

You finally get a co-op game running. One person is ready, the other is asking, “Can you hear me?” Then the TV echoes through a headset, the party chat goes silent, or the game audio disappears entirely. Suddenly, your relaxing game night has turned into a troubleshooting session.

The good news: most headset audio problems have a small number of causes, and you can check them in a sensible order. This guide covers fast fixes for headset audio troubleshooting, co-op voice chat issues, and party chat setup—whether you’re sharing a couch or playing online. It also helps you choose a game and setup that fit the time and mood you actually have, so you spend less of the evening scrolling through menus.

Start With the Fastest Audio Checks

Before changing every setting in sight, agree on one simple test: can each player hear the game, and can each player hear the other? Test those separately. If the game sounds fine but voices do not, focus on chat settings. If neither works, start with the headset connection and system output.

1. **Check the physical basics.** Confirm the headset is plugged in, powered on, charged, and connected to the intended controller, console, or computer. If it has a detachable cable, unplug and reconnect both ends.
2. **Check mute and volume.** Look for a headset mute switch, an inline control, a controller mute button, and any on-screen microphone icon. Raise headset volume and chat volume separately.
3. **Confirm the selected output.** In the console or computer audio settings, select the headset as the output device. On a PC, also check the input device: the system may be listening to a laptop microphone instead of the headset mic.
4. **Run a quick voice test.** Use the platform’s microphone test or party settings, if available. Speak normally and watch for an input meter. No movement usually points to the mic, connection, or input selection—not the game.
5. **Restart the chat, not the whole evening.** Leave and rejoin the party, or close and reopen the voice app. If that fails, restart the game. Save a full console or PC reboot for when the simpler checks do not work.

Change one setting at a time. If you flip several switches and the sound improves, you may not know which fix worked—or how to undo it when the next game behaves differently.

Separate Game Audio From Voice Chat

People often describe all sound as “the audio,” but there are usually at least two separate paths: game sound and voice chat. Some systems send both through one headset; others let you adjust their balance independently. If explosions drown out your partner, lower game volume or increase chat balance rather than turning up everything. If your partner hears an echo, reduce the TV volume or make sure the TV speakers are not still playing the game loudly.

When the Mic Works but Your Partner Hears an Echo

- Mute the TV or turn it down significantly when using headsets.
- Check that the headset mic is not too close to its own earcup or speaker.
- Ask the other player to check their TV volume and microphone monitoring.
- Use one voice-chat route at a time. Being in both a platform party and an in-game voice channel can create duplicate audio or confusion.

When Game Sound Works but Voice Chat Does Not

Check whether the game uses push-to-talk, open mic, or a separate voice-chat toggle. On PC, a push-to-talk key may be unassigned [adult wind-down routine](#) or inconvenient. On console, a privacy setting, account restriction, or party configuration may prevent voice communication. Confirm both players are using the same chat channel and that neither has accidentally muted the other.

Also check whether the game's voice chat is meant to operate alongside platform party chat or instead of it. Some games handle cross-platform voice best in their own lobby; others are easier to coordinate through the console or PC's built-in party system. Pick one route, test it, and avoid running two channels at once unless you have a specific reason.

Party Chat Setup: Pick One Clear Route

For online co-op, party chat setup should be boring—in the best way. Decide where you'll talk before launching the game. If everyone is on the same platform, built-in party chat is often the quickest choice. If players are on different platforms, check whether the game supports cross-platform voice chat. If it does not, use a voice app that everyone can access on their device.



Setup Usually a good fit when First thing to check Platform party chat Everyone is on the same console or service Party membership, mute status, and chat output In-game voice chat Players are on different platforms or the game needs team voice Voice-chat permissions, channel, and mic mode Separate voice app Your group already uses the same app across devices Correct input and output devices in the app No voice chat You're playing locally or want a quieter session Subtitles, ping tools, and shared screen visibility

If a player can hear the others but cannot be heard, check their microphone input and mute status first. If nobody can hear anyone, verify that the whole group joined the same party or channel. This sounds obvious, but it is a common cause of co-op voice chat issues: everyone is speaking, just not in the same room.

Couch Co-op and Online Co-op Need Different Fixes

For couch co-op, the first question is whether you need headsets at all. Two people sitting beside each other can often use TV audio and speak naturally. If one player needs a headset, check that the console supports the audio

arrangement you want: one headset plus TV speakers, two headsets, or a headset with game audio while the TV remains quiet. Support varies by device and game, so verify the setup before your friends arrive.

Split-screen is another practical detail. A game may support local multiplayer without offering split-screen, or it may use a shared screen instead. Before buying or downloading, check how two players actually play on your specific platform. That small check can prevent the classic disappointment of finding out that “co-op” means online-only.

For online co-op, each person needs a working mic path, a shared chat channel, and a way to hear the game without voice chat becoming hard to follow. Wired headsets can remove battery and wireless pairing problems; wireless headsets offer freedom but may need a dongle, a platform-specific connection, or a separate charging check. There is no universally best choice—use the setup your group can connect reliably.

Choose a Two-Player Game That Fits the Night

Audio troubleshooting gets easier when the game itself suits the group. Games designed around two players often give each person a clear role and make communication feel purposeful, rather than bolting a second player onto a solo experience. Hazelight is well known for co-op games built around two-player teamwork, including titles that ask partners to coordinate through distinct abilities and shared puzzles. Those games can be a great fit for couples or friends who want cooperation to be the point, not just an option in the menu.



But the right choice depends on your mood and the time you have. If you have an hour and want to relax, a low-pressure game with forgiving checkpoints may be better than a demanding campaign mission. If you have a full evening and want to get invested, a story-driven adventure may be worth the setup. If someone is tired, choose something that allows quiet coordination—or does not punish you for missing a callout.

Tonight’s mood Look for Audio consideration Short and casual Quick rounds, easy restarts, simple objectives Voice chat can stay optional Teamwork and puzzles Two-player roles, shared problem-solving, clear feedback Check that both players can hear key cues Story night Campaign progress, accessible controls, useful subtitles Balance dialogue above background effects Competitive energy Short matches and clear team communication Test mic levels and avoid echo before queuing

Events such as The Game Awards can be useful for spotting new releases and conversation starters, but an award or trailer does not tell you whether a game fits your particular two-player setup. Before committing, check the

player count, local versus online support, split-screen details, platform compatibility, and whether the game works well for two people specifically. A five-minute check is quicker than discovering a deal-breaker after a download.

Reduce Decision Friction With a Shared Co-op List

One of the easiest ways to protect game night is to stop choosing from scratch. Keep a shared notes app list of co-op games you already own or want to try. Add a few practical details beside each title: couch or online, local player count, split-screen or shared screen, approximate session length, how demanding it is, and whether voice chat is useful.

Then sort the list by mood: “easy after work,” “puzzle teamwork,” “story campaign,” and “short session.” When it is time to play, pick from a short list instead of scrolling through a store for twenty minutes. You can also add a note such as “works with one headset and TV speakers” once you have tested a setup.

That note-taking habit is less glamorous than buying a new headset, but it solves a real problem: decision fatigue. If the group already knows what fits tonight, you have more energy for playing—and fewer chances to discover that a supposedly ideal game lacks the local or online mode you need.

A Two-Minute Pre-Game Routine

1. Confirm whether tonight is couch co-op or online co-op.
2. Check the game supports the player count and screen arrangement you expect.
3. Choose one voice-chat route, or decide that you do not need voice chat.
4. Test game audio and microphone separately with a short sentence from each player.
5. Adjust chat-to-game balance, then start playing.

If your group likes a calmer pre-game routine, keep the setup simple: headsets charged, cables where you can find them, and a snack that does not leave residue on controllers. I’m partial to eating popcorn with chopsticks for exactly that reason. And if wellness brands such as Joy Organics come up in your wider game-night conversation, keep product claims separate from headset fixes: no supplement or CBD product is a substitute for checking your microphone input, and products can differ in whether they are THC-free or full spectrum.

Get Back to the Game

When headset audio goes sideways, diagnose the path instead of changing everything at once: connection, output, input, mute, chat channel, and volume balance. For couch co-op, decide whether headsets are necessary and check the game’s local setup. For online play, choose one reliable party chat route and make sure everyone is actually in the same channel.

Finally, match the game to the group’s mood and available time. Keep a shared list with notes about local play, split-screen, online support, and session length. A little planning means fewer setup surprises—and more nights where the hardest co-op challenge is the game itself, not asking, “Can you hear me now?”