



ANSWERING PHONE CALLS

Proficiency Level: Intermediate

Lesson Length: 90 minutes

Vocabulary and Expressions: “May I ask who’s calling?” “Hold, please.” “One moment, please.” “I will transfer you.” “Can I take a message?”

Language/Culture Point: Various ways to say common phone phrases

Objective: Students will be able to answer the work phone and assist the caller.

Materials: 1) Student pages, 2) Index cards (one for each student)

Supplemental Materials to be Created: Lesson seven requires the instructor to create a Chalk Talk for calls that employees might answer at their business. Use thought bubbles to represent the reason for the call.



STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		- Brainstorming

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask students if they ever answer the phone at work. Why or why not?
2. When someone calls your business (a customer or employee), what do they call about?
3. What information do you need from them when they call? Common information needed includes name, phone number, and reason for calling.
4. Write the students’ responses on the board and allow them time to make notes in the space provided in their books.



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STEP 2: MINI PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		- Think Aloud

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Explain to the class that there are many reasons people will call a business and it is important to answer each phone call in a polite and clear manner. Write down the following sentence frames on the board (listed in italics below):

For example, we often say, “*(Name of business), how may I help you?*” or “*(Name of company), how may I direct your call?*”

Another example is “*Hello, (name of company), this is (your name), how may I help you?*” This is a long phrase, so it is helpful to practice it before an actual customer calls.

We can also add “*Good morning/afternoon/evening*” when we first answer, to make it more personal. So, if someone calls, we might say “*Good morning, (Name of company), this is (your name), how may I help you?*” and respond to what they are calling about.

2. Tell students to write these sentence frames in their notes.

STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		- Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Have students complete the sentence frames from step two using their company (or previous employer) and their name.
2. Give them a few moments to practice saying these sentences out loud.
3. Match each student with a partner and have them practice “calling” their partner and saying the sentence frames out loud.

**ANSWERING PHONE CALLS****STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK**

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Cell phones - Phone call conversation cards	- Conversation Cards - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students, "Today we are going to practice answering phone calls for work."
2. Create a telephone call conversation card using your knowledge of the types of calls employees must respond to for the students' place of business. One side of the card should have the reason for the call and the other side should have a short dialogue about that reason.
3. Write out the dialogue on the board as you act out the phone call. Act out both parts.
4. Repeat the dialogue two more times.

STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Cell phones - Phone call conversation cards	- Conversation Cards - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Choose a student volunteer to work with you. With the student, create a card for another reason people call the students' place of business.
2. Read the dialogue aloud with the student twice, the first time as the employee and the second time as the person being called. The student should play the opposite role.
3. Repeat with more volunteers as time allows.

**ANSWERING PHONE CALLS****STEP 6: PAIR OR SMALL GROUP WORK**

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
20 minutes	- Cell phones - Phone call conversation cards	- Conversation Cards - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Have each student create a phone call conversation card.
2. Have students stand in two lines facing each other.
3. Students will practice the conversations for each of the cards they created, being sure to switch roles and take turns reading both parts.
4. When each pair is finished, they should find another partner and repeat the process.
5. When students have had multiple opportunities to practice each conversation, ask for volunteer pairs to read each conversation aloud to the class.
6. To give students an extra challenge, try having the employee look only at the reason and have the person being called look only at the dialogue. This way each person will only know one side of the conversation and will have to use listening and thinking skills a little more!

STEP 7: INTRODUCTION TO WORKFORCE PREP SYLLABUS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		- Graphic Organizer

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Create two columns on the board, one for “Reason for Call” and one for “Common Phrases.”
2. In the first column, write one reason for a phone call that students receive at their business.
3. In the second column, write one phrase that a caller says when calling for that reason.



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4. Ask students for other ways a customer/guest/resident may say this.
5. Do the same for the remaining reasons for calls, helping students brainstorm different ways they have heard or may hear customers/guests/residents ask for the same things.

For example:

Reason for call:	Common phrases:
To-go order	I need to make a to-go order. I need to place a to-go order.
Make a reservation	I need to make a reservation. I need a room for Friday night.

STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Index cards	

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Have students close their books.
2. Give each student an index card.
3. Have the students create their own dialogue as if they are answering the phone at their place of business.
4. As students leave, have them give you the card.
5. Practice the dialogue with the student.