

EPISODE 39
LEVEL A1.2/A2.1

READING COMPREHENSION



PROBLEMS ON THE PHONE

Do you ever have problems when talking on the phone? "What kind of problems?" you may ask. For example, the last time I wanted to talk to my wife, I was connected with some other woman. I think I **dialed the wrong number** (= I pressed 7, not 6 and I got the wrong number).



When I dialed the right number, the line was **engaged** (= my wife was already on the phone). I **hung up** (= finished my phone call) and tried again, but I **couldn't get through** to her (= I couldn't talk to my wife because she was on the phone all the time) for the next 30 minutes. Finally, I decided to **leave a message on her voicemail** (= a service in your mobile which works like an answerphone) and asked her to **return my call** (= call me back). And the other time I was on the phone, I **got cut off** (= my conversation was finished suddenly and I could only hear beep, beep, beep). Who said life is easier with phones?

More contexts for the new words:

- The last time I talked to her on the phone, she **hung up on me**.
(= She suddenly finished our conversation without saying goodbye)
- I called you a few minutes ago, but the line was **busy** .
(=I called you a few minutes ago, but the line was engaged.)



EXERCISE 1

Match the columns to make correct expressions.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. dial the wrong | a. off |
| 2. the line was | b. call |
| 3. I couldn't get | c. up |
| 4. to leave a message | d. number |
| 5. to get cut | e. engaged |
| 6. to hang | f. through |
| 7. please return my | g. on sb's voicemail |



EXERCISE 2

Complete the questions with the key words from the text. Then answer them.

1. Do you like to leave messages on? Why/ Why not?
2. What do you say when you the wrong number?
3. When did you last get cut?

ENGLISH IN USE



In the text above we have some more examples of PASSIVE VOICE.

*I **was connected** with some other woman.
My conversation **was finished**.*

The general rule is the same, we need two verbs- "to be" and another verb in its past participle form, but we don't use "is and are" any more, we use "was and were". Why? Because here we are talking about the past and that is why we need a different construction.

*Many letters **were written** last week.
Tea **was drunk** with milk yesterday.*

This is Past Simple Passive.

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



*A/ How will I call you? I have no money.
B/ You can always make a **COLLECT CALL**.*

A **collect call** (American English), or a **reverse-charge call** (British English) is a telephone call that the person you are calling agrees to pay for.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. If you **SPEAK UP**, you talk louder.

*You have to **speak up**. The people in the back can't hear you.*

2. Another meaning of **SPEAK UP** is to say what you think instead of saying nothing.

*If anyone has a better idea, please **speak up**.*

3. If you **SPEAK UP FOR** somebody, you say something in support of someone or something.

*Children can't say what's hurting them, so they need their parents to **speak up for** them.*



EXERCISE 3

Transform the sentences so that the meaning stays the same. Use the prompts in brackets and the idiom/phrasal verbs you have learned.

1. Can you talk louder, please?

[UP]

2. In some countries no one has the courage to protest against the system.

[UP]

3. She has always supported the rights of working mothers.

[UP]

4. Calls when the person you call pays are not very popular today.

[COLLECT]

NEWS



RETURN OF TELEGRAM

European countries are **witnessing** the return of the telegram as a form of communication. A few decades ago telegrams were **routinely** used to deliver information quickly and **efficiently**. Then, around a decade ago, they started to be used only in case of emergencies, so seeing a postman with a telegram almost always meant that someone had died. In recent months, however, more and more people are turning to the good old telegram on special occasions, such as birthdays or name days. They **claim** there is nothing original in calling

someone on their birthday, while sending them a good old-fashioned telegram – that's something, and it will definitely be remembered and appreciated. What do you think? Would you like to get a telegram on your next birthday?

GLOSSARY

- **witnessing** – seeing
- **routinely** – often, normally
- **efficiently** – effectively
- **claim** – say

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

1. d
2. e
3. f
4. g
5. a
6. c
7. b

Ex.2

1. voicemail
2. dial
3. off

Ex.3

1. Can you speak up, please?
2. In some countries no one has the courage to speak up against the system.
3. She has always spoken up for the rights of working mothers.
4. Collect calls are not very popular today.