

Hello everyone!

Welcome to American Social Skills for English Language Learners!

Today's class topic is: Talking on the Telephone in English

For English language learners, speaking English on the telephone can be one of the most challenging and frustrating tasks. Listening comprehension is also much more difficult on the phone. But for most adult English learners, speaking on the telephone in English is an essential skill to master.

Activities:

Questionnaire: What are your telephone usage challenges?

Review: Strategies for talking on the telephone

Practice: Role-play real life scripts

Wrap-up: Questions and comments



American Social Skills for English Language Learners

Schedule of Topics 2023



September 13, 20:

Small Talk

September 27, Oct 4:

Manners

October 11, 18:

Talking on the Telephone in English

October 25, Nov 1:

Holidays and Celebrations

November 8, 15:

Body Language and Dress Codes

November 22:

No Class. Thanksgiving Holiday Break

November 29, Dec 6:

Parenting and Schools

December 13:

Corporate Culture, Everyday Communication

Telephone Usage Questionnaire

What are your “talking on the telephone in English” challenges?

1. Who do you need to call on the telephone?
2. Who calls you?
3. Do you need to use the phone at work? If so, when and with whom?
4. What types of personal calls do you make?
5. Do you need to call businesses? Why? Provide possible examples:
(To order food for take out? To ask about an issue with a utility bill?
To schedule a medical appointment? To refill a prescription at the pharmacy?)
6. Do you have difficulty understanding voicemail messages that people leave for you?
7. Do you have difficulty when you call a business and instead of a receptionist you get a pre-recorded message with a menu of options? Do you remember an example of when this happened?
8. Do you understand American telephone etiquette?
9. What do you find the most difficult?

Do you have telephobia?



Strategies for successful phone calls

Is the call informal or formal?

- The language and tone we use when we talk to family and friends, is different than the language and tone we use on a business call.



Informal Calls: Friends and Family



- Be friendly and casual.
- Use everyday conversational English, as you would if speaking in person.

Example: Leaving a message:

Recorded message: *Hi you've reached Linda, please leave a message.*

Your response: *Hey Linda, it's Lam. Just wanted to check in with you. Give me a call when you get a chance. Bye!*

Speak slowly!

Formal Calls: Businesses, Schools, Government, Insurance Company, Doctor's Office, Pharmacy, etc.

- Be polite – ask questions with *'may'* and *'could.'*
- Use formal “business-like” language.
- Don't forget to say *please* and *thank you*.

Example: Calling the customer service department at American Airlines

Hello. May I please speak to a customer service rep about a refund issue?

Speak slowly!

Formal Calls - Transactions

- We are often asked to give personal details to confirm our identity and affiliation with the organization.

You may be asked to give:

Your full name

Telephone number

Home address with zip code

Credit card number

Date of birth

Social Security number (*be careful!*)

Invoice number

Account number

Membership ID number



Four Strategies for Successful Formal Call Transactions:

1. Be prepared *before* you make the call.
2. Don't' be afraid to ask. . .
3. Take notes!
4. It's ok to try again later.



Don't be afraid!



1. Be prepared *before* you make the call:

- Define your “goal” or desired outcome for the call.
 - to make or change an appointment, get a reservation, resolve a service problem, etc.
- What are the questions you need to ask?
- Write down *everything* you need to say.
 - Your name, address, contact information, purpose of your call, your questions, etc.



1. Be prepared *before* you make the call:

- Gather all relevant information before you make the call.
 - your calendar, customer account numbers, credit card numbers, etc.
- Have a paper and pen ready.



2. Don't be afraid to ask . . .

- *Excuse me, could you repeat that?*
- *I'm sorry, could you speak up a little please?*
- *Excuse me, could you speak a little slower please? I'm not fluent in English.*
- *I'm sorry, would you mind spelling that for me?*



Avoid saying "I'm sorry my English is not good."

3. Take notes! Write down all important information

- The time and date of the call.
- The name of the person you talk to.
- Any important details.
- Get a confirmation number (if available).



During and after the call

4. It's ok to try again later

- If the call gets too confusing:

say "I'm sorry I need to go. I'll have to call back later."

- Then hang up
- Try again later



TRY AGAIN!

(Best tip ever!)

Ending a Telephone Conversation

Ending a telephone conversation **informal**:

- *Well, I guess I'd better get going. Talk again soon, OK?*
- *I'll let you go now. . .bye!*
- *Well, it was great catching up. Talk to you later.*
- *I have another call coming through. I'd better run.*

Ending a telephone conversation **formal**:

- *Thanks for your call.*
- *Thanks for your help. Have a nice day. Goodbye.*
- *Thank you so much for your help. Goodbye.*
- *You have been very helpful. Thank you.*

Practice Activities: *Talking on the telephone in English*

1. Calling a friend to invite him to join you for dinner at restaurant

You are calling your friend Kent to invite him to join you and some friends for dinner this Friday, around 7pm, at Mario's Italian restaurant. You get his voicemail. Leave him a message.

Prepare before you call: What information do you need to let Kent know?



2. Making a restaurant reservation

You and three of your friends want to go to dinner on Friday night at Mario's Italian restaurant. Everyone is available after 7:00pm. You call the restaurant to make a reservation.

Prepare before you call: What information do you need to give the restaurant receptionist?

Practice Activities: *Talking on the telephone in English*

3. Making a dentist appointment

You just moved to a new city and you need to find a dentist. From a web search you discover a dentist office, California Dental, near your home. Call and make an appointment.

Prepare before you call: What information do you need to give the receptionist?
What will you say if you reach a voicemail instead of the office receptionist?

4. Rescheduling an appointment

You have a dentist appointment on Friday, March 8. You need to reschedule. You started a new job and you now have only Monday and Wednesday mornings available for appointments. Call and ask to reschedule the appointment.

Prepare before you call: What information do you need to give the receptionist?
What will you say if you reach a voicemail instead of the office receptionist?



Talking on the Telephone in English

Role-play: Make a Restaurant Reservation

Take turns being the restaurant person (A) and the caller (B)

A: Hello Mario's Restaurant.

B: Hello. I would like to make a reservation for dinner.

A: Of course. When would you like to come in?

B: We would like a reservation for this Friday, at 7:00 or 7:30pm.

A: How many are in your party?

B: There will be four of us.

A: Fine. We can seat you at 7:30. What is the name?

B: The name is Parker

A: Can you spell that please?

B: Yes. It's P - A - R - K - E - R

A: Thank you Ms. Parker. We will see you on Saturday at 7:30pm.

B: Thank you. Good bye.

A: Goodbye.



Talking on the Telephone in English

Role-play: Make an Appointment with a Dentist (for a new patient)

Take turns being the dentist receptionist (A) and the caller (B)

A: Hello, California Dental.

B: Hello. I want to make an appointment.

A: Are you a patient here?

B: No. I am new to the area and need to find a dentist.

A: Dr. Lee is taking new patients. I can schedule an appointment for you with her.

B: Thank you.

A: Is this urgent?

B: No. I would just like to schedule a check-up for now.

A: Ok. What is your name?

B: John Park

A: Will you spell that please?

B: J-o-h-n P-a-r-k

A: And a contact number for you?

B: My number is 650-888-9999

A: Thank you. Dr. Lee's first available appointment is Monday, May 3rd. She has openings at 8:00am or 11:00am.

B: 8:00am is good for me.

A: Great. Do you have dental insurance?

B: No. Do you accept credit cards?

A: Yes, we do. You will need to pay at the end of your visit.

B: That's fine.

A: Great. You are all set. We will see you on Monday, May 3rd at 8:00am.

B: Thank you. See you then. Good bye.

A. Good bye.



Did you know?

Myths about native English speakers. . .

Most native speakers are not English experts:

- They make their share of mistakes.
- They are not bothered by making mistakes.

Most native speakers do not make fun of you:

- They do not think you are stupid.
- They don't judge you if you make a mistake.
- They do not think they are better than you.
- They recognize that you speak another language.
- They see it as something admirable.