

1. Use your laptop.

It is best to do Zoom auditions on a laptop and not on a smartphone. Make sure you have the latest Zoom update.

2. Use a tripod laptop stand.

This will allow you to raise and lower your computer so that you can do both standing and sitting scenes. They go for around \$40-50 on Amazon.

3. Sound is important!

Wear some kind of earbud with a microphone when reading as it can help avoid your dialogue cutting out in Zoom. By having the earbud mic close to your mouth, it mimics using a lavalier microphone. (Link on last page.)

Other option: lavalier mic and Bluetooth/wireless speaker. (Links on last page.)

4. Upgrade your internet.

If you can connect your laptop directly to your modem via a LAN cable, that will provide the cleanest connection. Otherwise, try to make sure you are close to your WiFi router for the best connection. If connecting via WiFi, disconnect other equipment from the WiFi (if at all possible).

If there are others in your location, make sure they know you are having a virtual taping session so you can have the full internet bandwidth/speed. (If they're on twitter or checking email it won't hurt your speed too much, but they can't be watching Netflix or playing an online game.)

5. Make sure your laptop camera is 1080p.

If you have an older computer, you may need to improve the video quality. You can either connect an external webcam (link on last page), or you can use your smartphone as a web camera by downloading EpocCam (\$7.99). It works with Zoom.

6. Set up an eye line.

A good eyeline is the top right-or left-hand corner of your laptop. You can either put a piece of tape or a post-it note there, OR minimize your Zoom window and

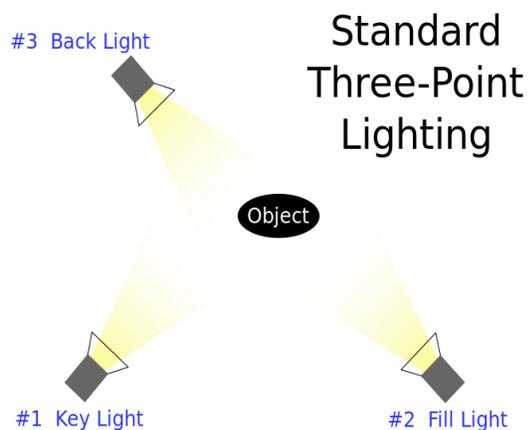
put your reader on the top corner of your screen. (See “Zoom tips” for how to do this.)

And, speaking of eyelines, don’t forget to clean your webcam lens!

You need to be relatively close to your laptop for the audition (very different from doing a taped audition with a fancy camera that can adjust for distance). Aim for the same frame as your self-tapes (about mid-chest or shoulders (or whatever the casting office asks for) to just above your head). I can fix a lot of framing issues, but it’s best if you give me something to work with!

7. Use decent lighting and a solid backdrop.

Invest in two softboxes. If you can, add a backdrop light of some kind as well (this can even be a simple desk lamp that you sit/stand in front of).



(Links for lighting equipment on last page.)

If you have been doing self-taping using your smartphone or another camera, you can use the same set-up for the Zoom taping; just swap out the tripod and equipment.

Do NOT use a ring light! This lighting gives off lots of shadows and it puts annoying light dots in your eyeballs.

Do NOT use the virtual backdrops in Zoom! Use a solid backdrop (light gray/gray, light blue/blue, light green all work well). Do not use black or white (although, in a pinch, black will be okay. White is never okay).

I used an inexpensive gray sheet tacked up to my living room wall for my taped auditions. But I now have a second option –I got a backdrop stand and I can put different backgrounds on it as I need it (different backgrounds = different sheet colors; I also have a nice dark blue tablecloth that I use). (Links on last page.)

8. Turn Notifications Off or put your devices on Do Not Disturb (airplane mode is ok but you have to turn your WiFi off on your phone as well, otherwise it'll still ring.)

9. Set up a Back-Up Recording (optional). This is not necessary, but some people find it comforting to know that their audition is being recorded in two different places. You can set up your phone (on its own tripod) directly behind the laptop on *its* tripod.

Make sure your phone is on Do Not Disturb with the WiFi turned off (if a call comes in, it will interrupt/stop the recording). Start recording right before you start our session. You do not need to play to that camera/phone or start/stop the recording. Let it run and end the recording once we finish our session—it is just a back-up.

Zoom Tips:

Note: Make sure you are in Gallery View (see below).

PIN the reader (on the reader's screen/box, click the three dots in the upper-right hand corner and choose "pin.") Then go to your video box, click on the triple dots and choose "**HIDE SELF-VIEW**"

You can minimize the zoom screen by going to the menu up top, choose Meeting, then choose "**ENTER MINIMAL VIEW.**" Now you can move that little window with the reader's face in it wherever you'd like.

Note: all of the above selections must be done while in "Gallery View." To make sure you are in Gallery View, go to the top right of the Zoom screen under "View," then choose "Gallery." This is also where you can show the full screen again or change from "hide self-view."

Equipment:

- Laptop (many choices available; if you need advice, let me know; do NOT get a Chromebook, as they do not work well with Zoom)
- Softbox (Amazon, \$23.99 each light): <https://tinyurl.com/y2hlqqa2>
- Backdrop Stand: (Amazon, \$40): <https://tinyurl.com/y2uv9y9f>
- Plain sheets (around \$9): <https://tinyurl.com/y5dbcemr>
- Tablecloth (around \$9): <https://tinyurl.com/yymybg9c>
- Lavalier Mic for Laptop (amazon, \$20): <https://tinyurl.com/y58t6wuq>
- External speaker for laptop: --USB (Amazon, \$20): <https://tinyurl.com/y4v8qam3> --Wireless Bluetooth (Amazon, \$19): <https://tinyurl.com/y5c8basu>
- AirPods (wireless) as sub for speaker and mic, connected via Bluetooth.
- Earbuds (Bluetooth, with mic) for Windows (or Mac) computer: <https://tinyurl.com/yyy3o2x9>
- Webcam (there are many choices, but this one is relatively inexpensive, 1080P, and highly rated): <https://tinyurl.com/y63ca5nd>