

Please leave a message after the beep

by Nick Southey

Lesson focus: Taking and leaving message on the phone

Level: Pre-intermediate +

Time needed: 90 minutes

Number of students: 2-8

Procedure

1 Ask one of your students to pretend to call you. After a couple of rings, answer normally (e.g. *Hello, Tom Richards, Hi Tom, this is...*). Repeat, but this time continue to make the ringing noise until students realise you are not going to answer. Repeat with a third student and, after a couple of rings, read the following answerphone message (encourage the student to leave a message):

Hello, this is (your name). I'm afraid I am not available to take your call right now but if you leave a message with your name and number, I'll get back to you as soon as I can.
BEEP

2 Give each student a copy of Worksheet 1 and discuss the questions as a group. If anyone has a personalized message, ask what the message says.

3 (Exercise 1) Read out the above message again. Ask students to complete the cloze in pairs. Repeat it as many times as necessary but always from the start of the message. Finally, have the students read out the message, inserting their own names.

4 (Exercise 2) In pairs, the students put the message in order. (Answers: 1. b; 2. a; 3. d; 4. c.) From the correct answer, extract the following phrases and write them on the board:

Hello, this is _____ (name) from _____ (company).
I'm calling to let you know / tell you that _____ (message).
Could you ring me / call me / give me a ring to _____ (confirm / discuss / talk about it, etc.)?
You can call / reach / get me on _____ (number).
I'll be in the office until / between / from _____ (time).

5 (Exercise 3) In pairs students match a verb in the left-hand column to an object in the right-hand column to check vocabulary for the following exercise. (Answers: a. 4; b. 7; c. 6; d. 1; e. 8; f. 3; g. 2; h. 9; i. 5.) Check answers and understanding as a group.

6 (Exercise 4) Tell students that you are going to leave them a message. Give each student a copy of Handout 2 and draw their attention to the phone book. Tell them that the message is from someone that they have in the phone book so they can use it to check names and numbers. Read the following message and ask students to take notes. Emphasize that they should not transcribe the message, only note the important details. If they need to listen again, they say 'BEEP' and you return to the start of the message.

Hello, this is Harriet Smith from Taylor Day. I am calling to let you know the conference starts on the 18th of March. Can you give me a ring to confirm how many people from your office are coming? You can call me on 03853 207138 or my mobile on 0776 83975. I'll be in the office until 6 o'clock. Thanks. Goodbye.

Encourage students to use the phone book to help. Check answers and demonstrate that your message was an exact copy of the structures used in the example on the board from Step 4.

7 (Exercise 5) Put students in pairs and sit them back to back. Give Student A a message role-play card. Tell Student B to read the answer phone message from Exercise 1 using his/her own name. Student A then leaves the message on the card following the example on the board from Exercise 4. Explain that the cards are in note form and the messages must be in full sentences. Student B takes notes of the important information from the message using the phone book to help with names, etc. Student B says 'BEEP' if he or she wants Student A to repeat the message at any point. Make sure students understand that not all the callers' information is in the phone book. When they finish one message, change roles and give Student B a different message role-play card.

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- o If someone calls you and you do not answer, does the call go to an answerphone or voicemail?
- o Is the answerphone message personalized or the standard telephone company message?
- o What would your answerphone message be in English?

Exercise 1

Listen to your teacher's message and fill in the gaps.

Hello, _____ is _____ . I'm _____ I am not _____ to
 _____ your call _____ now but if you _____ a message with your
 _____ and _____, I'll _____ back to you as _____ as I _____.

Exercise 2

Put the following phrases in order to make a clear message.

- a. I am calling to let you know that Keywork are ready to sign the contract.
- b. Hi Tim, this is Joanne Franks from Hartley's.
- c. You can call me on my mobile on 0773 539274. I'll be in the office until 7.
- d. Could you give me a ring to arrange a time to meet them?

Correct order: 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____.

Exercise 3

Match a verb on the left with a noun on the right.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| a. to deliver | 1. an account |
| b. to sort out | 2. an IT system |
| c. to compare | 3. an advertising campaign |
| d. to open | 4. an order |
| e. to register | 5. an invoice |
| f. to launch | 6. quotes |
| g. to update | 7. a problem |
| h. to conduct | 8. a trademark |
| i. to pay | 9. a market research survey |

Answers: a. ____; b. ____; c. ____; d. ____; e. ____; f. ____; g. ____; h. ____; i. ____.

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Exercise 4

Listen to the message that your teacher is going to leave you and make notes in the space below. Use your phone book to help with the name, company and number of the caller. Of course, with an answerphone we can listen again if we don't understand the first time. If you need to listen again, say 'BEEP' and your teacher will read the message from the start.

Notes

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Exercise 5

Work with a partner. Your teacher will give you some message cards. Student B reads his/her answerphone message. Student A takes a card and leaves the message for Student B. Student B makes notes of the important details from the message. Use your phone book to help with names and companies that call. Not all of the callers are in the phone book. When you understand the message, change roles and call with a different message. Remember to say 'BEEP' if you need your partner to start the message again.

Call 1

Call 2

Call 3

Call 4

Call 5

Some of the names and numbers in your phone book:

Company	Contact name	Phone numbers
Abbey Bank	Chris Hutton	02393 722040
Active Research	Ms Bailey	02642 388571
Allied Finance	Bill Hayes	03564 956388
Archway Printing	Sue/Kate	04118 736647
Axis Design	?	07336 859144
Baytree House	Tim	(mobile) 07884 867511
Bernie's	Kevin	02654 738924
Brown & Co	Mark Jones	05386 229654
Cherwell	?	03345 743835
Dewson Clark	Petra	03554 619516
Funtley's	-	06390 836245
Graham	Graham Pearce	07668 734276
Hernes & Whitshaw (lawyers)	Brian Kemp/Sally Knight	06361 954924
Jameson Research	Toby	6913856
JPK Communications	Henry/Jacqui	06450 439245
Lucid Design	-	05418 798761
Old Oak	Simon/Karen	04883 979467
Panmark	Georgina/Hans L	04695 810032
Surefire Consultants	?	04490 652860
Vanguard Design	Phil	03598 522460

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<p>Name: Henry Gale Company: JPK Communications</p> <p>Message: Can't come to meeting at time you agreed. Is it possible to do it one hour later?</p> <p>Phone numbers: (office) 06450 439245 (mobile) 07789 546224</p>	<p>Name: Sandra Bailey Company: Active Research</p> <p>Message: The results of your market research survey are ready. When can you meet to discuss them?</p> <p>Phone number: 02642 388571</p>
<p>Name: Phil Henderson Company: Vanguard Design</p> <p>Message: Agreed discount was not included in August's invoice. Can you phone to sort it out? In office until 4pm.</p> <p>Phone number: 03598 522460</p>	<p>Name: Wendy Maitland Company: K&G Technologies</p> <p>Message: Offering free analysis of your It system and a quote to update it to meet your company's needs. Phone back if interested.</p> <p>Phone number: 04776 290583</p>
<p>Name: Hans Lendermann Company: Panmark</p> <p>Message: Need to meet to discuss strategy for the advertising campaign. Please call between 6pm and 9pm. Going to Holland tomorrow.</p> <p>Phone number: 04695 810032</p>	<p>Name: Sally Knight Company: Hernes and Whitshaw</p> <p>Message: The date for the court case is set for the 29th. Need to send copies of all trademark and copyright agreements.</p> <p>Address: Hernes and Whitshaw Solicitors, 24 Park Street, Brighton B42 6LT</p>
<p>Name : Kevin Daily Company: Bernie's</p> <p>Message: Half of the order you delivered to Bernie's last week was damaged. Need correct order by the end of the week. Out of office. Phone mobile.</p> <p>Phone number: 07793 510420</p>	<p>Name: Marianne Pascuale Company: Fresh Faced</p> <p>Message: Got your number from Mark Jones. Need a quote for a press campaign. Arrange to meet?</p> <p>Phone number: 04452 853990 Or mobile: 07427 9257280</p>
<p>Name: Petra Clark Company: Dewson Clark</p> <p>Message: Increase the usual order by 50% for the next two months. Please contact to confirm.</p> <p>Phone number: 03554 619516 Email: purchasing@dewsonclark.com</p>	<p>Name: Ian Franks Company: Allied Finance</p> <p>Message: Bill Hayes has left the company so Ian will be the new account manager for Bill's accounts. Phone if any questions (office number the same as Bill's).</p> <p>Phone number: (mobile) 07162 932815</p>