

This section includes activities that can help learners develop the skills and background knowledge needed for using the telephone in business and personal situations. These skills include making personal and professional calls, leaving and taking voice mail messages, passing a message on to someone else and understanding instructions in automated voice mail systems.

The development of the activities was guided by the CLB performance conditions relating to LINC 6. If you want to develop your own activities, consider the performance conditions related to telephone interactions, below.

Performance Conditions

- Context is mostly familiar or clear and predictable, but moderately demanding (real-world environment, limited support)
- Topics are mostly personally relevant
- Learner is adequately briefed for focused listening and may require one or two repetitions
- Speech is clear, at a slow to normal rate
- Exchanges are approximately five minutes long, or 8 to 12 turns, each turn up to five sentences

Some of the activities in this chapter are followed by culminating tasks called *Putting It in Practice*. These tasks allow learners to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skills in a communication task. They can be used for formative assessment of learner progress. You can use all or some of the activities in this chapter in the order they are presented or choose the activities that are of interest to the learners you teach.



p. 369 | Introduction to Telephone Calls

Introduces the topic of telephone calls

- 1 Introduce the activity by explaining what a pet peeve is and providing examples of pet peeves related to the telephone. You could introduce terms and expressions from the dialogue that learners may be unfamiliar with, such as: *fed up with*, *when it comes to*, *I'm with you on that one*, *caught me at a bad time*, *a good approach*, *three calls in a row*, *fooling around*.

Introduce the recording by telling learners it is a radio phone-in show about telephone pet peeves. Play the recording once so that learners get an idea of what to expect, then again so they can answer the questions (in writing or discussion).

Extend the Activity: Ask learners to read the Culture Note and discuss their personal experiences of being put on hold. You could also ask them to come up with a list of expressions for the three polite things to do when putting someone on hold.



Audio 7.9: Transcript

Radio phone-in show about telephone pet peeves

Host: Hello, this is Rick Johns, back again on the Morning Show. Today we're taking calls from our listeners about telephone pet peeves. Are you fed up with people calling you in the middle of dinner to sell you vacuum cleaners and vacation packages? Do you hate being put on hold for what feels like hours while you listen to the same boring music over and over again? These are just a few of my pet peeves when it comes to using the telephone, and today we're opening the phone lines to hear about yours. Our first caller is Isabel. Hi Isabel. What is your pet peeve when it comes to the telephone?

Isabel: Hi Rick. I have to say that what I really hate is people calling during dinner time to do surveys or some kind of market research. They usually have a million questions to ask, and I'm busy! Can't they see it's dinner time? I really don't mind answering two or three questions, but I don't want to spend a half an hour on the phone with some stranger when I'm trying to cook.

Host: I'm with you on that one, Isabel. And you're right – they always seem to call at the most inconvenient time, don't they?

Isabel: Yes.

Host: So Isabel, do you have any suggestions for our listeners on how to handle these unwanted calls from telemarketers?

Isabel: Well, I usually just tell them politely that they've caught me at a bad time and I'm not interested in participating in the survey. You know, even though these calls bother me, I don't want to be rude to the people making them because I know they're just doing their job.

Host: Well that sounds like a good approach. Thanks for your call, Isabel. Next we have Sam on the line. Hi Sam. What's your pet peeve relating to the telephone?

Sam: Hi Rick. You know, the other day, I received three phone calls in a row and each time the caller hung up as soon as I answered. I was really annoyed! I don't know if someone was fooling around or calling the wrong number by mistake. But if it's a wrong number, the person should've at least apologized and not just hung up. That, to me, is rude!

Host: Yes, I agree, Sam. And I also think the caller should confirm the number so that he or she doesn't call the same number three times by mistake.

Sam: Exactly!

Host: Well, thanks for your call, Sam. Next, we have Maritza on the line. Hi Maritza. How are you today?

Maritza: I'm good, thanks.

Host: So tell us, what really annoys you when you're on the phone?

Maritza: You know, Rick, what I really hate these days is all the automated telephone lines. The other day I was trying to get through to the customer service department of a large company and all I kept getting was *For this department, press one; for that department, press two.* It's so frustrating. Call me old-fashioned, but I just want to speak to a real, live human being when I call a company! I'm tired of all these recorded voices with complicated menu options.

Host: Yeah, that's frustrating. Maritza, do you know that sometimes pressing "0" will get you through to a live person?

Maritza: Yes, I know. Sometimes that works, but often it doesn't. I just wish companies would realize that most customers just want to talk to a real person who can help them with whatever they're calling about.

Host: Thanks for sharing your pet peeve with us, Maritza and thanks to all of our callers. I'm afraid we've run out of time. Until next time, this is Rick Johns on the Morning Show.



p. 370 | What Would You Do or Say?

Builds awareness of expressions used on the telephone

Possible Answers

1. Sorry, could I get your name again? Could you please spell your name for me?
2. I wonder if you would mind slowing down a little; Could you please speak more slowly?
3. Would you mind spelling the name of the street please? Could you spell that for me please?
4. Could you repeat that for me, please?
5. You could ask the person a question, e.g., What do you think? Do you agree? How do you feel about that?
6. Repeat the directions back to the person, e.g., "Let me see if I have this right, you said ..."