LESSON 1

Business Talk: Phones, Emails, and Expressive Phrases



Phone Conversations


Greetings


Introductions


Dialing


Voicemail etiquette


Message taking

Written Communication Skills


Correspondence


Clarity


Conciseness


Tone


Audience awareness

Phrasal Verbs:


Pick up


Hang up


Fill in


Follow through


Drop by (send a quick message)

Email Writing


Formal structures


Email formats


Salutations


Professional language


Attachments

Verbs:


Answer


Inquire


Communicate


Compose


Express

Idioms:


Break the ice


Cut to the chase


Keep it under wraps


Read between the lines


Shoot the breeze

Good communication builds great opportunities!

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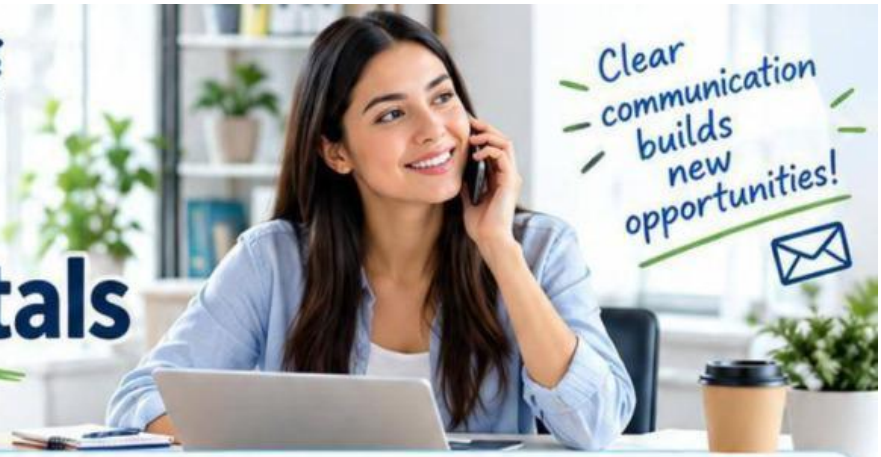
Grammar Fundamentals



Phone Conversations

Explanation	Structures Used	Examples
Greetings and Introductions	- Hello, how can I help you? - Hi, this is [Name].	- Hello, this is Maria. How can I assist you today?
	- Good morning/afternoon/evening.	- Good afternoon. Is this the IT department?
Make and Receive Calls	- Can I speak to [Name], please?	- May I speak to Mr. Rodriguez, please?
	- I'm sorry, he/she is not available.	- I'm sorry, she's in a meeting right now.
Take and Leave Messages	- Can I take a message?	- Yes, please tell Mr. Smith that Mrs. Jones called.
	- Could you ask him/her to call me back?	- Sure, I'll let him know.

Exercise 1: Gap Fill Exercise

Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. _____, this is Maria speaking. How can _____ today?
2. Good morning. _____ the manager available?
3. I'm sorry, _____ not in the office right now.
4. _____ I _____ to Mr. Lopez, please?
5. Could _____ take a message?
6. Yes, of course. _____ tell him that _____ called.
7. _____ you ask _____ to _____ me _____?

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Telephone Phrases for Customer Service

Be helpful. Be professional. Make a difference!



Answering the Call

- Good morning/afternoon/evening, thank you for calling [Company Name].
- This is [Your Name]. How can I help you?
- Hello, you're through to customer service.
- How may I assist you today?



Taking Messages

- May I take a message?
- Could you please repeat that?
- I'll make a note of that.
- I'll pass your message on to the right person.



Handling Requests

- Let me check that for you.
- I can help you with that.
- I'm sorry, but that's not possible.
- I'll do my best to assist you.



Dealing with Problems

- I'm sorry to hear that.
- Let me see what I can do.
- Could you provide more details?
- We'll resolve this as soon as possible.



Closing the Call

- Thank you for calling.
- Is there anything else I can help you with?
- Have a great day!
- Goodbye, and thanks for contacting us.



Expressive Phrases

- I really appreciate your patience.
- That sounds great!
- I completely understand.
- You're very welcome.



Remember

Use a friendly and professional tone, be polite, and always listen carefully. Your words create a better experience for every customer.



Useful Expressions

- I'm here to help.
- Let me find out for you.
- Thank you for your understanding.
- We appreciate your business.

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LESSON 1

Business Talk: Phones, Emails, and Expressive Phrases

Real conversations. Real situations.



Customer Service Dialogue

Read the conversation between a customer and a customer service representative.



CUSTOMER
Good morning. I'm calling about my new cellphone. It doesn't turn on, even though I charged it overnight.



CSR
Good morning! I'm sorry to hear that. Let me help you with that. May I have your name, please?



CUSTOMER
Sure. My name is Daniel Torres.



CSR
Thank you, Mr. Torres. Could you tell me when you purchased the phone and if you have the receipt?



CUSTOMER
I bought it two weeks ago, and yes, I have the receipt. What can I do now?



CSR
Great! I'll check your information and arrange a replacement. I'll send you an email with the details. Is there anything else I can help you with today?



CUSTOMER
No, that's all. Thank you for your help!

Key Phrases in the Dialogue

Answering the Call

- Good morning/afternoon/evening.
- Thank you for calling [Company Name].
- This is [Your Name].
- How can I help you?

Handling Requests

- Let me check that for you.
- I can help you with that.
- Could you please...?
- I'll do my best to assist you.

Dealing with Problems

- I'm sorry to hear that.
- Let me see what I can do.
- Could you provide more details?
- We'll resolve this as soon as possible.

Closing the Call

- Is there anything else I can help you with?
- Thank you for calling.
- Have a great day!
- Goodbye, and thanks for contacting us.

WATCH THIS VIDEO

Watch the short video and listen to a real customer service conversation. Then, answer the questions in your workbook.



Listen. Learn. Improve!

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How to Take a Phone Message



Steps to Take a Phone Message

1 Answer the call professionally.
- Good morning! ABC Company. How may I help you?
- Good afternoon! Thank you for calling. How can I assist you?

2 Find out who the caller wants to speak to.
- May I ask who you would like to speak to?
- Who would you like to speak with, please?

3 Explain that the person is unavailable.
- I'm sorry, but Mr. Smith is not available at the moment.
- I'm afraid Ms. Brown is in a meeting right now.
- He is currently out of the office.

4 Offer to take a message.
- Would you like to leave a message?
- Can I take a message for him?
- Would you like me to let her know that you called?

5 Ask for the necessary information.
- May I have your name, please?
- Could you please give me your phone number?
- What would you like me to tell him?
- Could you please spell your last name?

6 Confirm the information.
- Let me make sure I got that right.
- So, your name is Mr. Johnson, and your phone number is...
- You would like her to call you back this afternoon, correct?

7 Close the call politely.
- I'll make sure he gets your message.
- I'll pass your message along to her.
- Thank you for calling. Have a great day!

Message-Taking Form

Date: _____

Time: _____

To: _____

From (Caller's name): _____

Company: _____

Phone number: _____

Message:

Taken by: _____

Example of a Telephone Conversation

Receptionist:	Good morning! ABC Company. This is Sarah speaking. How may I help you?
Caller:	Good morning. Could I speak to Mr. Anderson, please?
Receptionist:	Certainly. May I ask who's calling?
Caller:	This is David Miller from Global Tech.
Receptionist:	I'm sorry, but Mr. Anderson is in a meeting at the moment. Would you like to leave a message?
Caller:	Yes, please. Could you tell him I'd like to discuss the new project? He can call me back at 888-456-7890.
Receptionist:	Certainly. Let me confirm your number: 888-456-7890, correct?
Caller:	That's correct.
Receptionist:	Thank you. I'll make sure he gets your message. Have a great day!
Caller:	Thank you. Goodbye!

Useful Vocabulary

Expression	Meaning
Take a message	Record information for someone who is unavailable.
Call back / Return a call	Phone someone again.
Pass a message along	Give a message to another person.
At the moment	Right now.
Available	Free to speak or meet.
Unavailable	Not able to speak or meet.
Get back to someone	Contact someone again later.
Put someone through	Connect a caller to another person.

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FRIENDS CONTEXT:
Make the Call, Take the Message

Stay connected. Friends are always part of the story.



STUDENT A
(Caller)

Call your friend and leave a message. Use the information below.

The information you need to say:

- **Name:** Daniel Carter
- **Phone number:** 555-742-3691
- **Reason for the call:** You can't go to the movie tonight because you have a family dinner.
- **Preferred time:** Tomorrow evening (after 7:00 p.m.)
- **Alternative plan:** Maybe watch it next weekend or go for coffee sometime soon.
- **Extra information:** You'll text your friend with the details.

Remember to mention:

- Your name
- The reason for your call
- The preferred time (or alternative)
- A friendly closing

STUDENT B
(Take the Message)

Listen to the message and complete the form below.

Message from:

Name:

Phone number:

Reason for the call:

Preferred time:

Alternative plan:

Other details / closing:

Useful Expressions

- Hi, this is … (name).
- I'm calling to …
- I can't make it because …
- Would it be possible to … ?
- How about …?
- I'll text you the details.
- Thanks for understanding!
- Talk to you soon!

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Doctor's Appointment:
Make the Call, Take the Message



ROLE PLAY

Student B will call the doctor's office to arrange an appointment. Student A will take a message and write down all the details. Student B must provide the information below naturally, without showing the worksheet to Student A. Then compare the notes.

STUDENT B
(Caller – Doctor's Office)

Information to communicate:

- Name: Alex Morgan
- Phone number: 555-0186
- Doctor: Dr. Taylor
- Reason for appointment: a persistent cough and sore throat
- Preferred day: Thursday
- Preferred time: after 2:00 p.m.
- Availability: Friday morning is also possible
- New or returning patient: new patient
- Insurance: GreenCare Health Plan
- Extra request: ask whether to bring an ID and insurance card

WHAT TO SAY

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain why you are calling.
- Ask for an appointment on your preferred day and time.
- Give your contact details and insurance information.
- Ask what documents you should bring.
- Thank the receptionist politely.

STUDENT A
(Receptionist – Take the Message)

Take notes here:

Patient's name:

Phone number:

Doctor:

Reason for appointment:

Preferred day:

Preferred time:

Alternative availability:

New or returning patient:

Insurance plan:

Documents to bring:

Appointment confirmed for:

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

- I'm calling to make an appointment.
- What seems to be the problem?
- Would Thursday afternoon be possible?
- Could I have your phone number, please?
- Are you a new patient?
- Please bring your ID and insurance card.
- Let me check the schedule.
- Thank you for your help!

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Phone Call: *Business Meeting*

Make the call. Take the message.



Role Play

Student A will call Student B. Follow the instructions and have a natural conversation. Student B will take a message. Then, switch roles.

STUDENT A
(Cailer)

Call and say the following:

- Introduce yourself and your company.
- Ask for the person (name) and mention that you are calling about the upcoming business meeting.
- Give the date and time of the meeting. (e.g., next Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.)
- Mention the meeting's location. (e.g., the company office or online via Zoom).
- Explain the purpose of the meeting. (e.g., to discuss the new project and next steps).
- Ask if the person can confirm the information or if they need anything else.
- Close the call politely.

Key Information to Include:

- Your name
- Company name
- Date and time
- Location (or online platform)
- Purpose of the meeting

STUDENT B
(Take Notes / Write the Message)

Take notes here:

Name:

Company:

Date and time:

Location:

Purpose of the meeting:

Other details / message:

Useful Expressions

- I'm calling about the meeting...
- Could you please confirm...?
- The meeting is scheduled for...
- It will be at...
- The purpose is to...
- Do you need anything else?
- Thanks for your help!
- Have a great day!

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LESSON 1

Customer Service: Take Notes

Listen. Take notes. Solve the problem.



ROLE PLAY

Student A will call the company to claim a damaged product. Student B will be the customer service representative. Listen carefully and take notes. Then, switch roles. *(Also include part of Your Turn: create a new situation and use your own information.)*

STUDENT A
(Caller)



Call the company and explain the problem. Use the information below.

Product information:

- Product: backpack
- Brand: TravelPro
- Order number: 786543
- Purchase date: April 15, 2025
- Problem: zipper is broken (doesn't close)

Your information:

- Name: Emily Carter
- Phone number: 555-982-3476
- Email: emily.carter@email.com
- Shipping address: 1200 Maple Ave, Austin, TX 78704

Key information to include:

- Your name
- Company name
- Order number
- Date and time
- Location (or online platform)
- Purpose of the call

STUDENT B
(Customer Service Representative)



Listen to the customer and complete the notes below.

Customer information:

Name:
Phone number:
Email:
Address:

Product information:

Product name:
Brand:
Order number:
Purchase date:

Problem / Request:

Next steps / Solution:

Other details / message:

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LESSON 1

PRACTICE TIME



Work in small groups. Engage in simulated phone conversations with assigned scenarios such as making appointments, booking rooms, or arranging gatherings. After completing your scenario, you may choose another for the next pair to participate, ensuring everyone gets a chance to practice speaking. Rotate roles for each session to foster collaboration and engagement.



Scenario 1: Dentist Appointment

You have a dentist appointment scheduled for next week, but something urgent has come up, and you need to reschedule. Call the dental office, explain the situation, and request to change your appointment to another available date and time.



Scenario 2: Restaurant Reservation

You're craving your favorite takeout meal and want to order food for delivery. Call a local restaurant, browse the menu options, place your order, provide delivery details, and confirm the payment method.



Scenario 3: Hotel Reservation

You're planning a weekend getaway and need to book a hotel room. Call the hotel reception, inquire about room availability, discuss amenities, and confirm your reservation details.



Scenario 4: Job Application

You're interested in a job opening at a company and want to inquire about the application process. Call the company's HR department, express your interest in the position, ask about job requirements, and inquire about the application procedure.



Scenario 5: Birthday Party

You're organizing a birthday party for a friend and need to invite guests. Call friends or family members, discuss the date, time, and location of the party, and confirm their attendance.



Scenario 6: Utility Service

You need to schedule a doctor's appointment for a routine check-up. Call the clinic, provide your details, and arrange a suitable date and time for the appointment.

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LESSON 1
Speaking



Telephone Networking Event

Read the situations below and practice the conversations with a partner. Then, answer the questions that follow each one.

1. IT Job Seeker and Recruiter

The job seeker is in the IT industry and wants to explore job opportunities. He calls the recruiter, introduces himself, and asks about available positions, company culture, and the application process.

The recruiter should answer professionally, listen to the job seeker's interests, provide information about openings, and explain the next steps, such as submitting a resume or scheduling an interview.



2. Healthcare Recruiter and Job Seeker

A recruiter contacts a job seeker in the healthcare sector, initiates the call, introduces herself, and provides feedback on the job seeker's application, discusses the next steps in the hiring process, such as scheduling an interview or requesting additional documents.

The job seeker should answer confidently, listen actively to the recruiter's feedback, ask any relevant questions about the application status or interview process, and express gratitude for the recruiter's time and assistance.



3. Finance Job Seeker and Industry Expert

The job seeker is in the finance field and wants advice from an industry expert. He calls, introduces himself, expresses his interest in learning more about career paths, and asks about the skills and qualifications needed for different roles.

The industry expert should share insights about the industry, offer guidance on how to gain experience, and provide advice on potential growth opportunities.



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LESSON 1

Pre-Listening Exercise
Phone Messages



1 Make a list of all of the reasons why a person may not be able to take a call (e.g., she's out of the office, he's on another line, etc.). When you do take a call, be sure to repeat the caller's name, number, and message before you hang up to confirm that you have the correct information.

Why can't someone take a call?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

2 **Agree or Disagree? Let's Spark Some Conversation!**

Do you agree or disagree with these statements. Talk together and share your opinions.

1. It's better to call someone than to send a text message.
2. Text messages are a quick and easy way to communicate.
3. Leaving a voicemail is better than sending a text when you have important news.
4. People should respond to text messages as soon as they can.
5. It's rude to not answer the phone when someone calls.
6. You should always leave a voicemail if the person doesn't answer your call.
7. It's okay to send a text message during a meeting or class.
8. People should avoid using their phone in public places like restaurants.
9. Sending a text message is better for asking simple questions than making a call.



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LESSON 1 LISTENING



TASK 1: People are leaving voicemail messages. Listen and number the pictures.



A. ☐



B. ☐



C. ☐



D. ☐



E. ☐



F. ☐

TASK 2

Listen again. How does each caller sound? Circle the correct answer.

1 Olivia sounds _____
- ○ a) pleased
- ○ b) angry
- ○ c) apologetic

2 Nathan sounds _____
- ○ a) scared
- ○ b) apologetic
- ○ c) excited

3 Anne sounds _____
- ○ a) apologetic
- ○ b) excited
- ○ c) pleased

4 Brandon King sounds _____
- ○ a) angry
- ○ b) bored
- ○ c) apologetic

5 Emily sounds _____
- ○ a) excited
- ○ b) angry
- ○ c) worried

6 Mrs. Parker sounds _____
- ○ a) apologetic
- ○ b) scared
- ○ c) angry

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LESSON 1
Listening



Listening: Phone Messages

1 TASK 1 • LISTENING

Listen to the voicemail messages. Read the information below and select the correct box for each item.

		Correct	Incorrect
1	The caller is Julie. The phone number is 834-6627. The message is: Please change your appointment to 10:30.	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐
2	The caller is Brian from the bank. The phone number is 447-7316. The message is: The shoes you ordered will be in next week.	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐
3	The caller is Jeff Lee. The phone number is 627-6002. The message is: He will be late to Spanish class tonight.	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐
4	The caller is Jessica Brown from Kim's Salon. The phone number is 867-5539. The message is: You can come in on Sunday morning at 11 a.m. for a haircut.	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐

2 TASK 2 • LISTEN AGAIN

Where is the person each caller asks for? Circle the correct answer.

1	a. at lunch	b. in a meeting	c. on vacation
2	a. in a meeting	b. at home	c. at lunch
3	a. in a class	b. at lunch	c. on vacation
4	a. on vacation	b. at the mall	c. at the bank
5	a. at lunch	b. in a class	c. at home
6	a. at home	b. at the bank	c. on vacation

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LESSON 1

Listening Practice

Take Notes and Answer



Task 1: Tyres – Listen and answer.



1. Who called?
2. When did the person call?
3. Who is the message for?
4. What is the caller's phone number?
5. What is the message?

Message Taking Notes

Caller: _____
Time: _____
For: _____

Phone #: _____
Message: _____
_____

Task 2: VET Appointment – Listen and answer.



1. Who called?
2. When did the person call?
3. Who is the message for?
4. What is the caller's phone number?
5. What is the message?

Message Taking Notes

Caller: _____
Time: _____
For: _____

Phone #: _____
Message: _____
_____

For more listening practice, visit:
http://www.web-esl.com/phones/ansmchns.htm

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