



Tips For Using In Your Classroom

Before The Skype Call

- Download the latest version of Skype ahead of time. Make sure your account is set up and you have the person you'll be calling listed as a contact.
- Do a test Skype call with the other teacher/person beforehand if possible so you can both troubleshoot any video and sound issues.
- If a test call isn't possible, use Skype's call testing service to check your equipment.
- Double check your timezone with the person you're skyping with and make sure you're both clear on how much time you have available for the session.
- You might want to send an additional Skype instant message/email before the call. For example, say "we'll be ready to go in one hour/five minutes".

Before The Skype Call

- Depending on the format of your call, you might want to come up with a rough running order and allocate some roles to students. For example, write down who will be the greeters, decide on the order of questions (and what the questions will be), elect someone to thank and farewell the class/person.
- Decide if you will be recording the call and/or have some students write down notes.
- If you plan to create a blog post about the call, you might have some students take photos or short videos (ensure you have permission if using footage of others).
- Run through expectations with the students before beginning (e.g. being quiet in the audience and raising your hand if you would like to contribute something).
- Some students might be more confident rehearsing their questions and/or writing them down.
- If you know what the other class will be asking, you might want to do a little research.
- Consider inviting others to watch if you think they might be interested (e.g. your principal or parents).

The Classroom Setup

- Connect a device (with a webcam) to a television or interactive whiteboard so everyone can see the screen.
- Adding an external microphone will enhance the audio.
- Have a chair near the computer/microphone for the speaker to sit on. Position the webcam at eye level.
- Show the class how to look into the camera when speaking rather than looking at the screen.
- Show the class how to check if they're in frame when speaking.
- Arrange for the students to sit behind the speaker's chair so they can be seen in the background.
- Position the students strategically if needed (e.g. not near others who will distract them or close to the computer if they'll be speaking).
- Ensure everything is set up from the start (e.g. objects you want to show or notes).
- Put a sign on the door to say you're in a Skype call if you think you might be interrupted.

During The Skype Call

- Before asking or answering a question, say “hello, my name is ...” and smile!
- Speak clearly and loudly without shouting. Try to slow down your speech a little especially if speaking with others from overseas.
- Avoid slang, innapropriate language, and terminology that might be confusing to people from other countries (unless you explain what you mean).
- When it’s your turn to talk, try to explain clearly rather than using only one or two words.
- Sit still when you’re speaking on camera and hold any objects that you’re showing really still. Too much movement can make things blurry.
- If you’re not using instant messaging, click on full screen to enlarge the video stream.
- If you experience issues with the call during the session, stay calm! Try switching off the video to see if that helps. Sometimes you might need to end the call and call back.

After The Skype Call

- Reflect on the experience with your students while it's fresh in their minds. This might be through oral discussions or a writing activity.
- Jot down further questions your students have on the topics discussed. They could be the start of a great research project.
- Get in touch with the teacher/person you called and thank them for their time.
- A follow up blog post is a great way to share the learning and fun.
- Think about how you can improve things next time and whether it would be worthwhile scheduling a following up call.