

02

Making calls

Learning objectives

Making and receiving telephone calls in English is perhaps one of the most difficult skills which business students need to acquire, and certainly one which can cause a lot of stress.

This unit provides strategies to make telephoning in English less stressful and gives some useful formulaic expressions which will facilitate dealing with calls. Students practise listening to and dealing with voicemail messages and returning calls. Finally, students do a guided roleplay, initiating a phone call in order to find out certain information.

The grammatical focus is on the Past Simple and time adverbs, and the lexical focus is on telephone expressions.

Digital resources: Unit 2

Online Workbook; Extension worksheets; Glossary; Phrase bank; Student's Book answer key; Student's Book listening script; Fast-track map

This first section provides an opportunity for students to explore their attitudes and worries about speaking English on the phone. Students will listen to different versions of phone calls, and analyze what went wrong and why the revised version was more successful. They will also learn some common telephone expressions. The aim here is to demonstrate that many people have difficulty with telephone calls and it is nothing to be ashamed of. Several techniques will be given in this unit which should help.

1:1

Having only one student is a positive advantage when it comes to teaching and practising telephone skills, as it is possible to make real phone calls to demonstrate and practise the language. Use every opportunity to call your student on the phone or ask them to call you to practise the language and skills taught in this unit.

Warm-up

Read the quotation to the class and ask for reactions. How do the students feel when they encounter a telephone answering system that requires them to make endless choices by pressing different keys on their phone and never getting to speak to a real person?

Ask how often students have to use the telephone at work and how often they make or receive phone calls in English. Ask them to talk about any problems they have experienced.


1 Check that students have completed the questions in the questionnaire correctly before giving them time to think about and discuss their answers to them. Encourage students to give details of the incident when their answer

is yes. Ask them to report back to the class on any interesting anecdotes they shared.

Remind students that planning calls in a foreign language is vitally important. If you prepare what you are going to say when you make a call, the conversation is likely to progress much more smoothly and with less chance of misunderstanding. If you are aware of what you should say when you receive a call, then you will sound more confident, and you are less likely to cause offence by not using the established formulae which the caller will expect.

ANSWERS

A misunderstood B sounded C had D kept E shouted
F lost G wished H tried I wanted

2  1.11 Play the recording and elicit answers to the question around the class. Encourage students to suggest the kinds of things the person answering the phone could have said instead of his abrupt one-word responses (*Hello. Yes. Yes.*) and which would have been more helpful.

ANSWERS

The caller gets angry because the person who answers the call is abrupt and doesn't give full answers, which gives the impression of rudeness or lack of interest in the caller's reason for calling.



1.11

- A: Hello?
B: Hello.
A: Hello. Is that Dutch Hydro?
B: That's right.
A: Can I have the accounts department, please?
B: Yes.
A: Sorry?
B: This is the accounts department.
A: Oh, right. Erm, I'd like to speak to Marius Pot, please.
B: Yes.
A: Sorry?
B: That's me.
A: Well, why didn't you say so?
B: Can I help you?
A: I hope so! I'm calling about an invoice I received.



3 1.12 Play the recording for students to listen and complete the phrases. When you have checked the answers, ask them to say what would be an appropriate way of answering the phone in their own situations.


ANSWERS

Hello, accounts department. Marius Pot speaking.



1.12

- B: Hello, accounts department. Marius Pot speaking.
A: Ah, Mr Pot. Just the person I wanted to speak to. I'm calling about an invoice I received.

4  **1.13** Play the recording and elicit answers to the question. Again, you could ask students to say how the caller's utterances could be improved before you play the better version.

ANSWER

He hesitates a lot and has not prepared what to say.

 **1.13**

- A:** Good morning, Cheney and Broome. Can I help you?
- B:** Yes, please ... er, ... Just a moment ...
- A:** Hello? Are you still there?
- B:** Yes, sorry ... erm ...
- A:** How can I help you?
- B:** Oh, yes, can I speak to, er, to, er ... just a minute ... yes, to, er, Catherine Mellor, please?
- A:** Certainly. Who's calling, please?
- B:** Sorry?
- A:** Can I have your name, please?
- B:** Oh, yes, it's Ramón Berenguer ... from Genex Ace Pharmaceuticals.
- A:** Thank you. Can I ask the purpose of your call, Mr Berenguer?
- B:** Oh, yes. It's about, er ... an invoice.
- A:** Thank you, Mr Berenguer. Putting you through now.

5  **1.14** Play the recording for students to listen and complete the phrases.

Students can then work with a partner to briefly roleplay the first part of a telephone call, with one answering the phone properly and the other saying who they are, where they are calling from, who they want to speak to and what the call is about. They can then swap roles.

ANSWERS

This is Ramon Berenguer from Genex Ace Pharmaceuticals. Can I speak to Catherine Mellor, please? It's about an invoice.

 **1.14**

- A:** Good morning, Cheney and Broome. Can I help you?
- B:** Er, yes. This is Ramón Berenguer from Genex Ace Pharmaceuticals. Can I speak to Catherine Mellor, please?
- A:** Certainly, Mr Berenguer. Can I ask the purpose of your call?
- B:** It's about an invoice.
- A:** Putting you through now.

6 Students will find the expressions given here useful in a wide variety of phone calls. When they have found as many expressions as possible, divide the class into two teams. Each team takes a turn to call out the first part of an expression (the first three columns) and the other team has to complete it (from the last two columns).

Point out to students that the key to successful telephoning in English is confidence. If they have a range of expressions at their fingertips to cope with all the practical aspects and eventualities of telephoning (the person being out, on another line, offering to take a message, etc), then

they will sound more confident and will have more time to concentrate on the more important parts of the call (imparting information, finding something out, etc).


7 In this exercise, students predict what the person at the other end of the phone must have said to cause the responses given. Give students time to write the questions individually. Tell them that there may be more than one correct answer.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

- a Can I help you?
- b Can I ask who's calling? / Can I have your name, please?
- c Can/Could you spell that, please?
- d Can I give her a message?
- e Can you tell him I called?
- f Can you read that back to me?
- g Can you speak up, please?
- h Can you tell me when she'll be back?
- i Can you get back to me within the hour?
- j Can you ask him/her to call me back?
- k Can I get back to you on that?
- l Can I leave a message?

Language links

Direct students to the *Language links* section on page 18 for more practice of useful telephone expressions for dealing with difficulties and distractions.

8  **1.15** Play the recording for students to check their answers against the ones given.


For a more interactive way of checking answers, select a pair of students and ask one of them to read out the question they have written. If the question is correct, the other student should give the response from the book. If the question is not correct, he/she should either say nothing or give a response which is appropriate to the question that has actually been asked. Establish what the correct question should be before moving on. Do this for all the questions, selecting a different pair of students each time.

 **1.15**

- a Can I help you?
- b Can I ask who's calling?
- c Can you spell that, please?
- d Can I give her a message?
- e Can you tell him I called?
- f Can you read that back to me?
- g Can you speak up, please?
- h Can you tell me when she'll be back?
- i Can you get back to me within the hour?
- j Can you ask her to call me back?
- k Can I get back to you on that?
- l Can I leave a message?

Voicemail

In this section, students practise listening to voicemail messages and identifying the important information in them. The messages are then used for grammar work on the Past Simple and pronunciation of Past Simple regular verb endings. The students end by recreating voicemail messages from written messages.

1  **1.16** Encourage students to take meaningful notes when they listen to the messages. Elicit that these notes should contain the important information from the messages, which is likely to include the name of the caller, what the message is about and any action that the receiver of the call is required to take.

ANSWERS

a 4 b 1 c 2 d 6 e 3 f 5

 **1.16**

Message 1

Hello. This is Cheryl. I phoned you about five times yesterday, but you weren't in. Anyway, I corrected those figures you faxed me. Okay, speak to you later.

Message 2

Hi, Peter. Anne here. I wanted to talk to you about the project meeting tomorrow, but you're obviously not there. The good news is we finished phase one on time. As I explained, I may be a little late for the meeting. So just go ahead and start without me. I'll join you at about ten.

Message 3

Er, this is Zoltán. Just to let you know, I started the report this morning and just emailed you the first part. Oh, I included the quarterly accounts in the report, too. Let me know what you think.

Message 4


Mr Carter. It's Philip Heath. I talked to our stock control manager about the Venezuelan consignment and he says we despatched the goods a week ago. The shipping agent says they delivered them this morning. So, problem solved!

Message 5

Hello, Mr Carter. This is Ryan Hope from SilverStar. I called you a couple of weeks ago about an estimate for a contract in Malaysia. Erm, we discussed my client's requirements and, well, I expected to hear from you last week. Could you give me a call on 01865 555959 as soon as possible, please?


Message 6

Pete. It's me. Sorry, mate, I tried everything, but head office say we can't have any more time. They say they waited six months for the preliminary report, another six months for the feasibility study and now they want to see some results. Anyway, I booked the conference room for three tomorrow. Give me a call when you get in. We need to talk.

2  **1.16** Make sure students have read the questions before you play the recording again so that they know exactly what information they are listening for.

ANSWERS

- Message 1 About five
- Message 2 It was finished on time.
- Message 3 The quarterly accounts
- Message 4 This morning
- Message 5 Last week
- Message 6 Students' own ideas

3  **1.16** You could ask the students to try to put the words into the correct columns before you play the recording again, and just use the recording for them to check their answers. Elicit that the verbs in the /ɪd/ column all have infinitives ending in the /t/ or /d/sound.

When students have to categorize things by pronunciation, always encourage them to say the words aloud to see what sounds right. Developing an instinct for what sounds right will help them throughout their language learning careers.

ANSWERS

- /d/: phoned, explained, emailed, delivered, called, tried
- /t/: faxed, finished, talked, despatched, discussed, booked
- /ɪd/: corrected, wanted, started, included, expected, waited


Language links

Direct students to the *Language links* section on pages 18–19 for further explanation of the construction and use of the Past Simple, and exercises to practise this tense.

4 Go through the example with the class and point out how the prompts in the message have been turned into a spoken message. Students work with a partner to do the same with the remaining messages. Go around, offering help and encouragement. When checking answers, point out that there may be several correct answers.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

See Listening script 1.17.

5  **1.17** Play the recording for the students to compare their answers with the original voicemails. Emphasize that these are not the 'correct' answers. What the students have written may be just as valid.

 **1.17**

Message A

Hi, it's Seiji. Listen, the negotiations here in Nagoya are going pretty well, but we seem to be deadlocked on price. Can you authorize me to offer them a 14% discount on 50,000 units? I think that should do it.

Message B

Hi, it's Jim. Listen, I'm in a bit of a panic. I'm at the Expo in Dublin and, you won't believe this, but I've lost the memory stick with my entire presentation on it! Could you email over my PowerPoint slides as attachments as soon as possible? Thanks!

Message C

Hi. Tony here. I'm still stuck in a meeting at head office. Are you making progress with the conference arrangements? Please make sure you contact the speakers to confirm their attendance. Cheers.

Message D

Hi, Kate here. I'm with the people from InfoTag in Seattle and they're querying our invoice for the third quarter. Can you ask someone in accounts to check the figures and reinvoice them if necessary? Thanks.

Message E

Hello, this is Alicia. This is urgent. I really need a copy of the Turin report from you by tomorrow afternoon at the latest. Call me straight back if you're having problems.


Message F

Hi there, this is Mike. Listen, I've got an appointment over at your offices on Friday. Do you want to meet up? Maybe go for a coffee or something? Oh, by the way, Ian sends his regards. Catch you later. Bye.

B: Hello, Sylvia. It's Tim Curtis from the Sydney office. I just wanted to know how the meeting with the people from Temco Supermarkets went. This is a really good chance for us to start exporting to Britain. I hope their visit was a success. Er, give me a ring when you get in, would you? Bye now.

Returning a call

In this section, the students work on responding to a voicemail message.

1  **1.18-1.19** Play Call 1 and do the questions relating to it before you play Call 2.

Make sure students have read the questions before they listen to the recording of Call 1 so that they know exactly what information they are listening for. Check answers before moving on to Call 2.

Again, make sure students have read the questions for Call 2 before they listen so that they concentrate on listening only for the information they need. Encourage discussion with a partner or in small groups for question f.

ANSWERS

Call 1

- a Sylvia Wright's
- b To know how the meeting with the people from Temco Supermarkets went.
- c 1 Hello. This is Patterson Meats,
2 Sylvia Wright's office. Thank you
3 for calling. I'm afraid
4 I'm not able to take
5 your call right now,
6 but if you'd like to leave
7 a message
8 please do so
9 after the tone and I'll get back
10 to you as soon as I can.

Call 2

- a 2 b 1 c 2 d Sorry about that. I just had to sign for something. Where were we?
- e UK customers accepting kangaroo meat

 **1.19**

Call 2

- A:** Hello. Tim Curtis.
- B:** Hi, Tim. It's Sylvia here. I got your message.
- A:** Sylvia, hi. So, how did it go?
- B:** It went pretty well, I think. They sent three people in the end.
- A:** Three? Well, that's a good sign.
- B:** Yeah, there was Bill Andrews, head of meat purchasing. I think you met him when you went to the UK last month.
- A:** That's right. He seemed pretty interested when I spoke to him then.
- B:** Yeah, he asked me a lot of questions about our quality control.
- A:** Uh huh. I thought he might. I hope you told him he's got no worries there.
- B:** I certainly did.
- A:** Good. So who else came? Er, did Stephanie Hughes come?
- B:** Er, they sent Jonathan Powell from their marketing department instead and Melanie Burns, who's in charge of imported produce.
- A:** Oh, right. I didn't meet them in London. So, did you show them the processing plant?
- B:** I did. There wasn't time to do a tour of the factory, but I showed them the packing department and the freezer units. Then we gave the presentation – Ian and I – and took them out to dinner afterwards.
- A:** Great. Did they say when they'd let us know? I mean, do you think they'll place an order or not?
- B:** Well, it's too early to say. But I think they were quite impressed.
- A:** Hmm.
- B:** They said they'd be in touch in the next couple of days or so. They were a bit worried at first about British customers accepting our product. Although they do sell other exotic meats already. Ostrich, for example, and that's quite popular.
- A:** Erm, excuse me for a moment, Sylvia ... Sorry about that. I just had to sign for something. Where were we? Oh, yeah, they were worried about UK customers accepting our product, you say?
- B:** Well, I don't think it's a problem. Er, you know what the Brits are like – animal lovers and all that. They weren't sure if people would accept kangaroo meat as an alternative to beef.

 **1.18**

Call 1

A: Hello. This is Patterson Meats, Sylvia Wright's office. Thank you for calling. I'm afraid I'm not able to take your call right now, but if you'd like to leave a message, please do so after the tone and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

A: Kangaroos are too cute and lovable to eat, huh?
B: Well, something like that. But I told them they're not exactly endangered. There are twice as many kangaroos in Australia as there are Australians. Kangaroo's been on the menu here for years. They agreed it tastes good and, as I said to them, it's a really healthy option – ten times less fat than a beef steak and no chance of getting mad cow disease!

2 Students should not have much difficulty in putting these verbs into the Past Simple, so the time limit has been introduced to encourage them to work quickly and to give an element of fun. You could structure the activity as a race, with the winner being the first student to write all 14 verbs in the Past Simple and raise their hand.

ANSWERS

was/were, came, did, got, gave, went, had, met, said, sent, spoke, took, told, thought

3 Students should be able to identify fairly readily which extract is incorrect and why.

ANSWERS

Extract a is incorrect because the word order is wrong in both questions.

Language links

Direct students to the *Phrase bank* in the *Language links* section on page 19 for more on language for telephoning.

Finding out

In this final section, the focus is on getting students to put into practice all the skills they have learned in the unit so far. They have a choice of subjects on which to base their roleplay, and there is plenty of preparation work and guidance before they embark on their calls.

Make sure students don't just ask a series of questions when it is their turn to initiate the call. They have a lot of information to find out, but they must listen and react to their partner's answers to one question before they proceed to the next. It might also be useful to go over some of the language they could use to introduce each new question so that the impression of a list is reduced. For example:

By the way, which ... Oh, and I've been meaning to ask, what ... And I was wondering how long ...

Focus attention on the useful phrases for showing interest in the box at the top of the page. If necessary, practise a few of these around the class by telling individual students some information and getting them to react appropriately. For example:

You: *I've just won a lot of money.*
 Student 1: *Great!*
 You: *I've just bought a new car.*
 Student 2: *Really?*

You: *Someone I haven't seen for 20 years is coming to dinner on Sunday.*
 Student 3: *Oh, that's interesting.*

Ask the students first to decide what the subject of their phone calls will be and then to look at the relevant sections of notes and decide not only how to ask the different questions, but also how they will answer the questions their partner is likely to ask. They can then roleplay their calls. Roleplayed phone calls often work better when students are seated back to back and cannot see each other.

When students have done their roleplays, encourage some of them to perform them for the rest of the class.

1:1

Agree with your student which situations to roleplay, and give the student a chance to be both the person asking for information and the person supplying it. Remember to set a good example by reacting to what your students says, using some of the useful phrases in the box at the top of the page.

Language links

ANSWERS

Vocabulary

Telephone expressions

a 7 b 5 c 1 d 4 e 2 f 8 g 9 h 3 i 6

Grammar

Past Simple

1 A *Did Enrique phone* about those figures?
 B No. I *waited* all morning, but he *didn't phone*.
 A Typical! And I suppose he *didn't do* the report either.
 B No. Did he *go* to the meeting yesterday?
 A No, but I *didn't expect* him to.

2 hurried, occupied, referred, conferred, dropped, flopped, committed, transmitted, played, enjoyed, offered, suffered, developed, visited

Verbs that change the y to an i to form the Past Simple tend to be multi-syllable verbs with the stress on the first syllable. *Play* is a one-syllable verb and *enjoy* has the stress on the second syllable. Single syllable verbs with short vowel sounds before a consonant and multi-syllable verbs with the stress on the final syllable double the consonant. *Offer*, *suffer* and *visit* have the stress on the first syllable, and *develop* has the stress on the middle syllable.

Time adverbs

3 a ago b before c For d over e During f In
 4 a wanted b were c decided d asked e was
 f lit g thought h said i had j took k pressed
 l showed m worked n stated o could p proved
 q turned r put s got t went u closed v came
 w sat x leaned y whispered
 5 a 1 b Stefan told him. c 3
 d Who did you tell? Who told you?
 6 a Who *said* so?; So where *did he* say we're moving to?
 b What *happened*?; What *did I* say?
 c And what *did she* think?; So who else *came* to the meeting?

Phrase bank: Telephoning

1 a C b C c C d R e R f B g C
 h R i B j B k B l R m C n C o C
 2 It is more polite because it is more formal and less direct.