

Telephone Skills: Role-plays

Time: 45-90 minutes, depending on the size of your class

Preparation: 5 minutes (Print this page, cut the cards into strips, make copies of the Classroom Handout and at least glance at what the cards have to say.)

Level: Intermediate+

Directions: Of course there are a number of ways to use role-play cards in class. For these particular cards, we recommend the following:

Place two chairs back to back at the front of the classroom. Explain to the class that students will be coming up to these chairs to perform impromptu role-plays. Because these role-plays take place on the telephone, they will not be able to see their partner. Divide the class into pairs. While each pair is performing, the other pairs should fill out the Classroom Handout. Choose two students from the class to come and sit in the chairs. Hand each one a card (one "A," one "B"). (You can pretend to be the telephone and ring here.) Allow the students to act out their role-play as the rest of the class listens and takes notes. Once the role-play is finished, give all the pairs a couple of minutes to compare their answers to the questions. Then, ask for whole class feedback on the answers and provide any useful telephone expressions and reformulations. Now, ask the first pair to select the next pair. Have these next two students come to the front of the room and repeat the process.

Once you have gone through all the cards, you could pass out all the cards again. (Make sure each pair receives a different situation from the one they performed for the whole class.) Remind the students to use the new expressions (Hopefully, these are still on the board.) Then give the class a few minutes to act out the role-plays simultaneously. (If they are into this activity and you still have some time to kill, you might want to have pairs trade situations and do it again.) Finally, bring the class together and select a few students to report back on the simultaneous role-play(s).

Note: There are enough role-plays for 18 students.

Phone Call #1 (write on board)

Who are the two callers?

What is the purpose of the phone call?

How does the phone call end?

List any useful telephone expressions you hear:

Read more: Learning ESL - Speaking on the Telephone

Name _____

Role-plays: Telephone Skills

A: You are calling your friend Ken. You want to invite him to a party this Friday.	B: You answer the phone. The person on the other end of the line wants to speak to Ken. You don't know anyone named Ken.
A: You want to reserve a table for five at a restaurant called the Slanted Door. Call the restaurant and make a reservation for 8:00 this Saturday.	B: You work at a restaurant called the Slanted Door. Answer the phone. (The restaurant is completely booked for Friday and Saturday nights this week.)
A: You need to make a doctor's appointment because you hurt your back while you were cleaning the house. Call the doctor's office and make the appointment.	B: You work in a pediatrician's office answering the phones. (Note: a pediatrician is a doctor for children.)
A: Your friend just borrowed your car to go get some more beer. Call him (on his cell phone) to remind him to get some chips and salsa.	B: You borrowed your friend's car to buy more beer. You have just driven into a lamppost. You're not hurt, but the car is badly damaged. Your cell phone rings.
A: You're on vacation with your friend in Las Vegas. You have just spent all your money. Your friend is upstairs in the hotel room. Call your friend and ask to borrow \$60.	B: You're asleep in your Las Vegas hotel room. Your friend is still downstairs in the casino. It's four o'clock in the morning. The phone rings.
A: Call your girlfriend/boyfriend to let them* know that you'll be home very late because you have to work. *them=him or her (informal)	B: Your girlfriend/boyfriend always stays out late. You suspect that they* are having an affair. The phone rings. *they=he or she (informal)
A: You promised your mother that you would water her plants while she was away on vacation. You forgot. The plants are dead. The phone rings.	B: You are away on vacation in San Francisco. You have a lot of beautiful plants. Call your son/daughter to find out how your plants are doing.
A: You have not finished writing your English essay. Call your teacher and ask if you can turn it in late.	B: You are an English teacher. The phone rings. It's one of your students.
A: You live in an old flat. Things break all the time. This time, your toilet is flooding the bathroom. Call your landlady and demand that she fix it.	B: You own a beautiful old apartment building. You have one tenant who is always calling you to complain. The phone rings.

Name _____

Telephone Skills: Partners Activity

This is a fast fun way to pair students for another activity. Just print this page, copy on to colored paper if you want, cut the page down the middle and cut strips for each telephone exchange. Students should walk around the room and find the missing half of their exchange. Combinations must be logical. This sheet has a total of nine exchanges, which allows for eighteen students. If your class size is larger than this, just duplicate one sentence for every two extra students.

As an alternative, you could make multiple copies of this page, cut the same as above, divide students into groups, and give each group all the exchanges to match.

Find Your Partner: Telephone Skills	
May I please speak to Jerry?	He's not here right now. May I take a message?
I'd like to make a reservation.	For how many people?
Is this the Animal Defense League?	The Animal...what? Sorry, I think you have the wrong number.
May I please speak to Maria Shigematsu in Accounting?	She just stepped out for a minute. Can I have her call you back?
Sorry to bother you but-	Do you know what time it is?
I'd like to order a large pizza with Canadian bacon and pineapple.	Delivery or pick-up?
Sorry, we're out of red. We should be getting more in next week.	I'd like to place an order for 500 red pens.
I really have to get back to my English homework.	Oh, I'll let you go. Give me a call when you have some time.
I'm sorry I didn't call you last night. I fell asleep early.	That's okay. I wasn't here anyway.