

## A Phoning scenario

You want to phone someone in a company. You pick up the phone. You hear the **dialling tone** and **dial** the number on the **keypad**. You don't know the person's **direct line** number, so you **dial** the number of the company's **switchboard**. One of these things happens:

- The number rings but no one answers.
- You hear the **engaged tone** (BrE) / **busy tone** (AmE) because the other person is already talking on the phone. You **hang up** and try again later.
- You **get through**, but not to the number you wanted. The person who answers says you've got the **wrong number**.
- The **operator** answers. You ask for the **extension** of the person you want to speak to.
- You are **put through** to the wrong extension. The person offers to **transfer** you to the right extension, but you are **cut off** – the call ends.
- The person you want to speak to is not at their desk and you leave a message on their **voicemail**. You ask them to **call you back** or to **return your call**.

## B Asking to speak to someone 1

Can you put me through to extension 123, please?  
 Can I have extension 123, please?  
 Extension 123, please.  
 123, please.  
 James Cassidy in Sales, please.

I phoned a moment ago, but I was cut off.

I'll } hold.  
 } call back later.

One moment, please.  
 I'm putting you through.  
 The extension/line is ringing for you.

Sorry to keep you waiting.

I think you've got the wrong extension.  
 I'll try and transfer you.

I'm afraid the line's/extension's busy/engaged.  
 I'm sorry, but there's no reply

Do you want to hold or would you like to call back later?

## C Voicemail

If the person you want to speak to is not there, you may hear this:

You're through to the voicemail of James Cassidy. I'm not at my desk right now, but if you leave a message, I'll get right back to you. To leave a message, press 1. To speak to the operator, please hold.

After you leave your message, you may hear this:

To listen to your message, press 2.

After you listen to your message, you may hear this:

If you'd like to change your message, press 3. If you'd like to erase your message, press 4. Otherwise, please hang up.

**49.1** You are trying to phone Delia Jones. She works in a large company. Match your possible reactions (1–7) to the things (a–f) described in A opposite. One of the things is used twice.

- 1 That's strange. Their switchboard isn't big enough to handle all the calls they get.
- 2 That's ridiculous! A company with 500 employees, but no one answers the phone.
- 3 I ask for Delia Jones and they put me through to Della Jones!
- 4 Delia seems to spend all day on the phone. Her line's always busy.
- 5 That's strange. I'm sure I dialled the right number.
- 6 Oh no I hate this – oh well, I'd better leave a message ...
- 7 They never seem able to find the extension number!

**49.2** Look at B opposite. Annelise Schmidt is trying to phone James Cassidy. Put the conversation into a logical order.

- 1 Annelise: Good morning. Can I speak to James Cassidy in Sales?
- 2 Annelise: Is that James Cassidy?
- 3 Annelise: No, I'm afraid I don't.
- 4 Annelise: Thanks. Oh no, I've been cut off.
- 5 Switchboard operator: Do you know the extension?
- 6 Switchboard operator: Sorry to keep you waiting. ... I'm putting you through.
- 7 John Cassidy: Cassidy.
- 8 John Cassidy: No, this is John Cassidy. You've come through to Accounts. I'll try and transfer you back to the switchboard.

**49.3** Look at Unit 48 and the opposite page. Correct the nine mistakes in Annelise Schmidt's voicemail message.

Hi James, this is Annelise calling out of Sprenger Verlag in Hamburg. It's very difficult to get hold to you. I phoned to you earlier, but your telephone central placed me through to the bad telephone. Anyway, I'm calling to you to discuss the contract we were talking about in Frankfurt. I'll call further later or perhaps you'd like to ring to me here in Hamburg on 00 49 40 789 1357. Bye for now.

### Over to you

Have you ever had these problems on the phone, in your language or in English?  
Do you use voicemail yourself? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

### A Asking to speak to someone 2

It's } X (here).  
This is }

! You don't say ~~I am~~ X.

Can } I speak to Y, please?  
Could }

Is that Y?

Y speaking.  
Speaking.

Is this a good/convenient time to call?

I'm (rather) tied up at the moment.  
Could you call back later?

I'm afraid Y is

n't at his/her desk.

not in the office.

on another line.

out of the office.

with someone right now.

off sick today.

in a meeting.

on holiday (until ...).

### B Giving and taking messages

I'm calling about ...  
I'm calling to confirm that ...  
Could I leave a message?  
Could you tell Y that ...?  
Could you ask Y to call me back? My number's ...

I wonder if you could call back later?

Can I ask who's calling?

Who's calling please?

Which company are you calling from?

May/Can I ask what it's about?

May/Can I take a message?

Would you like to leave a message?

I'll ask him/her to call you (when he/she gets back).

### C Spelling names

If you want to spell a name, you can say, for example, 'A for Alpha', 'B as in Bravo', etc.

You may also need these expressions:

■ capital A

■ small a

■ all one word

■ new word/line

■ dash or hyphen (-)

■ slash (/)

■ dot (.)

■ at (@)

### D Taking messages: checking information

a I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name.

e Where did you say you're calling from?

Could you spell it, please?

b Is that with a D at the end, D for David?

f Is that with one M in the middle or two?

c Did you say your number is 624 426?

g The code for Sweden is 49, right?

d Is that with B for Bravo or V for Victor?

h Is that Ginola like the football player?

**50.1** Look at A and B opposite and change these conversations so that they are correct and more polite.

**1**  
 A: I want to speak to Mrs Lee.  
 B: That's me but I'm busy.  
 A: Sven Nyman talking. I want to talk about your order.  
 B: Call me back later.

**2**  
 A: Are you James Cassidy?  
 B: No. Who are you?  
 A: Annelise Schmidt. Is James Cassidy there and, if he is, can I speak to him?  
 B: He can't speak to you. He's in a meeting. Give me a message.  
 A: He has to call me as soon as possible.

**50.2** Spell the following as you would spell them on the phone. Use the table below to help you. The first one has been done for you.

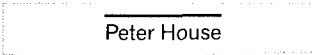
Alpha	Bravo	Charlie	Delta	Echo	Foxtrot
Golf	Hotel	India	Juliet	Kilo	Lima
Mike	November	Oscar	Papa	Quebec	Romeo
Sierra	Tango	Uniform	Victor	Whisky	X-ray
Yankee	Zulu				

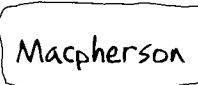
**1** Maecht: M for Mike, A for Alpha, E for Echo, G for Golf, H for Hotel, T for Tango.

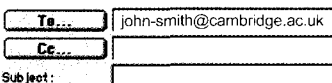
**2**  
 ● Valladolid

**3**  


**4**  


**5**  


**6**  


**7**  


**50.3** Match the responses (1–8) with the questions (a–h) in D opposite.

- 1 No, actually it's 46.
- 2 It's Valladolid with a V at the beginning, V for Victor.
- 3 No, it's Schmidt with a T at the end, T for Tommy.
- 4 Two. T-I-double-M-E-R-M-A-N.
- 5 No, 642 246.
- 6 Springer Verlag in Hamburg.
- 7 Krieslovski. K-R-I-E-S-L-O-V-S-K-I.
- 8 No, it's with two Ns in the middle.

*Over to you*



What is the most difficult thing when you phone someone in another language?  
 Practise words you often have to spell on the phone, using the alphabet above.

## A Making arrangements

You get through to the person you want to speak to and fix a meeting.

Can/Shall we fix/arrange an appointment/a meeting?  
Would it be useful to meet up soon?

How about Monday?  
What about Tuesday?  
Would Wednesday be suitable?  
Would Thursday suit you?  
Shall we say Friday?

I'll (just) get / check my diary

That's fine.

I can't / won't be able to make Monday.  
I've got to (+ infinitive) / a (+ noun) ...

## B Closing the conversation

Here are some ways of finishing a conversation without sounding abrupt (rude).

See you on Friday then.

I'm going to have to go now.

I've got to { go to a meeting.  
go and see someone.

(It's been ) nice talking to you.

Good to talk to you.

Talk to you soon, no doubt.

We'll be (back) in touch soon.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yes, I'll look forward to seeing you on Friday.

Nice talking to you.

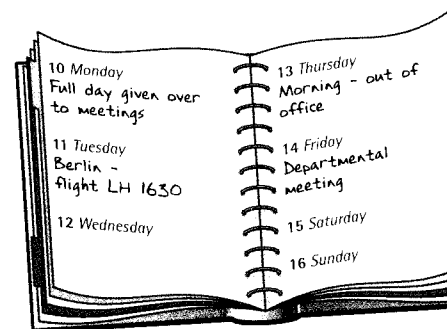
(It's been) good talking to you.

Thanks for { calling.  
phoning.

## C Changing arrangements

Here are some ways of changing arrangements.

- I can't **make** Tuesday (Tuesday is not possible). **Something has come up** (has occurred to prevent our meeting). **I've got to** go over to Berlin to see a client. **How about** Wednesday?
- I think we said Thursday at 11. **Can you make** the afternoon instead? (Is it possible for you to meet in the afternoon?)
- We're going to have to change our arrangement for the 15th. Can we **put it off** (delay it) till the 22nd? I'd completely forgotten we have a departmental meeting that day.
- I'm afraid Monday **won't be possible** after all. I'm going to be very busy that day. What about the following week?
- We're going to have to **put back** (delay) our meeting. I'm **completely snowed under** (very busy) at the moment. **Can we leave it open** (decide not to fix a day) for the time being? **I'll get back in touch** (contact you again) when I'm not so busy.



- 51.1** Annelise Schmidt (AS) gets through to James Cassidy (JC) and arranges to meet him. Reorder their conversation, which contains expressions from A and B opposite.
- a AS: Fine thanks. I'm going to be in London on Tuesday and Wednesday next week. How about meeting up to discuss how Megabook and Sprenger might work together?
  - b AS: Hello. This is Annelise Schmidt. You remember we met at the Frankfurt Book Fair last month?
  - c AS: Look forward to seeing you then. Bye.
  - d AS: Sounds good. Shall I meet you at your office? I've got the address.
  - e AS: Yes, that's fine.
  - f JC: James Cassidy.
  - g JC: Goodbye.
  - h JC: I'll just check my diary. I won't be able to make Tuesday. I've got to go to Manchester. Would Wednesday suit you? How about lunch?
  - i JC: OK. See you on Wednesday at 12.30, then.
  - j JC: Yes, how are you?
  - k JC: Yes. Why don't you come round here at about 12.30? Ask for me at reception and I'll come down.

**51.2** Look at B opposite. Which of these conversations sound natural, and which sound strange?

- 1 A: Nice talking to you. See you on Wednesday.  
B: See you Wednesday. Thanks for calling. Bye.
- 2 A: I'll look forward to seeing you tomorrow, then.  
B: Talk to you soon, no doubt. Bye.
- 3 A: It's been good talking to you. I'm going to have to go. I've got to go to a meeting.  
B: Nice talking to you. I'll be in touch soon.
- 4 A: See you this afternoon at four, then.  
B: Yes, we'll be back in touch soon.
- 5 A: I'm going to have to go.  
B: OK. Talk to you soon, no doubt. Bye.

**51.3** Match these replies (1–5) to the things (a–e) the people say in C opposite.

- 1 I suppose so: it would have been good to meet. Look forward to hearing from you when you're less busy.
- 2 The 22nd ... I'm going to be on holiday. What about the 29th?
- 3 The afternoon would be no problem. How about at three?
- 4 Wednesday's going to be difficult. Can you make the next day?
- 5 Yes, the same day the following week would be fine.

### Over to you

Do you make arrangements on the phone?

Do you find it difficult to end phone calls?