

IIT Madras

BSc Degree

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English – I (Basic English)

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Telephone English

(Refer Slide Time: 00:16)



Making a call

- Hi/ Hello.
 - This is Megha from Airvoice services.
 - My name is Megha. I am calling from Airvoice services.
-
- How is it going? Good, thanks. What about you?
 - How are you? Great, thanks. What about you?
 - What's up? Not much. The usual.



So, when it comes to a telephonic conversation, you either make a call, or you take a call. When do you make a call? You make a call by dialling the person's number and then the phone rings. When the phone rings, the person picks it up, and that is what is known as taking the call. So the situation that invites you to make a call could be formal. When do you make formal calls? When you have to make calls to your boss, to your office colleagues so all of this can be categorized under the formal calls.

Whereas when you talk to your family members when you talk to your friends, all of them can be seen as informal calls. So, let me give you a small example. I will tell you how you should start a phone conversation in both formal and informal context. So, you start by greeting, and then you introduce yourself. So, an example of formal context Megha is working for Air Voice Services, and this is how she is starting the phone conversation.

She starts by greeting, saying hi; hello, this is Megha from Air Voice Services, or she could also say, my name is Megha I am calling from the Air Voice Services. When it comes to informal calls, let us suppose you are making a call to your friend, you did not start the way you started

for a formal call right, you would not say my name is this, and I am calling for XYZ purpose. You would start with hi; how was it going or you would say hi; how are you? Or hi what's up? How do you respond to those questions? You may say good. Thanks, what about you? Or you could say good, thanks; how about you? Or you could also say not much, the usual; how about you?

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A video slide featuring a woman speaking. To her left is a graphic of a green circle with the text "Asking for someone". To the right of the video frame is a list of six phrases:

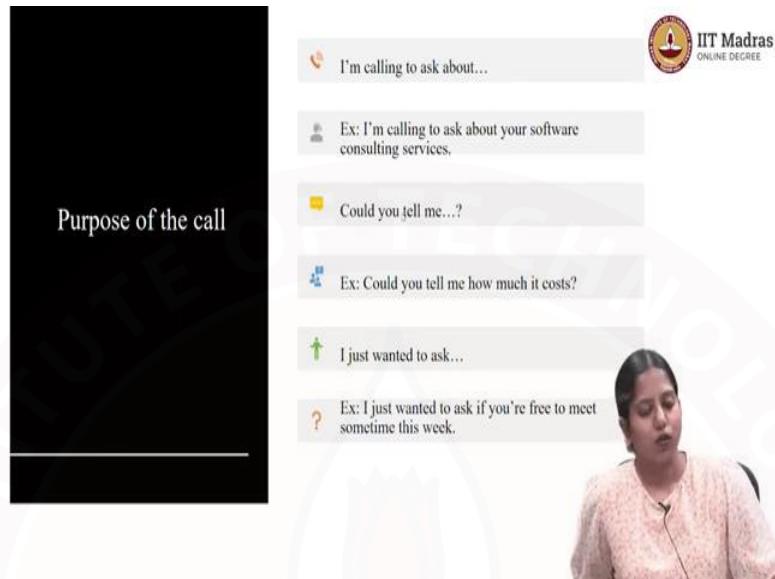
- May I speak to Padmini?
- Could I speak with Padmini?
- I'd like to speak to Padmini, please.
- Is Padmini there?
- Is Padmini around?
- Can I talk to Padmini?

Now here is another situation and that situation is when you have to ask for someone. So, again I am going to divide it on the basis of formal and informal context. So, let us suppose in a formal context. You want to call your friend Padmini; you make the call. So, making the call to her office number and somebody else her colleague has picked up the call. So, how would you phrase that? How do you ask for Padmini?

You may say; may I speak to Padmini? Or could I speak with Padmini? Or I would like to speak to Padmini. You may also add please at the end of the question or the sentence. So, in that case, you may say; may I speak to Padmini please? Or could I speak with Padmini please? Or I would like to speak to Padmini, please. Now if this is an informal context let us suppose Padmini is at home but she has not picked up the call instead her sister who is a good friend of yours as well picks up the call, so how would you ask for Padmini? Hi, is Padmini around? Or you would ask;

is Padmini there or can I talk to Padmini? So, there you do not have to be formal, you do not have to add please at the end of these questions.

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Now getting to the purpose of the call, so once you greet you ask for someone what next? Then you tell the person why you call him or her for. So, again in a formal context, you could say; I am calling to ask about I am giving you an example, let us suppose you want to know more about some software consulting services. So, you could say; hello, I am calling to ask about your software consulting services, then you could continue the conversation saying; could you tell me and so on. Could you tell me how much it costs?

Whereas in an informal situation, let us suppose you are calling your friend, you could just say; hey, I just wanted to ask if you are free to meet sometime this weekend. Hey, I just wanted to know if you are available for a movie this weekend. So, that is how you get to the purpose of the call.

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The image shows a video call interface. On the right side, there is a video frame of a woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored top. She appears to be speaking. To her left is a large, semi-transparent circular graphic divided into three horizontal sections: blue at the top, white in the middle, and green at the bottom. Overlaid on this graphic is the word 'Availability' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below 'Availability' is a bulleted list of five questions:

- When would be a good time to call?
- When will he/ she be back?
- Please let me know your best convenient time.
- Do you know when she'll be back?

Now checking on their availability, again let us suppose we are going to divide it according to formal and informal context. In a formal context, you are making a call to your friend, and she is in the office. You are making a call to her office number, and she is not around somebody else picks up the call, and then they say that this person is not around, so how would you ask for that person's availability, you could ask when would be a good time to call her or if you are talking to the person directly if your friend says that look I have a board meeting now, can we talk later.

Then you could say; when would be a good time to call? Or if someone else has picked up the call for her, you could ask when will he or she be back, or please let me know your best convenient time or please let me know her best convenient time for a call. And in an informal context like I have already said if Padmini sister has picked up the call and she is saying that you know Padmini is not around. The next question that you can ask you know checking on the availability is, do you know when she will be back.

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Leaving a message

- Could you take a message for him?
- I'd like to leave her a message.
- Please tell Padmini that Meera called.
- Please ask her to call me back.
- She can reach me at 7708645321.
- Could you ask him to call me back?
- Please tell him that I'm in town.
- Please let her know that I would like to meet her.

(comes to the conversation)

Now leaving a message, how do you leave a message? So, Padmini's sister says, look she is not around, should be back maybe in a couple of hours. So, you feel okay, in that case, let me leave a message for her. So, what are the things that we can say in that context? Let us check it out using a phone conversation. So, listen to this conversation, this will help you understand the different phrases and the questions that we can use in this context.

Telephone caller 1: Hello, could I speak to Padmini, please.

Telephone caller 2: I am sorry she is not around.

Telephone caller 1: Oh, that is alright, I would like to leave her a message, could you please take a message for her?

Telephone caller 2: Yes, of course.

Telephone caller 1: Or you may tell Padmini that Meera had called, you could also ask her to call me back.

Telephone caller 2: Sure, I will tell her.

Telephone caller 1: She can reach me at 7708645321.



Telephone caller 2: Oh wait a second please, let me grab a pen and a paper to make a note of that number. Could you please repeat your number?

Telephone caller 1: Yes, sure. My number is 7708645321.

Telephone caller 2: Okay, fine, noted.

Telephone caller 1: Okay, thank you. Bye.

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Taking a call

- Good morning/Good afternoon. (Company name), (your name) speaking.
- Thank you for calling (company name). This is (your name).
- How may I help you? What can I do for you ?

- Ex: Good afternoon. Air voice services. Megha speaking.
- How may I help you?
- Ex: Thank you for calling Airvoice Services. This is Megha. What can I do for you today?

Now, taking a call. When do you take a call, when your phone rings, you take a call. You could also say you are picking up the call. So, again we will look at both informal and formal context. First, the formal context, let me give you a context. So, Megha was working for Air Voice Services, and a lot of customers call her to enquire about various plans and various customer services. So let us see how Megha introduces herself after picking up the call.

So, you could say, so Megha could say; Good afternoon, Air Voice Services; Megha speaking or she could say; Hello, Good afternoon, Air Voice Services, how may I help you? Or she could also say; thank you for calling Air Voice Services, this is Megha, what can I do for you today? Or it is also possible that she could say thank you for calling Air Voice Services, this is Megha how may I help you or what can I do for you.

Now we will listen to a phone conversation and understand this process better. We will know how to use certain phrases and sentences or the different kinds of phrases and sentences that you can use when you take a call.

Telephone caller 1: Good afternoon. Thank you for calling Air Voice Services. How may I help you?

Telephone caller 2: This is Kavita calling from Madipakkam. I had recharged my phone with an international roaming plan which I see is still not activated.

Telephone caller 1: Okay, please hold on mam, I will put you through the technical team.

Telephone caller 2: Okay.

Telephone caller 1: Hello mam, it was a technical glitch from our side, sorry for the inconvenience caused by the delay. The team has worked on it. The plan will be activated in 15 minutes, anything else that I can help you with?

Telephone caller 2: No, nothing else, thank you so much.

Telephone caller 1: Thank you, have a nice day.

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Asking who is calling

- Hello...Is that?
- Could I ask who's calling?
- May I ask who's calling?
- Who's calling, please?
- Who am I speaking to, please?
- Where are you calling from, please?



Now asking who is calling. Suppose, you are not familiar with the voice, in that case, you could ask, 'May I know who is calling or may I ask who is calling or could I ask who is calling or who is calling please or who am I speaking to please?' And then you can also follow up the question where are you calling from, please? However, if the voice sounds familiar to you, then you could say; hello is that Padmini? So, I hope I made this part clear; these are all the questions that you can use in order to ask or know who is calling.

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- Could you hang on?
- Could you hold on?
- Would you mind holding, please?
- Hold on, let me grab a pen and a paper.
- Sorry, to keep you waiting.
- Sorry, he is on the other line.
- Could I take a message?
- Could I leave a message?
- I am tied up at the moment. Can I call you back/in an hours time?
- If it is not urgent, can I buzz you later in the evening?
- You just have two minutes, be quick in what you have to say.
- I won't be able to have a long chat as I am driving now.
- This conversation will take longer, can I call you later?

Now, asking to wait. Again will listen to another phone conversation; this will help you familiarize with certain questions and certain sentences and phrases that you can use to ask the other persons to hold or to wait.

Telephone caller 1: Hello, can I speak to Meera, please.

Telephone caller 2: Could you hold on, I will check if she is around.

Telephone caller 1: Yeah, sure.

Telephone caller 2: I, sorry to keep you waiting, Meera has gone to the nearby temple with her grandmother, she is not around. Do you want me to take a message for Meera?

Telephone caller 1: No thanks, I will buzz her tomorrow morning.

Telephone caller 1: Hello, this is Nitya sister Ananya speaking.

Telephone caller 2: Oh, hello Ananya yes I remember Nitya telling me that you wanted some inputs in the new BSc course launched by IIT Madras.

Telephone caller 1: Yes, is it a good time to talk?

Telephone caller 2: Ananya, I am tied up at the moment, can I call you back in an hours time?

Telephone caller 1: Sure, please call me at your best convenient time.

Telephone caller 2: Okay, sure. Bye.

Telephone caller 1: Bye.

Could you hang on, could you hold on, would you mind holding please, hold on let me grab a pen and a paper, sorry to keep you waiting, sorry he is on the other line, could I take a message, could I leave a message, I am tied up at the moment, can I call you back in an hours time, if it is not urgent can I buzz you later in the evening, you just have 2 minutes be quick and what you have to say or I would not be able to have a long chat as I am driving now. This conversation will take longer; can I call you later. All these based on the context. These are all the sentences you can use based on a different context, based on the context that you are in.

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On receiving a second call

- I am receiving a second call. Could you hold for a second/minute?
- I am speaking to someone on the other side. If it is not urgent, can I call you in sometime?
- I am getting a call from my professor. I will have to answer. I will call you back soon.
- Please hold on'a sec. My boss is pinging me.



Now on receiving a second call, let us suppose you already on a call with someone, and you are receiving a second call, what are the phrases that will come, phrases and sentences that we can use or that will come handy to you when you receive a second call. You could say; I am receiving a second call could you hold for a second or could you hold for a minute, you could also say I am speaking to someone on the other side if it is not urgent can I call you in sometime? You could say I am getting a call from my professor; I will have to answer. I will call you back soon.

Or again depending on the context I am getting a call from my family, or I am getting a call from my dad, I am getting a call from my office, I will have to answer this I will call you back soon. Or you could also say, please hold on for a second; my boss is pinging me. Please hold on for a second; my boss is pinging me. What is pinging? Here ping is a synonym for a call, so instead of saying my boss is calling me, you could also use my boss is pinging me.

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Conference call

- Can I get Sita with us?
- Wait a second, let me rope in Sita into this call.
- I am having Geetha with me on the other side, I am patching you in.
- Geetha and Sita, am I audible to both of you?
- Geetha, please stay on the line, Sita you could disconnect. I will call you later.

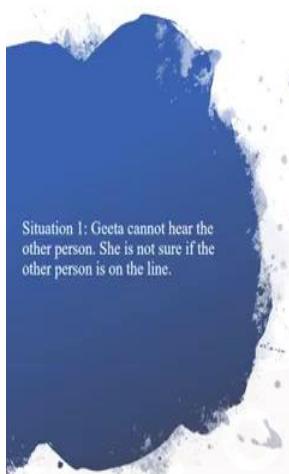


So, now coming to conference calls. What are conference calls? What is a conference call? A conference call is a call that you make to multiple people at the same time. So, you put people on a conference call. So, I am giving you a situation here, here Ram is talking to Geeta, and that is when Sita is calling Ram, and they all want to discuss the office work. So, Ram says, and he says this to Geeta; look Sita is calling me or he could also say; look Sita is pinging me, can I get Sita with us? So, Geeta says, of course, we would like to discuss this with Sita as well. So, he says, wait a second, let me rope in Sita into this call.

This is important, rope in. Let me rope in, and then you tell Sita, i.e., Ram tells Sita that I am having Geeta with me on the other side, I am patching you in. Meaning, I am adding you to this call with Geeta. And once he does that to confirm whether he is audible to both of them, he says Geeta and Sita, am I audible to both of you? So, he is asking both of them, am I audible?

And once the conversation begins and they discuss over about the project then Ram says Geeta please stay on the line, Sita could you disconnect, I will call you later. So, they discuss whatever is required with Sita, so now Ram feels that Sita could disconnect and he needs to talk more with Geeta, and therefore, he ends up saying Geeta, please stay on the line, Sita you could disconnect, I will call you later.

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Situation 1: Geeta cannot hear the other person. She is not sure if the other person is on the line.

1. Hello, are you there?
2. Hello. Can you hear me?
3. Hello. Am I audible?
4. Hello. Is my voice clear enough?
5. Can you hear me loud and clear?
6. Is my voice too low?



Now, let us talk about phone problems. We all encounter, or we all have difficulties hearing the other person from time to time. Right? When we make a phone conversation when we make phone calls with friends, families and colleagues and both formal and informal context. What are the sentences that can be used in such situations, so I am giving you one situation and this is where Geeta cannot hear the other person, and she is not sure if the other person is on the line?

So, in that case, she may ask hello, are you there or hello can you hear me or hello, am I audible or hello, is my voice clear enough, hello, can you hear me loud and clear, hello, is my voice too low? So, these are all the questions that you can ask if you are not sure whether the other person is on the line or not.

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Situation 2: Lena is on a phone conversation with Anjali. Anjali realises that she is running out of charge.

- 1. Please be quick. My battery is about to die.
- 2. I might lose you soon, as I am on 1% battery.
- 3. My battery is about to drain. Please text me.
- 4. Can I call you after charging my phone?
- 5. Let me grab a charger and call you back.



The second situation is where Lena is on a phone conversation with Anjali, and Anjali realizes that she is running out of charge. So, her phone is going to die soon. In that case, what are the sentences that can be used? She may say, please be quick, my battery is about to die, she could say I might lose you so soon, lose you soon, as I am on 1 per cent battery. She could also say my battery is about to drain, please text me or can I call you after charging my phone? Or let me grab a charger and call you back.

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Situation 3 : Geeta cannot hear the other person.

- Hello, I can hear you on and off.
- Hello, your voice is breaking.
- Hello, your voice is jarring.
- Hello, I can hear you, but in bits and pieces
- Hello, your voice is echoing.
- Hello, I think you got cut off.



Now let us look at the third situation, that is when Geeta is not able to hear the other person properly. We must all have encountered this situation multiple times when we make phone calls.

You either hear your own voice or you hear the other person's voice is echoing or surfacing back or you hear them in bits and pieces. So, what are the sentences that we can use when you cannot hear the other person properly?

So, one we can say hello, I can hear you on and off. Then the second sentence is hello; your voice is breaking. You could also say your voice is jarring. When do you say your voice is jarring? When many a time we end up hearing some kind of vibrating noise and that is what is known as jarring. So, you could say your voice is jarring. The next one is hello, I can hear you, but in bits in pieces. The fifth one is, hello, your voice is echoing, that is when the voice surfaces back or sometimes you could hear you might hear your own voice. In that case, you could say look my voice is echoing let me cut the call and call you back again or you could also say hello, I think you got cut off.

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Phone problems / Wrong number



I can't get through.



The line is
busy/engaged/unobtainable.



Sorry, I think you have got
the wrong number.



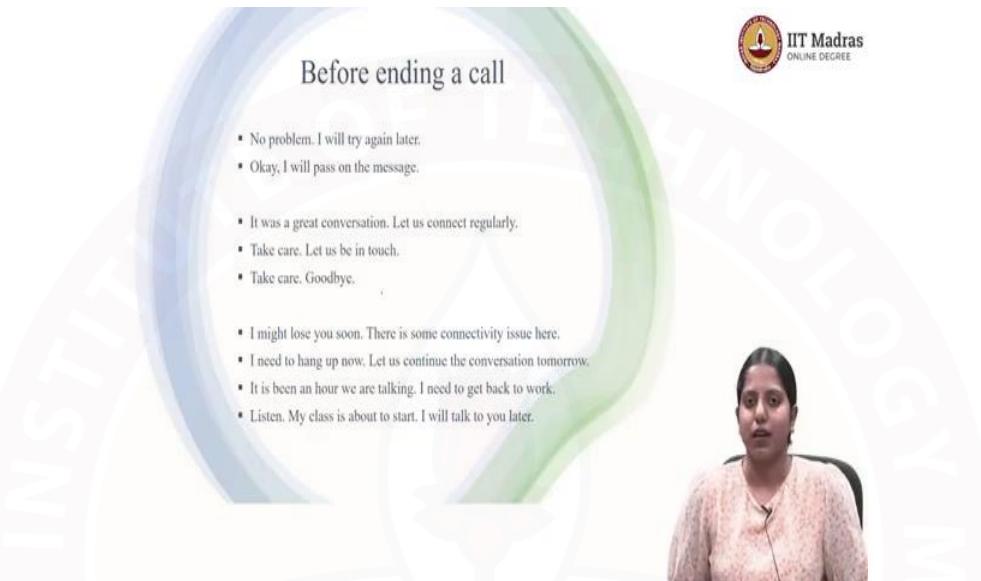
There is none of that name
here.



Now, the other phone problems are when you just hear a beep sound that is when you say I could not get through that number or when you hear multiple beep sounds maybe it could also mean that the other person is busy or engaged. In that case, you could say looks like the line is busy I will call her later, or you could say the line is engaged, she is talking to somebody else I will call her later. Or if there is no sound at all, you could either say looks like the phone is dead or you could say she is unobtainable or the line is unobtainable.

Now there is another instance which is the wrong number; the other situation is the wrong number. So, rather than saying wrong number which we generally tend to say, you could say, sorry I think you have got the wrong number or you could say there is no one or none of that name here.

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Before ending a call

- No problem. I will try again later.
- Okay, I will pass on the message.
- It was a great conversation. Let us connect regularly.
- Take care. Let us be in touch.
- Take care. Goodbye.
- I might lose you soon. There is some connectivity issue here.
- I need to hang up now. Let us continue the conversation tomorrow.
- It is been an hour we are talking. I need to get back to work.
- Listen. My class is about to start. I will talk to you later.

Now, how do you end a call? If it is a formal situation, then you could say, okay, no problem I will try again later. This is when you call for someone, but that person is not around and your friends, colleague is telling you that she is not around. So you could say, no problem I will again later, or if you are on the receiving end and if your friend's friend has asked you to pass on a message. You could say, okay great; I will pass on the message.

And then informal phone conversation you could say it was a great conversation let us connect regularly or take care, let us be in good touch. Or take care. Goodbye. Now if there is a connectivity issue or you get another call you want to hang up, then what are the sentences that you can use in that context? You could say, I might lose you soon there is some connectivity issue here. I might lose you soon there is some connectivity issue here. Then you could say I need to hang up now, let us continue the conversation tomorrow.

You could also say it's been an hour we are talking I need to get back to work or listen, my class, is about to start I will talk to you later, this is when you have to cut the call abruptly—and again based on the different context. So, I hope you have picked up a few phrases and sentences that no

will come handy to you in phone conversations. With that we come to the end of the module, I will meet you with a different module on a different day until then stay safe, take care. Bye.

