

Telephoning in English

There are many specific verbs and phrases used when speaking on the telephone in English. This guided to leaving a message on the telephone provides a step by step guide to leaving a message that will make sure that the recipient returns your call and / or receives necessary information.

LEAVING A MESSAGE ON RECORDER

Sometimes, there may not be anyone to answer the telephone and you will need to leave a message.

Follow this outline to make sure that the person who should receive your message has all the information he/she needs.

1. *Introduce yourself:* ---Hello, this is Ken.
---Hello, my name is Ken Bear. (More formal)
2. *State the time of day and your reason for calling:*
---It's ten in the morning.
---I'm phoning (calling, ringing) to find out if...
to see if...
to let you know that...
to tell you that ...
3. *Make a request:*
---Could you call (ring, telephone) me back? / Would you mind... ? /
4. *Leave your telephone number:*
---My number is / You can reach me at.... / Call me at ...
5. *Finish:*
---Thanks a lot, bye. / I'll talk to you later, bye.

MESSAGE EXAMPLE 1:

Telephone: (Ring... Ring... Ring...) Hello, this is Tom. I'm afraid I'm not in at the moment. Please leave a message after the beep... (*beep*)

Ken: Hello Tom, this is Ken. It's about noon and I'm calling to see if you would like to go to the basketball game on Friday.

Could you call me back? You can reach me at 367-8925 until five this afternoon. I'll talk to you later, bye.

MESSAGE EXAMPLE 2:

Telephone: (beep ... beep ... beep). Hello, you've reached Peter Frampton. Thank you for calling. Please leave your name and number and reason for calling. I'll get back to you as soon as possible.

(beep)

Alan: Hello Peter. This is Jennifer Anders calling. It's about two pm right now. I'm calling to see if you'd like to have dinner sometime this week. My number is 451-908-0756. I hope you're available. Talk to you soon.

***As you can see, leaving a message is pretty simple. You only need to make sure that you have stated all the most important information:

Your Name, The Time, The Reason for Calling, Your Telephone Number.***

How to connect & take a message

Some of the most important phrases include how to answer the phone, how to ask for others, how to connect, and how to take messages.

Here is a short telephone conversation with some of the key phrases:

ENGLISH PHRASES

Operator: Hello, Frank and Brothers, How can I help you?

Peter: This is Peter Jackson. Can I have extension 3421?

Operator: Certainly, hold on a minute, I'll put you through...

Frank: Peterson's office, Frank speaking.

Peter: This is Peter Jackson calling, is Bob in?

Frank: I'm afraid he's out at the moment. Can I take a message?

Peter: Yes, Could you ask him to call me at 089 6780876.

I need to talk to him about the Nuvo line. It's urgent.

Frank: Could you repeat the number please?

Peter: Yes, that's 089 6780876, and this is Peter Jackson.

Frank: Thank you Mr. Jackson. I'll make sure Bob gets this asap.

Peter: Thanks, bye.

Frank: Bye.

As you can see, the language is rather informal and there are some important differences to everyday English.

PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

Here are a few ways to informally introduce yourself on the telephone:

1.1 *"This is Ken."*

1.2 *"Hello, Ken speaking."*

1.3. If you'd like to reply more formally, use your full name.

"This is Jennifer Smith speaking."

"Hello, Jennifer Smith speaking."

1.4. If you are answering for a business, just state the business name. In this case, it's common to ask how you can help:

"Good morning, Thomson Company. How may I help you?"

"Plumber's Insurance. How can I be of service today?"

In American English, we answer the phone stating: "This is.....". The phrase "This is ..." is used only on the telephone to substitute the phrase "My name is ..." which is not used to answer the telephone.

In British English, it's common to answer the phone by stating the telephone number.

2. ASK WHO IS ON THE TELEPHONE.

Sometimes, you'll need to find out who is calling. Ask them politely for this information:

(from receiver)

"Excuse me, who is this?"

" C a n I a s k w h o i s c a l l i n g , p l e a s e ? "

3. ASK FOR SOMEONE.

At other times, you'll need to speak to someone else. This is especially true when you telephone a business. Here are some examples: (from caller)

"Can I have extension 321? (Extensions are internal numbers at an office.)"

“Could I speak to.....?”

“Can I speak to.....?” (More informal)

“May I speak to.....?” (More formal)

“Is Jack in?” (Informal idiom meaning: Is Jack in the office?)

4. CONNECT SOMEONE.

If you answer the phone, you might need to connect the caller to someone at your business.

Here are some useful phrases:

“I'll put you through.” (Put through = connect')

“Can you hold the line?”

“Can you hold on a moment?”

WHEN SOMEONE IS NOT AVAILABLE.

These phrases can be used to express that someone is not available to speak on the telephone.

“I'm afraid John is not available at the moment.”

“The line is busy.”

“Mr. Jackson isn't in.”

“Mr. Jackson is out at the moment.”

TAKING A MESSAGE

If someone isn't available, you might want to take a message to help the caller.

“Could/Can/May I take a message?”

“Could/Can/May I tell him who is calling?”

“Would you like to leave a message?”

Tips for Telephoning Native English Speakers.

Have you ever had problems understanding native English speakers on the telephone? If so, you are not alone. All English learners have difficulties understanding people on the telephone. This is for a number of reasons:

- People speak too quickly.
- People don't pronounce the words well.
- There are technical problems with the telephones.

- You can't see the person you are speaking with.
- It's difficult for people to repeat information.

HOW TO ASK OTHERS TO SPEAK SLOWLY ON THE PHONE.

Follow these tips to help you get native speakers of English to slow down!

- **Immediately ask the person to speak slowly.**
- **When taking note of a name or important information, repeat each piece of information as the person speaks.** This is an especially effective tool. By repeating each important piece of information or each number or letter as the speaker gives you a telephone number you automatically slow the speaker down.
- **Do not say you have understood if you have not. Ask the person to repeat until you have understood.** Remember that the other person needs to make himself/herself understood and it is in his/her interest to make sure that you have understood. If you ask a person to explain more than twice, he will usually slow down.
- **If the person does not slow down, begin speaking your own language!** A sentence or two of another language spoken quickly will remind the person that he is fortunate because he doesn't need to speak a different language to communicate. Used carefully, this exercise in humbling the other speaker can be very effective. Just be sure to use it with colleagues and not with a boss!

Grammar

Telephone English poses a special problem for English learners because of the lack of visual clues used when speaking. Practicing telephone English in class can also seem rather artificial as exercises generally ask students to practice speaking on the phone through role-plays sitting together in small groups. Once they have learned the basic phrases used in telephoning, the main difficulty lies in communicating without visual contact. This telephone English lesson plan focuses on creating more realistic telephoning situations to encourage students to practice authentic telephoning situations.

EXERCISES FOR PRACTICING PHONE CONVERSATIONS

- Review phrases used in telephoning with the telephone English match-up and quiz below. See Telephone English: Dialogue and Appropriate Vocabulary and Business Telephone Conversations for further vocabulary review.
- When students have finished, ask them to identify phrases that are not used in personal interactions. (i.e. This is Mr. Smith, Would you like to leave a message, etc.)
- To begin practicing on the phone, ask students to pair up and then separate into different rooms. Make sure students have the right telephone numbers!
- Students should take turn initiating telephone calls as indicated in the short cues provided in the worksheet.
- Once students are comfortable with easy conversations, move on to more difficult conversations as outlined in the next activity.

- Ask each student to write out notes for a telephone conversation that they would typically have with a native speaker. Make sure students have a specific task in mind when writing out the notes. You can provide a few examples such as: *Order 500 Liters of Olive Oil - Delivery: Next Friday - Payment Method: Company Account - Address: Student's Company Address - Telephone/Fax: Student's Telephone/Fax, etc.*
- Choose some notes and ask the student to leave the room and go into the next office. Now, this is when your acting skills come in handy! Take the various notes, call the other extension and ask for the person suggested by the student who wrote the notes.
- You've made it to Hollywood now! Take a variety of roles and act them out on the phone. Really put your students through the paces. You can be angry, impatient, in a hurry, etc.
- Once you have repeated this exercise, get students to call each other in their own offices to repeat the exercise. Remember it is crucial to actually use the phone, as the difficulty lies in understanding English over the phone. If students need suggestions see: Role Plays: Role Play Dialogue Cues to Practice Telephoning with Friends

TELEPHONE ENGLISH EXERCISES

1. Match the first half of the sentence to the second half to complete these common expressions used on the telephone.

I'll put you	who is calling?
This is	the line?
Would you like to	leave a message?
Peter	through.
Can I ask	calling.
Can you hold	isn't available at the moment.
I'm afraid Ms. Smith	Alice Anderson.
I'm sorry,	the line is busy.

Telephone Cues

- A telephones B in order to speak to the manager. Unfortunately, the manager is out. Leave a message.
- B telephones A and would like to speak to a colleague, Ms. Anderson. A asks B to wait and puts B through to Ms. Anderson.
- A telephones B and wants some basic information about the company. B describes what the company does and sells.

- B telephones A to complain about a broken product. A apologizes and redirects B to the appropriate customer service department.
- A telephones B to make an appointment with the personnel department. B suggests a time to speak to Mr. Taylor who works in the department. A agrees to come in at the suggested time.
- B telephones A asking for information about store opening hours. A provides the appropriate information.

Notes for a Call

It's a good idea to write out short notes before you make a telephone call.

This will help you keep on track during your conversation. Write out some notes for a telephone call asking for specific information needed for your current job. Make sure to ask for specific details about a product, a meeting, or other event that you'll attend. Make a copy of your notes for a class mate and practice the conversation.

These short English conversations focus on telephoning in English. Here are five common situations used when telephoning in English. To begin with, each situation first presents the entire telephoning English conversation. Next, each situation has two separate versions with either caller 1 or caller 2 left blank. These telephoning English conversations can be used in the following ways:

- Use the entire telephoning English conversation in pairs to practice the situations.
- Use the separate telephoning English conversations **with** your role. The other role is taken away so that you can listen to your partner more carefully.
- Use the telephoning English conversations **without** your role once you have used the role plays a number of times. This will help you memorize common phrases used in typical telephoning English situations.

Feel free to print out these telephoning English situations for use in class, or share the telephoning conversations with your friends online. For example, you could call your friend on Skype, navigate to a telephoning English practice page and practice together by each taking a role, exchanging roles, and practicing a few times. Click on the following telephoning English conversations to begin.

MAKING A DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

Complete Conversation

Caller 1: Dr. Peterson's office. How may I help you?

Caller 2: I'd like to make an appointment to see the doctor.

Caller 1: Certainly, are you ill at the moment?

Caller 2: Yes, I'm not feeling very well.

Caller 1: Do you have a fever, or any other symptoms?

Caller 2: Yes, I have a slight fever and aches and pains.

Caller 1: OK, Dr. Peterson can see you tomorrow. Can you come in the morning?

Caller 2: Yes, tomorrow morning is fine.

Caller 1: How about 10 o'clock?

Caller 2: Yes, 10 o'clock is fine.

Caller 1: May have your name?

Caller 2: Yes, it's David Lain.

Caller 1: Have you seen Dr. Peterson before?

Caller 2: Yes, I had a physical exam last year.

Caller 1: Yes, here you are. OK, I've scheduled for ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

Caller 2: Thank you.

Caller 1: Drink plenty of warm fluids and get a good night's sleep!

Caller 2: Thank you. I'll do my best. Goodbye.

Caller 1: Goodbye.

Role Play: Caller 1

Caller 1: Dr. Peterson's office. How may I help you?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Certainly, are you ill at the moment?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Do you have a fever, or any other symptoms?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: OK, Dr. Peterson can see you tomorrow. Can you come in the morning?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: How about 10 o'clock?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: May have your name?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Have you seen Dr. Peterson before?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Yes, here you are. OK, I've scheduled for ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Drink plenty of warm fluids and get a good night's sleep!

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Goodbye.

Role Play: Caller 2

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: I'd like to make an appointment to see the doctor.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, I'm not feeling very well.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, I have a slight fever and aches and pains.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, tomorrow morning is fine.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, 10 o'clock is fine.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, it's David Lain.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, I had a physical exam last year.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Thank you.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Thank you. I'll do my best. Goodbye.

Caller 1: _____

LEAVING A MESSAGE

Complete Conversation

Caller 1: Hello, this is Jane.

Caller 2: Hello, this is Ken. May I speak with Andy?

Caller 1: I'm afraid Andy isn't in at the moment.

Caller 2: Could you take a message?

Caller 1: Sure, just a moment let me get a pencil... OK.

Caller 2: Great. Can you tell Andy that we're meeting tomorrow at three o'clock.

Caller 1: OK ... three o'clock meeting with Ken. Does he know where the meeting is?

Caller 2: Tell him we'll be meeting in the corner office downtown.

Caller 1: Yes, corner office downtown. Is there anything else?

Caller 2: I'll leave my telephone number just in case he doesn't have it.

Caller 1: OK, I'm ready.

Caller 2: Yes, my cell phone number is 439 908 7754.

Caller 1: That's 439 808 7754.

Caller 2: No, it's 439 908 7754.

Caller 1: Ah, sorry.

Caller 2: No problem. Thanks for your help.

Caller 1: I'll make sure Andy sees this as soon as he gets in tonight.

Caller 2: Thank you. Good bye.

Caller 1: Good bye.

Role Play: Caller 1

Caller 1: Hello, this is Jane.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: I'm afraid Andy isn't in at the moment.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Sure, just a moment let me get a pencil... OK.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: OK ... three o'clock meeting with Ken. Does he know where the meeting is?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Yes, corner office downtown. Is there anything else?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: OK, I'm ready.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: That's 439 808 7754.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Ah, sorry.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: I'll make sure Andy sees this as soon as he gets in tonight.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Good bye.

Role Play: Caller 2

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Hello, this is Ken. May I speak with Andy?

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Could you take a message?

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Great. Can you tell Andy that we're meeting tomorrow at three o'clock.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Tell him we'll be meeting in the corner office downtown.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: I'll leave my telephone number just in case he doesn't have it.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, my cell phone number is 439 908 7754.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: No, it's 439 908 7754.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: No problem. Thanks for your help.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Thank you. Good bye.

Caller 1: Good bye.

MAKING A DINNER RESERVATION

Complete Conversation

Caller 1: Good Evening Brown's Grill how may I help you?

Caller 2: Hello, I'd like to make a dinner reservation for Friday.

Caller 1: Certainly, I'd be happy to help you with that. How many people are there in your party?

Caller 2: There'll be four people.

Caller 1: ... and what time would you like to make a reservation for?

Caller 2: Let's say at seven o'clock.

Caller 1: I'm afraid we don't have anything available then. We could seat you at six o'clock or at eight o'clock.

Caller 2: Oh, OK. Let's make the reservation for eight o'clock.

Caller 1: Fine, eight o'clock on Friday evening for four people. May have your name?

Caller 2: Yes, it's Anderson.

Caller 1: Is that Anderson with an 'e' or an 'o'?

Caller 2: Anderson with an 'o'.

Caller 1: Thank you. Great. I have a table for four for the Anderson party at eight o'clock on Friday evening.

Caller 2: Thank you very much.

Caller 1: You're welcome. We'll see you on Friday.

Caller 2: Yes, see you then. Good bye.

Caller 1: Good bye.

Role Play: Caller 1

Caller 1: Good Evening Brown's Grill how may I help you?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Certainly, I'd be happy to help you with that. How many people are there in your party?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: ... and what time would you like to make a reservation for?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: I'm afraid we don't have anything available then. We could seat you at six o'clock or at eight o'clock.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Fine, eight o'clock on Friday evening for four people. May have your name?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Is that Anderson with an 'e' or an 'o'?

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Thank you. Great. I have a table for four for the Anderson party at eight o'clock on Friday evening.

Caller 2: T_____

Caller 1: You're welcome. We'll see you on Friday.

Caller 2: _____

Caller 1: Good bye.

Role Play: Caller 2

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Hello, I'd like to make a dinner reservation for Friday.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: There'll be four people.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Let's say at seven o'clock.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Oh, OK. Let's make the reservation for eight o'clock.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, it's Anderson.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Anderson with an 'o'.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Thank you very much.

Caller 1: _____

Caller 2: Yes, see you then. Good bye.

Caller 1: _____

TELEPHONING SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD

Complete Conversation

Caller 1: Good morning, Washington Grade School, this is Chris. How may I help you?

Caller 2: Good morning, this is Alice Smith, I'm calling for my daughter, Judy. She's not feeling well today.

Caller 1: I'm sorry to hear that. I hope it's not too bad.

Caller 2: No, no she has a little fever and a cough. Nothing too serious.

Caller 1: Well, I hope she feels well soon.

Caller 2: Thank you. Do you think I could get her homework for today?

Caller 1: Is there any specific class?

Caller 2: I'm especially concerned about math and science.

Caller 1: OK, is it alright for me to give your e-mail address to the teachers? They can then send the homework along later today.

Caller 2: That would be great. Do you have my e-mail on file?

Caller 1: Just a moment, ... we have chrisp at gmail dot com. Is that correct?

Caller 2: Yes, that is correct.

Caller 1: OK, I'll make sure Mr Brown and Ms White get your message and e-mail.

Caller 2: Thank you very much.

Caller 1: I hope Judy feels well soon.

Caller 2: She should be fine by tomorrow. Thanks for your help.

Caller 1: My pleasure, have a nice day.

Caller 2: Thank you. Good bye.

Caller 1: Good bye.

บทสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษเกี่ยวกับการพูดโทรศัพท์ (Talking on the phone)



Bob: Hello. This is 038 436377. Bob, speaking. May I help you?

สวัสดีครับ ที่นี่หมายเลขศูนย์สามแปดสี่สามหกสามเจ็ดเจ็ด บ็อบพูดครับ ให้ช่วยอะไรครับ

Tom : May I speak to Pranee, please? Is she in?

ขอสายคุณปรานีด้วยครับ ไม่ทราบว่ายู่ไหม

Bob: Yes, hold the line a moment, please. I'll see if she's in.

ครับ กรุณาถือสายรอสักครู่ ผมจะดูก่อนว่าเธออยู่ไหม

(กรุ่หนึ่งต่อมา บ็อบจึงพูดต่อ)

Oh, she is now talking to someone on another phone.

อ้อ ตอนนี้เธอกำลังพูดอยู่อีกเครื่อง(สาย)หนึ่งครับ

Would you like me to tell her to call you back?

จะให้ผมบอกให้เธอโทรกลับไหมครับ

Tom : No. Thank you. I'll call her again in a while.

ไม่ละครับ ขอบคุณ ผมจะโทรกลับเองอีกสักครู่

Bob: Would you wish to leave a message for her?

คุณอยากจะฝากข้อความถึงเธอไหมครับ

Tom: Tell her that I'm Tom, her old friend.

บอกเธอว่า ผมทอม เพื่อนเก่าโทรฯมาครับ

Bob: I will. Bye.

แล้วผมจะบอกให้ นะครับ สวัสดีครับ

Telephone Call in a Military office

(การพูดคุยทางโทรศัพท์ในหน่วยทหาร)

LCDR Ken: Good afternoon, Operations and Intelligence Division, *This is LCDR Ken, the Operations Officer speaking.*

CDR Allen: Good afternoon, Ken. This is Commander Allen, Chief, Medical Support Unit. *Can you put me through to the Captain, please?*

LCDR Ken: I'm sorry sir, but the Rear Admiral is with him right now.

CDR Allen: Do you think I could interrupt them? I've got some very important news.

LCDR Ken: I'll see if he can take your call, sir. *Can you tell me what the call is about?*

CDR Allen: I've just got a call from Headquarters. We've been ordered to mobilize our Mobile Medical Support Unit and deploy a medical team into the seashore village. This one is hot and I need to talk to the boss so he can coordinate the Transportation Division.

LCDR Ken: Just a second, sir. I'll buzz him on the intercom.

Captain Rex: Captain Rex speaking.

LCDR Ken: Sir, CDR Allen, Chief, Medical Support Unit is on Line two, he has something urgent to discuss with you. Can you take his call or do you want me to ask him to call back later?

Captain Rex: I'll take his call now, we're finishing our meeting. Did he say what his news was?

LCDR Ken: Yes, sir. He said that he needs Transportation for his Mobile Medical Support Unit and a medical team but he didn't give me any details. Do you want me to transfer his call to you now, sir?

Captain Rex: Yeah, go ahead.

Vocabulary:

Operations and Intelligence Division (n.) = กองยุทธการและการข่าว

Medical Support Unit (n.) = หน่วยสนับสนุนด้านการแพทย์

การใช้ภาษา (Using of language):

๑. ในการพูดคุยทางโทรศัพท์เริ่มด้วยการกล่าวทักทาย หน่วยผู้รับ และแนะนำ ยศ ชื่อ ตำแหน่ง ของผู้รับ
๒. แล้วจึงเริ่มกล่าวถึงวัตถุประสงค์
๓. และรายละเอียดเพิ่มเติม
๔. หรือถามคำถามต่าง ๆ

ตัวอย่าง

This is LCDR Ken, the Operations Officer speaking.

Can you put me through to the Captain, please?

Can you tell me what the call is about?

Sir, CDR Allen, Chief, Medical Support Unit is on Line two, he has something urgent to discuss with you.

Can you take his call or do you want me to ask him to call back later?

I'll take his call now.

Do you want me to transfer his call to you now, sir?
