

OXFORD Business English

English for Telephoning

David Gordon Smith

EXPRESS SERIES



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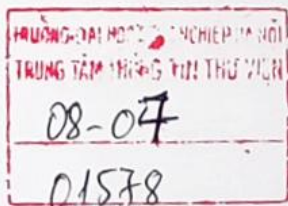


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M-ROM



MultiROM

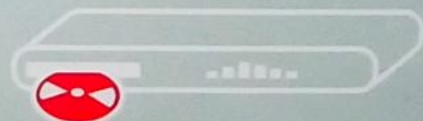
English for Telephoning is accompanied by a MultiROM which
has a number of features.

Interactive exercises to practise useful phrases, vocabulary,
and communication through your computer.

Listening extracts. These are in enhanced audio format that
can be played on a conventional CD-player or through the
audio player on your computer.

Useful documents including an A-Z wordlist in PDF format that
you can print out and refer to.

If you have any problems, please check the technical support
section of the readme file on the MultiROM.



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About the book

In today's world there are very few jobs that do not involve the daily use of the telephone – and due to globalization, the language used on the telephone in business contexts is increasingly English. Even for people with a high level of English, speaking on the telephone presents a particular set of difficulties, for example sound quality. Not being able to see the body language of the person you are speaking to also makes telephone communication more problematic than a face-to-face conversation. However, by learning some of the conventions of the language of telephoning you can overcome some of these difficulties and develop your ability to hold efficient telephone conversations.

English for Telephoning offers you training in how to sequence a conversation and in strategies for communicating by telephone, as well as teaching typical expressions that will allow you to speak on the telephone successfully and with confidence.

English for Telephoning consists of six units that each deal with specific areas related to communicating by telephone. The book is structured so that the more basic skills are dealt with at the beginning of the book and it becomes progressively more advanced. However, the sequence is not fixed and the user can choose the units most relevant to their needs.

Each unit begins with a **Starter**, which consists of a quiz or a questionnaire that allows you to analyse your own use of the telephone. There are realistic listening exercises which offer practice in listening comprehension as well as presenting language and communication strategies. Throughout the units there are exercises that allow you to review your telephone English, learn new expressions and vocabulary, or to practise core grammatical structures. The role plays give you the opportunity to put all you have learned into practice. At the end of each unit there are listening and reading activities designed to generate interesting conversations related to the theme of the unit. These are called **Output**. Finally, the book closes with a fun crossword to **Test yourself!** on all you have learned over the previous six units.

The **MultiROM** contains all the **Listening extracts** from the book. These can be played through the audio player on your computer, or through a conventional CD-player. In order to give yourself extra listening practice, listen to it in your car. The **Interactive exercises** let you review your learning by doing **Useful Phrases, Vocabulary, and Communication** exercises on your computer, this will be particularly valuable if you are using the book for self-study. There is also an **A-Z wordlist** with all the key words that appear in **English for Telephoning**. This includes a column of phonetics and a space for you to write the translations of the words in your own language.

In the appendices of **English for Telephoning** you will find the **Partner Files** for the role plays, and the **Answer key** so that you can check your own answers if you are working alone. There are also **Transcripts** of the listening extracts and three pages of **Useful phrases and vocabulary**, which can be used as a handy reference when speaking on the telephone at work.

'Shall I put you through?'

TARTER

Work with a partner. Ask him or her the questions below and make a note of the answers. Then tell the class what you found out.



- 1 How often do you make phone calls in English?
- 2 When was the last time you made or received a phone call in English? How was it?
- 3 Who do you normally speak English to on the phone? Are they native speakers or non-native speakers of English?
- 4 What do you find most difficult about telephoning in English?
- 5 Describe your worst experience with an English phone call.

AUDIO
2-4

- 1 Three people are calling the company Micah Information Systems. Listen to the three dialogues and complete the table.

	CALL 1	CALL 2	CALL 3
Who is calling?			
Who does he/she want to speak to?			
Does he/she get through? If not, why not?			
What will happen next?			

British English

The line is engaged.
mobile (phone)

American English

The line is busy.
cell (phone)



2 Listen again and complete the sentences from the dialogues.

- 1 Micah Information Systems. Sylvia _____.
- 2 I'll _____ Mr Seide you _____.
- 3 It's Karen Miller _____.
- 4 I actually _____ to speak to Maria.
- 5 Just _____ on a moment while I make the _____.
- 6 I'm _____ Maria's line is _____.
- 7 I'll try _____ later.
- 8 Let me just _____ a pen.
- 9 Nice to _____ from you.
- 10 I'm actually talking to someone on the other _____.



Which sentences (1–10) can be used:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a to say who you are? <u>1, 3</u> | e to say that somebody (or you) can't talk now? _____ |
| b to open a conversation politely? _____ | f to say you will call again later? _____ |
| c to say who you want to speak to? _____ | g to take or leave a message? _____ |
| d to put a caller through to another person? _____ | |

3 Match the two parts to make questions from the dialogues.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Could I speak | a my mobile number? _____ |
| 2 Can I take | b through to her? _____ |
| 3 Could you ask | c have your number? _____ |
| 4 Could you tell me | d back in ten minutes? _____ |
| 5 Does Mr Seide | e your name again? _____ |
| 6 Is she there | f a message? _____ |
| 7 Shall I put you | g ask what it's about? _____ |
| 8 Can I just | h at the moment? _____ |
| 9 Can I call you | i to Jörg Seide, please? <u>a, h</u> |
| 10 Have you got | j him to call me back? _____ |

Now match these answers with the questions. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| A Certainly. | G Yes, she is. |
| B Yes, he does. | H I'm afraid he's in a meeting. |
| C Sure, no problem. | I I need to ask her about the project meeting next week. |
| D My name is John Ellis. | J Yes, please. |
| E Yes, I have. | |
| F That would be great. | |

4 There are usually two ways of saying the same thing: a formal way, or a less formal way. Find pairs of expressions with the same meaning and complete the table.

~~Can I speak to Bob, please?~~

Certainly.

~~Could I speak to Bob, please?~~

Thanks.

What's it about?

Could you please hold?

Hang on a moment.

Can I just ask what it's about?

Shall I put you through to her?

Sure.

Do you want to speak to her?

Thank you.

MORE FORMAL*Could I speak to Bob, please?***LESS FORMAL***Can I speak to Bob, please?*

5 There are different ways to give our names on the telephone. Match the sentences with the explanations. (Careful: one sentence below is not used on the telephone!)

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1 This is Gordon Wallis. | a You say this when you answer the phone. |
| 2 It's Gordon (Wallis) here. | b You say this when you call a company and you don't know the person who answers the phone. |
| 3 Here is Gordon Wallis. | c You say this when you call someone you know. |
| 4 Gordon (Wallis) speaking. | |

USING FIRST NAMES

Whether we use first names or surnames (family names) with people in English normally depends on the relationship we have with them. Here are some tips.

- As a general rule, do what the other person does. So if the other person uses your first name, use their first name when you speak to them. One important exception: if the other person has a much higher status than you (for example if you are a secretary and they are a manager) then sometimes it is better to use their surname, even if they use your first name. It depends on the company culture.
- If it is the very first time you speak to a person, you should probably use their surname.
- If you have had contact with the person before (even if it was only on the phone), you can normally use first names.
- If the person is an important business contact, you should definitely try to use first names, if appropriate. It is a sign of a close working relationship.

6 Look at – or listen to – the three phone calls in exercise 1 again. Who uses first names, and who uses surnames? Why?

GIVING 'BAD' NEWS

It is very common for native speakers to use *I'm afraid* or *I'm sorry* when giving 'bad' news, for example when saying someone is not available.

I'm afraid Mr Seide is in a meeting.

I'm sorry, but Mr Seide is in a meeting.

If you do not use *I'm afraid* or *I'm sorry*, the sentence sounds very direct and impolite to a native speaker.

The word *actually* is also often used to make a statement more polite. For example, it can be used:

- instead of saying the word **no**. A: *Does he have your phone number?* B: **Actually**, I don't think he does.
- when we change the subject (e.g. when we change from small talk to talking business). *Your holiday sounds fantastic. Listen, Sandra, I **actually** wanted to speak to Maria.*
- to say something which is inconvenient or annoying for the other person, in a polite way. *Can I call you back? I'm **actually** talking to someone else on the other line.*

Careful: *actually* is not the same as *current(ly)*!

7 Rewrite the highlighted sentences below with *I'm afraid* or *actually*.

- 1 I'm trying to get through to Jake Woodward. He asked me to call him this morning.
I'm actually trying to get through ...
- 2 Marie Dupont. You're from France, aren't you? – No, I'm from Belgium.
- 3 Can I talk to Kevin Shields? – He's not here.
- 4 Would you like to leave a message? – No, I'll call back later.
- 5 Can I call you tomorrow? – I won't be in the office tomorrow.
- 6 Heather's line is engaged. Shall I tell her to call you back?

8 Look at the situations below and make excuses for why your boss doesn't want to come to the phone. Try to use *I'm afraid*, *I'm sorry*, or *actually* in each sentence. Remember that you don't always need to tell the truth when making an excuse!

EXAMPLE

*I'm afraid she's unavailable.
She's actually out of the office today.*

EXCUSES

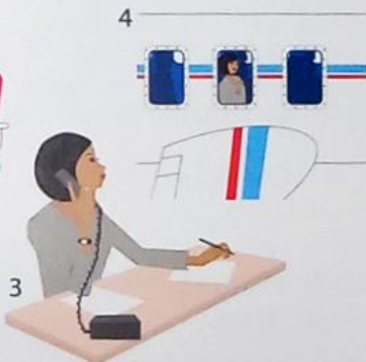
*having lunch
out of the office today/this afternoon
on a business trip
in a meeting
on another line*



1



2



3



4



5

9 Work with a partner to practise the dialogue below.

A

Answer phone.

Respond.

Person is unavailable. Say why
and offer to take message.

Take message.

B

Say hello and make some small talk.

Change subject and ask to speak to somebody.

Leave message.

Say thank you and goodbye.

10 Often when we telephone we have to deal with communication problems. Listen to the dialogues and match them with the problems. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

CALL

- a The caller is speaking too quietly.
- b The person called didn't understand what the caller said.
- c The person called wants the caller to say something again.
- d The caller is speaking too fast.
- e The caller has called someone by mistake.
- f The person called doesn't know how to write a word.
- g The phone itself is making a lot of noise.
- h The previous call was cut off and the caller has to call the other person back.

Now complete the extracts from the dialogues with words from the box. Then listen again to check your answers.

slowly • up • cut • line • catch • spell • could • wrong

1 Sorry, I didn't _____ that.

2 Sorry, _____ you repeat that, please?

3 Sorry, can you speak _____ a bit, please?

4 Sorry, I think you have the _____ number.

5 Sorry, this is a really bad _____.

6 Sorry, we got _____ off.

7 Sorry, could you _____ that for me, please?

8 Sorry, could you say that a bit more _____, please?