



Skillmax Resource Guide

ACTIVE JOB SEARCH

TELEPHONE SKILLS



Contents

Welcome to Unit 5	4
Positioning yourself for the interview	6
Activity 1	7
Activity 2	11
Activity 3	12
Activity 4	16
The telephone interview	17
Activity 5	18
Activity 6	20
Activity 7	21
Giving information clearly on the telephone	22
Activity 8	23
Activity 9	24
Activity 10	25
Activity 11	26
Activity 12	28
Activity 13	29
Activity 14	30
Activity 15	31
Activity 16	32
Activity 17	33
Activity 18	34
Activity 19	36
Activity 20	37
Preparing for a jobseeking telephone call	38
Activity 21	38
Making jobseeking telephone calls	40
Putting telephone strategies to work	41
Activity 22	41
Activity 23	43
Activity 24	45
Activity 25	47
Activity 26	48

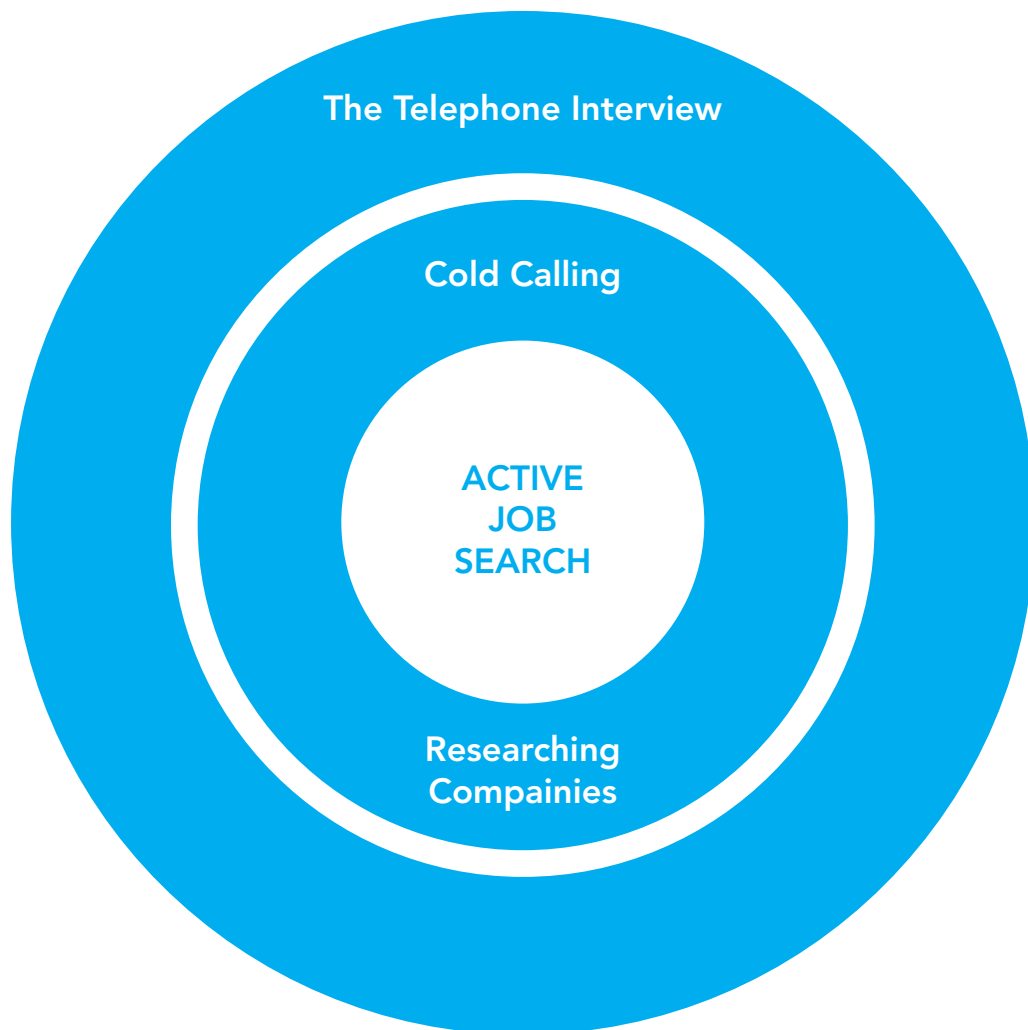
Welcome to Unit 5

Unit 5 focuses telephone skills for active jobseeking. You will practise telephone strategies that ensure you understand what people are saying and that the listener understands you. You will also listen to and analyse telephone calls in terms of their success.

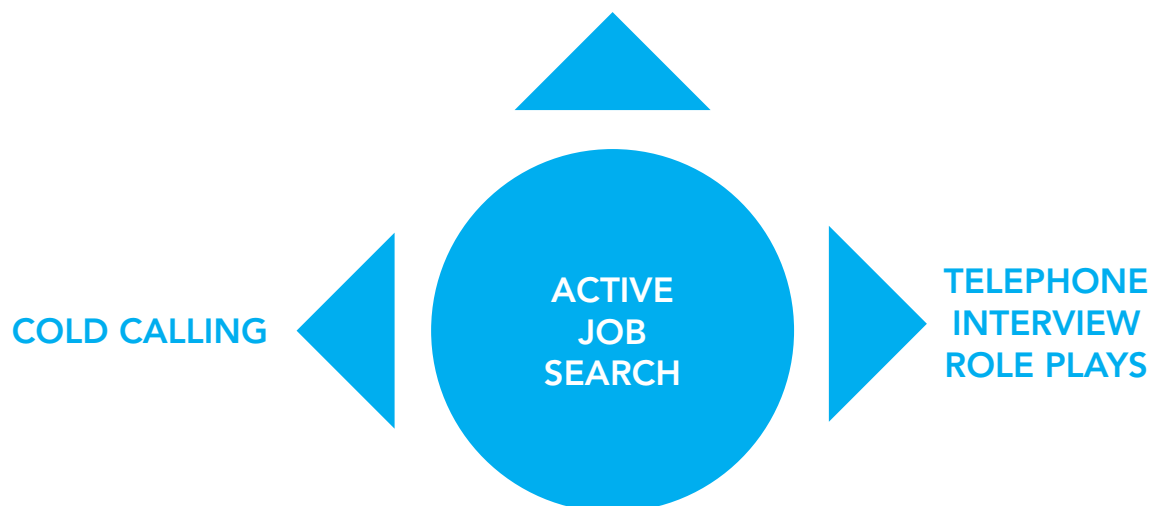
Assessment

There is no formal assessment in Unit 5 but the teacher will check your role played telephone calls against performance criteria.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES



COMMUNICATION
OVER THE TELEPHONE



Positioning yourself for the interview

There are various avenues for seeking employment. One of the strategies involves researching and contacting a *prospective* employer. This is referred to as *cold calling* or *prospecting the company*. This method not only builds confidence but also gives you an opportunity to self-market yourself and target a specific employer or industry sector.

HAVING THE RIGHT SET OF SKILLS WHEN TELEPHONING RECRUITERS AND EMPLOYERS

- Listening
- Asking questions
- Answering questions
- Confirming information
- Seeking clarification
- Writing down information
- Using a confident and friendly tone of voice



Activity 1

Research three companies that you would like to work for and that reflect your professional background.

Research the company in the industry of your chosen profession and create a list. This includes the mission statement, values, products/services, location, size, and any other relevant statistics. Refer to the websites in the Resource section of this Guide to assist you in your research.

Complete the contact worksheet to record your findings and information.

STEP 1

Investigate the following:

- Current employment vacancies
- The possibility of an informal interview
- Referrals to other employers
- Future job vacancies
- Methods of job application
- Introduction to key contacts within the company
- Referrals from associated business contacts

STEP 2

Contact the company and identify the name of a contact person who is in the best position to offer you a job (the hiring manager). Your information should include name and title.

STEP 3

Prepare a list of potential questions to ask the hiring manager.

STEP 4

Confirm your follow-up strategy/action after the phone call.

STEP 5

Submit your research findings and your worksheet to your teacher for assessment.

File your research into your Career Portfolio.

Contact Worksheet

Number	Date	Company	Contact person	Title	Questions	Follow-up action
1						
2						
3						

Case study 1

Read the following case study.

On the 12th February this year Raj Oman a Mechanical Engineer, contacted Paul James, HR Manager from Abbott Lee and Sons and asked the following questions:

1. Are there any current employment vacancies in the engineering department? If not, in what period of time will you be seeking new staff?
2. How does your company recruit for new employees? Do you use an agency or advertise yourself? What websites or newspapers do you use?
3. What specific qualifications do you require in your mechanical engineering department?
4. Would it be possible to speak to the Manager of the Engineering Department to discuss the above and introduce myself.
5. Could I please ask the name of the Manager?
6. I would like to send you my résumé, who is the best contact person to address it to?
7. Can I reconfirm your address please?
8. I will call back in a week to recheck you have received my letter and résumé. Is that suitable?
9. Can I leave you my name and contact phone numbers? The Manager can call me today at any time and tomorrow from 10.00am onwards.

Thank you for your time and information. You have been very helpful. Goodbye.

Case study 2

Read the following case study.

On the 17th February this year, Raj Oman contacted the Manager of the Engineering Department, Lee Robsworthy. Read the following conversation:

L: Well I am busy right now but will endeavour to help you.

R: Yes I appreciate you are busy and any information you have is very helpful.

L: Tell me more about your qualifications?

R: I can provide you with my current qualifications and my overseas experience as well as my local employment/work experience.

L: Are you a permanent resident?

R: Yes I am a permanent resident and as such I am seeking full-time or contract work.

L: What kind of teamwork have you experienced?

R: I worked in a team of 8 engineers in my previous position overseas and feel confident I can adapt to the Australian workplace. I would like to give you some examples.

L: Are you available for an interview next week?

R: Yes I am available for an interview or a discussion at a time and day that suits you.

L: What do you know of our company?

R: I have researched your company and am aware of the expansion and reputation of excellence it has in the engineering industry.

L: Can you email me your résumé this week?

R: Yes, I do have a current résumé and would be pleased to email that to you together with my cover letter.

Activity 2

ROLE PLAY

In pairs cold call a company and speak to the HR or Department Manager.

Include the following:

- An introduction
- The purpose of the call
- Relevant questions
- Appropriate responses
- Sustained conversation
- Polite and confident tone of voice
- Appropriate pausing, stress and intonation
- A statement for follow-up action

Discuss feedback with your partner.

Reverse the role play and follow the same instructions with your class partner.

Debrief to the class.

Include in your discussion pros and cons associated with cold calling.

Activity 3

Case study 3

Read the case study below and discuss.

The caller is Lakshmi Rajan and she is cold calling a medium-sized accountancy company. The person she is calling is Janet Bridges, the HR Manager.

Company: Peterson and Jacobs Pty Ltd

Location: North Sydney

Position: Accountant

Goal: To find out about current job opportunities

Company contact: Good morning Peterson and Jacobs, this is Janet speaking. How can I help you?

Lakshmi: Good morning Janet my name is Lakshmi Rajan and I am ringing to inquire about available positions within your company. I am a qualified accountant with eight years experience.

Janet: I see... no we do not have any current vacancies in the business, in fact we are downsizing our accountancy department and won't be recruiting for some time.

Lakshmi: Oh I see... so there aren't any prospects coming up in the next few months?

Janet: No I am afraid not. I am sorry I cannot help you. Good luck with your jobseeking.

Lakshmi: I understand.Thank you for your time.

Janet: That's fine, goodbye.

Lakshmi: Goodbye.

Answer the following questions and discuss as a class.

1. Was Lakshmi well prepared during the telephone call?
2. What other questions could Lakshmi have asked?
3. Did she achieve her goal?
4. Suggest other strategies that she could have used.

Case study 4

Read the case study below and then complete the checklist.
The caller is Michael Ang and he is cold calling Jacobs and Stevens Pty Ltd.

Company name: Jacobs and Stevens Pty Ltd

Location: Sydney CBD

Position: Accountant

Person: John Wells

Goal: To find out about current job vacancies in the accountancy department

Company contact: Good morning Jacobs and Stevens, this is Linda speaking.

Michael: Good morning my name is Michael Ang and I would like to speak to your Financial Controller, I believe that is John Wells?

Linda: Yes it is... What is it in regards to?

Michael: I'm a qualified accountant for over ten years and I would like to discuss employment opportunities with him.

Linda: OK... I'll have to check if he is available.

Michael: Thank you I would appreciate that.

John: This is John Wells how can I help you?

Michael: Hello John my name is Michael Ang and I'm a qualified CPA certified accountant. My neighbour Peter Stanley works in your company in the IT department and he suggested I should ring you to discuss any employment opportunities.

John: I see... right well we actually don't have any vacancies at the moment.

Michael: I understand... may I ask John when you would be recruiting? Where do you advertise your positions?

John: I could be advertising in one month's time for a six-month contract... it will be advertised on CareerOne.com... would a contract role interest you?

Michael: Yes thank you that sounds very interesting. I'm flexible for either full-time or contract work. I have experience in maintaining company accounting, records and preparing and analysing financial budgets. Are they the type of qualifications you would be looking for?

John: Yes actually, we are needing someone who has worked on large-scale projects.

Michael: In my last role in Singapore I worked for a construction company managing the capital for a large project, it was a million dollar commercial shopping centre with multi-storey carpark. We managed the budget and met the timeframes allocated to our department.

John: That sounds interesting.

Michael: Could I suggest that I send you my résumé by email so you can see my work history and range of qualifications.

John: Yes you could do that. Send it to john@jacobstevens.com.au.

Michael: Thank you I'll send it today and follow up with you next week to check you have received it and briefly discuss the contract opportunity that you mentioned.

John: Fine, do that.

Michael: Yes thank you and I appreciate your time and information.

John: No problem, I look forward to seeing your résumé. Goodbye Michael.

Michael: Thank you again and goodbye.

Cold call checklist

Analysis of the cold call	Yes	No
1. Polite greeting and introduction		
2. Spoke to the appropriate person		
3. Provided clear purpose for call		
4. Overcame any difficulties		
5. Self-marketed effectively		
6. Achieved goal		
7. Provided follow-up action		
8. Appropriate end to the phone call		

Activity 4

Work in pairs. Select one telephone role play. Discuss.

Recruitment agency

Call a recruitment agent to introduce yourself and request information regarding positions and possible vacancies in your field of work.

Prospecting a company

Telephone a company in which you have an interest in applying for a position. You are cold calling this company and do not have any contacts within the organisation.

Referral phone call

You have been given a contact name in a company from a friend. Telephone the company and introduce yourself and make general enquiries about future job prospects.

Job advertisement

You have found a suitable position on seek.com. Download the application details and contact the person on the application form. You are therefore ringing them in response to the job they have advertised.

Professional association

You have researched a professional association and are calling the association for information regarding job opportunities or for contacts in your industry.

The telephone interview

Screening call. When a potential employer calls, you will be screened while you are being interviewed. Your main aim is to convert the telephone interview into a face-to-face interview and at the same time express your enthusiasm and interest in the position. Your answers must be aligned with your résumé and covering letter. That is why practising for a phone interview is an essential step in your job preparation. Make sure that your confidence and personality come across, if not it will be unlikely that the potential employer or recruitment agent will consider you for an interview. Speak clearly and remain professional at all times.

When the employer calls you, be prepared with the following documents:

1. Your résumé
2. Company information
3. Questions to ask
4. Answers to questions
5. Pen, notepaper and diary

Activity 5

Read the article below *Interview tips: Winning the phone interview* reprinted from CareerOne.com.au. Kate Southam is the Editor of CareerOne.com.au. To view articles on the CareerOne site, use the News & Advice tab at the top of the www.careerone.com.au home page.

1. Underline all of the key points.
2. Using your current résumé, practise a telephone interview with your partner.
3. Record your interview and discuss how you use your voice, your tone and enthusiasm.
4. Incorporate all of the tips listed in the article.
5. Discuss with the class.

Interview tips: Winning the phone interview – by Kate Southam

Phone interviews are a common way to pre-screen candidates for face-to-face interviews.

With so much at stake, it's important to make a good impression. In fact, every time you deal with a potential employer or a recruitment consultant over the phone, consider you are being interviewed.

Remember, the recruitment consultant is the gatekeeper you have to get by if you are to be considered by the employer. Also practise your best phone manners when dealing with reception staff and personal assistants.

Use these interview tips to help you shine over the phone.

1. Prepare for the interview in the same way you would for a face-to-face interview. Know your résumé inside out and prepare answers for common questions like, *What is your greatest weakness/strength?* For tips on answering the *weakness/strength* question go to the Job hunting advice section of www.careerone.com.au.
2. Rehearse and rehearse again. This is the best technique for assessing how well you know your career history, calming nerves, untwisting tongues and building confidence. Ideally, rehearse with someone from the same industry but if that's not possible, a friend or family member would be fine. You'll need to provide the questions as you know your role and industry. Do a couple of rehearsals in person and a couple using a phone. Your rehearsal partner will tell you if you are stumbling over words or sounding nervous.

UNIT 5: TELEPHONE SKILLS

3. On the day, make sure you have a quiet place to do the interview. Warn family members not to interrupt and keep animals out of the room. Make sure nothing is on – radio or mobile phone. If you have call waiting, see if you can have it disabled.
4. Make sure you get the interviewer's name right and then use it several times.
5. Don't answer with just a yes and no but do keep your answers concise. Smiling while talking will project a positive image to the listener and will change the tone of your voice. Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. Stand and pace if it will help you breath and project your voice.
6. Dress the part so you feel professional – and sound it too.
7. Tape notes in big writing to the walls. I know a senior executive who did this and it worked. Also, stick your résumé up where you can see it.
8. Remember that the interviewer cannot see you. If you get a question you want to think about, don't panic but state that, eg: *That's a good question. I'm going to take a moment so I can provide you with an accurate answer.*
9. Keep a pen and paper handy to take notes that will help you ask good questions about the employer and role.
10. Obviously you will not smoke, chew gum or eat during the interview but it's a good idea to have water on hand. If you get a dry mouth, it's fine to say: *Excuse me while I take a sip of water.*
11. Don't interrupt the interviewer.
12. Ask questions that show your interest in the company rather than yourself. Asking whether the team you would be joining is currently tackling any big projects would be better than: *How much would I earn?*
13. At the end of the interview, thank the interviewer for his or her time and say you hope to meet them in person. Ask about the next steps in the recruitment process including the timeline.
14. Follow up with a thank-you note or email.

Activity 6

There are many variations to the questions below. Research and network with your professional contacts and friends to develop a comprehensive list of questions.

Share the list with your class.

FREQUENTLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your duties and responsibilities in your current job or in your most recent job (in your country).
2. Describe a project you currently completed. What were the highlights?
3. Why do you want to leave your current job?
4. Describe the kind of work environment that you would like to work in?
5. How much do you know about the position you have applied for?
6. How much do you know about the company?
7. When can you come in for a face-to-face interview?

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

Activity 7

You run your own recruitment company. You have been invited to a career development workshop to present a session on the topic:
What to expect at a telephone interview.

WHAT ARE THE TOP TEN TIPS FOR HANDLING A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW?

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

Discuss in pairs.

Present your response to class.

Giving information clearly on the telephone

The telephone distorts sounds and even native speakers use strategies to ensure that they are understood. In this section you will focus on some of these strategies.

Strategy 1 Spelling names

When you have to spell your name or the name of your street or suburb, you can use the International or Phonemic Alphabet. This enables you to identify clearly the letter you are saying. Some letters are easily confused on the phone eg: N and M, P and T and B, S and F.

You can use the alphabet to identify all the letters in a name eg:

Caller: My first name is Rhys. That's R for Robert, H for Harry, Y for yellow, S for Sam.

You can use the alphabet to identify only those letters which may confuse the listener eg:

Caller: My surname is Robinson. That's R, O, B, I for ink, N for Nellie, S,O,N.

Activity 8



- a Listen to the people spelling the names on the CD.
- b Underline the words and letters which they stress. The first one is done for you.

- i My first name is Rhys. That's R for Robert, H for Harry, Y for yellow and S for Sam.
- ii I live in Fowler Street, Camperdown. That's F for Fred, O, W, L for Larry, E, R.Fowler. Number 24.
- iii My name is Narem Soni. First name Narem. N for Nellie, A for apple , R for Robert, E, M for mother. Surname Soni. That's S for Sam, O, N for Nellie, I.
- iv My son's name is Nathanael. That's N for Nellie, A, T, H for Harry, A, N for Nellie, A E L. Nathanael.
- v My address is 10/45 Permanent Ave, Earlwood. That's E for egg, A for apple, R for Robert, L for Larry, W, double O, D. Earlwood.
- vi My address is 116 Ewart St, Dulwich Hill. Ewart. That's E for egg, W for William, A, R, T for Ted. Ewart St.

Activity 9



- a Listen to the International Alphabet on the CD.
- b Practise reading the alphabet out loud.

INTERNATIONAL ALPHABET

A for apple	B for Bob	C for cat
D for dog	E for egg	F for Fred
G for George	H for Harry	I for ink
J for Jack	K for king	L for Larry
M for Mary	N for Nellie	O for orange
P for Peter	Q for queen	R for Robert
S for Sam	T for Tom	U for umbrella
V for Victor	W for William	X for X-ray
Y for yellow	Z for zebra	

c Spell these names using the international alphabet.

i Edward	ii Mohammad	iii Tsoupis
iv Cabramatta	v Bronovski	vi Beattie
vii Spring	viii Manendes	ix Kossmann

d Spell your name, street name and suburb for the class using the International Alphabet.

Strategy 2 Giving telephone numbers

When you give someone a telephone number, you need to give them a chance to write it down. You can help the listener by pausing between groups of numbers and then repeating the number eg:

Caller: My telephone number is 9289...92...46. That's 9.2.8.double 9.2.4.6.

When you give an extension number, it is best to say the numbers separately eg:

Caller: My telephone number is 9289...92...46. 92899246. Extension 2.1.3.

Activity 10



a Listen to the people giving telephone numbers on the CD.

b Mark the places where they pause. The first one is done for you using / to mark the pause.

- i My phone number is 92997608. That's 92/double 9/76/08.
- ii My number is 83895603.
- iii My telephone number is 95587862. My extension is 337.
- iv You can call me on 0406780932. That's 0406780932.
- v My work number is 93183320. And my home number is 98106593.
- vi My mobile number is 0409903276. 0409903276.

c Say these telephone numbers.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| i 92767690 Ext 213 | ii 83095679 | iii (02) 98672090 |
| iv (03) 93460298 | v 0417 809 975 | vi 91309876 Ext 445 |
| vii (08) 89966509 | viii 99876432 | ix 0418 008 980 |

d Say your telephone number using the correct pausing.

Strategy 3 Giving your address

When you give your address on the telephone, you need to make sure that the listener has heard it correctly. You can use the strategies of pausing (marked with a /) and the International Alphabet eg

Caller: My address is one hundred and eighty two / Centennial Ave / Chatswood. That's Centennial / C for cat / E, N / T for Ted / E / double N / I for ink, A / L for Larry.

Activity 11



a Listen to the people giving their addresses on the CD.

b Mark the places where they pause using a /.

i I live at 213 Bland Sreet. That's Bland, B for Bob, L for Larry, A, N, D. Bland St Haberfield 2045.

ii My address is 24/314 Parramatta Rd, Homebush 2140.

iii My home address is 16. That's one six Edwardson Ave Penrith 2750.

c Listen to the people on the CD and write down their addresses.

i

ii

iii

c Give your full name, address and telephone number to three class members. After they have written the information down, check it and complete the following table.

	Information accurate		Information inaccurate	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Classmate 1	YES	NO	YES	NO
Classmate 2	YES	NO	YES	NO
Classmate 3	YES	NO	YES	NO

d If the information was inaccurate, what strategy could you have used to make it clearer?

Strategies I should have used

Classmate 1

Classmate 2

Classmate 3

Checking your understanding

Effective telephone communication relies on mutual understanding. It is your responsibility to ask for:

- clarification, if you have not understood what the other person has said
- repetition, if you are not clear about what has been said
- confirmation of your understanding

Asking for clarification

If you do not understand what the other person has said, rather than asking them to repeat it you can use other strategies for seeking clarification.

Strategy 4 Repeating the words you have heard

One strategy is to repeat the words you understand with a rising intonation and then pause. By using this strategy you show the other person that you have been listening and that you have only missed part of the information.

Receptionist: You need to send in an application form with a résumé. You need to send it to the personnel officer.

Caller: I send it to ...?

Receptionist: The personnel officer. His name is in the advertisement.

Caller: The personnel officer. Thank you.

Strategy 5 Repeating the last word

Another strategy is to repeat the last word with a rising intonation. This strategy shows the other person that you have been listening and that you need an explanation of the information.

Receptionist: You will need to include copies of your documents.

Caller: Documents?

Receptionist: Yes copies of your qualifications and your visa.

Caller: Oh I see. Thank you.

Activity 12



a Listen to the conversations on the CD.

CALL 1

Receptionist: You need to mail your application to Locked Bag 54 Blakestone.

Caller: Locked Bag 54?

Receptionist: Blakestone. B for Bob, L, A, K, E for egg, stone. 3260.

Caller: Blakestone. Thank you.

CALL 2

HR manager: You need to place the tender in the tender box in the atrium.

Caller: Atrium?

HR manager: It's the space in the middle of the ground floor.

Caller: Oh right. Thanks.

CALL 3

Receptionist: The applications will be culled by a review panel.

Caller: Culled?

Receptionist: Yes. The review panel decides who will be called to interview.

Caller: Oh, I see.

b Tick the strategies the callers use.

	Repeats words heard	Repeats last word
Call 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Asking for information to be repeated

When you do not hear what the other person has said, then you need to ask them to repeat the information. There are various ways you can do this.

Strategy 6 Requesting repetition directly

One strategy is to use a formulaic request to ask directly for repetition eg:

- Could you say that again, please?
- Would you mind repeating that, please?
- Could you spell that, please?
- Could you say the number again, please?

Activity 13



a Listen to the conversations on the CD.

CALL 1

Receptionist: His number is 08 8964,5601.

Caller: Would you mind repeating that, please?

Receptionist: 89,64,56,01.

CALL 2

Receptionist: It's on Bleasdell Road.

Caller: Could you spell that, please?

Receptionist: B for Bob, L, E, A, S for Sam, D for dog, E, double L.

CALL 3

Receptionist: The manager's name is Ron Amato.

Caller: Could you say that again, please?

Receptionist: Amato. A, M, A, T, O.

b Write down what the callers say to ask for repetition.

Call 1:

Call 2:

Call 3:

Strategy 7 Requesting repetition indirectly

One strategy is to use a formulaic phrase to ask indirectly for repetition eg

- I'm sorry, I didn't quite understand that.
- Sorry, I didn't quite catch that.
- I'm sorry, I didn't quite get that.
- Sorry, I missed that.

CALL 1

Receptionist: His number is 08 8964,5601.

Caller: Sorry. I didn't quite catch that.

Receptionist: 89,64,56,01.

CALL 2

Receptionist: It's on Bleasdel Road.

Caller: Sorry. I missed that.

Receptionist: B for Bob, L, E, A, S for Sam, D for dog, E, double L.

CALL 3

HR manager: Don't just answer the questions. You need to elaborate.

Caller: I'm sorry. I don't quite understand.

HR manager: I mean you need to give more information about yourself and what you've done.

Activity 14



- a Listen to the conversations on the CD.
- b Write down what the callers say to ask for repetition.

Call 1:

Call 2:

Call 3:

Confirming your understanding

When you ask for repetition or clarification, it is best to confirm your understanding. In this way you leave nothing to chance.

Strategy 8 Confirming your understanding directly

One strategy is to ask directly for your understanding to be confirmed by the other person eg:

- Did you say?
- So you mean?

Activity 15



a Listen to the conversations on the CD.

CALL 1

Receptionist: His number is 08 8964,5601.

Caller: Did you say 5601?

Receptionist: That's right.

CALL 2

Receptionist: It's on Bleasdell Road.

Caller: Did you say Bleadsell?

Receptionist: No. Bleasdell. B, L, E, A, S, D, E, double L.

CALL 3

HR Manager: Don't just answer the question. You need to elaborate.

Caller: So you mean I need to give more information about myself and what I've done?

HR Manager: Exactly.

b Write down what the callers say to ask for confirmation.

Call 1:

Call 2:

Call 3:

Strategy 9 Repeating information

Another strategy is to repeat what you think has been said. This is especially important for dates, times and numbers. You need to stress the information you want to check eg:

- Right, so that's the 14th of April.
- That's 2.30 on Saturday, right?

Activity 16



a Listen to the conversations on the CD.

CALL 1

Receptionist: Your interview time is 3.15 on the 28th June.

Caller: So that's 3.15.

Receptionist: That's right.

CALL 2

Receptionist: Your interview time is 4pm on the 16th.

Caller: The 16th. One, six.

Receptionist: Right.

CALL 3

HR manager: Bring your visa and educational documents.

Caller: Visa and documents.

HR manager: Yep.

b Write down the information the callers repeat.

Call 1:

Call 2:

Call 3:

c Underline the words the callers stress.

Strategy 10 Asking direct questions

You can use direct checking questions. You need to stress the word which focuses on the information you want to check eg:

- **When** did you say?
- **What** time did you say?
- **Who** did you say?
- **Where** did you say?

Activity 17



a Listen to the conversations on the CD.

CALL 1

Receptionist: Your interview time is 3.15 on the 28th June.

Caller: What time did you say?

Receptionist: Quarter past three.

CALL 2

Receptionist: Come to Block A on Riley Street.

Caller: Which block?

Receptionist: Block A.

CALL 3

HR manager: You'll be interviewed by Ms Selwyn.

Caller: Who, sorry?

HR manager: Ms Selwyn.

b Write down the questions the callers use to confirm information.

Call 1:

Call 2:

Call 3:

Strategy 11 Checking the meanings of words

You can check the meanings of particular words eg:

- What does mean?
- I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with that word/term.

Activity 18



a Listen to the conversations on the CD.

CALL 1

Receptionist: The main office is in Turella.

Caller: I'm sorry. I'm not familiar with that suburb. Where is it?

Receptionist: Near Arncliffe.

CALL 2

HR manager: It's an open advertisement.

Caller: I'm sorry. I'm not sure what that means.

HR manager: It means it has been advertised broadly and anyone can apply.

Caller: From outside the public service?

HR manager: And inside.

CALL 3

HR manager: You'll be required to undertake a sample task.

Caller: I'm not sure what you mean.

HR manager: You'll be given a task which reflects something you might have to do in the job.

Caller: Oh right. That's interesting.

b Write down the words the callers are checking.

Call 1:

Call 2:

Call 3:

Checking you are understood

When you use the telephone, it is important that you are sure that the listener has understood what you are saying. You can say:

- Do you know what I mean?
- Is that clear?
- Do you follow me?

If the listener doesn't understand, you can say:

- No, sorry. What I meant was ...
- No. Actually, what I said was ...

Being polite

Part of your responsibility on the telephone is to be polite. If you are polite the other person is likely to give you information and to give you more time.

Strategy 12 Giving feedback

One politeness strategy is to give feedback to the other person. This shows that you have understood, that you are listening and that you are interested. You can use any of these sounds and words:

- Mm
- Really
- Right
- Uh huh
- I see
- OK

Strategy 13 Softening requests

It is important when you ask for information or assistance that you soften your request. It is considered inappropriate to demand information. For example these requests are likely to annoy the other person:

- Tell me more about the job.
- I want you to send me the information.

To get a positive response to your request and to keep the other person on side, it is better to phrase your requests in these ways:

- Would you mind answering a few questions I have about the job?
- I was wondering if you could tell me a little more about the job.
- Could you please send me the information about the vacancy?
- I wonder if you could send me some information about your company.

Strategy 14 Minimising requests

Through language you can also minimise your requests. This minimising language puts the other person at ease and lets them know that you understand they are busy eg:

- Can I just take a little of your time to ask a few questions about the job?
- If I could just take a little of your time.
- I only need a couple of minutes.

Activity 19

Read the transcript below and:

- tick all the places where the caller gives feedback
- underline all the polite strategies the caller uses
- put a circle around the minimising language the caller uses

Caller: Could I speak to the Human Resources Manager please?

Receptionist: I'll just put you through.

Caller : Thank you.

HR: Good morning. Human Resources. John Peters speaking.

Caller: Good morning. I am ringing to enquire about the engineering job you advertised in this morning's paper.

HR: Yes. How can I help you?

Caller: I was wondering if you could just answer a few questions I have.

HR: Not a problem. Fire away.

Caller: The job is advertised in relation to a particular project in Dubbo.

HR: Yes it's a project to upgrade the major roads in the Dubbo region.

Caller: Right.

HR: It's estimated to take one year.

Caller: And when would it start?

HR: Next month.

Caller: Would accommodation be made available for the successful applicant?

HR: The department would assist the person to find accommodation but would not pay for it.

Caller: I see. I just have a couple more questions. Is that OK?

HR: Yes that's fine.

Activity 20

- a** Look at this conversation framework. It is a conversation between two people. One person is looking for a job and he rings an acquaintance to ask for help.

Stages of conversation	Sample language
Greetings:
Caller gives reason for calling:	I am new to Sydney and am interested in job opportunities in sales. I was hoping I could speak to someone regarding any opportunities you might have.
Acquaintance sympathises and asks what the caller's background is:	Yes I know how you feel. I've had the same problem. You're an aren't you?
Caller responds:	Yes I'm ...
Acquaintance asks about past experience:	So where ...
Caller describes last job, the company, duties etc:	In my last job ...
Acquaintance offers help:	I wish I could do something to help you. Actually one of my friend's husband is a civil engineer. Why don't I phone her and ask if you could speak to him and maybe get some advice. They've been here about two years. They're from China.
Closing	

- b** With a partner choose a character. Sit back-to-back and role play the phone call. Substitute your own information.
- c** Now swap characters.

Preparing for a jobseeking telephone call

Now that you have looked at a range of telephone strategies, you will now prepare for a jobseeking phone call. You will call a company you are interested in working for.

This means that you will have to:

- research the company and identify the person in the company you need to talk to
- prepare the questions you want to ask
- prepare responses to questions the company representative is likely to ask you

Activity 21

- a Form a small group of four and discuss the assessment criteria in this grid.

LEARNING OUTCOME: CAN PREPARE FOR A JOBSEEKING TELEPHONE CALL

Performance criteria	St 1	St 2	St 3	St 4
Researches target organisation				
Identifies contact person within organisation, eg their name, position etc				
Identifies information to be obtained in relation to organisation and employment				
Outlines range of questions which will elicit information sought				
Prepares responses for questions likely to be asked by organisation				

- b Complete the questionnaire on the next page.
- c Show your questionnaire to the other members of the group. The other members should use the grid to check your preparation. They will put a tick if you have met the criteria and a cross if you haven't. If you have not achieved some of the criteria, then make improvements to your preparation.
- d When you are ready, show your questionnaire to your teacher who will use the grid to check your preparation.

Telephone preparation questionnaire

i What company will you call?

ii Who will you speak to?

iii What is the purpose of your call?

iv What do you want to find out:

v List four questions you will ask:

vi List four questions the company representative might ask you and how you will respond:

Making jobseeking telephone calls

The telephone is a handy way to undertake part of your job seeking.

You can make phone calls to ask:

- about specific advertised jobs
- general questions about a company
- about jobseeking processes in different industries
- about likely future vacancies in a company

When phoning an employer about a position it is important to be well prepared. Whether you are applying for a job over the telephone or calling in response to an advertised position, there are some important points to keep in mind (in addition to the preparation techniques mentioned previously). These are:

- Introduce yourself and speak clearly and confidently. Explain your reason for calling. For example:
I am calling in response to the administrative assistant position which was advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald on Saturday 19th November.
- Have all relevant information about your work history and qualifications in front of you so you can answer questions quickly and accurately.
- If you are responding to an advertisement, have the advertisement in front of you when you make the telephone call.
- If you have the name of a contact person, ask for them by name. If not, ask to speak to the person responsible for recruitment of the job you are interested in (ask the receptionist for the person's name before they transfer your call and be sure to write the name down so you can use it when speaking to the person).
- Have a pen and paper nearby so you can take notes if you need to.
- Remember all the telephone strategies you practised earlier in this module.

Putting telephone strategies to work

Activity 22



a Listen to the phone call on the CD. Saiyou Lee is calling a company.

Receptionist: Good morning, Hills and Paterson. Can I help you?

Saiyou: Yes. I'm a laboratory technician. I'm from China and I just want to get a bit of information about working as a lab technician in Australia. Could you tell me who I could speak to?

Receptionist: Well are you looking for a job? We don't have any vacancies at the moment.

Saiyou: No, I'm not looking for a job actually. I just want some information. Is there someone I could speak to?

Receptionist: I'll just find out.

.....

The person you need to speak to is not available at the moment.

Saiyou: Could I possibly make an appointment to see him later?

Receptionist: Leslie is a woman, actually.

Saiyou: Oh sorry. Um ... could you tell me her surname?

Receptionist: Morrison.

Saiyou: Leslie Morrison. Right. I wonder if I could make an appointment to see her? I just want to ask her a few questions.

Receptionist: Ah, just a minute, I'll find out.

.....

Yes. She could see you tomorrow at about 4.30. Could I have your name please?

Saiyou: Yes. My name is Saiyou Lee. That's S.A.I.Y.O.U. Lee. L.double E.

Receptionist: Lee. OK.

Saiyou: Right. So that's tomorrow at, er 4.30? Is that right?

Receptionist: Yes, that's right. Bye.

b Listen again and answer these questions.

- i Who does Saiyou talk to in the company? _____
- ii What is the purpose of her phone call? _____
- iii Who does she make an appointment with? _____
- iv When is the appointment? _____

c Listen again and tick the telephone strategies Saiyou uses.

- ☐ spelling names _____
- ☐ using the phonemic alphabet _____
- ☐ pausing between numbers _____
- ☐ asking for clarification _____
- ☐ asking for repetition _____
- ☐ confirming understanding _____

d Listen again and complete the polite requests Saiyou makes.

- i Could you tell me _____ ?
- ii Is there someone _____ ?
- iii Could I possibly make _____ ?
- iv Could I have _____ ?
- v Right, I wonder if _____ ?

e Which of the above requests is an indirect one?

f Was Saiyou's phone call successful?

- ☐ YES ☐ NO _____

Why? _____

g What vital piece of information did Siayou fail to ask for?

The jobscreening telephone call

It is important to remember that you may also receive a telephone call from an employer or recruitment consultant with regard to a job you have applied for. Employers or recruitment consultants may contact you to conduct a telephone screen, which is often the first part of the job selection process and designed to decide whether or not they would like to invite you in for an interview. During the telephone screen, an employer or recruitment consultant would be looking for the following things:

- Getting a snapshot of your employment history, experience and skills relevant to the job
- An assessment of your communication skills
- Understanding your motivation or interest in the job

Example questions they might ask you include:

- What is your interest in this position?
- Why are you looking to leave your current job (if relevant)?
- What are you looking for in your next job?
- What is your ideal next role?
- What other jobs have you been applying for?
- What are your salary expectations?
- How soon are you available to start?

Keeping the conversation going

When you are on the phone it is important to keep the conversation going. You can do this by giving feedback, asking questions, responding to questions and taking your turn in response to what the other person says.

Activity 23



- a Listen to the phone call on the CD. Mita Delgado is calling a company.
- b Read the transcript on the following page and write the strategies, down the left-hand side, that Mita uses to keep the conversation going.

Receptionist: Good morning. BLT.

Mita: Good morning. Could I speak to Michael Johnson please?

Receptionist: May I ask who's calling?

Mita: Yes. Mita Delgado.

Receptionist: Could you spell that please?

Mita: M.I...T.A.

Receptionist: P for Peter?

Mita: No. T for Tommy.

Receptionist: M.I.T.A.

Mita: That's right. And my surname is Delgado. D.E.L...G-A-D-O.

Receptionist: May I ask what it's regarding?

Mita: Yes, I'm applying for the position of Production and Inventory Controller and I just wanted to ask Mr Johnson a couple of questions.

Receptionist: One moment please.

He's on the phone at the moment. Would you like to wait?

Mita: Sure.

Receptionist: The line's still busy. Do you mind holding?

Mita: OK. No that's fine.

Receptionist: Who were you waiting on? Mike Johnson was it?

Mita: Yes. That's right.

Mr Johnson: Hello Johnson here.

Mita: Hello. It's Mita Delgado speaking Mr Johnson. I'm very interested in the position of Production and Inventory Controller you advertised last Saturday. Can I just ask you a few questions?

Mr Johnson: Sure. What did you want to know?

Mita: Um, well, what sort of computerised inventory system have you installed in your factory?

Mr Johnson: Well, it's a CISS Inventory Pro System and we're going to a Golden Inventory soon.

Mita: I see. Well I've got experience with manufacturing resource planning and MS Excel spreadsheets. Would that be relevant?

Mr Johnson: No, no, no, you do a bit of word processing, but there ah won't be much.

Mita: Right.

Mr Johnson: Yeah. It's ah, mainly working off reports. The computer virtually works it out for you and tells you what... er, it'll give you a report saying: I think you should order this, this is moving up, this is moving down. Stuff like that.

Mita: I see. I do have experience with MS Word and Inventory Control. Is that useful?

Mr Johnson: Right. Yes, um, well, MS Word, well you won't use that much. It will mainly be reading the screen all the time. But, ah, look, just send us your résumé and ah, we can have a look at what you've done.

Mita: Yeah. Sure.

Mr Johnson: And we'll take it from there. OK?

Mita: Yes. Fine. Um, I was just wondering, could you send me any information about the company, like a company report or a brochure?

Mr Johnson: No, ah, look we're a pretty small company. I don't think we've got anything we could send you, actually.

Mita: I see. OK. All right then. Thanks very much for your time.

Mr Johnson: No worries.

Mita: Bye.

Mr Johnson: Bye bye.

The structure of telephone conversations

Conversations move through a numbers of stages.

When you telephone a workplace it is helpful if you are aware of what these stages are.

Activity 24



a Listen to the phone call on the CD. Prasad Tharappel is calling a company.

b Listen again and answer these questions.

i Who does Prasad want to talk to?

ii How many people does he speak to?

iii What is the purpose of his phone call?

iv Is the phone call successful?

c List two telephone strategies Prasad uses.

d What other questions could Prasad have asked?

e Read these stages of a telephone call to ask for information from a company.

- A Greeting
- B Requesting to speak to appropriate person
- C Arranging to hold on if person is unavailable
- D Asking person's name
- E Asking about position and company
- F Asking for information to be sent
- G Giving name and address
- H Closing

- f Mark the stages of the telephone call against the transcript below by placing the appropriate letter on the left-hand side of the page.

Receptionist: Multi-Construction. Good morning.

Prasad: Hello. I'm applying for the position of Mechanical Engineer that was advertised last Saturday and I just wanted to find out some more information about it. Could you tell me who's the best person to speak to?

Receptionist: Ah, just a minute. I'll put you through to someone who may be able to help you.

Prasad: Could you tell me ... ?

....

Receptionist: The Line Manager's unavailable at the moment. Can I take your name and have him call you back?

Prasad: Could you tell me his name, please?

Receptionist: Ah, yes. It's Andrew Cannon. Can I have your name please?

Prasad: Sorry, can I just check that? It's Cannon. C.A.double N.O.N. Is that right?

Receptionist: Yes that's right.

Prasad: Mmm, will he be very long, do you think? Could I hold on?

Receptionist: He's at a meeting. He'll be quite a while. I can give him a message to call you.

Prasad: It's OK. Thanks. I'll call him back a bit later on. When will he be available?

Receptionist: The meeting finishes about two. You could ring him then, if you like.

Prasad: OK. Could you possibly tell me a bit about the company? How big it is and what kind of projects you do?

Receptionist: I'll put you through to Personnel.

Personnel: Personnel. Donna speaking.

Prasad: Hello. I was thinking of applying for the position of Mechanical Engineer that you advertised last Saturday. I was wondering if you could tell me something about the company.

Personnel: Yes. We're an Australian-based construction company, but at the moment a lot of the contracts are in Asia. The projects are mainly roads, bridges and sewerage.

Prasad: Right. Would it be possible to send me a bit of information about the company, a yearly report or a brochure or something?

Personnel: Yes I could. What's your name and address? My first name is Prasad. P.R.A.S.A.D. My surname is Tharappel. T.H.A.R. A. double P. E.L.

Personnel: And your address?

Prasad: Flat 4, 28 Belmore Road, Marrickville, 2204.

Personnel: OK. I'll send out a report to you.

Prasad: That's great. Thanks very much for your help.

Personnel: No problem.

Prasad: Bye.

Personnel: Bye bye.

Activity 25



a Listen to the phone call on the CD and read the transcript below. Anna Bodhinayake is calling a company.

Receptionist: Geo Consulting. Good morning.

Anna: Could I speak to Mr David Carmichael please?

Receptionist: Can I say who's calling?

Anna: My name is Anna Bodhinayake.

Receptionist: May I ask what it's regarding?

Anna: It's regarding the position for Geotechnical Engineer advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald last Saturday.

Receptionist: OK. I'll put you through. Won't be a moment.

Anna: Thank you.

...

Receptionist: The line's busy. Would you like to hold?

Anna: Yes I would, thank you.

Receptionist: He won't be long.

David: David Carmichael. Hello.

Anna: Hello. My name is Anna Bodhinayake. I'm interested in applying for the position of Geotechnical Engineer ...

David: Right.

Anna: ... that you advertised last Saturday.

David: Right. Your name is Anna?

Anna: That's right

David: And what ... er ... what's your surname?

Anna: Bodhinayake ... B.O.D... H.I.N.A.Y .. A.K.E.

David: I.K.E?

Anna: No, A.K.E. A for Alfred.

David: A.K.E. OK. And your phone number, Anna?

Anna: 9858 4392.

David: 9858 4392.

Anna: That's right.

David: How long have you been in Australia for?

Anna: One and a half years.

David: OK. And have you got any Australian experience at all?

Anna: No, but I'm just completing my Masters Degree in Geotechnical Engineering at the University of New South Wales.

David: Right. And how many more years have you got to go to finish your Masters degree?

Anna: I'm doing it on a part-time basis and I'll complete it by the end of this year.

David: OK Umm, where do you come from again?

Anna: Sri Lanka.

David: Mmm and how many years experience in Sri Lanka?

Anna: Ten years experience as a geotechnical engineer and four years as a civil engineer. I was involved in soil testing and preparing test reports. All these tests were done according to British and American standards.

David: So for those ten years you were involved in advising, testing and preparing soil?

Anna: Yes, soil.

David: For the construction of what, ah freeways or ...?

Anna: The construction of major highways.

David: Right. How about buildings and ... um, ah, residential areas?

Anna: Well, I've done investigations for bridges and also landslides so I feel I could undertake any geotechnical investigations.

Continue next page >>

David: Uh, have you got a car by any chance?
Anna: No, I haven't at the moment.
David: That's OK. It's not a problem. What sort of salary were you expecting?
Anna: Well. Something in the range of thirty to thirty-five thousand.
David: OK. Have you got a résumé, Anna?
Anna: Yes I have.
David: OK. Could you, possibly post that off to us?
Anna: Yes, sure. I'll send it today.
David: OK. Well, I'll have a look at your résumé and we'll take it from there.
Anna: Right. Thanks very much.
David: No problem.
Anna: Goodbye.
David: Bye.

b In a small group, discuss the conversation in terms of:

- telephone strategies
- the success of the call
- things Anna could have done to improve the phone call

c Share your discussion with the whole class.

Activity 26

a Form a small group of four and discuss the criteria in this grid.

Performance criteria	Achieved
Identifies self clearly and appropriately	
Uses appropriate staging eg: greeting, pre-closing and closing	
Sustains dialogue eg: takes turns, confirms, clarifies, repairs, identifies topic shifts	
Makes statements, asks and answers questions and gives feedback	
Requests and offers goods and services	
Links ideas cohesively by using appropriate reference and conjunction	
Uses vocabulary and grammatical structures appropriate to setting and register	



- b Listen to the phone call on the CD and read the transcript below. Nabil Lahoud is calling a company. Check if Nabil has achieved the performance criteria in the grid.**

Receptionist: EB Import/Export Co. Good morning.

Nabil: Good morning. My name is Nabil Lahoud. Um, I just wanted to find out who is in charge of the Accounts Section. Could you tell me his name, please?

Receptionist: Yes. It's Andy Geddes.

Nabil: Could I speak to him, please?

Receptionist: Just a minute. Putting you through.

Receptionist: Good morning. Accounting Department. June speaking. Can I help you?

Nabil: I'd like to speak to Andy Geddes please.

Receptionist: May I ask what it's regarding?

Nabil: I'd like to get some information about accounts clerk positions.

Receptionist: I'm afraid we don't have any vacancies at the moment.

Nabil: I see. Actually, I just wanted to ask him a bit about any other companies in the import/export area and the possibility of positions in the future. Could I just speak to him for a couple of minutes, please?

Receptionist: Just a minute. The line's busy, will you hold?

Nabil: Yes, thanks, I will.

Andy: Hello. Andy Geddes.

Nabil: This is Nabil Lahoud speaking, Mr Geddes. I'm an accountant with seven years experience in the Accounts Department of an import/export company in Lebanon. The company is actually very similar to yours. Our main products were building materials.

Andy: Mmm hm.

Nabil: I was responsible for Accounts Payable and Receivable and Payroll and I was also involved in preparing monthly financial reports. I'm very interested in working for a similar company here and I was just wondering if you had any vacancies for accounts clerks at the moment?

Andy: Not at the moment, I'm afraid, but ... ah ... you're familiar with Lotus 123 are you?

Nabil: Yes I am. I'm also familiar with Word and Excel. Would you like me to send you my résumé?

Andy: Yes, OK. I guess you could. Ah, what was your name again?

Nabil: Nabil. N.A.B.I.L. And my surname is Lahoud. L.A.H.O.U.D.

Andy: OK, ah Nabil. Ah, mark it for my attention, Andy Geddes, and I'll have a look at it. Have you got the address?

Nabil: Yes I have. It's 298 Russell Street, Campsie. Is that right?

Andy: Yes that's it.

Nabil: OK, then. I'll send it to you today. Do you have any idea when you might have a vacancy Mr Geddes?

Andy: Well, if things pick up a bit we might need someone. It just depends on business.

Nabil: I see.

Andy: Right. Well, ah, send us your résumé and we'll see what happens. OK?

Nabil: Thanks very much.

Andy: No problem.

Nabil: Goodbye.

Andy: Bye Bye.

- c With a partner prepare a similar phone call to role play to the class. Take turns at being the caller.**
- d Use the criteria in the grid (a) to check each other's call.**