TOPICS 4–5 | B1–B2 | STUDENT HANDOUT

Phone Calls to Professional Emails

Speaking on the Phone • Letters and Emails

1. Warm-up: call, email or message?

Choose the best channel for each situation: **PHONE CALL / EMAIL / MESSAGE**. Explain your choices.

1. You need an answer from a colleague within the next five minutes.
2. You want to send a client a contract.
3. You need to explain a complicated problem.
4. You want to confirm an appointment.
5. A customer is angry and wants an immediate solution.
6. You need a written record of an agreement.
7. You want to ask a colleague a simple question.
8. You need to formally complain about a service.

Discuss

• Which channel do you use most often? Do you prefer calling or writing?

• Why do people sometimes feel uncomfortable making professional calls?

• When is a phone call better than an email?

2. Vocabulary warm-up: telephone English

Match expressions 1–12 with functions A–L. Write the letter next to each expression.

Expression	Function
1. May I speak to Mr Brown, please? ___	A. asking someone to wait
2. Speaking. ___	B. saying why you are calling
3. Who’s calling, please? ___	C. checking information
4. Could you hold for a moment? ___	D. asking for repetition
5. I’m afraid she’s unavailable at the moment. ___	E. answering when someone asks for you
6. Can I take a message? ___	F. asking to speak to someone

TELEPHONE LANGUAGE

Vocabulary warm-up - continued

Expression	Function
7. Could you ask her to call me back? ___	G. offering to record information
8. I’m calling regarding... ___	H. saying someone cannot speak now
9. Could you repeat that, please? ___	I. asking who is calling
10. I didn’t quite catch that. ___	J. asking for a return call
11. Let me confirm the details. ___	K. politely ending a call
12. Thanks for your help. Goodbye. ___	L. saying you did not hear or understand

3. Phone language bank

Function	Useful phrases
Starting a call	Good morning. This is Anna Kovalenko from Bright Solutions. I’m calling regarding... / I’m calling about... I’d like to speak to...
Receiving a call	Good morning. Bright Solutions. How can I help you? Speaking. / May I ask who’s calling? One moment, please.
Clarifying	Could you say that again, please? Could you speak a little more slowly? I’m sorry, I didn’t quite catch that. Could you spell that for me? Let me check that I understood correctly.
Leaving a message	Could you ask him to call me back? Could you tell her that...? My number is... / I’ll try again later.
Ending a call	Thank you for your help. / I appreciate your time. I’ll send you the details by email. I look forward to speaking with you again.

4. Sound professional

Choose the more professional version.

1. A. Who are you? / B. May I ask who’s calling, please?

2. A. Wait. / B. Could you hold for a moment, please?

3. A. She isn’t here. / B. I’m afraid she’s unavailable at the moment.

4. A. Say that again. / B. Could you repeat that, please?

5. A. What do you want? / B. How can I help you?

CLARITY, TONE AND ACTIVE LISTENING

Sound professional - challenge

Make these sentences more professional.

1. Call later.
2. I don’t understand.
3. Give me your name.
4. He’s busy.
5. Send me the information.

5. Phone skills: no visual clues

On the phone, you cannot see facial expressions, gestures, body language or visual reactions. What becomes more important?

Choose the **four most important** and explain your choice.

tone of voice • speaking speed • grammar accuracy • pronunciation

repetition • active listening • asking questions • checking understanding

Discuss: What can happen if you speak too quickly? How can you show that you are listening?

6. Mini phone call: find the problem

Receptionist: Hello?
Caller: Hi. Is Mark there?
Receptionist: No.
Caller: When will he be back?
Receptionist: I don’t know.
Caller: OK. Tell him to call me.
Receptionist: What’s your name?
Caller: Anna.
Receptionist: OK. Bye.

What is wrong with this call? Find at least **five ways** to improve it. Then rewrite the conversation.

TELEPHONE ROLE-PLAYS

7. Making an appointment

Student A: GlobalConnect Ltd	Student B: the client
Arrange a 30-minute meeting with a potential client. **Your availability:** Tuesday: 10:00–12:00 Wednesday: after 15:00 Friday: all morning.	You are unavailable on Tuesday. Wednesday at 16:00 is possible but not ideal. Friday at 11:00 works well. Ask whether the meeting is online, how long it will take and what will be discussed.

Include a greeting, reason for calling, suggested time, negotiation, confirmation of details and closing. **Then switch roles.**

Useful language

Would Friday at 11:00 work for you?

Would it be possible to meet on Wednesday instead?

Let me confirm: Friday at 11:00, online, for 30 minutes.

8. Problem call: active listening

Customer	Company representative
You ordered office equipment five days ago. The company promised delivery within three days. You need the equipment tomorrow. You are frustrated.	The order was delayed because of a logistics problem. It can be delivered tomorrow afternoon. Listen, clarify the customer’s needs and offer a solution.

Useful language

I understand your concern. / I’m sorry to hear that.

Let me check what happened. / If I understand correctly...

Here’s what we can do. / Would that solution work for you?

I apologise for the inconvenience.

Record the agreed solution

READING AND DISCUSSION

9. The phone call is not dead - it has simply become more valuable

For many office workers, the telephone is no longer the first choice for professional communication. Emails, messaging platforms and video calls allow employees to communicate quickly while also creating a written record.

This has changed workplace habits. Many younger professionals now prefer receiving a message before an unexpected call. A phone ringing without warning can feel more disruptive than it did a decade ago.

Yet the business call has not disappeared.

In situations where a problem is urgent, complicated or emotionally sensitive, speaking directly can be more efficient than exchanging ten emails. A conversation allows people to ask questions immediately, hear tone of voice and correct misunderstandings before they become larger problems.

The difficulty is that telephone communication demands particular skills. Without facial expressions or body language, speakers must make their meaning clear through language and tone alone. Active listening becomes particularly important. Phrases such as “Let me make sure I understood you correctly” may sound unnecessary in everyday conversation but can prevent expensive mistakes in business.

Written communication has a different advantage: permanence. An email creates a record that participants can return to later. For this reason, many professionals combine the two methods. They discuss a complex issue by phone and then send a short email confirming what was agreed.

The result is not a competition between old and new forms of communication. The more useful professional skill is knowing **which channel to choose - and when to switch from one to another.**

Original teaching text.

READING: CHECKING UNDERSTANDING

10. True, false or not given?

Write **T**, **F** or **NG**. Find evidence in the text where possible.

1. Email has completely replaced telephone communication. ___
2. Some younger professionals dislike unexpected calls. ___
3. Telephone conversations can be useful for complicated problems. ___
4. Phone calls always save more time than emails. ___
5. Active listening is especially important without visual signals. ___
6. Emails provide a permanent written record. ___
7. The article recommends using only one communication channel. ___

11. Find the business expressions

Find words or phrases in the text matching these meanings.

1. something that must be dealt with quickly: _____
2. a document or message that can be checked later: _____
3. listening carefully and showing understanding: _____
4. mistakes in understanding: _____
5. saying what was decided: _____

Discuss the main idea

Think of one situation where you would call first and then send an email. What would you discuss on the phone? What would you confirm in writing?

FROM CONVERSATION TO CORRESPONDENCE

12. From phone call to email

Client: Can we move Monday's meeting to Tuesday?
You: Certainly. Would 2 pm work for you?
Client: Yes. Could we meet online instead of at your office?
You: Of course. I'll send you the Teams link today.
Client: Great. Thank you.

Write a short confirmation email. Include the new day, time, meeting format and what you will send.

13. Email structure

Part	Purpose and examples
1. Subject line	Be clear and specific: **Meeting confirmation - 6 October**. Avoid vague subjects such as Hello, Important or Meeting.
2. Greeting	More formal: Dear Ms Taylor, Neutral: Dear Anna, / Hello Anna,
3. Opening	Thank you for your email. I'm writing regarding... Further to our phone conversation...
4. Main message	State clearly what you need. Use short paragraphs.
5. Next step	Could you please confirm...? Please let me know if... I would appreciate it if...
6. Closing	Kind regards, / Best regards, / Best wishes, Your name

Business letters

A formal letter also includes the sender's address, date and recipient's address before the greeting. In traditional British correspondence, use **Yours sincerely** when you name the recipient, and **Yours faithfully** after **Dear Sir or Madam**.

EMAIL LANGUAGE BANK

14. Email vocabulary

Phrase	Українською
I am writing regarding...	Пишу щодо...
Further to our conversation...	У продовження нашої розмови...
Could you please...?	Чи могли б Ви...?
I would appreciate it if...	Буду вдячний/вдячна, якщо...
Please find attached...	У вкладенні Ви знайдете...
Please let me know...	Будь ласка, повідомте...
I am pleased to confirm...	Радий/рада підтвердити...
We regret to inform you...	На жаль, повідомляємо...
I apologise for...	Перепрошую за...
Thank you for your patience.	Дякую за Ваше терпіння.
at your earliest convenience	за першої зручної нагоди
I look forward to hearing from you.	Очікую на Вашу відповідь.
attached document	прикріплений документ
inquiry / enquiry	запит
complaint	скарга
confirmation	підтвердження
request	прохання / запит
follow-up email	лист після попереднього контакту; залежно від контексту - лист-нагадування

Choose useful phrases

Select three expressions you could use in a confirmation email and three for a request. Use them in your own sentences.

SUBJECT LINES AND EMAIL ETIQUETTE

15. Subject line challenge

Replace each vague subject line with a clear and specific one.

1. **Hello** - changing a meeting on 12 October.

_____

2. **Question** - asking about internship opportunities.

_____

3. **Problem!!!** - a product you received is damaged.

_____

4. **Documents** - sending the final version of a report.

_____

16. Email etiquette: good idea or bad idea?

Decide and explain. Are any answers dependent on the context?

- **A.** Writing the entire subject line in CAPITAL LETTERS.
- **B.** Replying to an important business email within a reasonable time.
- **C.** Sending an attachment without mentioning it in the email.
- **D.** Checking names, dates and attachments before clicking Send.
- **E.** Writing five long paragraphs when two sentences would be enough.
- **F.** Using emojis in every professional email.
- **G.** Using a clear subject line.
- **H.** Reading the email once before sending it.

Discuss: Is an email automatically more formal than a phone call? How can you acknowledge a message when you need more time to reply?

17. Email clinic: what’s wrong?

Subject: HI

Hey,

I need information about your course. How much is it? When is it? Send me details ASAP.

Also I need to know if there are discounts.

Thanks!!!

Identify at least **six problems**. Then rewrite it as a professional inquiry in your notebook.

PURPOSE, ACCURACY AND TONE

18. Four purposes - four emails

Match each situation with its purpose: **INQUIRY / REQUEST / COMPLAINT / CONFIRMATION**.

• **A.** You ordered 20 office chairs but received only 18. _____

• **B.** You want information about prices before ordering. _____

• **C.** You want a colleague to send the final report by Friday. _____

• **D.** You want to confirm the time of an agreed meeting. _____

19. Use of English: professional email language

Choose the best option.

1. I am writing ___ our telephone conversation yesterday.
A. according **B.** following **C.** regarding to **D.** about of

2. Could you please ___ whether the meeting is still scheduled for Friday?
A. confirm **B.** assure **C.** approve **D.** agree

3. Please find the requested document ___.
A. attached **B.** attaching **C.** attachment **D.** attach

4. I would ___ it if you could reply by Wednesday.
A. thank **B.** appreciate **C.** please **D.** welcome

5. We apologise ___ the delay in delivery.
A. about **B.** with **C.** for **D.** of

6. I look forward to ___ from you.
A. hear **B.** hearing **C.** heard **D.** be hearing

20. Tone transformation

Make these sentences more professional.

1. Send me the report today.

2. You made a mistake in my order.

3. I want more information.

4. Why haven’t you replied?

5. I can’t come to the meeting.

6. Thanks for waiting.

PROFESSIONAL WRITING PRACTICE

21. Complaint without sounding aggressive

Version A

You sent me the wrong product. This is unacceptable. Fix this immediately.

Version B

I’m writing regarding order #2458, which arrived this morning. Unfortunately, the product delivered does not match the item ordered. Could you please advise how we can arrange a replacement?

What makes Version B more professional? Find examples of factual language, polite language, a clear problem and a requested action.

22. Email challenge: choose one

Write **80–100 words**. Include a subject line, greeting and appropriate closing.

Option	Situation and details to include
A. Inquiry	Ask a company about an internship programme. Include available positions, application deadline, required English level and application procedure.
B. Request	Ask a colleague for information for a report. Explain what you need, why you need it and the deadline.
C. Complaint	Your confirmed hotel booking has been cancelled. Include booking information, the problem, its effect on you and your requested solution.
D. Confirmation	Confirm arrangements after a phone conversation. Include the date, time, location or platform and agreed next steps.

FINAL BUSINESS SCENARIO

23. Call + follow-up

Student A: NorthStar Events	Student B: the client
A client booked a conference room for **15 October**. The room is no longer available because of a technical problem. You can offer another room in the same building, on the same date, with a slightly smaller capacity and a **15% discount**. Call the client.	You expected a room for **60 people**. The alternative room holds only **45**. Ask for clarification, another possible solution and confirmation in writing. Do not agree to an option that leaves your needs unresolved.

Stage 1 - telephone

Resolve the situation professionally. Use at least **five telephone expressions**. If the offered room does not work, discuss another option and agree who will check its availability.

Your call notes

Stage 2 - follow-up email

Write a short email confirming the problem, agreed solution or proposed option, any changes and what happens next. Make clear which arrangements are confirmed and which still need checking.

Check your message

Are the date, capacity and price clear? Is the next action clear? Does the email accurately reflect your conversation?

HOMEWORK

Professional Communication Pair

Choose **one** situation and prepare a call plan and a connected email.

Situation	Your purpose
1. Appointment	You need to rearrange a meeting.
2. Inquiry	You want information about a professional course.
3. Complaint	A service was not delivered as agreed.
4. Job application	You have a question about a vacancy.

Part A - phone call

Write a short call plan with an opening, reason for calling, **2–3 key questions** and closing. **Do not write a complete script.**

Part B - email

Write a **100–120 word follow-up email** connected with the same situation. Include:

• a clear subject line;

• a professional greeting;

• a clear purpose and relevant details;

• a next step;

• an appropriate closing.

Before you submit

Check the names, dates, tone and word count. Make sure the email records the same details as your call plan.