

TELEPHONE SKILLS

The telephone is very much a part of our lives today. In this unit you will learn to use English to make a telephone call, answer the telephone, greet the person at the other end of the line, ask for someone and respond when someone else makes such a request. You will also see how the language of formal telephone calls is a little different from that of informal calls.

In every dialogue, note carefully the words highlighted in bold.

ANSWERING THE TELEPHONE AND ASKING FOR SOMEONE

Dialogue 1 (formal)

The phone rings in the office of EduBooks Publishing Company.

Receptionist : **Good afternoon. EduBooks Publishing Company.**

Caller : **Could I speak to the sales manager, please.**

Receptionist : **Could I tell him who's calling, please.**

Caller : **My name's Nitya Menon. I am calling from the Women's College library.**

Receptionist : **Thank you, ma'am. I'll put you through to Mr Abdullah, the sales manager.**

Caller : **Thank you.**

Dialogue 2 (formal)

The phone rings in Suman's home.

Suman : **Hello. Suman Bhushan.**

Caller : **Hello. Could I speak to Mr Prem Bhushan, please?**

Suman : **May I know who's calling?**

Caller : **I'm Srinath, his colleague.**

- Suman : **Hold the line, please. Mr Bhushan will talk to you in a moment.**
- Caller : **Thank you.**

Dialogue 3 (formal)

The phone rings in Ms Samuel's home. Santosh takes the call.

- Santosh : **Hello, this is 27613625.**
- Caller : **Is that Ms Karuna Samuel's residence?**
- Santosh : **Yes. Would you like to speak to her?**
- Caller : **Yes, please.**
- Santosh : **Could you hold on a minute, please. I'll call her.**
- Caller : **Thanks.**

Dialogue 4 (informal)

The phone rings in Sitara's home.

- Sitara : **Hello.**
- Caller : **Hi, Sitara, This is Arun.**
- Sitara : **Hi, Arun. What's up?**
- Caller : **Nothing much. Remember, we have a meeting tomorrow morning.**
- Sitara : **Thanks for reminding me, Arun. It's about the editorial for the school magazine, isn't it?**
- Caller : **Yes. Just wanted to make sure you'll be there.**
- Sitara : **I will. Don't worry.**
- Caller : **Bye, then.**
- Sitara : **Bye, Arun.**

Dialogue 5 (informal)

The phone rings in Anil's home.

- Anil : **Hello. 27462132.**
- Caller : **Hey, Anil. It's me, Kiran.**
- Anil : **Hi, Kiran. Great to hear from you. Where've you been all these days?**
- Caller : **I was at the cricket coaching camp.**
- Anil : **Good for you. How did it go?**

Dialogue 7 (formal)

The phone rings in the office of a college.

Secretary : **Good morning. Girls Government Junior College, Ranchi.**

Caller : **Good morning. Could I speak to Professor Rai, please.**

Secretary : **Professor Rai is on leave. May I know who's calling?**

Caller : **I'm Jabbar Ali, from Mehbubia College. Could I leave a message, please.**

Secretary : **Just a minute, sir. (pause) Yes?**

Caller : **Please tell Professor Rai that the meeting to be held on 15th April has been postponed to 4th May.**

Secretary : **D'you mind repeating that, sir?**

Caller : **The meeting scheduled for 15th April has been postponed to 4th May.**

Secretary : **Anything else, sir?**

Caller : **You can ask him to call me if he needs any more information. My number is 28453536.**

Secretary : **28453536. I'll certainly convey your message, sir.**

Caller : **Thank you.**

Secretary : **You're welcome, sir.**

Dialogue 8 (formal)

The phone rings in the CSI Hospital.

Secretary : **Hello. Good afternoon. CSI Hospital.**

Caller : **Good afternoon. I'd like to speak to Dr Nandita Desai, please.**

Secretary : **Dr Desai's in the operation theatre, sir. I can take a message.**

Caller : **Thank you. Could you tell her Rajesh Rao called, please.**

Secretary : **I'll do that, sir. Would you like to leave your phone number?**

Caller : **Dr Desai has my number. Thank you.**

Secretary : **You're welcome.**

Dialogue 9 (informal)

The phone rings in Bharat's home.

Bharat : **Hello.**

Caller : **Hello. I'm Rani. Is Rekha there?**

Bharat : **Hi, Rani. I'm Bharat, Rekha's brother. She's gone to the music class. I'll tell her you called.**

Caller : **Thanks, Bharat. Please tell her I'll talk to her in the evening.**

Bharat : **Okay.**

Caller : **Thanks. Bye.**

Bharat : **Bye.**

Dialogue 10 (informal)

The phone rings in Vasu's home.

Vasu : **Hello.**

Caller : **Hello. Suresh tau? Priya here.**

Vasu : **Hi, Priya. This is Vasu. Father's gone to the market. Anything important?**

Caller : **No, not really. Just tell him that I've got the book he wanted. I'll bring it over on Sunday.**

Vasu : **Right. I'll tell him that.**

Caller : **Thanks, Vasu. And how're your exams going?**

Vasu : **All right. I have the last one tomorrow.**

Caller : **Good luck. See you on Sunday then.**

Vasu : **Yes. Bye.**

Caller : **Bye, bye.**

Useful points to remember

During informal phone calls:

- We do not usually use fixed expressions of politeness, such as
 - *Can I speak to Rekha, please.*
 - *May I know who's calling/speaking?*
 - *Would you like to leave a message?*
 - *Would you like me to take a message?*
 - *Could I leave a message, please.*
- We often use the name of the person we are talking to, to sound friendly: