

## Telephone English

### Some basic vocabulary about using a telephone/a phone:

To **answer a call**: to reply to when someone is phoning you. Also “to take a call”.

**Answering machine**: a machine or device that records a message left by a caller. Today, messages are often recorded on the voicemail of a mobile phone.

**Busy/engaged**: the telephone line is already being used – the line is busy/the line is engaged.

**Cell (phone)**: a mobile phone, usually now a smartphone.

**Conference call**: a call with three or more people.

To **dial a number**: to enter a number on a phone. **The dial tone**: the sound the line is ready.

To **hang up**: to end the conversation, to put down the receiver (of an old land-line phone).

**Extension**: the direct line to someone in an organisation/building. They have an extension number.

**Landline**: a fixed telephone working on a telephone network line (wire or fibre today).

To **pick up the phone**: similar to taking a call using an old landline telephone. The opposite of hanging up.

**Receiver**: the part of an old, landline phone you pick up to speak into and listen with.

**Ringtone**: the sound the telephone makes when some is calling.

**Telephone directory**: an alphabetical list which provides people’s numbers.

**Text message/SMS**: a short message sent via a telephone.

**Touchscreen**: the glass face of a smartphone which is sensitive to touching by fingers.

### Some sample of a typical work telephone conversation:

**Caller**: Hello, this is Sarah Lee from ABC Ltd (or, for example, the History Department at the University of Paris 1).

**Receptionist** (or Switchboard): Good afternoon, Bristol University, how can I help you?

**Caller**: May I talk to Professor Yamina Hamadi, please?

**Receptionist**: Do you have an extension number please?

**Caller**: No, I’m sorry I don’t.

**Receptionist**: Ok please hold the line, while I look it up... [after a few moments]. Hello, I’m putting you through now.

**Caller**: Thank you... [hears to line ring].

A) **Answering machine**: Hello, you have got through to Professor Hamadi’s voicemail. Please leave a message after the tone, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

**Caller**: Hello, this is Sarah Lee from ABC Ltd. I’m just calling to confirm that your travel arrangements and accommodation for the conference in April are being booked. Could you please call me back should you have further particular requests? Thank you. Good-bye.

B) **Person taking the call** (Prof Hamadi): Hello, politics department, how can I help you?

**Caller**: Hello. Could I speak to Professor Yamina Hamadi please?

**Prof Hamadi**: Speaking. Who is it please?

**Caller**: Oh, good. It’s Sarah Lee from ABC Ltd. I’m calling about your travel arrangements for the conference in April. Before finalising the booking, I need to know your exact dates of arrival and departure.

**Prof Hamadi**: Sure, I’m planning to take a train from London to Paris on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April, and will be returning to the UK on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>. My partner is coming to Paris at the weekend, so we would like to have a double room for the Friday and the Saturday night. We’ll pay for this of course, but I would be grateful if you could take care of the booking.

**Caller**: That’s no problem. I think that’s all the information I need for now. I’ll email if I need anything else. Thank you for your time.

**Prof Hamadi**: You’re welcome. Good-bye then.

**Caller**: Good-bye.

### For some listening exercises watch:

1/ Telephone conversations in English: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW1ht\\_JIHVM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW1ht_JIHVM)

2/ Essential Business English 4 – A telephone conversation, with good exercises and role play at the end: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tw2r9DkL5co>

3/ English telephone phrases: <https://www.espressoenglish.net/telephone-english-phrases/>