

TELEPHONE PRACTICE

One of the biggest problems is speed. Native speakers, especially business people, tend to speak very quickly on the telephone. Here are some practical tips to 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 spell or give 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 they 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 they are fortunate because THEY do not 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 :-)!

DIALOG

Asking who is on the telephone

Excuse me, who is this?

Can I ask who is calling, please?

Asking for Someone

Can I have extension 321? (extensions are internal numbers at a company)

Could I speak to...? (Can I - more informal / May I - more formal)

Is Jack in? (informal idiom meaning: Is Jack in the office?)

Connecting Someone

I'll put you through (put through - phrasal verb meaning 'connect')

Can you hold the line? Can you hold on a moment?

How to reply when someone is not available

I'm afraid _____ is not available at the moment

The line is busy... (when the extension requested is being used)

Mr Jackson isn't in... Mr Jackson is out at the moment...

Taking a Message

Could (Can, May) I take a message?

Could (Can, May) I tell him who is calling?

Would you like to leave a message?

Leaving a Message

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. **Introduction** - - - - Hello, this is Ken. **OR** Hello, My name is Ken Beare (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.

Here's an example of message

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 Mets 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.

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

Telephone Dialogues

Dialogue #1: Calling a child's school

A: <Ring!>

B: Stevenson Elementary. This is Carol.

A: This is Terry Mishkov. My child is sick and will not be in school today.

B: What is your child's name?

A: Sergey Mishkov.

B: How do you spell that?

A: Sergey is spelled S-E-R-G-E-Y, and Mishkov is M-I-S-H-K-O-V.

B: Thank you. What grade is Sergey in?

A: He is in third grade.

B: And what is his teacher's name?

A: Mrs. Smith.

B: All right. Thank you for calling.

A: You're welcome.

B: Goodbye.

Dialogue #2: Wrong numbers and right numbers

A. [dials]

B. [answers:] Hello?

A. This is _____. Is Sherri there?

B. I'm sorry. You have the wrong number.

A. Is this 555-5024?

B. No, it isn't.

A. Oh, I'm sorry.

A. [dials]

B. [answers:] Hello?

A. This is _____. Is Sherri there?

B. No, she isn't.

A. What time do you expect her home?

B. She'll probably be back by 9:30.

A. Oh, thank you. I'll call back later.

Homework Assignment:

Call places of interest to get information regarding location, hours, events, dining facilities, etc.