Phone calls English

Phrases for business phone calls in English: answering, asking for someone, taking and leaving messages, asking people to repeat or spell, and ending the call politely.

Model dialogue

Receptionist	Good morning, Brightline, Sarah speaking. How can I help you?
Caller	Hello, this is Mark Davis from Arco Supplies. Could I speak to Ms. Lopez, please?
Receptionist	I'm afraid she's not available at the moment. She's in a meeting until three. Can I take a message?
Caller	Yes, please. Could you ask her to call me back this afternoon?
Receptionist	Of course. Can I have your number, please?
Caller	It's 555 0192.
Receptionist	And could you spell your surname, please?
Caller	Sure. D-A-V-I-S.
Receptionist	Let me read that back to you: Mark Davis, 555 0192. I'll give her the message.
Caller	Great, thanks a lot. Bye.

Key vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Example
extension	an internal phone number in a company	Call me on extension 214.
hold	to wait on the phone	Could you hold, please?
voicemail	a recorded phone message	I left a message on her voicemail.
call back	to phone someone again	I'll call you back in ten minutes.
hang up	to end a phone call	He hung up before I could answer.
get through	to reach someone by phone	I couldn't get through; the line was busy.
reception	the front desk of a company	Please call reception if you need a taxi.
missed call	a call you didn't answer	I have three missed calls from my boss.

Useful phrases

Answering and introducing yourself

Good morning, Brightline, Sarah speaking.	answering a work call
Hello, this is Mark Davis from Arco Supplies.	saying who you are
How can I help you?	offering help

Asking for someone

Could I speak to Mr. Chen, please?	asking for a person
Could you put me through to the sales department?	asking to be connected
One moment, please. I'll put you through.	connecting the caller
I'm afraid she's not available at the moment.	person not available
She's in a meeting until three.	giving a reason

Messages

Can I take a message?	offering to take a message
Could you ask him to call me back?	leaving a message
Can I have your number, please?	asking for details
Could you spell that for me, please?	asking for spelling
Let me read that back to you.	checking information

Problems and ending the call

Sorry, the line is very bad.	bad connection
Could you speak a bit more slowly, please?	asking for slower speech
Thanks for calling.	ending politely
Have a nice day. Bye.	saying goodbye

Practice and role-play

A. Complete the phrases

Write one word in each gap.

1. Could you put me _____ to the sales department?
2. I'm afraid she's not _____ at the moment.
3. Can I take a _____?
4. Could you ask him to call me _____?
5. Could you _____ that for me, please?
6. Let me _____ that back to you.
7. Sorry, the _____ is very bad.
8. Thanks for _____.

B. Correct the mistakes

Each sentence has one mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. I am Mark Davis.

2. Who are you?

3. Can you call me again back?

4. Wait a moment.

C. Role-play

Student A. You are a receptionist at a hotel. The manager is out until tomorrow. Take a message: name, company, phone number and reason for calling. Read it back.

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Student B. You call the hotel to speak to the manager about a group booking for twenty people. Leave a message and spell your name.

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Answer key

A: 1 through · 2 available · 3 message · 4 back · 5 spell · 6 read · 7 line · 8 calling

B: 1 This is Mark Davis. · 2 Who's calling, please? · 3 Can you call me back? · 4 One moment, please.