

**1 Frequently a Sales Representative may make a “cold call” to a purchasing manager or some other influential person in a company. Imagine the following situation:**

Dominique Peron is Personal Assistant to Jacques Le Grand, Production Controller in Compagnie Tarbet Garonne (CTG), a Canadian manufacturer of paints and varnishes. M. Le Grand has asked not to be disturbed by unsolicited sales calls. Walter Barry from Dallas, Texas would like to speak to M. Le Grand.



- a) Listen to the tape and say what Dominique is trying to do. What is her objective?
- b) Dominique Peron finally makes a suggestion to the caller. What does she say?



**2 Listen again. Complete the script below by writing down all the phrases used by Dominique Peron to block the caller.**

CTG: Bonjour, ici La CTG.

WALTER BARRY: Good morning, Walter Barry, calling from Dallas, Texas. Could I speak to Monsieur Le Grand, please?

CTG: Who's calling, please?

WALTER BARRY: I'm sorry – Walter Barry, from Dallas.

CTG: Er, \_\_\_\_\_, please?

WALTER BARRY: Well, I understand that your company has a chemical processing plant. My own company, LCP, Liquid Control Products, is a leader in safety from leaks in the field of chemical processing. I would like to speak to M. Le Grand to discuss ways in which we could help CTG protect itself from such problems and save money at the same time.

CTG: Yes, I see. Well, M. Le Grand \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

WALTER BARRY: Can you tell me when I could reach him?

CTG: He's \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in New York. So it is difficult to give you a time.

WALTER BARRY: Could you ask him to call me?

CTG: I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, he's \_\_\_\_\_.

WALTER BARRY: Could I speak to someone else, perhaps?

CTG: Who in particular?

WALTER BARRY: A colleague for example?

CTG: You are speaking to his Personal Assistant. I can deal with calls for M. Le Grand.

WALTER BARRY: Yes, well ... er ... yes ... could I call him tomorrow?

CTG: No, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. Listen, let me suggest something. You send us details of your products and services, together with references from other companies and then we'll contact you.

WALTER BARRY: Yes, that's very kind. I have your address.

CTG: Very good, Mr. er er ...

WALTER BARRY: Barry. Walter Barry from LCP in Dallas.

CTG: Right Mr. Barry. We look forward to hearing from you.

WALTER BARRY: Thank you. Goodbye.

CTG: Bye.



**3 Listen to the beginning of another conversation. A Sales Manager from a tools manufacturer is calling a car components company.**

- a) Who does the caller ask to speak to?
- b) What is the result?
- c) Why is the caller successful / not successful here?

### Role play 3

Work in pairs. Student A should refer to File card 7A and Student B should use File card 7B.

### Role play 4

Keep to the same A or B. Student A should refer to File card 8A and Student B should turn to File card 8B.

## TRANSFER

Think about any of the following – whichever is most likely for you now or in the future. Prepare the call (maximum three minutes preparation!). Explain the details of the situation to a colleague or to your teacher, then practice the call.

- 1 Call a company to ask for product details or prices.
- 2 Call a hotel to make a reservation.
- 3 Call a travel agent to ask about flights to a city you need to visit.

If possible, record your conversation.

## Language Checklist

### Using the Telephone (1)

#### *Introducing yourself*

Good morning, Aristo.

Hello, this is ... from ... .

Hello, my name's ... calling from ... .

#### *Saying who you want*

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

Could I have the ... Department, please?

Is ... there, please?

#### *Saying someone is not available*

I'm sorry he/she's not available ... .

Sorry, he/she's away / not in / in a meeting /  
in Milan.

#### *Leaving and taking messages*

Could you give him/her a message?

Can I leave him/her a message?

Please tell him/her ...

Please ask him/her to call me at ...

Can I take a message?

Would you like to leave a message?

If you give me your number I'll ask him/her to  
call you later.

#### *Offering to help in other ways*

Can anyone else help you?

Can I help you perhaps?

Would you like to speak to his assistant?

Shall I ask him to call you back?

#### *Asking for repetition*

Excuse me. / Sorry, I didn't catch (your name /  
your number / your company name / etc.).

Excuse me. / Sorry, could you repeat your (name,  
number, etc.).

Excuse me. / Sorry, I didn't hear that.

Excuse me. / Sorry, I didn't understand that.

Could you spell (that / your name), please.

#### *Acknowledging repetition*

Okay, I've got that now.

(Mr. Kawashima.) I understand.

I see, thank you.

## Skills Checklist

### Using the Telephone: Preparation for a call

#### *Reading – background information*

#### *Desk preparation*

Have the following available:

- relevant documentation / notes
- correspondence received
- computer files on screen
- pen and paper
- diary.

#### *Check time available*

How much time do you need?

How much time do you have?

#### *Objectives*

Who do you want to speak to?

In case of non-availability, have an alternative  
strategy:

- call back / be called back – when?
- leave a message
- speak to someone else
- write or fax information.

#### *Do you want to:*

- find out information?
- give information?

#### *Introduction*

Do you need to refer to:

- a previous call?
- a letter, order, invoice or fax?
- someone else (who?)
- an event (what? when?)

#### *Prediction*

What do you expect the other person to say / ask  
you? How will you respond?

#### *Language*

Key phrases (see Language Checklist)

Pronunciation

Spelling

## Quick Communication Check

### 1 Introducing yourself and saying what you want

You are on the phone. Complete the sentences with the correct words on the right.

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a) Can I _____ to Mr. Johnson, please?                 | _____ |
| b) _____ Jan Van der Saar.                             | _____ |
| c) I'm _____ from Amsterdam.                           | _____ |
| d) Can you _____ me the Purchasing Department, please. | _____ |
| e) I'd like some _____, please.                        | _____ |

- speak / say
- My name's / I'm
- living / calling
- fix / give
- informations / information

### 2 Leaving and taking messages

Complete the exchanges below with words from the box.

- A Can I \_\_\_\_\_ a message?  
 B Yes, please. Please \_\_\_\_\_ him I'll arrive at about three in the afternoon.  
 C He isn't here at the moment. \_\_\_\_\_ you like to leave a message?  
 D Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ you say Mr. Sorensen called?  
 C I'm sorry, can you \_\_\_\_\_ your name?  
 D Yes, it's Sorensen. S ... O ... R ... E ... N ... S ... E ... N.  
 E Shall I ask him to \_\_\_\_\_ you tomorrow?  
 F No, it's okay. Please tell him I'll \_\_\_\_\_ later.  
 G I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ a message for Mr. Casey, please.  
 H Yes, of course. Who's calling?  
 G Angelo Gherrini, from Milan.

- |           |
|-----------|
| leave     |
| take      |
| could     |
| call      |
| would     |
| tell      |
| call back |
| repeat    |

### 3 Asking for repetition

Make sentences from the following.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a) can I'm that you repeat sorry?               | _____ |
| b) said I'm understand I what didn't you sorry. | _____ |
| c) sorry speak I'm slowly more please.          | _____ |

- \_\_\_\_\_ didn't you I hear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ you that spell can please?
- \_\_\_\_\_ say you what did?

Key	1	a) speak, b) My name's, c) calling, d) give, e) information
2		
3		
		A take, B tell, C would, D could, C repeat, E call, F call back, G leave
		a) I'm sorry, can you repeat that? I didn't hear you.
		b) I'm sorry I didn't understand what you said. Can you please spell that?
		c) I'm sorry, please speak more slowly. What did you say?

# 4 Good to hear from you again!

## AIMS

- Cross-cultural communication on the telephone (1)
- Setting up appointments
- Changing appointments
- Ending a call

## 1 Cross-cultural communication on the telephone (1)



1 Listen to the three recorded extracts. Match each call to the appropriate picture below. In each case there is a communication problem.

What is the problem, and how could it be solved?



Conversation 1 Picture \_\_\_\_\_ Problem \_\_\_\_\_

Solution \_\_\_\_\_

Conversation 2 Picture \_\_\_\_\_ Problem \_\_\_\_\_

Solution \_\_\_\_\_

Conversation 3 Picture \_\_\_\_\_ Problem \_\_\_\_\_

Solution \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Look briefly at the text below. Before reading the text, say:**

- a) what it is about
- b) what the message of the cartoon on the next page is
- c) what you think the text probably recommends.

**3 Now read the text. Mark the sentences that follow as True (T) or False (F).*****Barriers to oral communication***

Oral communication usually presents more problems than written communication. If you've ever studied another language, you know it's easier to write in that language than to conduct a conversation. Even if the other speaks your language, you may have a hard time understanding the pronunciation if the person isn't proficient. For example, many non-native English speakers  
5 can't distinguish between the English sounds *v* and *w*, so they say "wery" for "very." At the same time many people from the United States cannot pronounce the French *r* or the German *ch*.

Also, people use their voices in different ways, which can lead listeners to misunderstand their intentions. Russian speakers, for instance, speak in flat, level tones in their native tongue. When they speak English, they maintain this pattern, and non-Russian listeners may assume that the  
10 speakers are bored or rude. Middle Easterners tend to speak more loudly than Westerners and may therefore mistakenly be considered more emotional. On the other hand, the Japanese are soft-spoken, a characteristic that implies politeness or humility to Western listeners.

Idiomatic expressions are another source of confusion. If a U.S. executive tells an Egyptian executive that a certain product "doesn't cut the mustard," chances are communication will  
15 fail. Even when the words make sense, their meanings may differ according to the situation. For example, suppose you are dining with a German woman who speaks English quite well. You inquire, "More bread?" She says, "Thank you," so you pass the bread. She looks confused; then she takes the breadbasket and sets it down without taking any. In German, *thank you* (*danke*) can also be used as a polite refusal. If the woman had wanted more bread she would  
20 have used the word *please* (*bitte* in German).

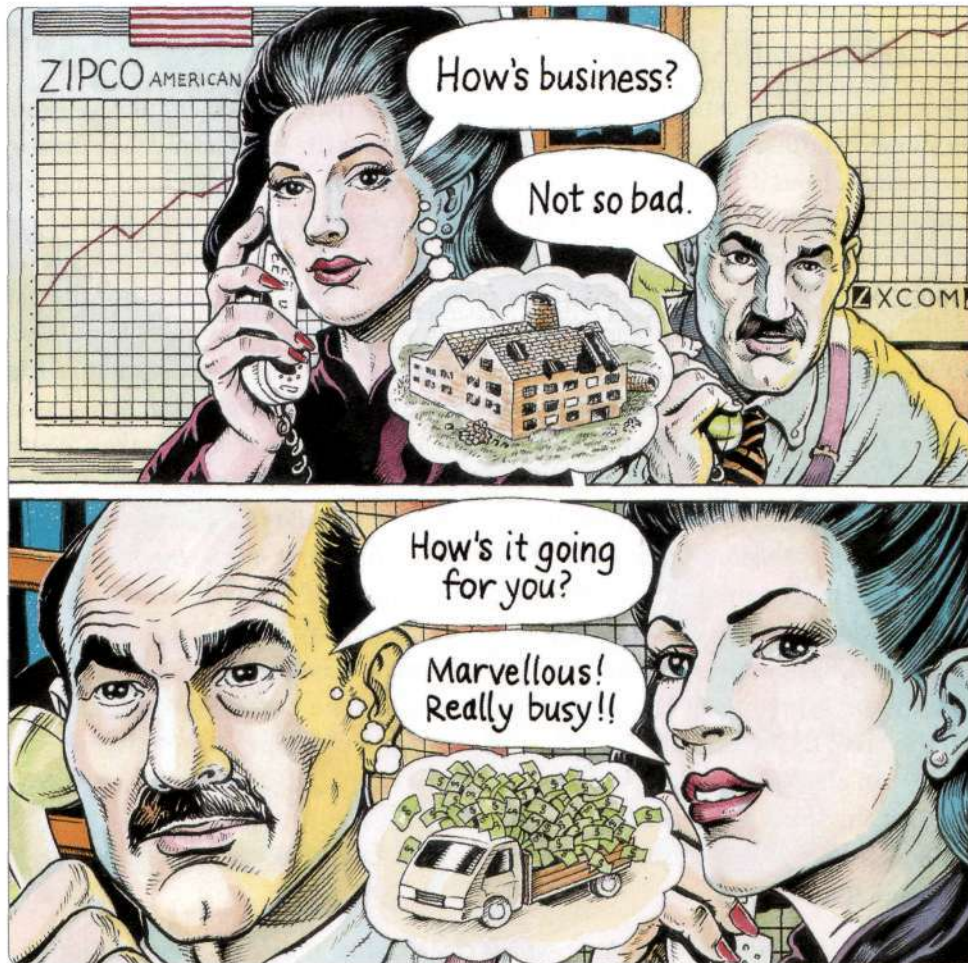
When speaking in English to people who speak English as a second language, you may find these guidelines helpful:

- 1 *Try to eliminate noise.* Pronounce words clearly, stop at distinct punctuation points, and make one point at a time.
- 2 *Look for feedback.* Be alert to signs of confusion in your listener. Realize that nods and smiles don't necessarily mean understanding.
- 3 *Rephrase your sentence when necessary.* If someone doesn't seem to understand you, choose simpler words; don't just repeat the sentence in a louder voice.
- 4 *Don't talk down to the other person.* Try not to overenunciate, and don't "blame" the listener for not understanding. Use phrases such as "Am I going too fast?" rather than "Is this too difficult for you?"
- 5 *Use objective, accurate language.* Avoid throwing around adjectives such as *fantastic* and *fabulous*, which people from other cultures might consider unreal and overly dramatic.
- 6 *Let other people finish what they have to say.* If you interrupt, you may miss something important. You'll also show a lack of respect.

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From *Business Communication Today* (Fifth Edition) (Pearson Education Inc, NJ, 1998)

- a) Speaking is more difficult than writing.
- b) Pronunciation presents special difficulties.
- c) English spoken in a flat, level tone sounds uninterested.
- d) Middle Easterners are more emotional than Westerners.
- e) The Japanese tend to speak softly.
- f) It's good to use a lot of idiomatic and colloquial phrases.



4 Read the numbered points 1–6 in the text again. Match each of the phrases in the box to one of the numbered points.

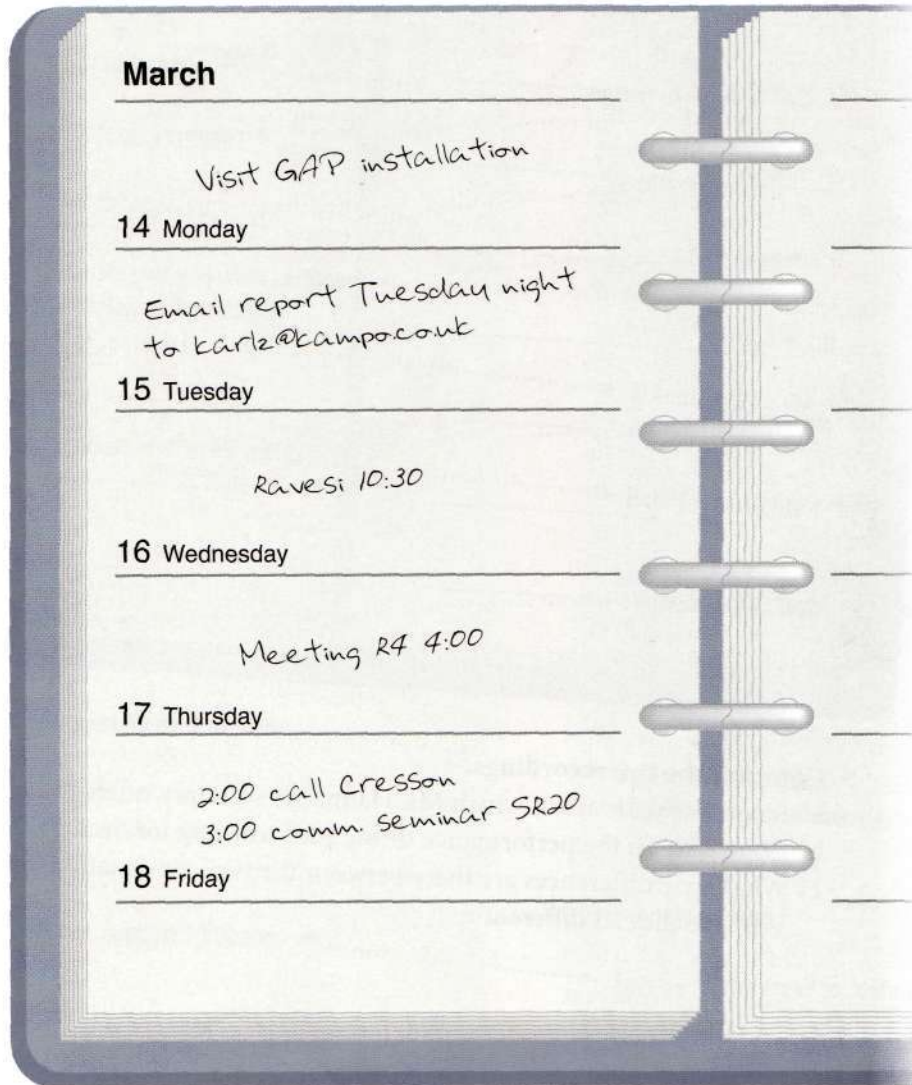
don't interrupt      notice if your listener understands  
 repeat using simple words      use neutral language      speak clearly  
 take responsibility for poor understanding

Which do you think is most important point for *you* when you speak English on the phone?

## 2 Setting up appointments



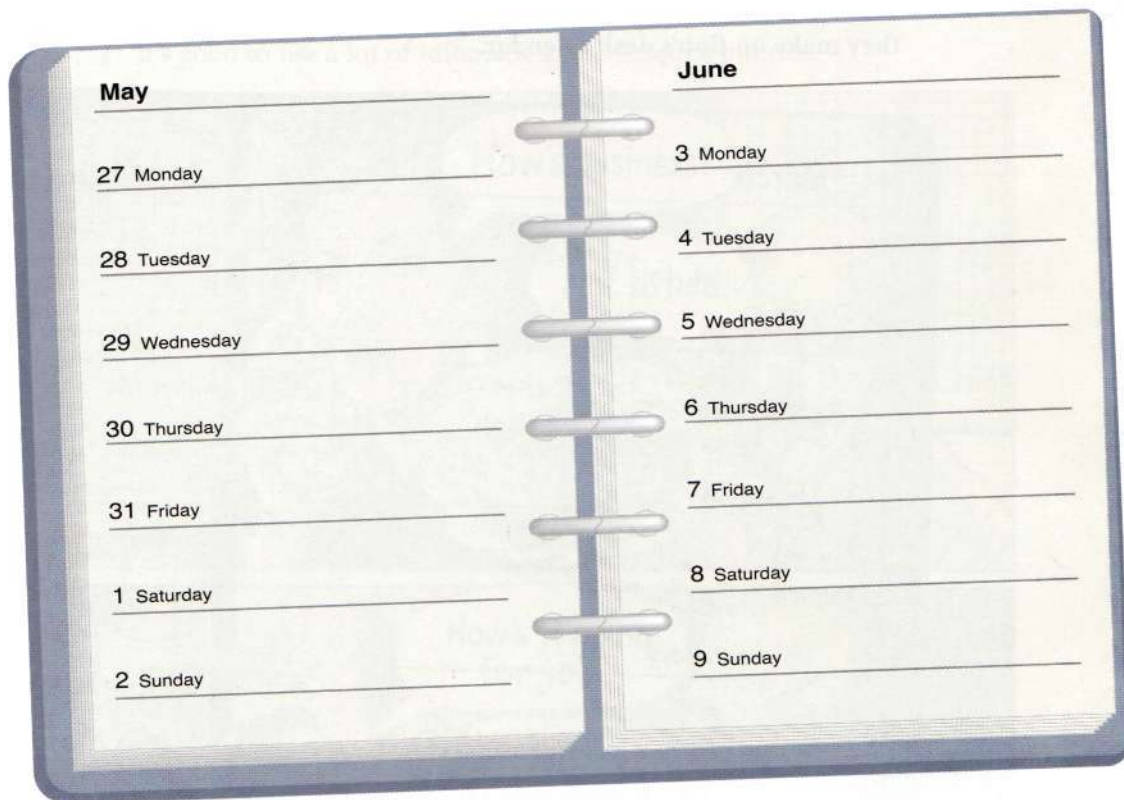
- 1 Listen to the recording. Two colleagues, Bob and Lara, need to meet because a third colleague, Leon, has resigned. As you listen, write the details of the appointment they make on Bob's desk calendar.







2 Here Vladimir Kramnik from Moscow calls Joanna Hannam of Swallow Exports Ltd., in Miami. He wants an appointment with Ms. Hannam. Complete the details of the appointment made on Ms. Hannam's desk calendar.



3 Compare the two recordings.

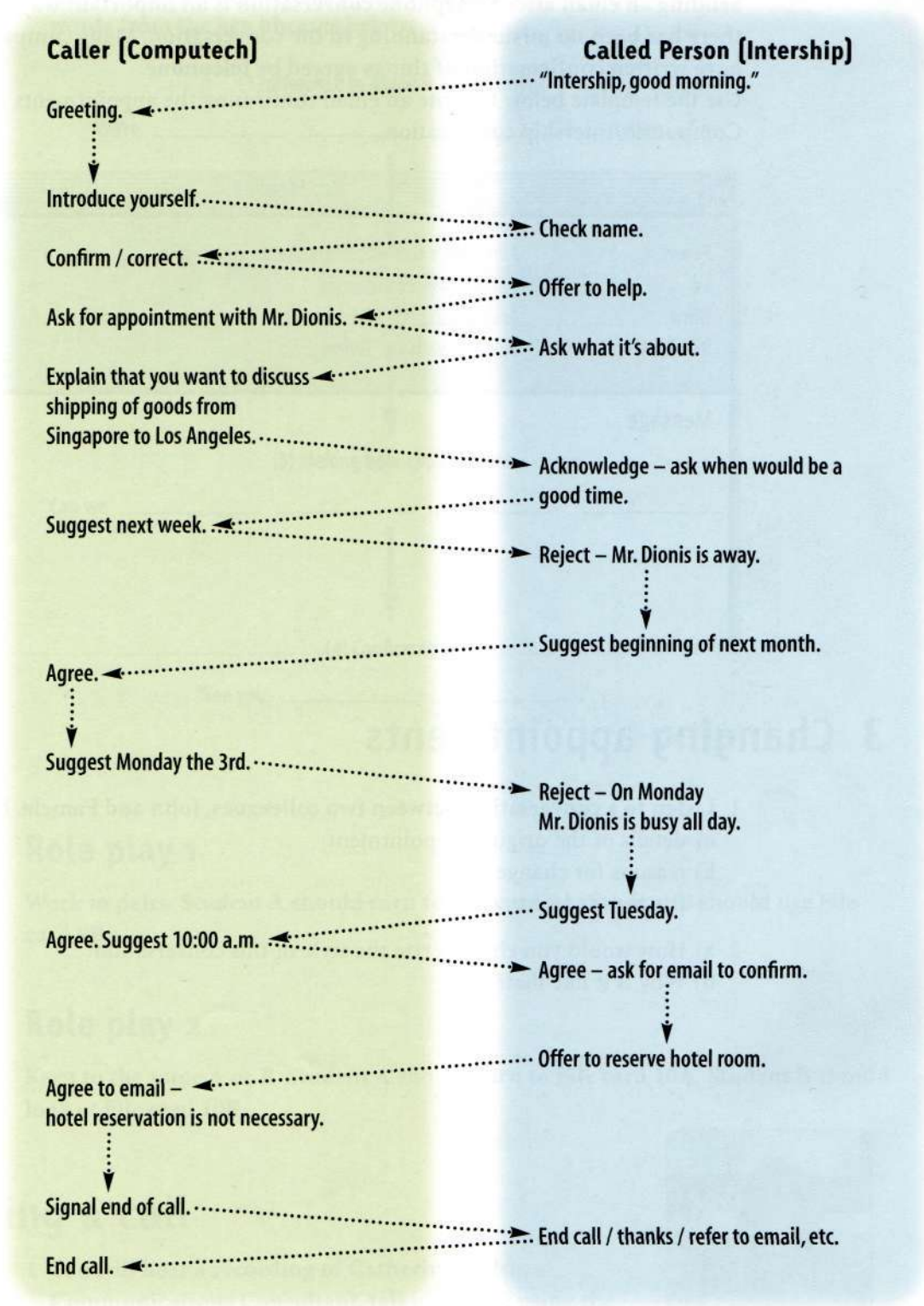
- a) Identify three ways in which Ms. Hannam's secretary offers to help Mr. Kramnik.
- b) Comment on the performance of the staff working for Swallow Exports.
- c) What style differences are there between the two conversations in 1 and 2 above?  
Why are they so different?

### Practice 1

In the following conversation, a Singaporean exporter, Computech Arcos, plans to send goods from Singapore to Los Angeles. The caller wants to have a meeting with a U.S. shipping company, Intership.



Suggest suitable phrases for each step in the conversation, then practice the dialogue with a colleague.



Now listen to the recording of a model answer.