
The Phone Etiquette



The Phone Etiquette plays an important part of doing business. Courteous and appropriate phone response is essential on daily basis in the travel/tourism industry. Although the phone etiquette may vary in different cultures, your students will be serving English speaking customers so they should familiarize themselves with the basics of the English speaking world. Whether your students are answering the phone or making phone calls, they must use the proper phone etiquette in order to maintain a certain level of professionalism.

You should teach your students to:

- speak clearly and distinctly in a pleasant tone of voice
- they may try to lower their voice if they normally speak loud
- answer promptly if possible before the third ring
- discontinue any other conversation or activity such as eating, chewing gum, typing, etc that can be heard by the calling party
- smile (it shows, even through the phone lines)
- use hold button effectively (some callers accidentally hear conversations being held nearby)
- explain to the caller that they are doing transferring them
- listen actively and listen to others without interrupting.
- remember that they may be the first and only contact a person may have with the company they work for and that first impression will stay with the client long after the call is completed
- give a pleasant response if they have the wrong number
- give a pleasant response if the party is not in

Practice with your students how to create a good first impression on the phone.

Here are some tips:

Answer with a friendly greeting.

Ask the caller for their name, even if their name is not necessary for the call. This shows you have taken an interest in them.

Keep the phone a bit away from your mouth

When putting a caller on hold, always ask permission.

When taking a caller off of hold, always thank them for holding.

When transferring a caller, tell them to whom you are transferring them.

When taking a phone message for someone, always be sure to include the following information:

Caller's name and company name if applicable

Time and date of call

What the call is regarding

Obtain a phone number if the caller wants a return phone call

Before hanging up, be sure that you have answered all the caller's questions

Always end with a polite expression

If possible let the caller hang up first. This shows the caller that you weren't in a hurry to get off the phone with them

Exercise:

In your journal write 2 expressions that you could teach your students for each point above.

For example:

When putting a caller on hold, always ask permission.	Would you mind holding? Could you hold a minute?
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You can use the following table for your students.

Task	Phrases
Let the caller know where you are transferring them.	
Find out the name of the caller and ask what it is in regard to.	
Tell the caller to hold for a moment.	
Return to caller and complete the call	
Tell the caller you are transferring them to (name)'s voicemail.	
Make Initial Greeting	
Tell the caller that the person is out of the office and if you can take a message.	
Tell the caller that the person is out of the office and if you can transfer them into their voicemail.	

When taking messages be sure to ask for: Caller's name (asking the caller for correct spelling.) Caller's phone number and/or extension (including area code)	
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Handling Rude or Impatient Callers

- Stay calm.
- Speak slowly and calmly.
- Treat the caller with respect.
- Be firm but understanding with your answers.
- Try to remain diplomatic and polite.
- Show willingness to resolve the problem.
- Try to think like the caller.
- Offer to have your supervisor talk to the caller.

Exercise:

In your journal write as many phrases as you can think of for the following:

What do you say when you call someone and they answer the phone. *	
State the purpose of your call.	
Apologize when you reach the wrong number.	
If you need to delay the conversation, call to postpone it.	
Return a phone call.	

*Note that a phrase

"Who am I speaking with?" is not grammatically correct (because it ends in a preposition) The correct form is: "This is _____. To whom am I speaking?"

There are several ways that you can use to end a long phone call without making up a story or sounding rude:

1. Promise to finish your discussion at another time.
2. End on a positive note.
3. Tell the person how much you've enjoyed speaking with him/her.

Words and phrases that keep the clients comfortable

Hello! I'm sorry to keep you waiting.
Good morning! Thank you for waiting.
Please. It was nice talking with you.
Thank you. Is there anything else I can do for you?

I'm very sorry. Thank you for coming in (or calling).
Excuse me. It's been a pleasure to serve you.
You're welcome. I'd be happy to do that for you.
May I help you? We appreciate your business.

It is important for your students to make sure that others understand them.

To prevent misunderstandings teach your students to listen closely to what they say. They should:

- speak clearly
- speak at a moderate pace
- speak with enough volume to be heard clearly
- stay with the caller
- use everyday language
- use phrases to get the caller's attention: "Excuse me sir/ma'am"
- repeat information
- spell out information
- be specific
- encourage questions

They should NOT:

- mumble
- turn away from the phone
- rush the sentences
- give important information when the caller doesn't appear to be listening
- talk down to the caller
