

# Making Telephone Calls

## Warming-Up

### Questions for Thought



- How often do you make telephone calls every day?
- What do you usually say to strangers on the phone?
- Are there any differences between making business calls and personal calls? Why/Why not?

### Vocabulary Match

There are many terms you may need to know when using the telephone in English-speaking countries. Match the terms with their descriptions. Write A–J in the brackets following the words or phrases.

- |                          |                    |                         |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 wrong number ( )       | 5 local call ( )   | 9 call forwarding ( )   |
| 2 area code ( )          | 6 out of order ( ) | 10 toll-free number ( ) |
| 3 receiver ( )           | 7 busy signal ( )  |                         |
| 4 long-distance call ( ) | 8 call waiting ( ) |                         |

- a long-distance call that is free of charge to the caller provided by large businesses, which usually begins with 1–800 in the U.S.
- a telephone call made within your calling area
- a telephone service which enables you to answer a second call while placing your first call on hold
- a call made outside your calling area that usually costs more and requires you to dial an area code plus the number of the person you are calling
- the two- or three-digit number before a telephone number that indicates the city and area in which the number is located
- the part of the telephone that you hold against your ear to speak and listen
- a number that is not the one you wished to reach
- a beeping sound that indicates someone is talking on the phone
- a feature that lets you send your calls to another number
- broken; not working

## Learning Objectives

- To get familiar with the etiquette and vocabulary in telephone conversations.
- To learn to make and answer telephone calls for various purposes.

### First Attempt

Make up conversations with a classmate. By using the telephone, you try to:

- 1) make an appointment with your professor;
- 2) call your friend but have dialed the wrong number;
- 3) make a reservation at a Chinese restaurant; and
- 4) call a friend of yours, who is not available, and her roommate answers.

Compare the sample conversations with your own.



Sample Conversations

### Telephoning Etiquette

When you make a phone call, no matter whether it is business or personal, there are a few simple etiquette rules to follow.

**Tips** 在英语国家，人们接听或拨打电话时，首先要自报家门，这和咱们中国人只说“喂，……”一类的习惯有所不同哦！

1) Offering a greeting.  
(Hello/ Good morning.)

2) Identifying yourself. (This is Jeff Smith speaking/ calling.)

3) Saying why you are calling or asking to speak to a person by name. (May/ Can/ Could I speak to Mary, please?)





Listening

# Activities

## Task 1

### Speaking to the Person Indicated

Quite often, the person who picks up the phone is not the one we want to talk to. Here is a possible conversation.

#### Scenario

You call your professor and his secretary answers.

**Secretary:** Good morning. Dean's Office. Can I help you?

**You:** Hi. This is Tom Rosenberg. I'm wondering if I could speak to Professor Joseph, please?

**Secretary:** Yes. Sorry, who's calling? Who is this?

**You:** Tom Rosenberg, visiting scholar from Georgetown University.

**Secretary:** Thank you. Could you hold while I connect you?

**You:** Thank you.

#### Do It Yourself



Sample Conversations

Work in pairs. Make up conversations for the following situations.

- 1) To call a friend, and her husband answers.
- 2) To call your cousin Ann, and her roommate answers.
- 3) To call the school library to see if *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* is available.
- 4) To call a travel agency to book a package tour to China.



## Task 2

### Calling Someone Who Is Not Available

Sometimes the person you call is not in or at a meeting. You may leave a message in situations like this, as shown in the following conversation.

#### Scenario

You call your brother, but he is not in. His colleague answers.

**Colleague:** Hello. Service Department, General Motors Beijing.

**You:** May I speak to Chris Hamilton?

**Colleague:** I'm afraid he can't take the call now. Would you like him to call back in a little while?

**You:** Yes, please tell him his brother Tom called. Thank you.

**Colleague:** You're welcome. Goodbye.

**You:** Bye.

#### Do It Yourself



Sample  
Conversations

**Work in pairs. Make up conversations for the following situations.**

- 1) To call a cell phone repair shop, but the repair person is busy.
- 2) To call your friend at work, but he is with a customer. Ask him to call you back.
- 3) To call your sister, but she is away on a business trip. Her husband answers. Leave a message.
- 4) To call your classmate to get the assignment. She's gone swimming and her mother answers.



### Task 3

## Handling Wrong Numbers

You may call a wrong number or receive a call from someone who dialed the wrong number. Don't feel embarrassed or upset. Handle it properly when it happens.

When you have dialed a wrong number, you may say the following:

- Oh, I'm sorry. I think/I guess/I'm afraid/I have the wrong number.
- Oh, sorry. I dialed the wrong number.
- Is this... *(the number you want to dial)?*
- Oh, I was trying to reach... *(the name of the person).*

When you receive a call from someone who dialed the wrong number, you may say:

- There's no one here by that name.
- I'm afraid you have the wrong number.
- No, it isn't. *(After the caller says the number he/she wants to dial.)*
- That's okay. *(After the caller says "Sorry.")*

### Do It Yourself



Sample Conversations

**Work in pairs. You dialed the wrong number when you were trying to reach:**

- 1) a customer by the name of Joe Hanson;
- 2) the car wash where you left your car half an hour ago;
- 3) a supermarket to see if it is still open;
- 4) your landlady to pay the rent; and
- 5) a laundry for your dry-cleaned down jacket.




## Task 4

### Leaving Messages

Sometimes you may reach a person's answering machine or voice mail instead of the person you want to speak to. Using an answering machine or voice mail is very popular in English-speaking countries no matter if it is a residential telephone or cellphone.

#### Scenario

You have to reschedule a meeting with a business partner.



Hello, you've reached 415-678-7356. I'm not able to answer the phone right now, but if you leave your name and a message, I'll get back to you as soon as I can. *(Beep.)*

Hello, Mr. Richards, this is Sarah Thompson. I'm wondering if we could reschedule our meeting on Tuesday to a later date. Something urgent has come up. I'm really sorry if this causes any inconvenience. Please let me know your available times. You can call me at 415-456-7987. Looking forward to hearing from you. Many thanks.

#### Do It Yourself



Sample  
Conversations

**You've dialed a number and received a recorded message on the person's answering machine or voice mail. Leave a short message after the beep.**

- 1) You have difficulty making long-distance calls, and you are calling the telephone company and hear the following:  
*You have reached AT&T Customer Service. Your call is important to us. Please leave your name and number, and we'll return your call as soon as possible. Thanks! (Beep.)*
- 2) You are calling your neighbor the Smiths and have not reached them in person. This is the voice mail they left:  
*Hi. We're out! Sorry to have missed your call. Leave your name and number and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. Bye-bye! (Beep.)*
- 3) You are calling your professor of English literature about the poetry reading next week, but she is not available. Here is the message she left on the answering machine:  
*Hello. You've reached the office of Janet Gamberg. I'm teaching right now. Please leave your name, number, and a short message, and I'll return your call as soon as I can. Bye. (Beep.)*
- 4) You are calling to invite your friend Tim and his wife to a birthday party next Saturday. You fail to reach them and only hear the following message:  
*Hello. This is 976-988-2378. I'm unable to take your call at the moment, but please leave your name, number, and the time you called and I'll get back to you soon. (Beep.)*

## Task 5

## Expressing Views

 Work in groups of three or four. Listen and discuss the questions listed after each recording.

### Listening 1 Susan Taylor is making an emergency call.

1

Why do you think Susan doesn't identify herself in the conversation?

遇到紧急情况，切不可乱了方寸。如果忘了告诉接线员你的地址和电话，你可能就得多疼一会儿了。

2

At what point in the conversation do you think Susan should have told the operator her address and phone number?

电话一旦被接通，就应马上通报你的具体位置和联系方式。

3

What do you think the operator wanted to do when she says, "Can I...?"

你要是接线员，务必得到求救者的准确信息，方可迅速施救。

4

What else do you think she should tell the operator?

当然还得提供地址嘛！

### Do It Yourself

Revise the conversation with your group members by adding the necessary information.



Sample Conversation



## Mini Lecture



### 拨打紧急电话

在紧急情况下，有效地拨打急救电话至关重要。我们可能会遇到以下几种紧急情况：

- 火灾 ( Fire )
- 交通事故 ( Traffic Emergency )
- 犯罪 ( Crime )
- 医疗应急 ( Medical Emergency )

Watch the Mini Lecture



**Listening 2** *Bob Johnson wants to talk to the Director of the Registration Office.*



1

Do you think the receptionist does a good job by asking why Bob's calling? Why?

具体情况具体分析。如果是公务电话，也许接线员有责任处理一些简单事宜；如果是私人电话，一般来说，这种询问就不太合适了。

2

In what other ways could the receptionist have said, "He's unable to take your call now"?

有多种表达方式，请看后面的“Review: Useful Language”。

3

How do you think the receptionist should respond when Bob says, "It's very urgent"?

如果你是接线员，就得耐心地让致电者等候或过后打来；如果你是在打电话，催促别人一般是不礼貌的。

**Do It Yourself**

Revise the conversation with your group members and pay attention to social appropriateness.



Sample Conversation



### Listening 3 *Jack Lee is calling to apply for a job.*



1

Why do you think Jack doesn't identify himself immediately? Why does he wait until he speaks to someone in the Human Resources (HR) Department?

接线员只负责转接电话而不负责招聘，因此没有必要向其通报自己的姓名。

2

Do you think it is appropriate for Jack to say that he doesn't understand what the secretary says? What would have happened if Jack had felt too embarrassed to ask the secretary to repeat the name, especially when he is being transferred to the HR director?

听不清或没有听懂对方的话而要求重复是正常现象，切不可因为怕丢面子而误了大事。

#### Do It Yourself

Make up a conversation with a classmate to schedule a time for a job interview.



Sample Conversation

#### Task 6

#### *Sharing Experience in Phone Use*

Work in groups of four or five, one of whom is to chair the discussion of the following topics within each group.

- 1) Who uses the telephone most in the group? Why does he/she use it so much?
- 2) How do you keep yourself socially connected, by making phone calls or via social media platforms, or both? Why?
- 3) What brands do you prefer when choosing a cellphone, domestic or foreign? Why?

# Review

## Useful Language

### You're the Caller

#### When you get through

*Hello. May I speak to...?  
Hello, this is... Is Mary in?*

#### When you are told to wait to be transferred

*Thank you.*

#### When you reach a wrong number

*Sorry.  
Sorry, I must have dialed the wrong number.  
I'm terribly sorry.  
Sorry to disturb you.*

#### When you want to let the person you wanted to reach know you've called

*Can I leave a message?  
Would you please take a message for him/her?  
her?  
Could you please tell him/her...?*



### You Answer

#### When you hear the caller's greeting

*Hello, ... speaking.  
Can/Could/May I help you?  
How can I help you?*

#### When you need to pause for a moment

*Hang on, please.  
Hold, please.  
Just a moment, please.  
Just a second, please.  
Will you hold on, please?*

#### When you receive a call from the wrong number

*Sorry, there's no one here by that name.  
You have the wrong number.*

#### When the person the caller wants to speak to is not available

*Sorry, he's out.  
Sorry, she's not available right now.  
He is unable to take your call at the moment.*

#### When the caller can't reach the person

*Can/May I take a message?  
Do you want me to tell...?  
Could you call back later?  
Can you try some other time?*

