

A

Starting a phone conversation

The call on the left is between two friends: Joe and Lily. When British people answer the phone at home, they usually just say 'hello'. The call on the right is a more formal business call.

JOE: Hello?

LILY: **Is that** Joe?

JOE: Yeah.

LILY: Hi. **It's** Lily.

RECEPTIONIST: Good morning. Chalfont Electronics.

PAUL SHARP: Oh, **could I speak to** Jane Gordon, please?

RECEPTIONIST: Yes. **Who's calling**, please?

PAUL SHARP: **My name is** Paul Sharp from Bexel Plastics.

RECEPTIONIST: Right, Mr Sharp. I'm **putting you through** [I'm connecting you] ... (pause) ...

JANE GORDON: Hello?

PAUL SHARP: Mrs Gordon?

JANE GORDON: **Speaking**. [Yes, this is Mrs Gordon.]

Common mistakes

We say: **Is that** Joe? (NOT Are you Joe? or Is it Joe?)

And we say: **It's** Lily. (NOT I am Lily or Here is Lily.)

B

Problems on the phone



I tried to **ring** you this morning [phone you] but I think you were **on the phone** to your mother [using the phone].



I think I **dialled** [made a phone call to a particular number] **the wrong number** (e.g. 451 and not 351) this morning – I got a very angry person on the phone!



I **gave her a ring** this morning [phoned her], but I couldn't **get through** [make contact / speak to her]; the line was **engaged** [being used, someone was on the phone].



I **left a message** (e.g. Please ring me) on Dan's **answerphone** as he was **out** [not there; *syn* not in], but he never **phoned me back** [returned my phone call], so I don't know if he got my message.

C

Phone numbers

Q: What's your **home** phone number? (also **landline**)

A: 603 884

Q: What's your **mobile** number?

A: 07723 259369

Q: What's the **emergency** number for the police, fire or ambulance?

A: 999

Q: What's the **dialling** code for the UK when you are phoning from Hungary?

A: 0044

D

Mobile phones and texting

Many people use their mobile **mostly/mainly** [most of the time] for **texting** [sending short written messages from one phone to another]. Do you **text** your friends and family all the time?

These are common text **abbreviations** [letters which represent words].

ASAP = as soon as possible

CU = see you

BF = boyfriend (GF = girlfriend)

IMO = **in my opinion** [this is what I think]

B4 = before

FYI = for your information

2DAY = today

U = you

2MORO = tomorrow

THX = thanks

Y = why?

LOL = laughing out loud

PLS = please

X = kiss

Exercises

53.1 Answer the questions.

- What are two more ways of saying *I called him*?
I phoned him.
- You phoned Tom but weren't able to speak to him. What are three possible reasons for this?
.....
.....
.....
- You can ring a phone number. What are three other numbers you can ring?
..... number number number

53.2 Complete the phone conversations.

- A: Hello?
B: Good morning. Could I ¹ *..speak to..* Luke James?
A: Who's ², please?
B: ³ Liam Matthews.
A: One moment, please. I'm ⁴ you through.
C: Hello?
B: ⁵ Mr James?
C: ⁶

A: Good morning. Boulding Limited. Can I help you?
B: Yes. I'm trying to contact Oliver Fallow. He left a ⁷ on my ⁸
A: I see. Well, I'm afraid Mr Fallow's ⁹ at the moment. Can I ask him to
¹⁰ you later?

A: Hello.
B: Hi. ¹¹ Carlos?
A: Yeah, speaking.
B: Hi Carlos. ¹² Serena.
A: Oh hello. I was expecting you to ring last night.
B: I did, but I couldn't get ¹³; the line was ¹⁴
A: Oh yes, I'm sorry about that. I was ¹⁵ the phone to my brother for about an hour.

53.3 What do these text abbreviations mean?

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 GRT = <i>great</i> | 6 FYI = ... |
| 2 X = ... | 7 LOL = ... |
| 3 CU = ... | 8 THX = ... |
| 4 IMO = ... | 9 BF = ... |
| 5 ASAP = ... | 10 U = ... |

53.4 Over to you

Answer the questions. If possible, compare your answers with someone else.

- How often do you use a mobile phone? What do you use it for? How often do you text people? Who do you text?
- In your country, what is the emergency number for the police, fire brigade or ambulance?
- From your country, what's the international dialling code for the United Kingdom?
- How do you feel about people who use their mobile phone on a train?