

Would you like to leave a message?

Activity Type

Reading, writing, listening and speaking activity, pair work

Focus

Telephone language

Polite requests

Aim

To practice taking and leaving telephone messages.

Preparation

Make one copy of the cards for each pair of students and cut as indicated.

Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

Time

25 minutes

Introduction

In this telephone messages role-play, students practice taking and leaving messages over the phone.

Procedure

Divide the students into pairs. Give each pair a set of cards (A to D). Ask the students to start with the pair of cards marked 'A'.

Explain that the students are going to take it in turns being a receptionist or a caller, and role-play taking and leaving telephone messages.

The student with the message card takes on the role of a receptionist and has to complete the card with information from the caller.

The student with the caller card uses their role card to make a call. The role card contains their name, contact information, the name of the person they want to contact, reason for their call and a short message to leave with the receptionist.

Write an example dialogue on the board for the students to use and review the language with the class.

Example:

R: Hello, (name of company).

C: Hello, can I speak to (name), please?

R: I'm afraid he/she's in a meeting at the moment/out of the office/not in today. Would you like to leave a message?

C: Yes, please.

R: Can I have your name please?

C: My name is...

R: How do you spell that?

C: ...

R: And what's the message?

C: Could you ask/tell him/her that...

R: Can I take your phone number/email address, please?

C: Yes, it's...

R: (repeats phone number and/or email) Okay, I'll make sure he/she gets the message.

C: Thanks for your help, goodbye.

R: Goodbye.

Students then begin the role-play. When the phone conversation and message card have been completed, the students swap roles and continue with the next pair of cards. This continues until all four pairs of cards have been used. Afterwards, have the students check the accuracy of their messages by comparing them with the caller cards.

Would you like to leave a message?

Message A		Message B	
Message for:	Message for:	Message for:	Message for:
From:	From:	From:	From:
Phone number:	Phone number:	Phone number:	Phone number:
Email:	Email:	Email:	Email:
Message:	Message:	Message:	Message:
.....
.....
Message C		Message D	
Message for:	Message for:	Message for:	Message for:
From:	From:	From:	From:
Phone number:	Phone number:	Phone number:	Phone number:
Email:	Email:	Email:	Email:
Message:	Message:	Message:	Message:
.....
.....
Caller A		Caller B	
You are Hana Saito.		You are Francisco Lopez.	
You want to speak to Riku Tanaka.		You want to speak to Maria Garcia.	
You haven't received the sales report for last month and you urgently need it.		You need to change the time of tomorrow's meeting from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.	
Leave a message for him to email the report as soon as possible.		Leave a message for her to call or email you to check the new time is convenient.	
Your telephone number is 8018-1660.		Your telephone number is 93-199-9019.	
Your email is saitoh@gmail.com.		Your email is flopez@hotmail.com.	
Caller C		Caller D	
You are Noah Weber.		You are Tony Robinson.	
You want to speak to Mia Fischer.		You want to speak to Peter Newbridge.	
You would like to meet her for lunch sometime this week to discuss a business partnership.		You want to see if he would like to play tennis on Saturday.	
Leave a message for her to call you back tomorrow morning.		Leave a message for him to call you back anytime today or tomorrow.	
Your telephone number is 1440-1550.		Your telephone number is 451-171-1770.	