

Discord Guide

Originally by Sylaniel, 2020-2021; updates by Arethinn

Last updated 10/24/2025

We're glad you're joining us for Shining Hearth! The event is held on Discord on a dedicated server. This guide will help you get set up and connected.

Quick Start

Here's a brief overview of how to join us:

1. [Create a Discord account.](#)
2. [Install the Discord app.](#) (Optional if you are not on mobile, but highly recommended.)
3. [Join the Shining Hearth server](#) using your invite code.
4. [Set your nickname on the server.](#) (Optional)
5. [Allow direct messages from server members.](#) (Recommended)
6. [Post an introduction](#) in the **#introductions** channel.
7. [Set up your audio.](#)
8. To attend a presentation or show during the gather, [connect to the voice channel where it is held](#) and make sure your microphone is muted. You can put questions or comments in the text chat. Depending on the nature of the presentation, it may also be okay to unmute and speak, but ask the presenter first.

How to get help

If you have already joined the server, you can get help by posting a message in **#help-desk**. Begin your message with the text **@Committee**, including the "@" symbol, and all Committee members will get a notification that there is someone asking for help. (This is called a "mention" or a "ping".)

If you are not able to get into the server, send an email to staff@shininghearth.net to get help.

You will need

- **A Discord account.** If you don't already have an account, [create one](#). Your email address is not visible to other users, but your username is, so choose it carefully.

- The [Discord software](#) or a desktop web browser (Firefox, Chrome, Edge, Safari, etc.) Discord is available for Windows, Mac, Linux, Android, and iOS/iPadOS. Your account works everywhere no matter how you access Discord, and you can log in from multiple places at once.
You can't use the web version of Discord on a mobile browser. If you're using a phone or tablet, you must install the app.

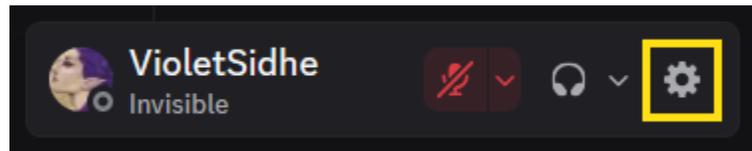
Get familiar with Discord and configure settings

[This guide on wikiHow](#) can help you get comfortable with Discord. (Note that its screenshots show the desktop version.)

Discord's settings are in a slightly different place depending on whether you're on desktop or mobile, which mobile app you are using, and whether you are in landscape or portrait orientation on mobile. On mobile, if you don't see the gear or your picture, first tap the back arrow at the top left.

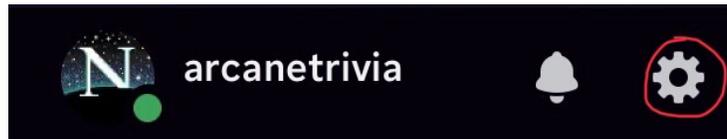
Desktop/web:

At the bottom left of the screen near your picture, click the gear.



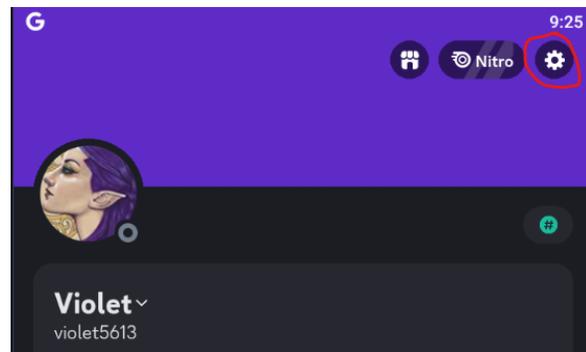
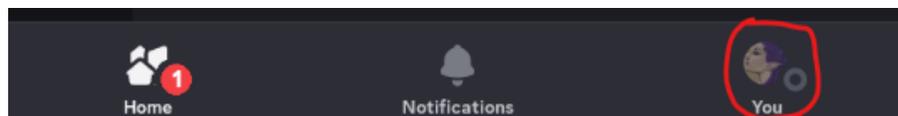
iPadOS:

At the bottom left of the screen near your picture, tap the gear.



Android:

First, at the bottom right of the screen, tap your picture. (It may be a bit difficult to see because it's dimmed when you're not in the settings.) Then, at the top right, tap the gear.

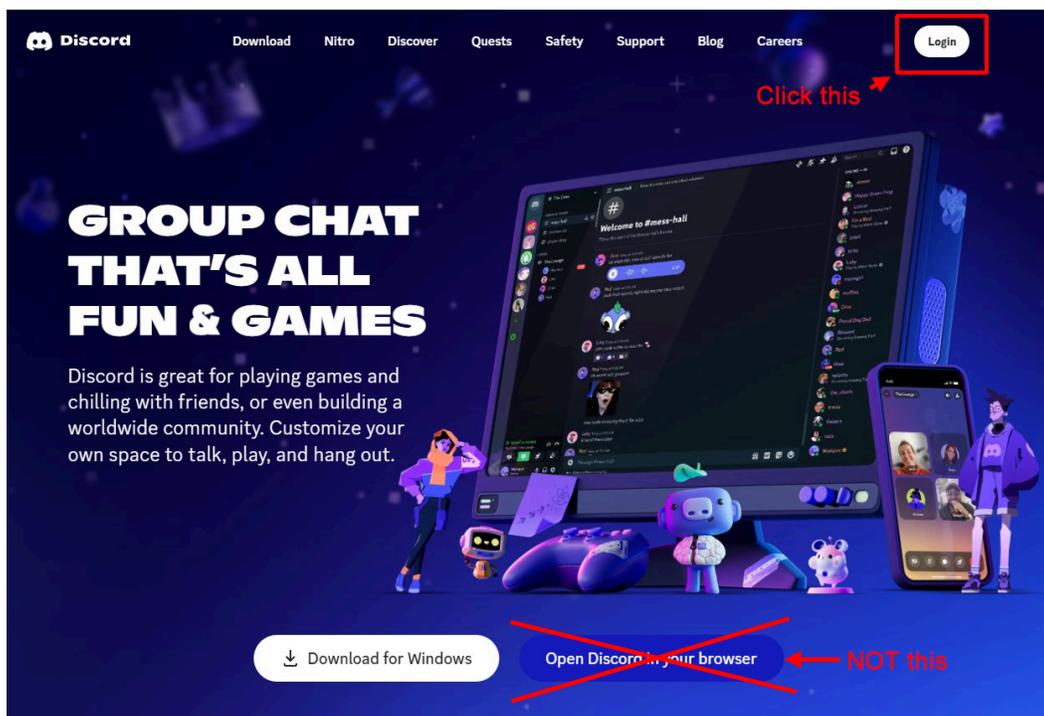


Join the Shining Hearth server

1. Within one week after you register, you will receive an invite code for the Discord server via email. Look for a mail with the subject line **Welcome to Shining Hearth!** It will contain a code that looks like this: **fk3krt4wND**
2. Open the Discord program/app, or go to <https://discord.app> if you want to use your desktop web browser.
3. If you are not already logged in to your account, you will be prompted to log in.

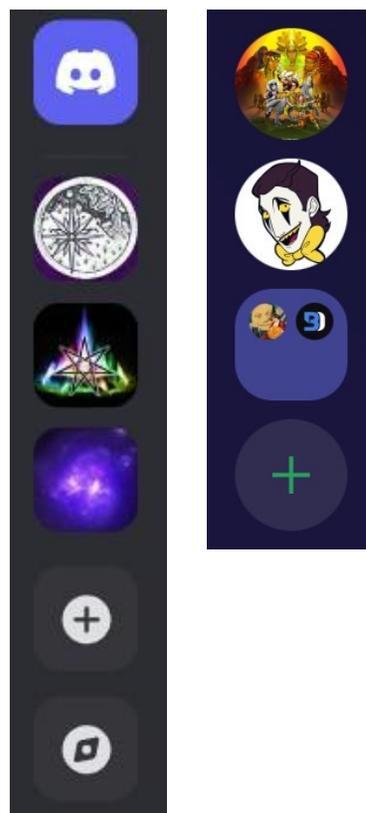
IMPORTANT!: If you choose to use your web browser, avoid starting on <https://discord.com/>. Its layout may be confusing for the new user. You may think you should click "Open Discord in your browser", but that will prompt you to create a new account even if you already have one!

If you do find yourself on this page, make sure you click the **Login** button at the top right, instead.

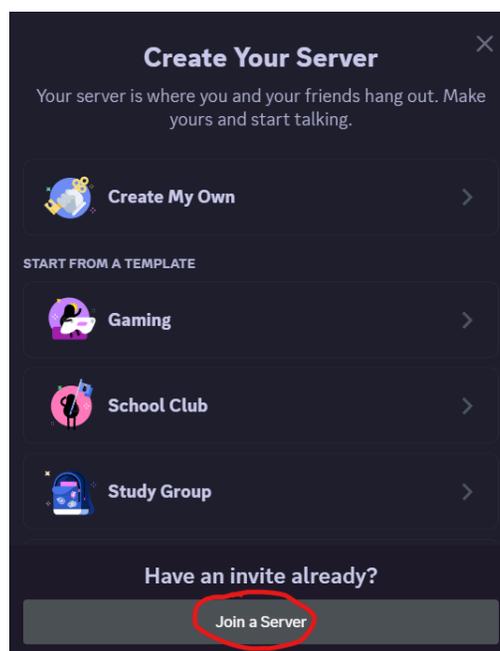


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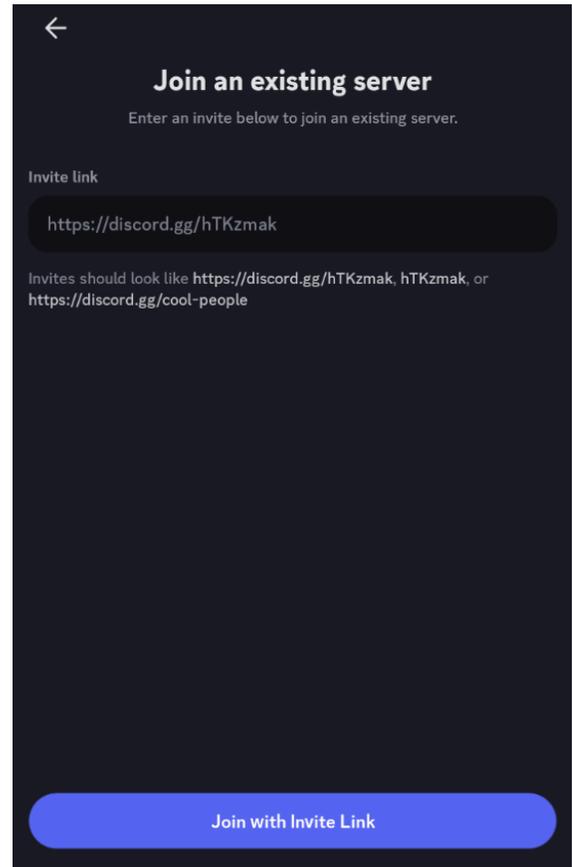
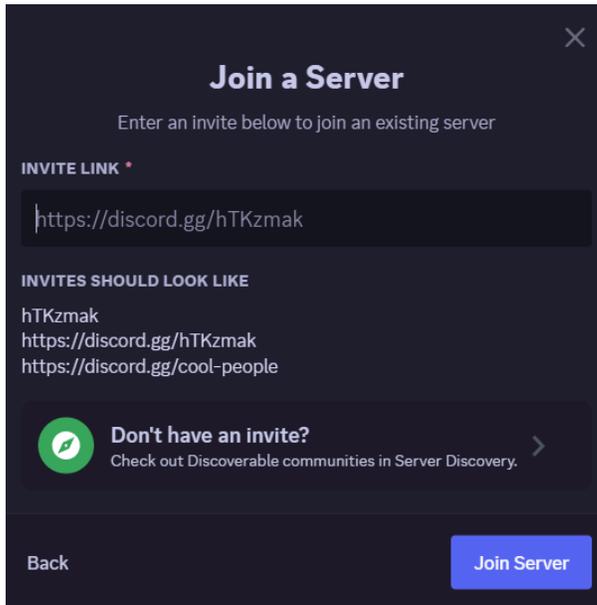
4. Find your server list on the far left of the screen. (If you don't see the server list on mobile, first tap the back arrow at the top left.) If you're not a member of any other Discord servers, this will be mostly empty.
5. Click or tap the **plus** near the bottom of the list to **Add a Server**.



6. You will get a popup that suggests you want to create a new server (which you don't). Click or tap the button at the bottom of the popup that says **Join a Server**.



- Copy the invite code you received in the email, paste it into the **Invite Link** box, and click/tap the blue **Join Server** or **Join with Invite Link** button.



- You will land in Shining's Hearth's **#announcements** channel. Before the gather, just a few other channels will be visible in the list on the left:



On mobile, you may need to tap the back arrow at the top left to see the channel list.

You are welcome to talk in **#off-season-chat** until it's time for the event. On the day before the gather begins, an announcement will be made when **#check-in-here** is open to check in for the event and gain access to all the event-related channels. **#off-season-chat** is closed while the gather is underway.

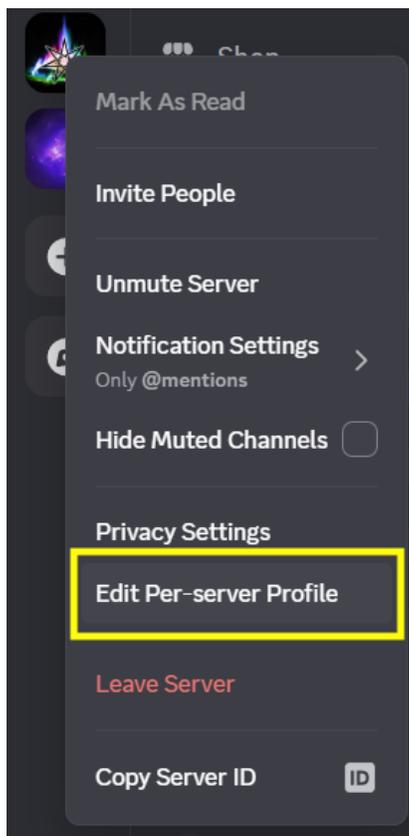
Set your nickname on the server (optional)

You may want to use a nickname at Shining Hearth that isn't the same as the username or display name you selected for your Discord account -- for example, a name you use in the Otherkind community.

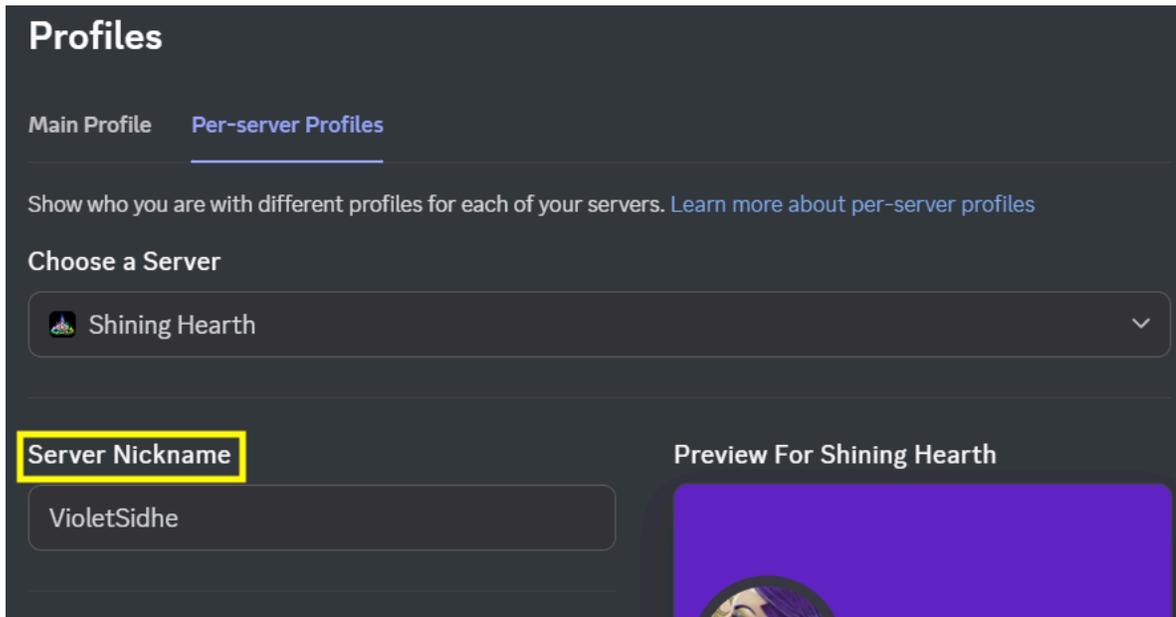
There are several ways to access this setting on both desktop and mobile, but to keep it simple we'll just describe one for each.

Desktop:

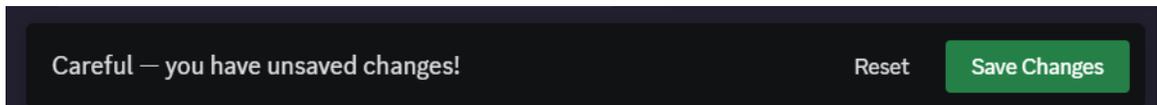
1. Right-click the server icon in the server list on the left of the screen, then click **Edit Per-server Profile**.



2. Click in the **Server Nickname** box and enter your desired nickname.

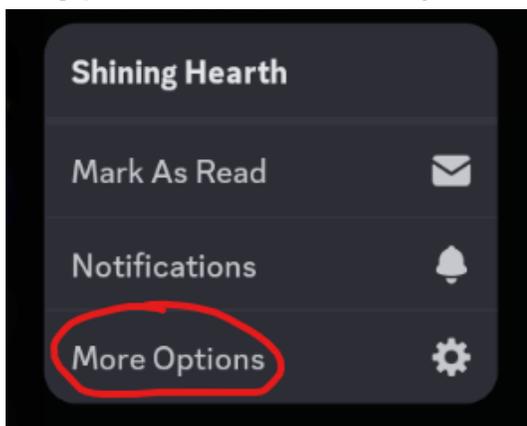


3. Click the green **Save Changes** button at the bottom to save.

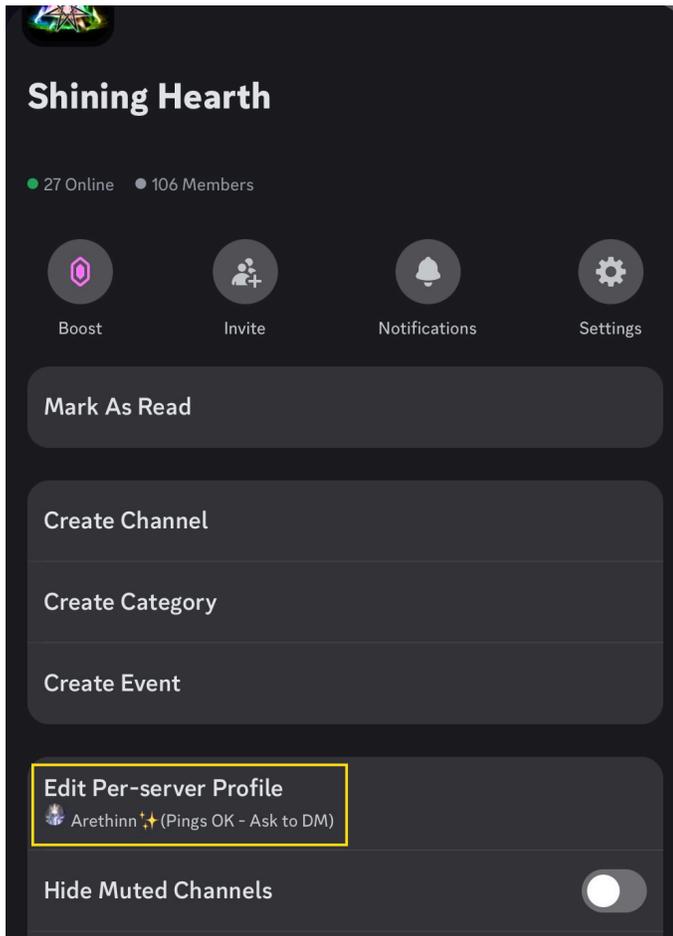


Mobile:

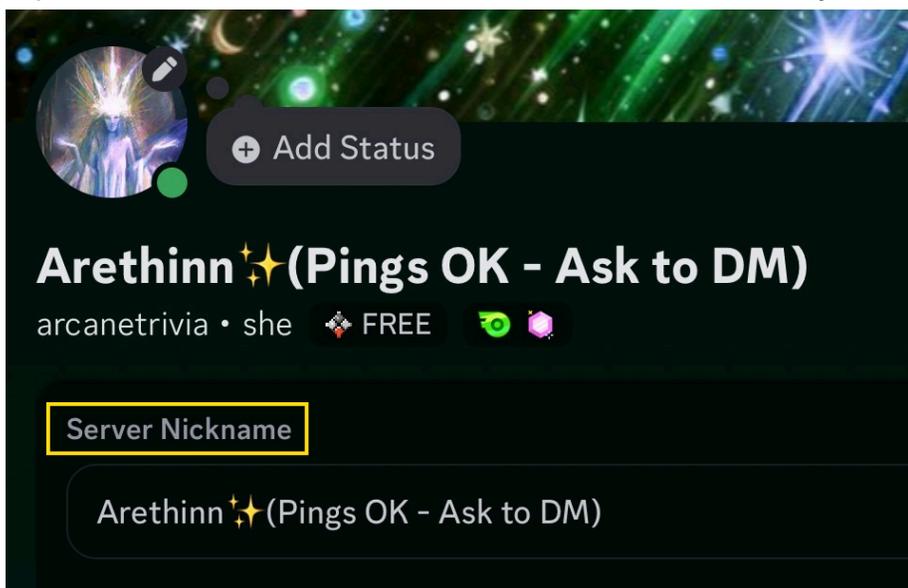
1. Long-press the server icon in your server list, then tap **More Options**.



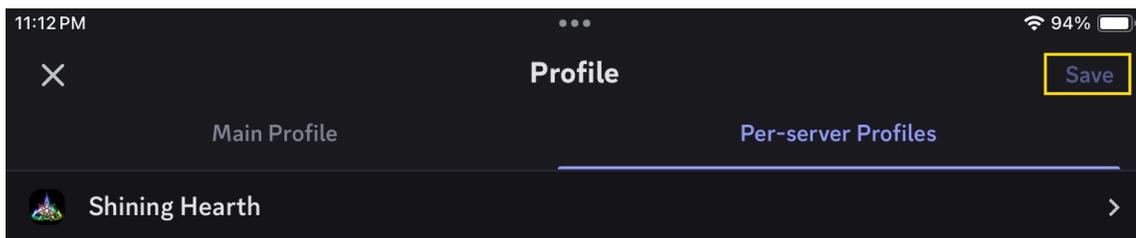
2. Tap **Edit Per-server Profile**. (The screenshot is an admin's view of the options; you won't see Invite, Settings, or the three Create items.)



3. Tap in the **Server Nickname** box and enter the nickname you want to use.



4. Tap **Save** at the top right.

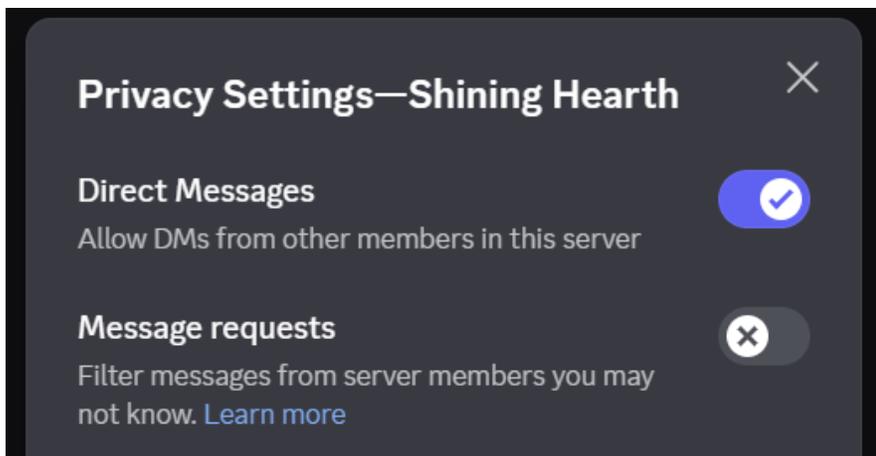


Allow direct messages (recommended)

We encourage you to allow messages from other members of the server so that staff can contact you privately if they need to.

Desktop:

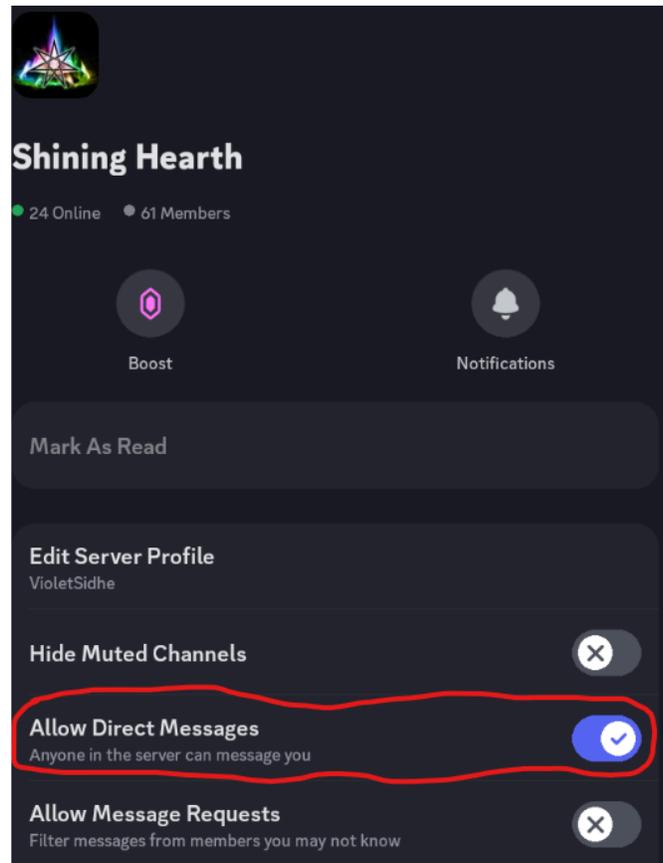
1. Right-click the Shining Hearth server icon and click **Privacy Settings**.
2. Turn on the first switch to allow **Direct Messages** from other members of the server.



3. We recommend leaving the setting for **Message requests** off, so that if you do have an incoming message from a staff member, it is not filtered into a different location where you may not see it.

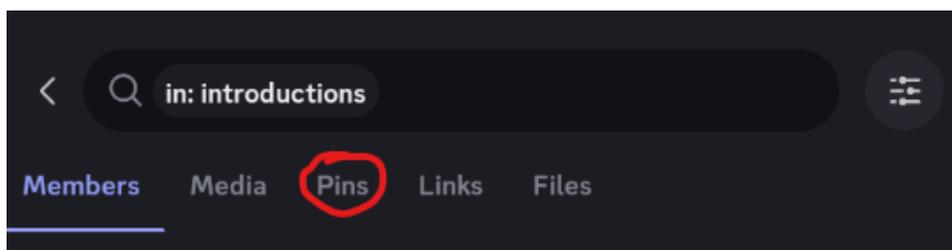
Mobile:

1. Long-press the server icon and tap **More Options**.
2. Scroll down if needed (depending on your screen size and orientation).
3. Tap the switch to **Allow Direct Messages**.
4. We recommend leaving the setting for **Message requests** off, so that if you do have an incoming message from a staff member, it is not filtered into a different location where you may not see it.

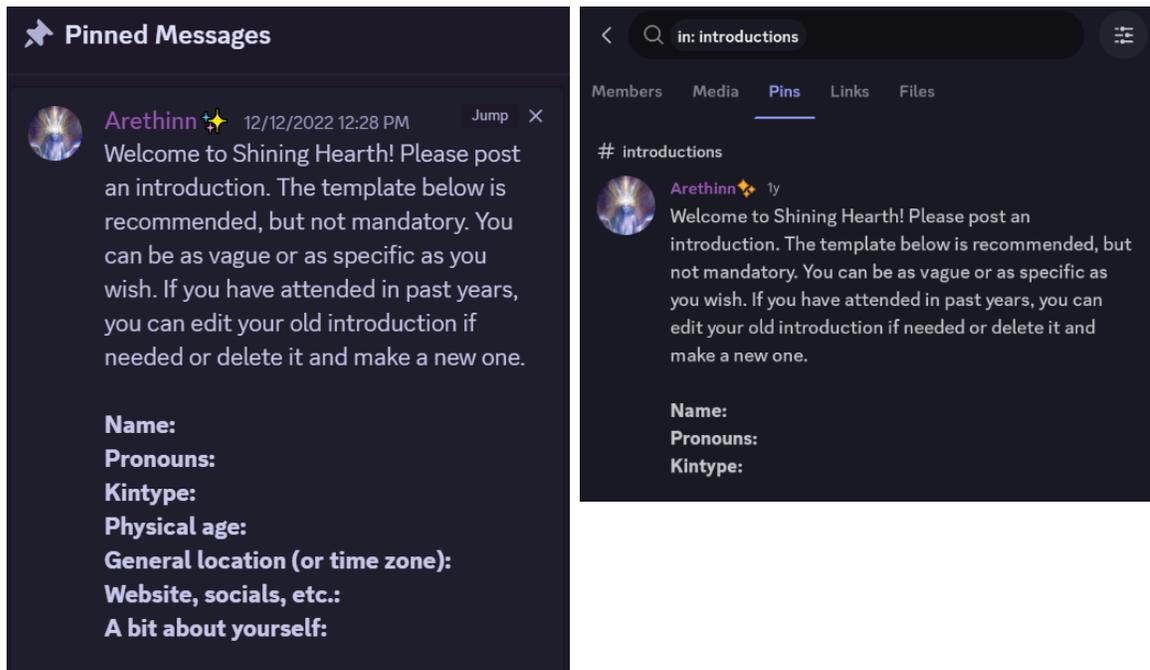


Post an introduction

1. Go to the Welcome Center **#introductions** channel.
2. On desktop, click the pushpin up towards the top right of the message area. On mobile, tap the Search magnifying glass at the top right, then tap **Pins**.



- This will pop up the pinned message, which has a suggested template.



- On desktop, you can copy and paste the bolded text right from this popup into your own introduction message.
On mobile, to copy the needed text, first tap the message to jump to it at the start of the #introductions channel. Long-press the message and tap **Copy Text**. Now you can paste it into your own introduction message. (Be sure to delete "Welcome to Shining Hearth! Please post an introduction", etc. - everything but the bold text.)

Set up your audio

To make sure you can hear and talk to other people, look at the **Settings > App Settings > Voice & Video** section. (On mobile, this is called just **Voice**.)

On desktop, you can choose input and output device, input and output volume, and whether you are in push-to-talk or voice activity mode. For push-to-talk to function, you must also configure what shortcut key (also known as a "keybind") you will press to trigger it.

Mobile devices have only one microphone and speaker, so you are only able to control the microphone sensitivity, which talk mode you are in, and the output volume. Discord will supply an onscreen button to press for push-to-talk.

[Here's a tutorial video.](#) (It's a few years old and Discord has added some settings since then, such as the Soundboard, but it should work for the basics.) If you prefer a text guide with screenshots, [here's one from HowToGeek](#) (also a couple of years old, but usable). Discord also offers a link to a [troubleshooting guide](#) within the settings. Or we may be able to help you in the **#help-desk**.

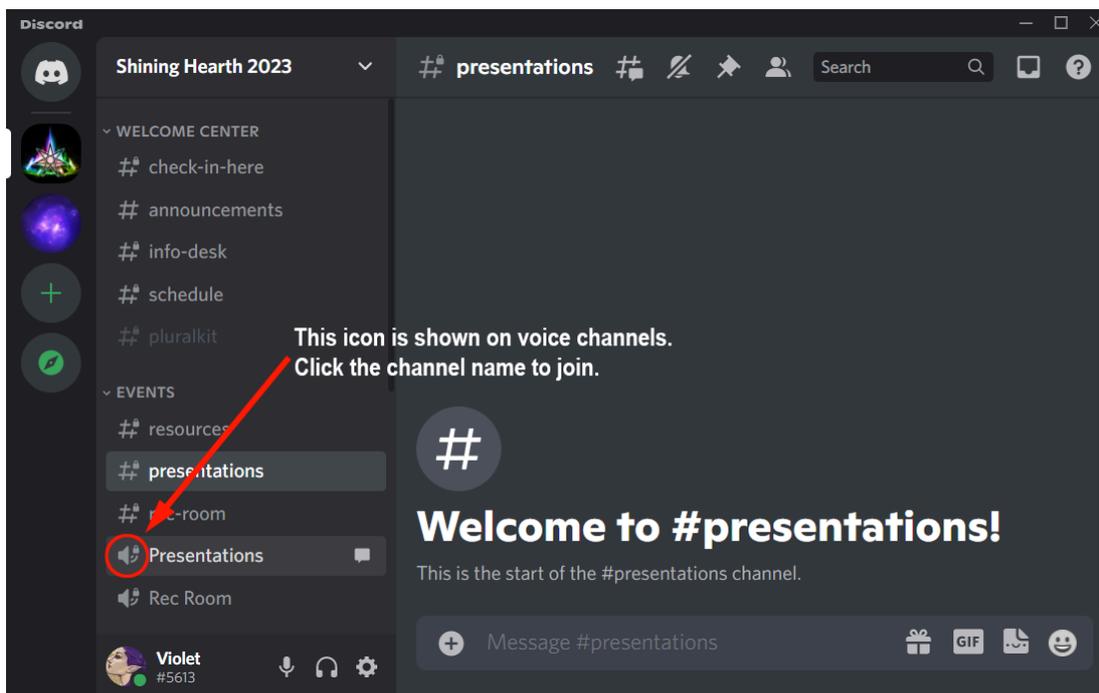
On desktop, leaving the input and output devices set to **Default** usually works, but if you have trouble with not hearing audio or your microphone not picking you up, it may help to explicitly choose the device you want Discord to use via the dropdown menus. If you try to change devices after you are already connected to a stream, Discord may not honor the choice and you may need to disconnect and reconnect to the stream to get it to work.

Voice Chat and Video Streaming

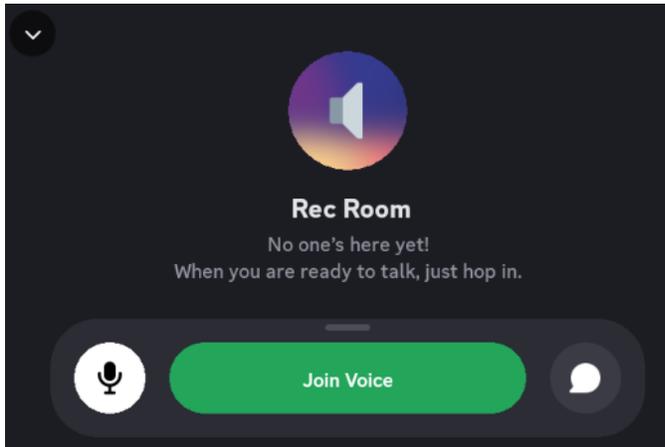
Voice chat and video streaming happen in voice channels.

To join a voice channel:

On desktop, simply click on the name of any channel that has this speaker icon,  and you will join it.

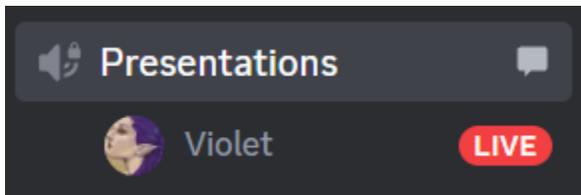


On mobile, tap the channel name and then the green **Join Voice** button at the bottom.



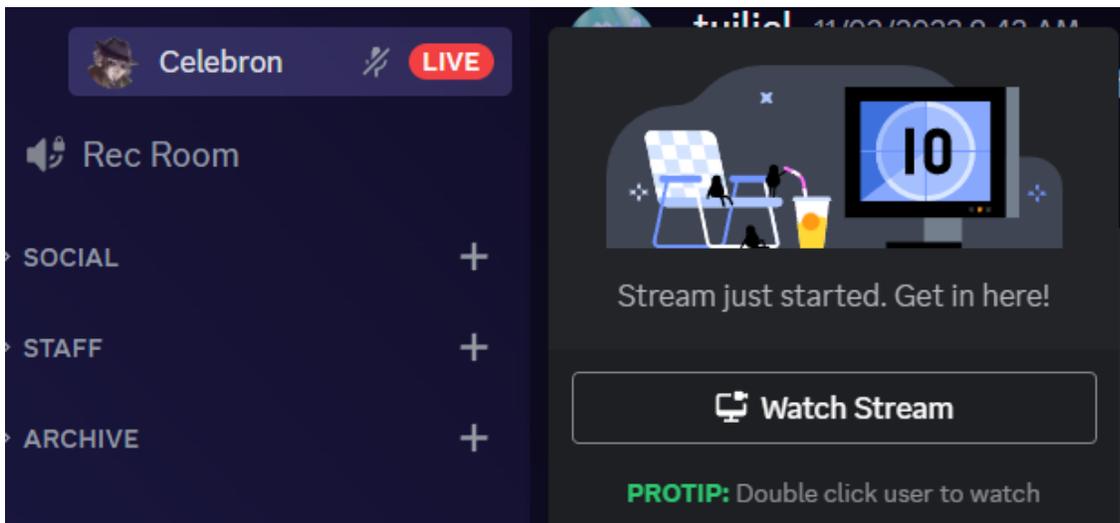
To watch a video stream:

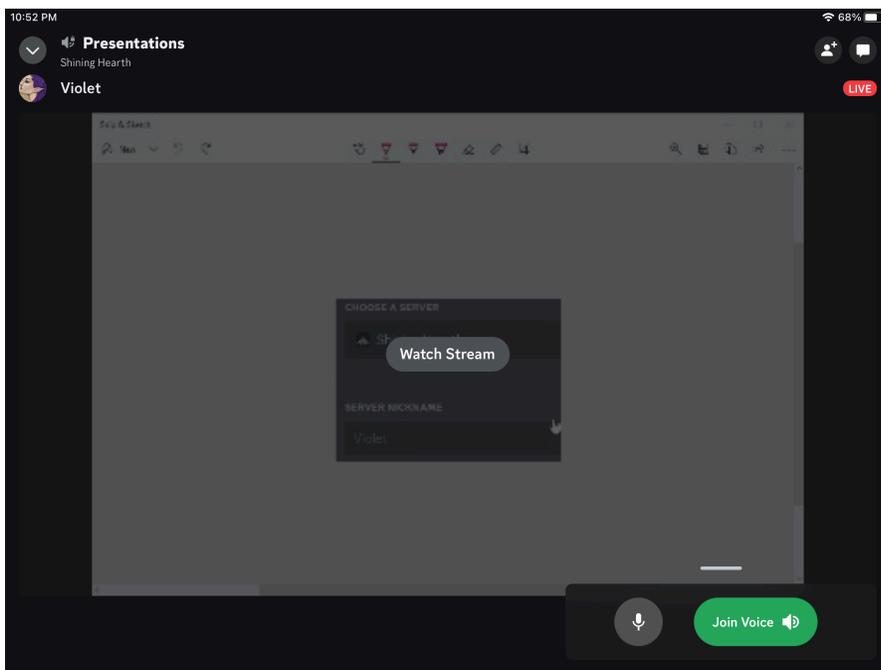
When someone in a voice channel is sharing their screen (for example, a presenter's slideshow), you will see a **LIVE** Live icon next to the name of the person broadcasting.



If you are already in the voice channel when they begin streaming, you will see a new video thumbnail pop up inviting you to **Watch Stream**. Click or tap it to start watching.

If you're not already in the voice channel when someone "goes live", hover over or tap the user's name in the channel list to get a popup:





Clicking **Watch Stream** here will make you automatically join the voice channel as well.

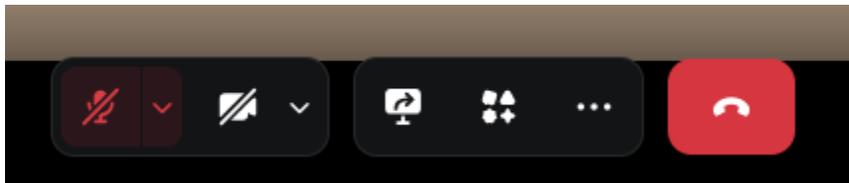
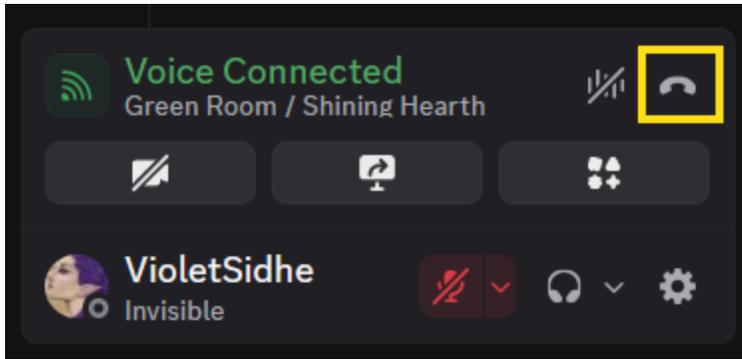
If someone is broadcasting their camera, you will see an icon of a video camera  next to their name. To see their video, just join the voice channel they are in. Unlike screen sharing, you will automatically see their video without having to take any extra action.

While in a voice channel or watching a video stream, the controls will automatically hide after a few seconds. To bring them back, move your mouse or tap anywhere on the screen.

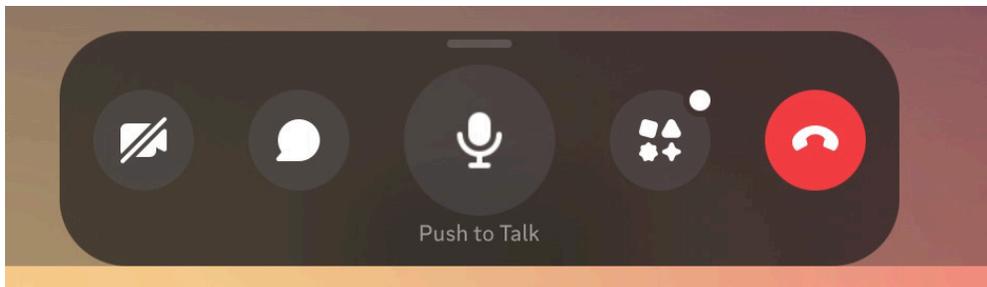
To leave a voice channel:

On desktop, either click the **Disconnect** button above your name and picture at the bottom left, or click the channel name (if you're not already focused on it) and then click the red Disconnect button in the control box that appears when you move the mouse over the stream window.

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On mobile, tap the screen to bring up the control box where you can disconnect.

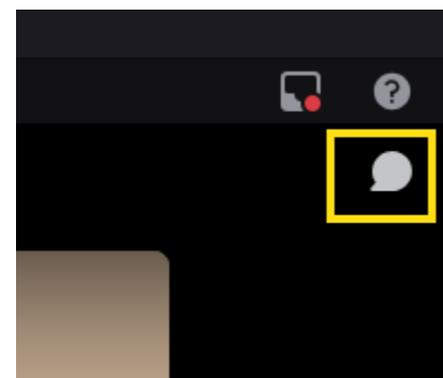


Text chat for voice channels:

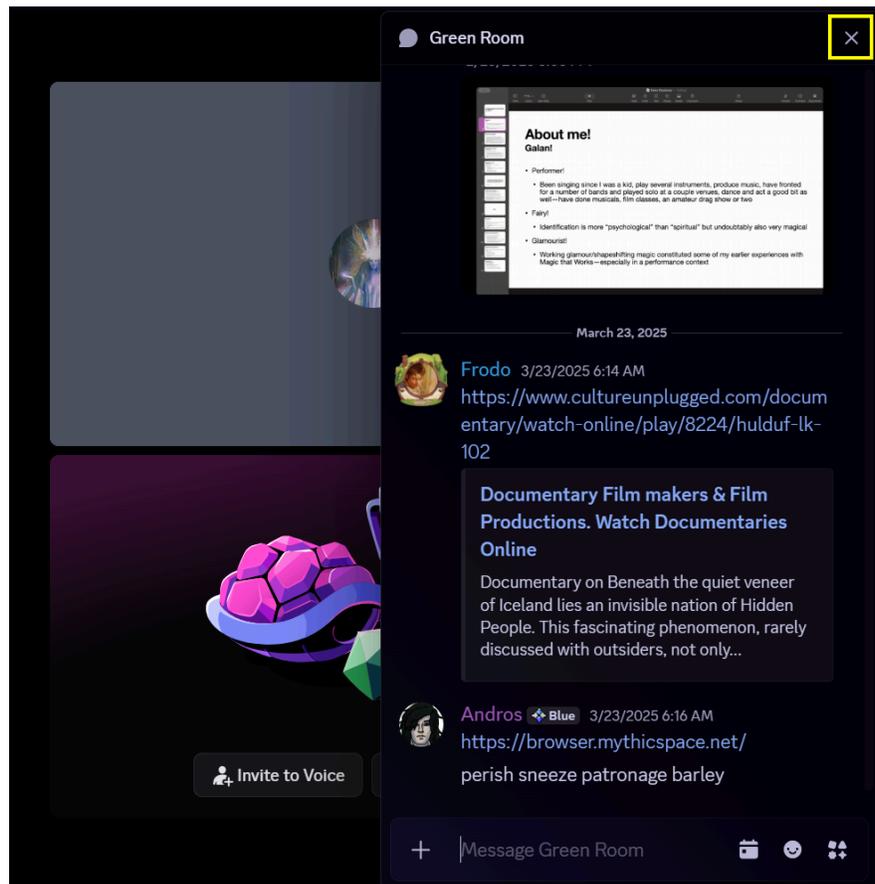
The Presentations, Rec Room, and Voice Chat channels each have their own text chat that is directly linked to them and does not appear separately in the main list of channels.

Desktop:

When you are in a voice channel, you can open the linked text chat by clicking the **speech balloon** at the top right of the screen.

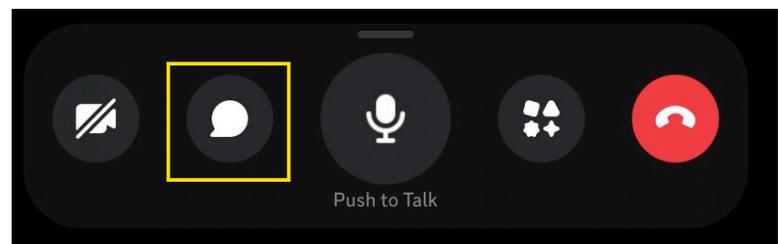


The chat will appear in a sidebar on the right-hand side of the screen, which may overlap the stream or thumbnails depending on the size of the window. To close the chat, click the X at the top right.

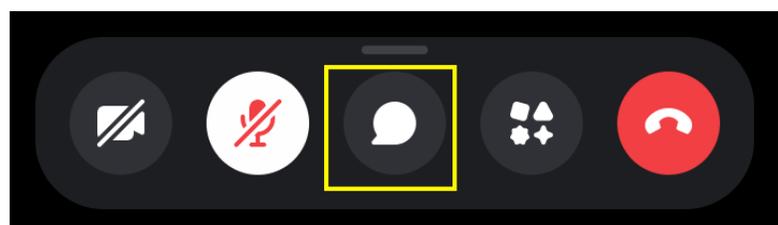


Mobile:

If you don't see the control box, tap the screen to bring it up. Then tap the speech balloon to open the text chat.



The position of the buttons differs based on whether you are in push-to-talk mode (first picture), which places the button for that in the center, or voice activity mode (second picture), which places the chat button in the center instead.



The chat window will overlay the voice chat user thumbnails or video stream, which will be dimmed in the background (although you won't really be able to see it on a phone screen). To go back to the thumbnails or stream, you can swipe downward, tap the X at the bottom right, or just tap anywhere outside the chat overlay, if you have room to do so.

