Hosting The January Challenge and other creative activities online

[The January Challenge](#) is 31 days of quick, fun and accessible creative prompts, each designed by different people across the UK. You can use our free Creativity Champions Packs to help you host The January Challenge, and engage with your groups and teams at work and in your community.

Hosting creative activities online is a great way to connect and engage with others, but it can also be tricky to maintain a sense of community and inclusion. We've put together some top tips for running The January Challenge creatively and effectively on digital platforms.

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1. Creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere

- **Set Clear Expectations:** Start with a brief intro to each session or creative prompt so everyone knows what to expect. Let people know they can participate at their own pace, and there's no right or wrong way to engage.
- **Be Mindful of Accessibility:** Use the captions feature on Zoom or Teams, and provide written instructions as well as talking them through. When sharing documents online (or using the 'share' feature on video calls), try not to have too much text on the screen at any point. Ask the group if they have specific accessibility requirements that you might not have thought of.
- **Encourage Participation in Various Ways:** Some people may prefer typing rather than speaking, or sharing images over videos. Encourage contributions in people's own preferred way - and remember, people don't have to share what they've created - they might just want to share how the experience was.
- **Mind the Time:** While it's great to have fun, make sure sessions are mindful of people's time. For example, keep Zoom/Teams meetings to 45 minutes to an hour to prevent Zoom fatigue and include breaks.

2. Making it interactive & fun

- **Icebreakers & Warm-ups:** Using short icebreakers at the beginning of each session can help people land in the virtual room! This could be a quick round of "one word" introductions, or a light creative challenge (e.g. "draw your mood in one emoji").
- **Use Breakout Rooms (Zoom/Teams):** Breakout rooms can help people connect more intimately in smaller groups, allowing for deeper conversations or more focused creative work. Rotate groups often so everyone gets to interact.
- **Space for creativity:** It's rare we give ourselves dedicated time for creativity! This is the perfect opportunity - and ensure that people have the space to settle in. 20 minutes (for example) might feel like a long time to be sitting silently creating together, but people can get a lot out of that feeling of being 'together, apart.' Encourage participants to share their creations live, if they want to, or through a shared space like Slack or WhatsApp. You could set up a designated "daily prompt" channel for ongoing engagement.
- **Music:** If you are meeting your group on a video call, you could share music to set the tone for people whilst they are being creative. (You could also encourage them all to be listening to music of their own choosing - or sharing suggestions!)

3. Fostering connection beyond the activity

- **Create Shared Spaces:** Use platforms like Slack or WhatsApp to create spaces where participants can continue the conversation after the live session. Channels or groups could focus on specific topics (e.g., a place to share progress on the day's prompt or a space for personal reflections).
- **Celebrate Everyone's Contributions:** After each creative session, take time to recognise and appreciate everyone's input. This could be as simple as a shout-out, or a virtual "high five."
- **Use Visual Prompts:** Use images, GIFs, or even video snippets to spark creativity and keep the environment lively and fun, especially on platforms like Slack or WhatsApp. Visual prompts can inspire and engage people who might feel hesitant about verbal interaction.

- **64 Million Artists Social Media:** Encourage your groups to join the broader online community! We have a busy and very friendly [facebook community](), as well as many active participants on [Instagram]() and [LinkedIn.]()

4. Keeping it simple & accessible

- **Limit Technical Barriers:** All of The January Challenges are creative prompts that can be done without needing complex tools or software. Activities that require only paper, pens, or simple digital tools (e.g., mobile apps) work well - though of course you are free to experiment with your group!
- **Clear Instructions:** Be concise with your instructions, especially on platforms like Slack or WhatsApp, where text can get easily lost in long conversations. Use bullet points or numbered steps to keep things organised.

5. Building community & supporting Peer-to-Peer connection

- **Encourage Sharing & Collaboration:** On platforms like Slack and WhatsApp, encourage people to share their work and provide feedback or support to one another. You could create a "share" moment at the end of each week for everyone to showcase what they've done.
- **Provide Opportunities for Peer Mentoring:** You could set up informal "buddy systems" for participants to check in on each other, offer encouragement, and keep each other motivated throughout the month.

Platform-Specific Tips:

- **Zoom/Teams:**
  - Use chat for quick reactions, feedback, or fun comments.
  - Spotlight participants when they share, so everyone feels seen.
  - Play with virtual backgrounds to spark creativity and lighten the mood.
  - Use the captions feature to improve accessibility

- **Slack:**
  - Set up channels for different types of activities (e.g., daily prompts, creative sharing, informal chat).
  - Use reactions to show support for others' posts (thumbs up, heart emojis).
- **WhatsApp:**
  - Create a supportive, casual space where people can share photos, voice notes, or even short videos.
  - Encourage the use of status updates as a place for daily creative reflections.

Running creative activities online allows people from different places to come together, share, and collaborate. Focus on fostering an environment where people feel safe, supported, and excited to participate.

We can't wait to hear more about how you get on with The January Challenge in your online group setting. If you have any questions or thoughts, get in touch - we'd love to hear from you.

Email us on yashoda@64millionartists.com.

Discover our resource ['Inclusive Facilitation Practice Toolkit'](#).