

Our telephone answering system has broken down. This is a human being. How can I help you?

Anonymous customer service representative

How often do you use the telephone at work?

Learning objectives: Unit 2

Business communication skills Receiving calls; Leaving voicemails; Roleplay: Exchanging information on the telephone Listening Planning a telephone call; Voicemail messages; Telephone conversations Vocabulary Telephone expressions

Grammar Past Simple; time adverbs ago, before, during, for, in over Phrase bank Telephoning

UZ Making calls

1 How comfortable are you speaking English on the phone? Work with a partner. Complete the questionnaire with the verbs in the box in the correct form. Then discuss.

have keep lose misunderstand shout sound try want wish

BE HONEST!

Can you remember a time when you ...

- what someone said on the phone? \land totally _ Oh, yes No
- rude and unhelpful because you were busy? I really ____ Oh, yes No
- C constantly to ask the other person to repeat what they said? Oh, yes No
- putting off a call because you didn't want to speak English? D just ____ Oh, yes Mo.
- actually _ at someone on the phone? Oh, yes No
 - completely _ track of the conversation? Oh, yes No
- you could talk to the other just ____ person face to face? Oh, yes No
- pretending you were even out to avoid taking a call? Oh, yes No really ____ _ to kill the person

on the other end of the phone? Oh, yes No

Making phone calls in a foreign language requires planning. It's especially important to know what to say right at the beginning of the call.

2 **1.11** Listen to the phone call. Why does the caller get angry?

3 💽 1.12 Listen to a better version of the same phone call and complete the following opening phrases:

____. Marius Pot _ _, accounts _

4 💽 1.13 Now listen to another phone call. Why does the caller sound so unprofessional?

5 💽 1.14 Again, listen to a better version of the same phone call and complete the following phrases:

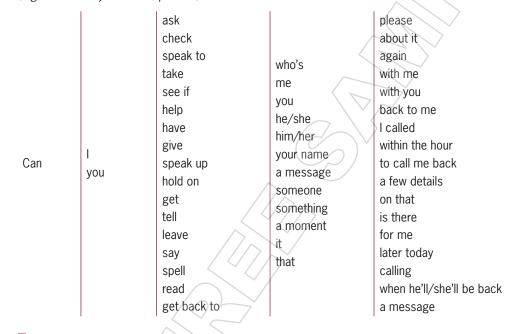
> _ Ramon Berenguer ____ Genex Ace Pharmaceuticals.

> > Catherine Mellor, _

an invoice.

?

6 A lot of the English you need on the phone is just a small number of keywords used in different combinations. Work with a partner. How many telephone expressions can you make in two minutes using one word or phrase from two or more sections below (e.g. *Can I have your name, please?*)? Write them down.



7 You overhear a colleague say the following things on the phone. What questions do you think she was asked? Use some of the telephone expressions you made in 6.

- a Yes, I'd like to speak to Ifakat Karsli, please.
- **b** Yes, it's Ivana Medvedeva.
- **c** M-E-D-V-E-D-E-V-A, Medvedeva.
- d Yes. Can you just tell her Ivana called?
- e Yes, I'll tell him as soon as he gets in.
- f Of course. Your reference number is 45-81099-KM. Okay?
- **g** Sorry, is that better?
- **h** Around three, I should think.
- i Can we make that two hours?
- j Certainly. Can you give me your number?
- k Sure. When can I expect to hear from you?
 - Sure. Just a minute. Where's my pen? Okay, go ahead.
 - 1.15 Listen and check your answers.

Voicemail

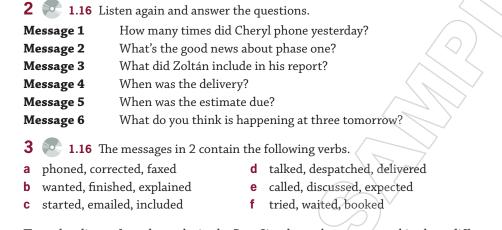
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b

1 1.16 Listen to six voicemail messages. Take notes. Which message is about:

a an order?

- some figures?
- **c** a meeting?
- **d** a deadline?
- e a report?
- a reminder?



The *-ed* endings of regular verbs in the Past Simple can be pronounced in three different ways: /d/, /t/ or /td/. Listen to the messages again. Which verbs take the /td/ ending? Why? Put them in the third column of the chart.



Now put the other verbs in the correct column.

Sve-

Flight

Stai on a

Will

pls = p asap = possib rgds = HQ = Q3 = t

5

4 The following messages were taken by your secretary. Work with a partner. Can you recreate the original voicemails? The first one has been done for you as an example.

·lana (Paris) t delay – late	Hi, it's Svetlana. Listen, my flight's been delayed and it looks like I'm going to be late for the meeting. Can you start with item two on the agenda and I'll join you as soon as I can? Thanks! See you later.					
neeting.						
t with item 2 genda.	A Seiji (Nagoya)	B URGENT!				
pin asap.	Negotiations going well - deadlocked on price. Authorize 14% discount on 50,000 units?	Jim (Expo in Dublin) Lost memory stick for presentation! Pls email PowerPoint slides asap!				
	C	D Kate (Seattle)				
please as soon as ple regards headquarters chird quarter	Tony Stuck in meeting at HQ. Conference arrangements progress? Pls contact speakers to confirm.	InfoTag querying our invoice for Q3. Ask accounts to check figures + reinvoice if necessary.				
<i>t</i>		Ð				
	URGENT! Alicia Needs Turin report - tomorrow pm latest! Call back if problems.	Mike Has appointment here Fri. Meet? Coffee? Ian sends his rgds.				

1.17 Listen to the original voicemails and compare them with your answers.



Returning a call

1 💽 1.18–1.19 Listen to two telephone calls and answer the questions.

Call 1

- a Whose answerphone are we listening to?
- **b** What does the caller want?
- **c** Put the lines of the recorded message in the correct order.
- 1 Hello. This is Patterson Meats,
- ____ but if you'd like to leave
- for calling. I'm afraid
- ____ please do so
- _____your call right now,
- _____ after the tone and I'll get back
- Sylvia Wright's office. Thank you
- I'm not able to take
- a message,
- 10 to you as soon as I can.

Call 2

- a Who didn't come to the meeting?
 - 1 Bill Andrews

2 Stephanie Hughes

- Jonathan PowellMelanie Burns
- **b** Who does Tim already know?
 - 1 Bill Andrews

- **3** Jonathan Powell**4** Melanie Burns
- 2 Stephanie Hughes 4
- **c** What didn't the visitors from the UK see?
 - 1 the processing plant
 - **2** the factory

- 4 the freezer units
- **5** a presentation
- 3 the packing departmentd Tim was interrupted during the phone call. Complete what he said to Sylvia.

Sorry	
I just	
	· ·
Where	?

- What were the British visitors worried about?
- f Would the product they came to see be popular in your country? Would you try it?

2 Put these irregular verbs from Call 2 into the Past Simple. You have 45 seconds!

be come do get give go have meet say send speak take tell think

3 One of the following extracts is from the phone call. The other is incorrect. Which is incorrect and why?

- a So who else did come? Came Stephanie Hughes?
- **b** So who else came? Did Stephanie Hughes come?



Remember to show interest in what your partner tells you. Really? I see. Right. Uh huh. Good. Great. Oh, that's interesting. Finish your call like this: Anyway, look, I must let you go. Thanks a lot for your help. Speak to you soon. Bye now.

Finding out

Work with a partner. Phone each other in order to find out some information to help you:

- do business in a foreign city
- give a presentation
- attend a job interview.

Talk to your partner before you begin and decide on the subject of your phone calls. Think of the language you will need to use.

Begin your phone call in this way:

Hi, _____ (your partner's name). *It's* ____ *things?* ... *And how's business?*

(your name) *here. How are*

Then use the notes below to help you ask your questions. Ask other questions if you like.



1 A business trip

Listen, I'm going to (city?) on business in a couple of weeks. I know you did some business there a while ago and I just wanted to ask you how it went.

- a Which airline / fly with?
- b business class?
- c Where / stay?
- d What / food like?
- e What / people like?
- f easy to work with?

- g meetings go okay?
- h language problems?
- i chance / see much / city?
- j What / do / evenings?
- k invite / their home?
- I take a present?





2 A presentation

Listen, I'm giving a presentation at ______ (a meeting? a conference?) in a couple of weeks. I know you had to give a presentation a while ago and I just wanted to ask you how it went.

- a talk / your own?
- **b** How long / take / prepare?
- **c** How big / audience?
- **d** How long / speak for?
- e nervous?
- use PowerPoint?

- g How many / visuals?
- h tell jokes?
- i give / handouts?
- j take questions / the end?
- k any difficult ones?
- I How / deal with them?

3 A job interview

Listen, I'm going for an interview at ______ (company?) in a couple of weeks. I know you had an interview with them a while ago and I just wanted to ask you how it went.

- **a** How long / interview / last?
- **b** How many interviewers?
- c How friendly?
- **d** say what / looking for?
- e refer / your CV?
- How interested / qualifications?
- g trickiest question?
- h ask / personal questions?
- i have / do / a test?
- j ask them / questions?
- k What / salary / like?
- I offer you / job?

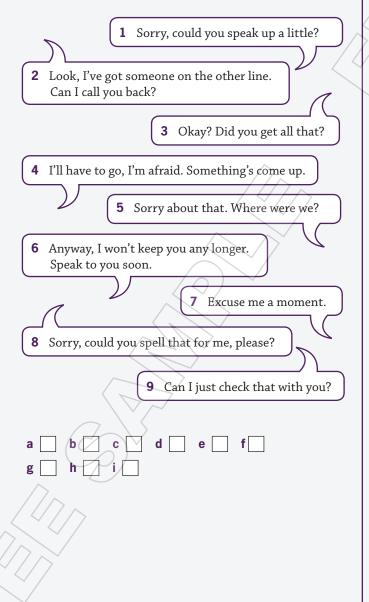
02 Making calls

Vocabulary

Telephone expressions

In business, phone calls are often interrupted. Match the difficulties and distractions (a–i) to the appropriate responses (1–9).

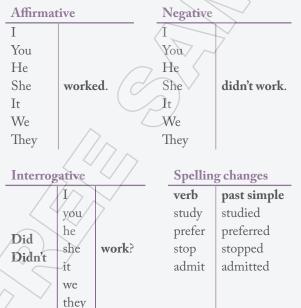
- **a** A colleague wants you to sign something.
- **b** Your colleague leaves a few seconds later.
- **c** There's a lot of noise right outside your office.
- **d** Your boss wants a word with you now!
- **e** Someone else is trying to call you.
- **f** The caller gives you their name it's unpronounceable!
- **g** You think you misunderstood the information the other person just gave you.
- **h** You gave the caller a lot of information very quickly.
- i The other person just won't stop talking!



Grammar

Past Simple

You use the Past Simple to talk about completed past events. Most verbs are regular, but there are about 100 important irregular verbs that are useful to learn.



to be

Affirmative		Negati	Negative		Interrogative	
Ι	was.	Ι	wasn't.		I?	
He		He		Was	he?	
She		She		Wasn't	she?	
It		It			it?	
You	were.	You	weren't.	Were	you?	
We		We		Weren't	we?	
They		They		werent	they?	

1 Correct the conversation with the information above.

- A Phoned Enrique about those figures?
- **B** No. I wait all morning, but he phoned not.
- **A** Typical! And I suppose he didn't the report either.
- **B** No. Did he went to the meeting yesterday?
- **A** No, but I not expected him to.

2 Write the Past Simple of the verbs below. Why don't the verbs on the right follow the same spelling changes as the verbs on the left?

hurry		play	
occupy		enjoy	
refer		offer	
confer		suffer	
drop		develop	
flop		visit	
commit			
transmit			

LANGUAGE LINKS

Stefan

Time adverbs

3 Time adverbs help us to be more specific about the past. Complete this short presentation about the development of a new product with the time adverbs in the box.

ago before during for in over

As you know, we first got the idea for the new product a year (a) _____, but (b) _____ we could go to market with it, there was a lot of work to do. (c) ______ six months, the product was in development at our research centre in Cambridge. We then ran tests (d) ______ a three-month period. (e) _ that time, we also conducted interviews with some of our best customers to find out what they wanted from the product. (f) ______ March we were finally ready for the launch.

4 Complete the joke with the Past Simple of the verbs in brackets.

A businessman (a) ____ _ (want) to interview applicants for the position of divisional manager. There (b) _____ (be) several strong candidates, so he (c) _____ (decide) to devise a simple test to select the most suitable person for the job. He (d) _____ (ask) each applicant the simple question, 'What is two and two?'

The first applicant (e) ______ (light) a cigarette, (think) for a moment and then (g) _____ (say) '22'. $(h)_{-}$

The second applicant (i) ____ _ (have) a degree (take) out his in engineering. He (j) ____ (press) a few buttons and calculator, (k) ____ (show) the answer to be between (l) ____

3.999 and 4.001.

(work) as a The next applicant (m) ____ corporate lawyer. He (n) __(state) that (can) only be four, and two and two (o) _____ (p) _____ (prove) it by referring to the wellknown case of Gates v Monopolies Commission.

The last applicant (q) _ (turn) out to be an accountant. The businessman again (r) (put) his question, 'What is two and two?'

(get) up from The accountant (s) (go) over to the door, his chair, (t) ____ (close) it, then (v) (u) _____ (sit) down. Finally, (come) back and (w) (lean) across the desk and he (x) _____ (y) _____ (whisper) in a low voice, 'How much do you want it to be?'

5 Read the conversation and answer the questions.

- Anne Who did you tell? Bengt Just Claire.
- Anne And who told you?
- Bengt Stefan.
- Anne And nobody else knows?
- Bengt Only you.
- Anne Well, of course, I do. I told Stefan.

- **a** Who knew first?
- **1** Anne **2** Bengt
- **b** How did Bengt find out?
- Who was the last to know?

1 Anne 3 Claire Stefan **2** Bengt 4 d Read these two questions and <u>underline</u> the subject

3 Claire

in each. Who did you tell? Who told you?

- **6** Correct the six errors in these conversations.
- **a A** They're moving us to a new office.
 - **B** Who did say so?
 - **A** The boss. I spoke to him this morning.
 - **B** Oh. So where said he we're moving to?
- **b A** Well. I went to the interview.
 - **B** And? What did happen?
 - A I got the job!
 - B What said I? I knew you'd get it. Congratulations!
 - **A** I spoke to Amy at the meeting about our idea.
 - **B** And what thought she?
 - A She liked/it.

С

B Good. So who else did come to the meeting?

Phrase bank: Telephoning

Look at the phrases below and decide who probably said them: the caller or the person who received the call. Mark them *C* or *R*. If you think it could equally be both, write *B*. The first one has been done for you.

a This is [John White] from [Novartis].

