How to transcribe a Zoom meeting (even if you're not the host)

Gabriel Jourdan, product lead at Goodmeet · Published November 20, 2026 · Updated November 20, 2026 · https://goodmeet.com/guides/transcribe-zoom-meeting

Quick answer

If you host on a paid Zoom plan, turn on Create audio transcript and record to the cloud: Zoom emails you the transcript after the call. Paid plans can also show a live transcript. If you're a participant or on the free plan, ask the host to start one, or use a note taker on your own computer that transcribes what you hear, with no bot in the call.

Which way of transcribing Zoom should you use?

It depends on two things: whether you're the host, and whether the host pays for Zoom. Zoom's own transcripts need a paid plan and the host's say-so. A note taker on your own computer needs neither, which also means telling people is up to you.

Method · Who can use it · Zoom plan needed · Visible to others? · Cost

- Cloud recording transcript · Host or co-host · Pro, Business, Education or Enterprise · Yes, Zoom announces every recording · Included in those plans
- Live meeting transcript · Host turns it on; participants can ask · Pro, Business or Enterprise · The host can add a notice · Included in those plans
- AI Companion summary · Host or co-host; participants can ask · Paid plans; 3 hosted meetings a month on the free plan · Yes, the AI icon changes color · Included in paid plans
- Computer recording, transcribed later · Host, or a participant the host allows · Any, including free · Yes, Zoom announces every recording · Free to record; the transcription service may charge
- Otter or Fireflies bot · Anyone with an account; the host may have to let it in · Any · Yes, the bot is a participant · Free plans with limits
- Goodmeet on your computer · Anyone in the call, on Mac or Windows · Any, including free · No, nothing joins the call, so you tell people · Free for individual use

How do you transcribe a Zoom meeting you host?

Record the meeting to the cloud with audio transcripts switched on, and Zoom transcribes it after the call. Both need a Pro, Business, Education or Enterprise account.

1. Sign in to the Zoom web portal, click your profile picture, then Settings.
2. Click Recording. Under General, make sure Cloud recording is on.
3. Under Advanced cloud recording settings, select Create audio transcript and click Save. If it's grayed out, your Zoom admin has locked it.
4. In the meeting, click More, then Record, then Record to the cloud. Only hosts and co-hosts can start a cloud recording.
5. After the meeting, Zoom emails you when the recording is ready, then again when the transcript is. Open Recordings and Transcripts in the web portal to read, edit or download it as a VTT file.

Zoom says cloud recordings usually take about twice the meeting's length to process, and occasionally up to 24 hours, with the transcript after that. If your meeting isn't in English, check first: one Zoom page says audio transcription only supports English, while another lists 19 languages.

The live transcript

Paid accounts can also show a transcript during the meeting. An admin, or you in your own settings if it isn't locked, turns on Meeting transcript under In Meeting (Advanced). In the meeting, click More, then Transcript: the panel fills in as people speak, and Save transcript saves a text file to your computer, if the host allows saving.

Zoom removed the old Save captions setting in May 2026, so guides that tell you to save captions no longer work.

Can Zoom's AI Companion transcribe a meeting?

Not quite: its meeting summary gives you a summary and next steps, not a word-for-word record. Zoom's support pages now call it Zoom AI, and its product page calls the assistant ZoomMate.

- Plans. It's included at no extra cost with paid Zoom plans. Zoom's AI assistant page also lists meeting summaries for 3 hosted meetings a month on the free plan.
- Who starts it. Only the host or a co-host can start or stop it. Any participant can ask them to.
- Who knows. Participants see the AI icon change color while it runs.
- Who gets it. Participants may receive the summary after the meeting if the host shares it.

If an admin allows it, Zoom can keep a transcript alongside the summary, which the host can download from Recordings and Transcripts.

How do you transcribe a Zoom meeting if you're not the host?

You have three options: ask the host, ask for permission to record, or take notes on your own computer.

1. Ask the host to start a transcript. If the host has meeting transcripts enabled, click More, then Transcript, then Request transcription. The host can start it or decline.
2. Ask for permission to record to your computer, then transcribe the file afterwards (see below). Zoom's computer recordings are free, but they don't come with a transcript.
3. Use a note taker that runs on your computer. It transcribes the call's audio as you hear it, so it doesn't depend on the host's plan or settings. That's the next section.

How do you transcribe Zoom with no bot and no host settings?

Use an app that listens through your own computer. Goodmeet records your computer's own audio and microphone, so no bot joins the meeting and nothing shows up in the participant list. It works the same in Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams or any other call app, and it doesn't matter whether the host pays for Zoom.

Only you can read your notes. Goodmeet transcribes on your computer, and your audio is never uploaded. Summaries are generated in Private Cloud AI on Google Cloud in the EU, designed so nobody can read them, and anything you sync or share is end-to-end encrypted. Your meetings aren't used to train AI models.

These are the steps from Goodmeet's help center guide, Record and summarise a meeting

(https://goodmeet.support.site/article/record-and-summarise-a-meeting):

1. Install Goodmeet on a Mac with Apple silicon or a Windows 11 PC with 16GB of RAM, and open it. Connecting your calendar is optional.
2. Join the Zoom call as usual, and tell everyone you're taking notes.
3. Click Quick recording. If your calendar is connected, you can click Take notes on the meeting's card instead, and Goodmeet also reminds you when it notices a call starting.
4. A live transcript appears as people speak. You can type your own notes alongside it.
5. Click Stop recording, or let Goodmeet stop when the call ends.
6. Click Generate summary. Copy the summary, notes or transcript, or share them with an encrypted link and password.

The audio is deleted once the transcript is final, and Goodmeet is free for individual use. Its limits: there's no web, iPad or Intel Mac version, the iPhone app is for meetings in person rather than calls, and summaries need an internet connection.

How do you transcribe a Zoom recording you already have?

A cloud recording with Create audio transcript on already has its transcript in Recordings and Transcripts. A computer recording doesn't, so you transcribe the file yourself.

- Captions saved with the recording. If the host turned on Save closed caption as a VTT file before the meeting, the captions are saved next to the computer recording.
- Upload the file to a transcription service. Otter's free Basic plan imports files of up to 30 minutes, within 300 transcription minutes a month.

Either way, an uploaded file is transcribed on that service's servers, so check its privacy policy first. For what to look for, see how private is your AI notetaker.

What about Otter, Fireflies and other bots?

They send a bot into the call that records and transcribes on the vendor's side. A bot has one real advantage: it can attend a meeting you can't.

- Otter. Otter Notetaker joins Zoom as a guest participant, named after you, and Otter says it can't join without appearing to others. It can join every calendar event with a Zoom link. On Zoom, it needs recording to computer files enabled, and the host may have to approve its recording request. The free Basic plan includes 300 minutes a month, with 30 minutes per conversation.
- Fireflies. Its bot, Fred, asks to join the call, and the host or a participant can turn it away. It can auto-join every calendar meeting with a video link. The free plan allows unlimited transcription through auto-join, with 400 minutes of storage.

Compare them in detail: Goodmeet vs Otter and Goodmeet vs Fireflies.

Do you need permission to transcribe a Zoom meeting?

Ask, every time. When someone records in Zoom, Zoom notifies everyone and asks them to consent. A note taker on your computer announces nothing, so the asking is up to you. One line at the start is usually enough: "I'm using an AI note taker so I don't have to type the whole time. Is everyone okay with that?"

This isn't legal advice: recording rules differ by place, by country and in the US by state, and some

places require everyone's consent. If you record for work, check with whoever handles legal or compliance.

Why isn't my Zoom transcript showing up?

- There's no Create audio transcript option. You're on the free plan, or your admin has turned it off. Ask your admin, or use a method from the table that doesn't need it.
- You recorded to your computer. Computer recordings never get an audio transcript. Record to the cloud next time, or transcribe the file.
- It's still processing. A cloud recording can take up to 24 hours, and the transcript comes after it.
- You can't save the live transcript. The host decides who can save it.
- A bot can't get in. The host has to admit it, or approve its recording request.

Frequently asked questions

Can I transcribe a Zoom meeting for free?

Yes, but not with Zoom's own transcripts, which need a paid plan. On the free plan you can record to your computer if the host allows it, then upload the file to a transcription service with a free tier, or use a free note taker that runs on your computer and transcribes the call as you hear it.

Can I transcribe a Zoom meeting as a participant?

Yes. Ask the host to start a meeting transcript, which participants can request from More and Transcript when the host has it enabled. Or use a note taker on your own computer: it transcribes what you hear, so it doesn't depend on the host's settings. Either way, tell everyone before you start.

Can I transcribe a Zoom meeting without recording it?

With Zoom, yes: on a paid plan the live meeting transcript doesn't need a recording, and the host can let participants save it. A note taker on your computer records the audio to transcribe it, but some, like Goodmeet, delete the audio once the transcript is final and keep only the text.

Does Zoom notify others when you transcribe?

Zoom always notifies participants when a meeting is recorded, and AI summaries show a changed AI icon. For live meeting transcripts, the host can add a custom notice. A note taker on your own computer doesn't notify anyone, so tell people yourself.

How long does a Zoom transcript take?

A live meeting transcript appears as people speak. A cloud recording transcript comes after the recording is processed: Zoom says recordings usually take about twice the meeting's length, occasionally up to 24 hours, and the transcript can take longer still. Zoom emails the host when each is ready.

Is Zoom's AI Companion summary a transcript?

No. The AI Companion meeting summary gives you a summary and next steps, not a word-for-word record. An admin can let Zoom keep a transcript alongside the summary, which the host can download. For a full transcript, use a cloud recording transcript or the live meeting transcript.

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Take private notes in your next Zoom call

Transcribed on your computer, with no bot in the call. Free for individual use.