

ENGLISH FOR WORK

**EVERYDAY
BUSINESS
ENGLISH**

Ian Badger



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Introduction

English for Work

The books in this series present and practise spoken English and practical writing for everyday communication; they feature key words and expressions which will help you in a wide range of work situations. The target language is introduced through short dialogues and texts, and developed in language notes and practice exercises.

The dialogues are recorded on an accompanying CD. The accents featured are predominantly British English, but comments on American usage are included in the notes.

At the back of each book there is a glossary which contains highlighted language from the dialogues. Translations of the glossary, in selected languages, can be downloaded from the Longman website, www.longman-elt.com.

The series is intended for pre-intermediate/intermediate level learners.

Everyday Business English

Everyday Business English is suitable for anyone who needs to work in the business world, and for students in adult education classes, schools, colleges and universities.

The book contains a range of language common to all who need to use English in their business lives. Whether you use English in meetings, presentations, on the phone or in emails, you will find language to help you work more effectively in this book.

Some of the everyday business English themes included in *Everyday Business English* are covered in greater depth in the other titles in the series:

Business Presentations
Everyday Technical English
Everyday Business Writing

How to use the book

You can work through *Everyday Business English* from start to finish or choose a chapter depending on your business need.

Start a chapter by listening to and repeating the *Useful phrases*. Then listen to the dialogues and study the accompanying notes. Certain phrases have been highlighted that have particular language features associated with them. However, it is worthwhile noting other phrases that appear in the dialogues, which are equally important and can also be seen as key phrases. Use a dictionary to check your understanding of the language presented.

On the notes pages you will find boxes containing notes on some differences between everyday British and American usage.

After studying the dialogues and notes, work through the exercises. You can refer back to the dialogues and notes as necessary. Answers and possible responses to the more 'open-ended' exercises are given at the end of the book.

Finally, refer to the glossary at the back of the book and test yourself on your understanding of key expressions. Write translations of these expressions, again using a dictionary if necessary. Visit the *English for Work* page on the Longman website where you will find translations of the key phrases in a number of languages.

You can use this book for self study or with a teacher. Good luck and enjoy building your 'everyday business English' skills!

Ian Badger, Bristol 2003

Some recommended materials to accompany the *English for Work* series:

- Longman Business English Dictionary
- Penguin Quick Guides: Business English Phrases
- Penguin Quick Guides: Business English Verbs
- Penguin Quick Guides: Business English Words
- Penguin Quick Guides: Computer English

1

Telephoning

**Some useful phrases.**

Listen to the recording and repeat.

Can I speak to Peter Safin, please?

Speaking.

Are you busy?

Can I call you back?

Please hold on.

Sorry to keep you waiting.

I'll transfer you.

What's the area code for Dublin?

Dial 9 to get an outside line.

Press the star key twice.

This is a very bad line.

You're breaking up.

The reception is very bad.

Would you like to leave a message?

Leave a message on my voicemail.

I'm in a meeting. I'll call you back.

I think we've covered everything.

Speak to you soon.

Bye for now.

SORRY TO KEEP YOU
WAITING SO LONG. ARE YOU
STILL THERE?





Dialogues 1

Beginning a call

- A:** I'd like to speak to Max Reed, please.
- B:** Just one moment. I'll connect you ... You're through now.
- C:** Max Reed speaking.
- A:** Hi, Max. Simon here.
- C:** Hi, Simon. How are you?
- A:** Fine. And you?

Checking information

- A:** Hello.
- B:** Hello, John. Sven here. Did you get my email?
- A:** Yes, it's right here in front of me.
- B:** Fine. I thought it would be quicker to phone than send you another message.
I wanted to run through some of the arrangements for Tuesday...

Asking the caller to hold

- A:** Sorry to keep you waiting so long. Could you hold on a little longer? The network is very slow today.
- B:** How long do you think it is going to take to find the information?
- A:** It won't be long now. Right. Here we are. The figures you need are ...

Asking the caller to leave a message

- A:** I'm trying to get hold of someone in your sales department. Are you having problems with your phone system? I was cut off earlier and now there is no reply.
- B:** Just a moment, please. I'll try the number for you. Yes, I'm afraid there's no reply from the department. They must be at lunch. **Would you like to leave a message** and **I'll get someone to call you when they get back**.
- A:** Thanks. My name's Baz Mehot and the number is 453980.

Making sure you understand

- A:** Can I speak to Teresa Riller? **I understand that she is looking after Sales** while **Marco Stam is on parental leave**.
- B:** That's right, but **I'm afraid she's not here at the moment**. Can I take a message?
- A:** Thanks. Could you say that Pieter Baumgartner called and ask her to call me back?
- B:** Can you spell your name, please?
- A:** Baumgartner is B-a-u-m-g-a-r-t-n-e-r. I'm at the Rainbow Hotel in room 13.
- B:** Is that 13, one three, or 30, three zero?
- A:** Thirteen, one three.
- B:** Thanks. I'll pass on the message.

Ending a call

- A:** ... OK. **Have we covered everything?**
- B:** I think so. You just need to let me know when you can send the report.
- A:** That's right. I'll send you a message when I get back to the office. **Anyway,** **thanks for calling**.
- B:** No problem. I'll wait to hear from you.

Notes

I'd like to speak to Max Reed, please.

Some other phrases for checking if someone is available:

Is Max Reed there?

Can I talk to Max Reed?

Is Max Reed available?

Hi, Max. Simon here.

This is an informal greeting. More formal greetings include:

Hello, Mr Reed. This is Simon Speedwell speaking.

Mr Reed. Hello, it's Simon Speedwell here.

I wanted to run through ...

We often introduce the topic politely by using the past tense. We can also use *I'd like to...*

For example:

I wanted to run through the arrangements.

I wanted to ask you a question.

I wanted to know about your travel plans.

I'd like to ask you a question.

Sorry to keep you waiting ...

Some other phrases to use when someone is waiting on the phone:

Could you hold on?

Do you mind holding.

Would you like to leave a message?

Would is used to introduce a polite offer.

Note also:

Would you like me to check?

Would you like to call back later?

Would you like to hold on?

... I'll get someone to call you when they get back.

Note the use of the simple present tense *when they get ...* in this sentence:

I'll call you if I can.

I'll phone you when they arrive.

I'll let you know if I hear anything.

I'll fax you if I remember the name.

I understand that she is looking after Sales ...

Language that indicates that you already have some information:

I understand that you're coming to Warsaw next week.

I hear that Pedro is moving to Singapore.

I see (that) they're going to open a new office in Paris.

... Marco Stam is on parental leave.

Some other reasons for absence include:

He's on paternity leave.

She's on maternity leave.

She's taking compassionate leave.

He's ill.

She's on holiday.

He's left for the day.

... I'm afraid she's not here at the moment.

Use *I'm afraid* or *I'm Sorry to* when passing on unwelcome information.

I'm afraid I can't help you.

I'm sorry I'm going to be late.

I'm afraid I can't find the information you need.

Have we covered everything?

Note how we signal that a call is coming to an end:

So is that everything?

Is that all?

Anyway, thanks for calling.

Other ways of bringing a call to an end:

Right, I'll check the details and call you back.

I think that's everything.

Is there anything else?

British/American differences

Some differences between British and American English:

British

parental leave

compassionate leave

She's on holiday.

American

family leave

In American English the term *bereavement leave* is also used.

She's on vacation.



Dialogues 2

A voicemail message

This is Ann Forsell's voicemail. I'm sorry I can't take your call at the moment, but please leave a message and I'll get back to you. Alternatively you can leave a message with my assistant. His number is 0046, (that's the country code for Sweden), 01, (that's the area code), 2132. Many thanks.'

Leaving a message

'Hi, Fiona. I've been trying to get hold of you all morning so I hope you get this. Please call Sara Remondi as soon as you can. **It's about the meeting next month.** Unfortunately **I can't make it** so we need to talk urgently. It's two o'clock my time by the way and I'll be going home in three hours. Bye for now.'

You can't talk

- A: Hello.
- B: Hi, John. **Can you talk?**
- A: Not really. **I'm in a meeting.** Can I call you back in, say, fifteen minutes?
- B: Sure. Speak to you later. It isn't urgent.

The reason for calling

- A: Can you hear me now? I couldn't hear you very well earlier. The reception was terrible. Anyway, how are you?
- B: Fine. **I was just ringing to check the time** for next week's meeting. Is it still three o'clock?

You can't hear the caller

- A: Hello.
- B: Hello. **Sorry, I can't hear you very well.** I'm in a restaurant and they have just started playing some loud music.
- A: I didn't catch that.
- B: **I'll just go outside.** Just a moment. Can you hear me now?
- A: Yes, that's much better. I'm glad you're enjoying yourself.

You have to end the call

- A: John, Peter has just arrived. I'll call you when I get back to London.
- B: Fine. I'll be here until 5. Speak to you later. Bye.
- A: Bye.

An automated message

'Welcome to Haznor Business Systems. This is a toll-free number. Please choose one of the following four options. **If you are calling about an existing order, please press 1.** If you wish to place a new order, press 2...'

Notes

This is Ann Forsell's voicemail.

Some other formal opening phrases for voicemail are:

You're through to Ann Forsell's voicemail.

You've reached Ann's voicemail.

An informal opening:

Hi. Ann here. Sorry I can't take your call at the moment but leave a message and I'll get back to you.

It's about the meeting next month.

Calls often begin with:

I'm calling/ringing about (your flight).

John, about (your flight to Paris).

... I can't make it ...

Make is often used instead of attend in informal usage:

Unfortunately, I can't make the next meeting.

I can't make Friday but Thursday would be fine.

Will you be able to make it?

Can you talk?

Other useful phrases for checking if the person you want to talk to is free, and some replies:

Are you busy?

Are you free to talk?

Have you got two minutes?

Can I call you back?

It's difficult at the moment.

This is a good time to talk.

I'm in a meeting.

Some other reasons why you cannot take a call:

I'm not at my desk.

I'm driving. (I'll just pull over.)

I'm just getting on a train.

I've just arrived at the airport.

I haven't got my diary with me.

I was just ringing to check the time ...

I was just ringing/calling ... is a useful alternative way to start a call:

I was just calling about the meeting next Friday.

I was just ringing to see if everything's OK for tomorrow.

I was just calling to ask for some advice.

Sorry, I can't hear you very well.

Some other phrases to use when reception is bad:

Sorry, could you repeat that?

Could you say that again?

I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.

I'm afraid the line's bad. Did you say fifteen?

Could you speak louder? The line's very bad.

I'll just go outside.

Use will when you offer or promise to do something.

I'll call you when I get back to London.

I'll be here until 5.

I'll tell her you called.

I'll make sure she gets the message.

I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

If you are calling about an existing order, please press 1.

Some other 'automated' instructions:

Press the star key twice.

Press the hash/square key.

Press 5 to speak to the operator.

Please replace the handset.

British/American differences

British

American

Differences in expressing time:

Monday to Friday

Monday through Friday

ten past six

ten after six

the ninth of December

December ninth

24-hour clock:

12-hour clock:

9:00, 17:00

9 a.m., 5 p.m.

Note: In the UK both 12-hour and 24-hour clocks are used but in the US the 24-hour clock is generally used only by the military.

Some differences in saying telephone numbers:

360-4458 = three six oh, double-four five eight

360-4458 = three six zero, forty-four fifty-eight

Other differences

Mobile phone (p12)

cell(ular) phone

directory enquiries

directory assistance/

(p13)

information

dialled (p14)

dialed

Practice

- 1 Complete the sentences using the verbs from the box below. Use each verb once only.**

press try call hear leave keep want ~~say~~ hold hang get

EXAMPLE: I'm trying to ... get ... hold of Peter Ince.

- a Would you like to a message?
- b I can't you very well. Please speak up.
- c Could you on, please? I won't be long.
- d Sorry to you waiting.
- e Can I you later?
- f If you to place an order, the star key.
- g I'll someone to call you later.
- h He didn't when he would be back in the office.
- i Please don't up. I'll the number again.

- 2 Write what you would say in these situations. Refer to the dialogues and notes.**

EXAMPLE: You are the manager. The phone rings and you pick it up. The caller asks 'Is that the manager?' What do you say?

Yes, [Tina Forget] speaking.

- a Your female colleague is off work as she has just had a baby. What do you say to the caller who wants to speak to her?
.....
- b You are in a meeting and you receive a call on your mobile phone. You cannot speak. What do you say?
.....
- c Leave a message on your colleague Peter's voicemail. Say that you called and ask him to call back when he gets the message.
.....
- d You don't catch the caller's name. Ask him to spell it.
.....
- e A colleague phones to let you know her hotel room number but you can't hear her very well. You are not sure whether it is fifteen or fifty. What do you say?
.....