



2 Listen to another short extract from the recording of Clare Macey. Here she is talking about being prepared for incoming calls. Tick what she recommends.

Send a fax suggesting someone calls you – then be prepared for their call.

If you expect a call, think about what the other person will say or what they will ask.

Check any relevant documentation or correspondence.

If you are busy or not ready when they call, ask them to call back later.

3 Taking and leaving messages



1 Listen to the recording and complete the missing information on the message pads below.

a)



Telephone Message

For:

Time of call:

Caller:

Company:

Phone number:

Message:

b)



Telephone Message

For:

Time of call:

Caller:

Company:

Phone number:

Message:

Discussion

Compare the styles of the callers in the two conversations you have heard. How are they different? Comment on how the people answering the calls handle each caller.

Now listen to two more examples and complete the message pads below.

c)


 *Telephone Message*

To: Time of call:

From:

Message:

d)

 **Computer Services User Support**

For attention of: Time of call:

Caller: Department:

Extension number: Workstation:

Problem / enquiry:

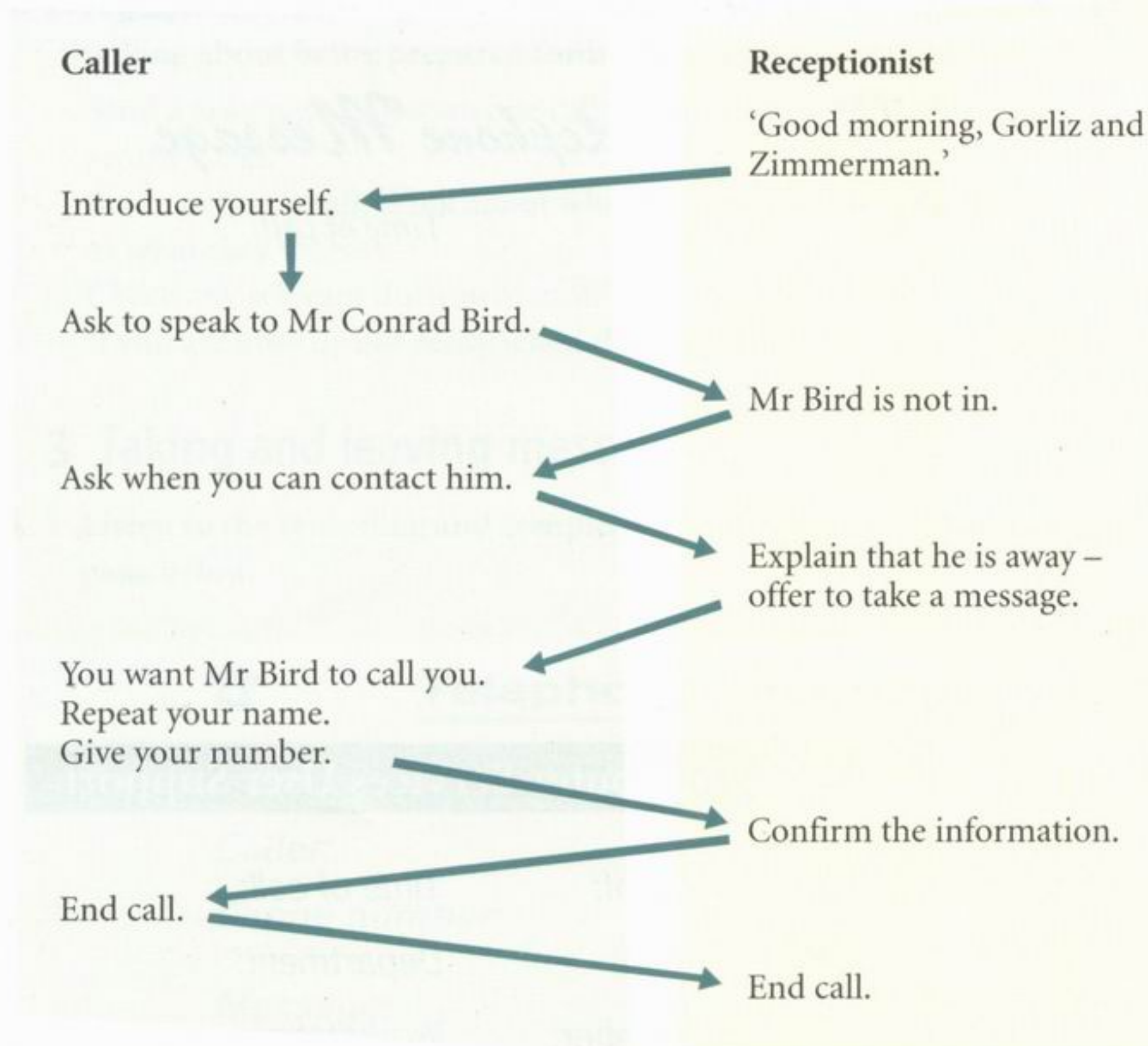
Notes:

Discussion

Discuss the style of the various speakers in the last two conversations. How does the style change according to the speaker and the situation? Is the style used always the right one?



Practice

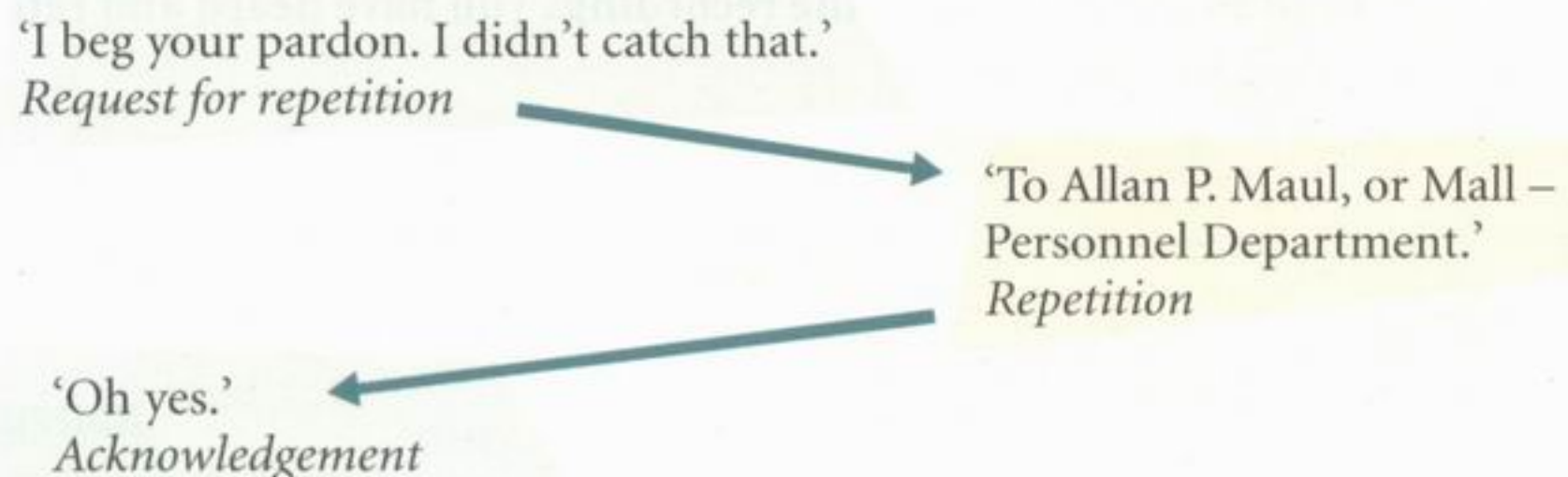
Use the following flow chart to make a complete telephone conversation. If you need to, listen again to the recordings you have heard and refer to the Language Checklist on page 24.



  Now listen to the recording of a model answer.

4 Asking for and giving repetition

-   1 Listen to the recording of a conversation between a woman who calls the Personnel Office in the Singapore branch of Michigan Insurance Inc. She has to attend for a job interview.
- The first time you listen, say why she calls.
 - Listen again. Notice that there are four requests for repetition. Why?
- 2 In each request for repetition, the person asking for the repetition also acknowledges it. It is important that any repetition is followed by an acknowledgement. Look at the following example that you have heard:



  Listen again. Identify two other ways to acknowledge repetition.

- 3 Look at the following situations and listen to the recording for each one. In each case, suggest why someone might ask for repetition and suggest a suitable phrase.



1



2



3

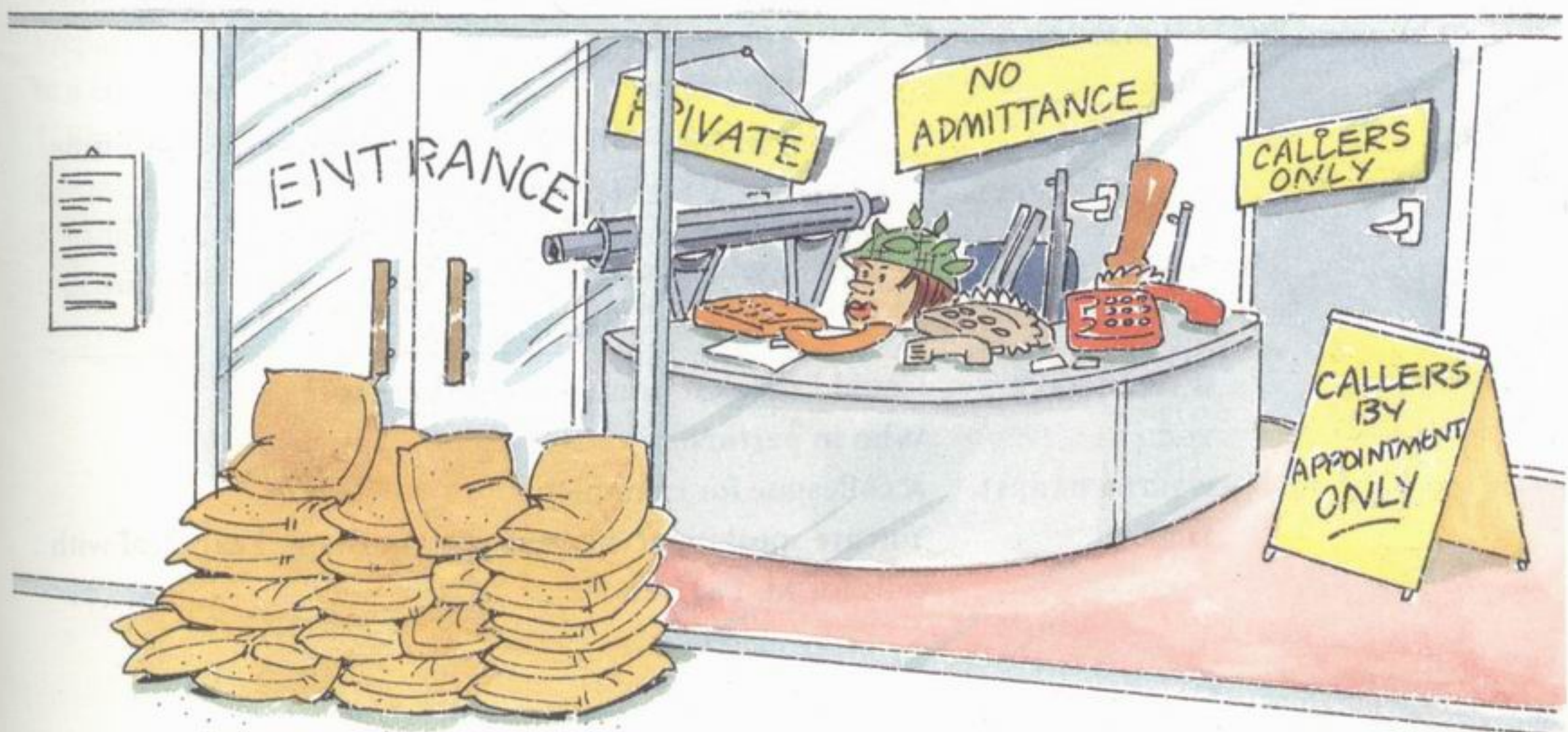
Role play 1

Work in pairs. Student A should turn to File card 5A. Student B should turn to File card 5B.

Role play 2

Keep to the same A or B. Student A should turn to File card 6A and Student B should turn to File card 6B.

5 The secretarial barrier



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 Tarbet Garonne Compagnie (TGC), a French manufacturer of paints and varnishes. M. Le Grand has asked not to be disturbed by uninvited sales calls. Walter Barry from London 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.

TGC: Bonjour, ici La TGC.
WALTER BARRY: Good morning, Walter Barry, here, calling from London. Could I speak to Monsieur Le Grand, please?
TGC: Who's calling, please?
WALTER BARRY: I'm sorry – Walter Barry, from London.
TGC: 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 TGC protect itself from such problems and save money at the same time.
TGC: Yes, I see. Well, M. Le Grand _____

WALTER BARRY: Can you tell me when I could reach him?
TGC: He's _____
_____, then _____
_____ in New York. So it is difficult to give you a time.
WALTER BARRY: Could you ask him to ring me?
TGC: I _____
_____, he's _____.
WALTER BARRY: Could I speak to someone else, perhaps?
TGC: Who in particular?
WALTER BARRY: A colleague for example?
TGC: You are speaking to his Personal Assistant. I can deal with calls for M. Le Grande.

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

TGC: 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.

TGC: Very good, Mr er er ...

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

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

WALTER BARRY: Thank you. Goodbye.

TGC: Bye.



3 Listen to the beginning of another conversation. A Sales Manager for a Dutch tools manufacturer, Reuter, is telephoning Dixon Auto, a British 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 practise the call.

- 1 Ring a company to ask for product details or prices.
- 2 Ring a hotel to book a night's accommodation.
- 3 Ring a travel agent to ask about flights to a city you need to visit.

If possible record your conversation.

Language Checklist

Telephoning (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 ring me on ...

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

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

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

Sorry, I didn't hear that.

Sorry, I didn't understand that.

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

Acknowledging repetition

Okay, I've got that now.

(Mr Kyoto.) I understand.

I see, thank you.

Skills Checklist

Telephoning: 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

4 Good to hear from you again!

- Cross-cultural communication on the telephone (1)
- Making arrangements
- Changing arrangements
- 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?



a



b



c

Conversation 1 Picture Problem

Solution

Conversation 2 Picture Problem

Solution

Conversation 3 Picture Problem

Solution

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

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

3 Now read the text. Identify the following:

- a) something that is important before telephoning
- b) advice on how to use your voice
- c) advice on checking your understanding
- d) examples of 'explicit' cultures – what does this mean?
- e) examples of 'subtle' cultures – what does this mean?
- f) a possible problem about the phone that you would not have face-to-face.

Telephoning across cultures

Many people are not very confident about using the telephone in English. However, good preparation can make telephoning much easier and more effective. Then, once the call begins, speak slowly and clearly and use simple language.

Check that you understand what has been said. Repeat the most important information, look for confirmation. Ask for repetition if you think it is necessary.

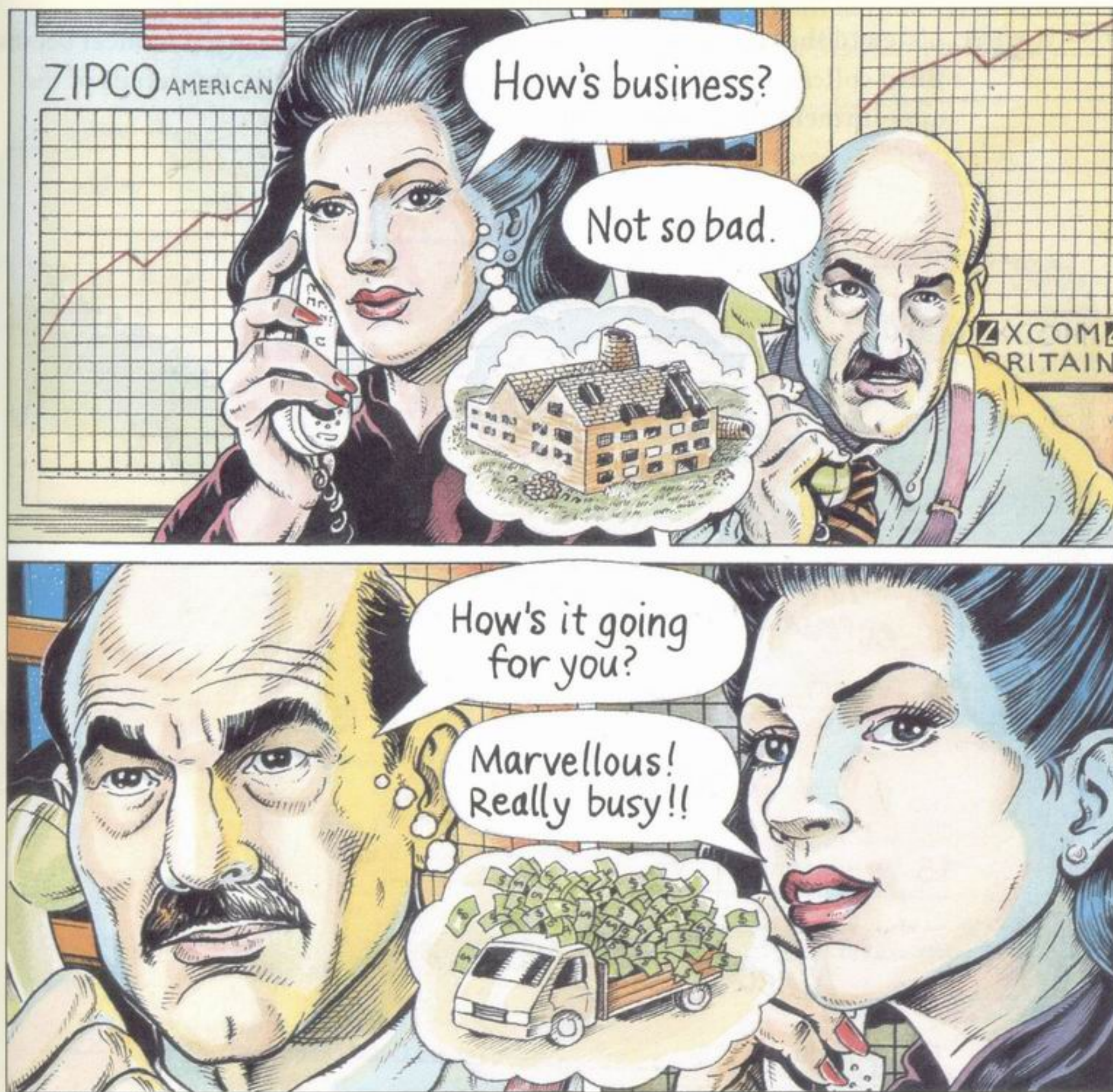
Remember too that different cultures have different ways of using language. Some speak in a very literal way so it is always quite clear what they mean. Others are more indirect, using hints, suggestions and understatement (for example 'not very good results' = 'absolutely disastrous') to put over their message. North America, Scandinavia, Germany and France are 'explicit' countries, while the British have a reputation for not making clear exactly what they mean. One reason for this seems to be that the British use language in a more abstract way than most Americans and continental Europeans. In Britain there are also conventions of politeness and a tendency to avoid showing one's true feelings. For example if a Dutchman says an idea is 'interesting' he means that it is interesting. If an Englishman says that an idea is 'interesting' you have to deduce from the way he says it whether he means it is a good idea or a bad idea.

Meanwhile, for similar reasons Japanese, Russians and Arabs – 'subtle' countries – sometimes seem vague and devious to the British. If they say an idea is interesting it may be out of politeness.

The opposite of this is that plain speakers can seem rude and dominating to subtle speakers, as Americans can sound to the British – or the British to the Japanese. The British have a tendency to engage in small talk at the beginning and end of a telephone conversation. Questions about the weather, health, business in general and what one has been doing recently are all part of telephoning, laying a foundation for the true purpose of the call. At the end of the call there may well be various pleasantries, *Nice talking to you*, *Say hello to the family* (if you have met them) and *Looking forward to seeing you again soon*. A sharp, brief style of talking on the phone may appear unfriendly to a British partner. Not all nationalities are as keen on small talk as the British!

Being aware of these differences can help in understanding people with different cultural traditions. The difficulty on the telephone is that you cannot see the body language to help you.

Adapted from *Faxes, phones and foreigners* by kind permission of British Telecommunications plc.



4 Choose the closest definition of the following words from the text.

- 1 literal (l.7)
 - a) direct and clear
 - b) full of literary style
 - c) abstract and complicated
- 2 understatement (l.8)
 - a) kind words
 - b) less strong way of talking
 - c) clever speech
- 3 deduce (l.15)
 - a) reduce
 - b) work out
 - c) disagree
- 4 vague (l.18)
 - a) unclear
 - b) unfriendly
 - c) insincere
- 5 devious (l.18)
 - a) rude
 - b) dishonest
 - c) clever
- 6 pleasantries (l.25)
 - a) questions
 - b) requests
 - c) polite remarks