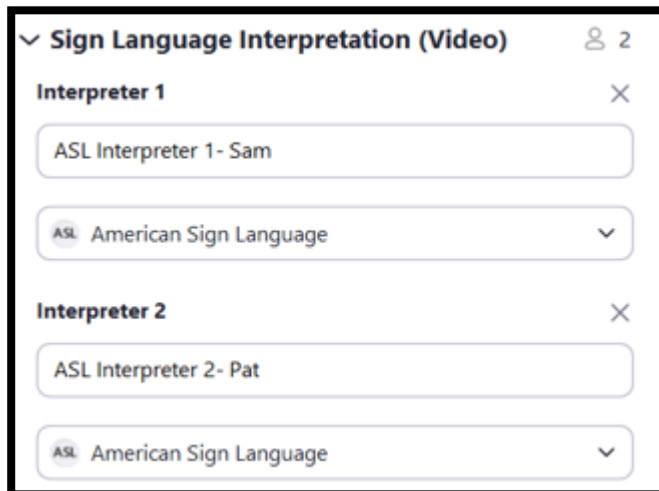
- Interpreters' channel selection for the pop-out window is **locked**. Although the options appear when they click on the interpretation globe, interpreters cannot click to either shut off the interpretation window or switch that view to another channel to take relay from another team of sign interpreters within the Sign Language window.



so close, yet so far away...

To see interpreters working in another Sign Language channel for purposes of relay interpreting, the interpreters giving relay MUST be visible in the main Zoom meeting (via the host's granting of that privileges as detailed above) or through a separate backchannel outside of Zoom.

- As noted earlier, interpreters will appear in participants' Sign Language window in the order they are assigned. If their camera is on, whoever is assigned under "Interpreter 1," will appear first to participants who choose to activate the Sign Language window.

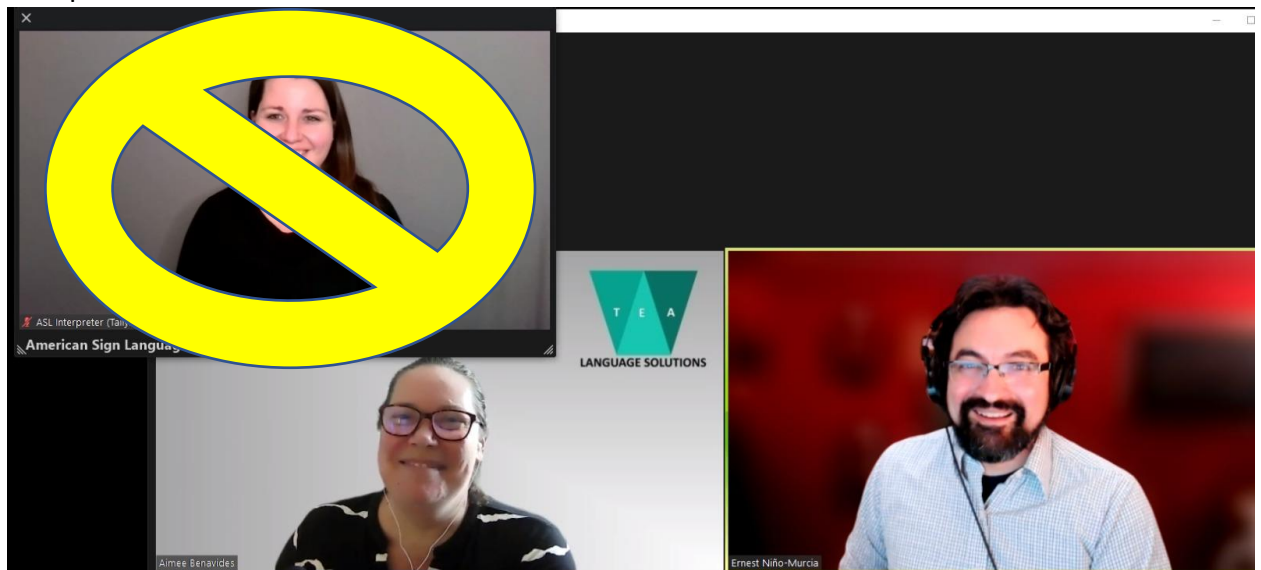


Zoom’s prioritization of Interpreter 1 over Interpreter 2 extends to how partners trade off in the interpreting window, with big implications for how interpreters collaborate:

Scenario	Description
Interpreter 1 “Handing over” the Sign Language window to Interpreter 2	The switch is triggered when an <u>active Interpreter 1</u> shuts off <u>their camera</u> , at which point Interpreter 2 takes over the Sign Language window if their camera is on. While active, Interpreter 1 is able to see passive Interpreter 2, so the partners can discreetly signal each other that they are ready before switching.
Interpreter 2 “Handing over” the Sign Language window to Interpreter 1	The switch is triggered when a <u>passive Interpreter 1</u> activates <u>their camera</u> , at which point they <i>automatically</i> take over the Sign Language window from an active Interpreter 2, even if that interpreter’s camera is still on. Because of this, there is no opportunity for interpreters to see each other within Zoom to signal they are ready to trade off.

In other words, the person assigned as “Interpreter 2” will only appear in the Sign Language window if their camera is on and Interpreter 1 has shut theirs down, but Interpreter 2 does NOT have to shut their camera down to cede the window back to their partner. If an active Interpreter 2 wants a *visual cue* from a passive Interpreter 1 that they are ready to take over for them, they will need a separate video connection with their partner outside of Zoom.

- Zoom’s recording function (cloud or local) will NOT capture the separate Sign Language interpretation window.



Workarounds for recording Sign Language interpretation include using screen recording software to recreate the participant's authentic view including the pop-out Sign Language window or capturing the Sign Language interpretation through the existing method of pinning or spotlighting interpreters to record them as regular meeting participants (not in the Sign Language window).

VII. Additional Resources

More information on setting up and running interpretation for Zoom hosts (including a deeper analysis of some common issues and fixes that also apply to Sign Language) can be found [here](#).

Acknowledgements: A very special thank you to ASL interpreters Tailyn Kaster and Amber Tucker for their work and input testing this feature.

About the Author and Contributors

This document was drafted by Ernest Niño-Murcia (ernest@tealanguagesolutions.com) based on testing conducted with Aimee Benavides and Robert Zemser. Ernest and Aimee are experienced conference interpreters who also provide training, guidance, and technical support on Zoom's interpreting feature to other interpreters and clients as T.E.A Language Solutions (<https://www.tealanguagesolutions.com>).