

Preparing to join an online classroom

Blackboard Collaborate is an online conferencing system that allows participants to collaborate online in real time. It is easy to use and has features that make it ideal for live mathematics tutoring. It enables a tutor and course participants to communicate live on-line using audio, handwriting on a shared virtual whiteboard and instant messaging via the internet.

It is very important that you test that your computer / laptop is set up to access an online classroom (provided by Blackboard Collaborate) in advance of the live session that you will be attending. You can do this at any time.

Your computer will need to be connected to the internet and have a stable, reliable connection. Please ensure that you are performing this test using the same computer that you will use to join the taster session. **To test your computer, click on the link below and follow steps 1 and 2:**

<http://tinyurl.com/meoy2b8>

(http://blackboard.force.com/btbb_publichome > first time users > Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing)

The online orientation in step 3 is not essential but nevertheless useful

You may find that you need to update the version of Java you have on your computer. You will need to accept all licence agreements and requests to unblock firewall protection in relation to running the application.

*Before you open a blackboard room for the first time you should be prompted to download the "Blackboard Launcher". Make sure this has downloaded and installed **before** opening the room link. If you are not prompted to download the launcher and the room will not open then click on the link below to download the relevant software.*

<http://tinyurl.com/blackboardlauncher>

If you have any connection problems, before getting in touch, please visit the support portal which can be found in step 4.

Typically if you are connecting from home it is unlikely that you will experience connection problems. However, if you are connecting from a network (e.g. a school network) you may experience initial problems but these can be resolved. **If you intend to connect to the online session from a school or college network you may need support from a technician in advance.**

Please inform the person who sent you these joining details if you have not been able to successfully set up your computer to access an online classroom. Please allow time plenty of time for troubleshooting in advance of your first scheduled online session.

Frequently asked questions

Can I join live sessions from a mobile device? You can join live sessions from iPhone, iPad, or Android device (including Kindle Fire HD). You will first need to download the appropriate Applet. However, some interactive features are limited on mobile devices and we recommend that participants use a computer or laptop.

What equipment do I need to join a live session? We strongly recommend that you use a USB headset to provide the best sound quality and to prevent audio issues for other users. Also in some live sessions your tutor will provide opportunities to use the shared whiteboard. To interact using the whiteboard you will find it helpful to have a graphics tablet. This is not essential but will help you write legibly on the screen e.g. Trust Stylus Design tablet or a Trust Flex Design tablet. Please check with your online tutor before purchasing a tablet (as it may not be appropriate).

How do I join the online classroom? You will be sent a link by email to the dedicated online classroom dedicated for your online session(s). You do not need a login or password; you will only need the dedicated link to the room. When you join the online classroom it's worth running the Audio Setup Wizard. You can do this by clicking on Tools then Audio then Audio Setup Wizard.