We use Zoom because it is considerably easier to use than many of the alternatives.

However some of you will have seen in reports in the press that there have been some security issues with Zoom.

As a result Zoom security has been significantly improved.

The first issue in the newspapers was about 'end to end encryption'. This was really about poor explanations by Zoom of how it works. Encryption means no one can see or hear unless they are allowed to. Everything is encrypted, but it goes via Zoom, rather than 'end to end' directly from one computer to another. This makes little or no difference for Alliance Français lessons. Whereas it may affect large corporations discussing sensitive commercial information.

The second issue is so-called 'zoom bombing', where a video call is interrupted by someone who shows unpleasant or illegal images or shouts unpleasant language. This can be prevented by having a password for a meeting and using the Waiting Room.

All of our lessons will be using a password and the Waiting Room.

The meeting password will make no difference to how you join one of our lessons, simply click on the link that you've been sent by email.

The Waiting Room will make a slight difference. It means that you cannot enter a Zoom meeting until the organiser (the teacher) accepts that you can enter.   In practice this means when you join a lesson, that you will see a Please Wait message for a short while. In order that your teacher can see who you are before accepting that you can enter, we would ask you to make sure Zoom on your computer shows your name, rather than something anonymous such as a number.

Finally, Zoom have recently updated their software to improve the strength of the encryption. Once again, this is mostly for the benefit of large corporations. It does however mean that by the end of May 2020, previous versions will stop working. All you need to do to update your copy of Zoom is to start Zoom, then click on Zoom.us on the top left menu, then click on Check for Updates. If you already have the latest version it will tell you. If you don't yet have the latest version, it will ask you if you want to update, then do so.