

Top tips for telephone English

Greetings

Every phone call should begin with a polite greeting such as, *Hi, how've you been?* or *Nice to hear from you.* Even if you're calling a business contact for a specific purpose, it'd be rude to jump right into business without a little small talk at the beginning.

Getting to the point

There always comes the point, however, where you want to move on from friendly banter and get down to business. For this situation, use the phrase **I'm just calling to ...** to transition to the topic at hand. For example, *I'm just calling to see if you'd like to set up a meeting.* If the situation is reversed, however, and you are waiting to find out why someone called you, you can guide the conversation by saying, *So what can I do for you?*

Interrupting without insult

If you happen to be speaking with a very talkative person, it may be difficult to **get a word in edgewise** or contribute to the conversation. If someone is going on and on, and you'd like to interrupt, be sure to do it politely. For example, begin with *I would like to say something here, if I may* or *Allow me to make a point.* Or, you could just ask: *May I interrupt you for a second?*

Confirming Action

If you're making plans on the phone, be sure to confirm the details toward the end of the call. Begin with phrases like *Please let me confirm...* and *So, let me make sure I've got things straight...* and follow up with the details as you understand them.

Closing the call

Sometimes this can be the trickiest part of the conversation! It may be the time to offer some good wishes, such as **good luck on that interview** or **hope you feel better soon** if it's appropriate. Additionally, you may want to confirm any plans you've made: *I'll see you on Friday, then.* Sometimes it's easiest to just say you enjoyed speaking to the other person. Also, keep in mind that strategically saying the word **well** at the beginning of a sentence can indicate that you are ready to end the conversation: *Well John, it's been a pleasure talking to you.*