

A Starting informal calls



Hello.

Speaking.

Hello, Liam. How are you?

Is

Pia there?
that Pia?

Hi Pia, it's Liam here.



B Starting formal calls

Good morning. Cara
Thompson's office.

Hello.

Could
Can

I speak to

Ms Thompson, please?



Who's calling, please?

My name's Julian Maxwell.
I'm calling from JM
Consultants in New York.One moment please.
I'll put you through.

Thank you.

Good morning, Ms
Thompson. My name's ...

Cara Thompson.

C Ending calls

I'll phone call again next week.

Good
Nice

to talk to you.

See you on Thursday.
at the meeting.
in Rome.Thanks
Thank you for calling.
phoning.Bye.
Goodbye.

A Showing understanding
Showing you understand



I'm phoning from UWX in Sydney.

Could you ask Ellen to email the details?

It's very important.

Right.

OK. I'll do that.

I understand.



B Checking and confirming information
Checking

My name's Nicholls.

Sorry, I didn't get that. Could you speak more slowly, please?

I'm sorry. My - name - is - Nicholls.

Is that one L or two?

Two. N-I-C-H-O-double L-S.
The company is Goodwood.

Can you spell that please?

I'm calling from Bendrix in London.

Can you repeat that (= say it again), please?

Yes, it's Bendrix.

Sorry, I can't hear you. Could you speak up (= speak more loudly), please?

Yes, of course. The number is 020 7400 3004.

So, that's 020 7400 3004.

Confirming

That's it.
right.

Jane Nicholls
jane.nicholls@jhu.co.uk

My email address is
Jane dot Nicholls at jhu dot co dot uk.
/kəʊ/

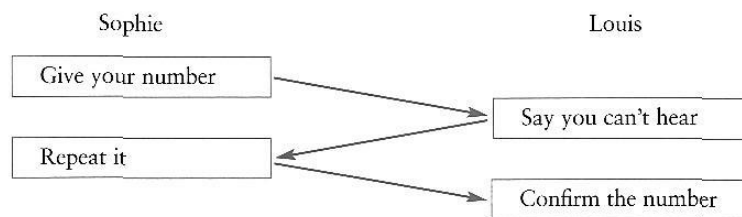
8.1 What do you say in the situations below? Look at A and B opposite to help you.

- 1 You understand what the caller is saying. (3 expressions)
- 2 The other person is speaking too fast.
- 3 You can't hear the other person.
- 4 You're not sure how to write a name.
- 5 You want someone to say the word again.
- 6 You confirm some information.

8.2 Put the conversation into the correct order. Look at B opposite to help you. The first sentence is i.

Speaker A	Speaker B
a That's it. Thank you very much.	b No problem. Goodbye.
c I'm sorry. I'll try to speak louder. Lisa dot Taggart at A-Y-Z dot com.	d Is that one G or two?
e Lisa dot Taggart at A-Y-Z dot com.	f Sorry, I can't hear you. Could you speak up, please?
g Yes, of course. My – name – is – Taggart.	h Lisa dot Taggart at A-Y-Z dot com.
i My name's Taggart.	j Thank you. And what's your email address, please?
k Two. T-A-double G-A-R-T.	l Sorry, I didn't get that. Could you speak more slowly, please?

8.3 Write the conversation below. Look at B opposite to help you.



Over to you



Write a short dialogue between you and one of your colleagues to check information using expressions from this unit. Give your email address.

39 Telephoning 4: messages

A Useful expressions

Person receiving a call

I'm sorry,
I'm afraid

he's
she's

on another call.
not here at the moment.

Can I take a message? (= you want to write down a message from the caller)

Who's calling please?

Which company are you calling from?

Person making a call

Can
Could

I leave a message? (= you want to give a message)

Can
Could

you ask

him
her

to

call
phone

me back

tomorrow?
as soon as possible?

B Leaving a message

Person receiving a call

Mark Simpson's office.

I'm sorry, he's in a meeting. Can I take a message?

Can I have your number?

020 9422 ...

5483. So, that's 020 9422 5483.

I'll give him the message.

Goodbye.

Person making a call

Hello. Can I speak to Mr Simpson please?

Yes, please. My name's Denise Parker.

Yes, it's 020 9422 5483.

5483.

That's right. Could you ask him to call me back? It's very urgent (= important to do quickly).

Thank you very much. Goodbye.

9.1 Put this conversation into the correct order. Look at A and B opposite to help you. The first sentence is h.

- | | |
|--|---|
| a So, that's 0131 899 0210. | h Mary Trevor's office. |
| b Can I have your number? | i Thank you very much. Goodbye. |
| c Goodbye. | j That's it. |
| d Hello. Can I speak to Ms Trevor please? | k My name's Ray Bradman. Can I leave a message? It's very urgent. |
| e I'll give her the message, Mr Bradman. | l Can you ask Ms Trevor to call me back tomorrow morning? |
| f I'm sorry, she's not here at the moment. Who's calling please? | m Yes, of course. |
| g It's 0131 899 0210. | |

9.2 Complete the message form using the information from the call in 39.1 above.

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

Message for: _____

Name of caller: _____

☐ Will call again ☐ Please call

Phone number: _____

☐ Urgent ☐ Not urgent

Notes: _____

Over to you



Think of the last phone message that you left. What did you say? Practise saying it in English.

49 Telephoning 2: getting through

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:

- a The number rings but no one answers.
- b 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.
- c You **get through**, but not to the number you wanted. The person who answers says you've got the **wrong number**.
- d The **operator** answers. You ask for the **extension** of the person you want to speak to.
- e 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.
- f 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?

50 Telephoning 3: messages

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.
Could you spell it, please?
- b Is that with a D at the end, D for David?
- c Did you say your number is 624 426?
- d Is that with B for Bravo or V for Victor?
- e Where did you say you're calling from?
- f Is that with one M in the middle or two?
- g The code for Sweden is 49, right?
- 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 Maeght: M for Mike, A for Alpha, E for Echo, G for Golf, H for Hotel, T for Tango.

2

● Valladolid

5

Peter House


3



6

Macpherson

4

 <http://www.britishcouncil.org/courses>

7

To... john-smith@cambridge.ac.uk
Cc...
Subject:

- 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.

Telephoning 4: arrangements

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.

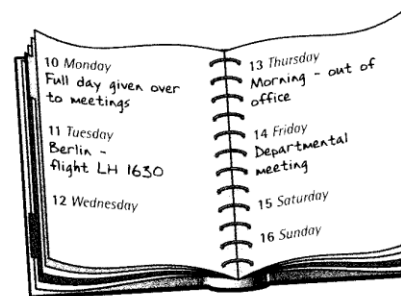
(It's been) good talking to you.

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?

What to say – what to expect

Read these useful sentences and make sure you understand them. Use a dictionary to help you.

Requests

Person calling

I'd like to speak to somebody about ...
Can you give me some information about ... ?
What's the position on ... ?
We'd like an earlier delivery date if possible.
Could you bring delivery forward by a few weeks?

Person called

What's the order number?
Can you give me the reference number?
When did you send the order?
I'll have to check with the department concerned.
I can't tell you right now, but I can look into it and get back to you.
Can I let you know the situation tomorrow?

Task 9 Requesting information

Study these examples of how to ask for information politely.

You don't know a caller's name. (give)

Could you give me your name, please?

You aren't sure of the name of the caller's company. (repeat)

Would you repeat the name of your company, please?

You want to know where the caller is calling from. (tell)

Can you tell me where you're calling from, please?

Could and *would* are more polite than *can*.

Now make questions using *could*, *would* and *can* in a similar way.

- 1 You aren't sure exactly what the caller is phoning about. (tell)
- 2 You want to know the caller's telephone number. (give)
- 3 You don't know how to spell the caller's name. (spell)
- 4 You didn't hear the caller's address clearly. (repeat)
- 5 You want to find out when the caller will be in the office tomorrow. (tell)
- 6 You aren't sure about the delivery date of your order. (confirm)

Task 13 Role play

Work with another student when you do this exercise. Agree which of you is Student A and which is Student B. Student A has information on this page, Student B on page 72.

Sit back to back. Student A should now 'call' Student B. When you have done the calls once, change roles.

A1 You are a colleague of Hannah Booth. You would like to ask Richard Dawson for the company name and phone number of someone called Kevin Kim in South Korea who he mentioned to Hannah Booth.

A2 You are a colleague of Nick Sheridan. You would like to ask Mark Wheeler the price of plugs (reference number MS/74/07) from Motor Systems UK.

A3 You are a colleague of Carla Parker. Carla has asked you to call Richard Dawson as she would like some information about Hannah Booth's company. If he is unavailable, leave a message, and explain that Carla would like the information urgently.

What to say – what to expect

Read these useful sentences and make sure you understand them. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

Connecting to an extension

Person calling

Could you put me through to Lorenzo Rinelli, please?
I'd like to speak to Isabel Silva, please.
Could you give me the number of his direct line, please?
She asked me to phone her this morning.

Person called

Would you hold on, please?
Please hold the line.
Yes, please hold on and I'll put you through.
Sorry to keep you waiting.
Sorry, this isn't her extension. I'll try to transfer you.

Wrong number

Person calling

Oh, isn't that International Computers?
I'm sorry, I must have the wrong number.
I thought I'd dialled 01632 875 4903.
Well, I found this number on a price list.
Sorry, I must have written down the wrong number. I'll try Directory Enquiries.
Sorry to have bothered you.
I must have got the area code wrong.

Person called

I think you must have dialled the wrong number. What number have you got?
I'm afraid there's nobody here with that name.
Sorry, they moved last August. The new number is 0117 496 0003.
You could probably find the right number on the Internet.

What to say – what to expect

Read these useful sentences and make sure you understand them. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

Making and confirming arrangements

Person calling / Person called

I'll email you the details.
I'll fax you to confirm all the arrangements.
Can I get back to you to confirm those details?
Right, I've got the details you were asking about.
You asked me to call back to let you know if the terms were acceptable.
We've discussed possible dates for the meeting, and next Thursday would suit us all.
Could you manage that?
I'll put everything we've discussed in writing and copy it to the relevant people.
About the delivery times – the earliest date we can manage is 1st May.
When you've checked things at your end, could you let me know, please?
There will be a car to collect you from the airport when you arrive.

Language study

Task 9 Asking questions

Study these examples of how to make questions.

You want to know where the nearest payphone is.

Where's the nearest payphone?

You want to find out how to spell someone's name.

How do you spell your name?

Now make questions in a similar way.

- 1 Find out when Ms Gonzalez will be back.
- 2 You'd like to know why the sales office hasn't called.
- 3 Find out when the manager normally arrives at the office.
- 4 You want to know why the documents have been delayed.
- 5 Find out the number to dial for Directory Enquiries.
- 6 You'd like to know where someone is phoning from.
- 7 You need to know a convenient time to ring someone back.
- 8 Find out why the meeting has been postponed and what the new date is.

Task 13 Role play

Work with another student when you do this exercise. Agree which of you is Student A and which is Student B. Student A has information on this page, Student B on page 72.

Sit back to back. Student A should now 'call' Student B. When you have done the calls once, change roles.

A1 You are a colleague of Liz Hunt at Orbis Group. Call Yoshida Tokuko in his office in Tokyo, on 0081 3 3486 5912. You would like him to confirm he can meet Liz Hunt when she comes to Tokyo on 14 May.

A2 Try the same call again.

A3 You are a colleague of Frank Patterson. He has asked you to call Teresa Lombardo urgently because the consignment sent by her company hasn't arrived yet – she had said it would arrive by the end of May and it's now 7 June. Find out why it is late and when it is expected to arrive.

What to say – what to expect

Read these useful sentences and make sure you understand them. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

Enquiries for prices and discounts

Person calling

I've seen your advertisement and I'd like to know how much you charge for ...
Could you please tell me what your terms are?
Does the discount go up according to the size of the order?
What are your hotel rates? Does that include breakfast?

Person called

We can give you a 10% discount if you order before 30 October.
The sale is going to continue for the next month.
When you open an account with us you get 5% off immediately.
Our prices start at \$100 for a single room, with breakfast included.

Task 9 Passing on messages

Study these examples of how to pass on messages.

'I'm arriving on flight BA 532,' said Claudia Peuser.

Claudia Peuser said she was arriving on flight BA 532.

Ming Li said to Jeff Shen, 'Please send confirmation in writing to the suppliers.'

Ming Li told/asked Jeff Shen to send confirmation in writing to the suppliers.

Now pass on these messages in a similar way. Make sure that you make all the necessary changes.

- 1 'I'll give you an extra 2% discount for such a big order,' Prisca Marchal said to me.
- 2 'Alicia, please tell Pablo Lubertino we've received his order,' the manager said.
- 3 'How do you spell your second name?' the receptionist asked Xin Yuzhuo.
- 4 The Sales Manager said to me, 'Tell her we'll offer them a bigger discount.'
- 5 Mete Irmak said, 'We paid the account by bank transfer on 17 October.'
- 6 'Can you check whether the figures in the file are correct, please?' Daniel Tai said to Hanna Chang.
- 7 'Could you tell Abdullah Hassan that I called, please?' Melissa Fu said to the receptionist.
- 8 Kenny Liu said to his colleague, 'Is the sale due to end next week?'

Task 13 Role play

Work with another student when you do this exercise. Agree which of you is Student A and which is Student B. Student A has information on this page, Student B on pages 72–73.

Sit back to back. Student A should now 'call' Student B. When you have done the calls once, change roles.

A1 You have inherited some money and you would like to invest £10,000 in shares. You call Daniel Evans at Capital Investment Services. You want to invest in 'safe' companies and you would like some prices, and information on how you can expect your money to grow.

A2 Your office is in London. You have to go on a business trip to Lima, Peru, at short notice for a ten-day trip. You call Globe Travel Agency to ask Annabel Davies to make bookings for you. You would like to stop over in Mexico City on the way, and in Port of Spain, Trinidad on the return trip. You would like to travel business class. Tell the travel agent the dates you need to travel. You need to know how much the return fare will be before you can make the booking.

A3 You are a colleague of Ben Corbett, the Sales Director at Bebbington Porcelain. Ben has asked you to call Eva Frei at the International Shop in Berlin to give her some more information about the tableware which the conference centre may order. There is a three-month delay in the production of the Blue Room Collection dinner plates, and stocks are low now; the Violet Room Collection is very similar, and all the pieces are in stock; the Gold Room Collection tableware has been discounted by a further 5% for three months.

What to say – what to expect

Read these useful sentences and make sure you understand them. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

Making appointments

Person calling / Person called

How about meeting on Tuesday 21st at 11.00?

I'll just check my diary.

When would be convenient for you?

Could you manage one morning next week?

Shall we say Wednesday 29th at 3 o'clock?

I'm afraid I'm tied up all that day.

I'll pencil that in for now. Can you tell me soon whether we can go firm on that?

Sorry, I've already got an appointment then. Can we arrange another time?

Could you send me a fax / an email confirming all the details?

Would it be possible to postpone the meeting?

Sorry to be difficult, but something urgent has come up, and I'm not going to be able to make it on the day we'd fixed.

It looks as if everyone involved can manage Friday next week, so let's go for that.



What to say – what to expect

Read these useful sentences and make sure you understand them. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

Changing appointments

Person calling / Person called

Could we arrange another appointment?

How about the 7th rather than the 1st? Are you free then?

I'm sorry, I can't manage that day after all. Can we find another date?

I'm calling because I don't think I'll be able to come after all.

Let's fix another time then. Would it suit you if we postpone the meeting until next month?

There's been a change of plan and I'm afraid I'm going to have to rearrange things to try to fit everything in.

I've been double-booked, because my assistant was confused by the appointments written in my diary, so we'll have to change the time of our meeting.

What to say – what to expect

Read these useful sentences and make sure you understand them. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

Making and handling complaints (1)

Person calling

I'm afraid I have to make a complaint.

It's very inconvenient.

The standard of service was unacceptable.

We should have been warned there was a problem.

I think we'll have to ask for a refund.

What are you going to do about it?

Person called

I'm very sorry to hear that.

I'm very sorry about the delay.

I'll find out what has happened and ring you back.

I shall make a full investigation into what went wrong.

I appreciate your position.

I can only apologise.

Task 9 Fault diagnosis

When we are talking about faults, we often use modal auxiliary verbs:

may/might/could – to list possible reasons (affirmative)

may/might – to list possible reasons (negative)

should/ought to – to talk about what we expect to happen

can't – to exclude various reasons

must – when we decide what the reason for the fault is

Example:

I can't get a dialling tone on my phone. It *may* be because there's a fault in the phone, or it *could* be in the phone line, or I *might* not have plugged the phone in. So I check the plug, but it's in the socket, so it *can't* be that. The phone company says the line is OK, so the phone *ought to* work, but it doesn't. The fault *must* be somewhere in the phone itself.

Complete the fault diagnosis in a similar way. (In some cases there is more than one possible answer.)

My car won't start one morning. Why not? There are a number of possible explanations. It (1) _____ be the battery. It (2) _____ be the plugs. I check them both, but they're OK, so the car (3) _____ start, but it doesn't. I had a new starter motor put in last month, so it (4) _____ be that. Then I notice that the needle in the fuel gauge is pointing at empty. It (5) _____ be the fuel. The fuel tank (6) _____ be empty. If I put some fuel in it, the car (7) _____ start. The fuel gauge (8) _____ be faulty, but I don't think it is.

What to say – what to expect

Read these useful sentences and make sure you understand them. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

Making and handling complaints (3)

Person calling

We're very unhappy with the arrangements.

This really isn't acceptable.

That may be true, but it doesn't help us right now.

I want you to get this sorted out now.

I can't afford to be let down again.

Person called

We're normally very reliable.

We've never had this sort of problem before.

This certainly shouldn't have happened.

I'll look into the matter immediately.

I'll deal with it personally.

I can't apologise enough.

Thank you for telling me about it.

Task 13 Role play

Work with another student when you do this exercise. Agree which of you is Student A and which is Student B. Student A has information on this page, Student B on page 76. Sit back to back. Student A should now 'call' Student B. When you have done the calls once, change roles.

A1 You are a colleague of Rob Godwin at Flyfast Airlines. Rob has asked you to ring Marina Donato. You have managed to track down her missing luggage, but unfortunately you will not be able to get it to her hotel until tomorrow afternoon. Call her to apologise for the delay, and explain that Flyfast Airlines will offer her some compensation for the expenses she will incur because her luggage is missing.

A2 You work in the service department of Bell-Watson Computers. Call Bettina Seitz to tell her that her computer monitor has now been repaired. Try to arrange a time for it to be delivered.

A3 You work at Superior Accommodation. You call Mr Wainwright, the 'unreliable' owner of the apartment that Ms Clayton had booked through your agency. You have several points to complain about:

- He didn't have his mobile switched on, so the clients and the agency couldn't contact him.
- He kept the clients waiting outside the apartment.
- The apartment hadn't been cleaned in readiness for the clients.
- Superior Accommodation is having to pay for the clients to stay overnight in a hotel while the apartment is made ready for them.
- You are only willing to deal with reliable owners, so you will no longer advertise Mr Wainwright's apartment on your website.