

Phoning the Call Center

In this lesson, you will practice phoning a call center. You may need to do this for your bank, phone, cable, or Internet service provider. You may also need to call the government. Speak clearly and listen carefully. Keep in mind that your call may be recorded.



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you prefer dealing with problems on the phone or by email?
2. How do you feel when you get put on hold by a call center?
3. What type of personal information might you have to give over the phone when you phone a call center?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| ___ 1. cancel | a) a special deal that involves more than one service or attraction |
| ___ 2. residence | b) the company that gives you a service |
| ___ 3. cell | c) to move to a different place or person |
| ___ 4. provider | d) a special deal at a good price |
| ___ 5. long distance | e) to end something that you previously planned to use or do |
| ___ 6. package | f) a mobile phone |
| ___ 7. promotion | g) covering a wide geographical area |
| ___ 8. contract | h) an agreement to use or do something |
| ___ 9. penalty | i) the place where you live |
| ___ 10. transfer | j) a fee or fine for breaking a contract |

Dialogue Reading

Read the dialogue with your partner a few times. Take turns being each character. Practice your intonation and pronunciation. Circle any new words or phrases that you need to practice.

CSR*: Good morning. **How can I help you today?**

Customer: Hello. **I'd like to cancel my home phone service.**

CSR: May I ask your reason for canceling? **Is this about a change of residence?**

Customer: No. I just don't use my home phone service anymore. I mainly use my cell.

CSR: I understand. Do you presently use TeleTalk as your Internet provider?

Customer: No, I have Internet at work. I just use it for long distance...which I can do on my cell.

CSR: **Well, we do have a package that may be of interest to you.**
TeleTalk has a special deal on...

Customer: **I'm sorry. I'm not interested in any promotions.** I'm just calling to cancel.

CSR: That's no problem. **There will be a \$50 penalty for canceling your contract.** You understand that, right?

Customer: \$50? I don't remember signing any contract.

CSR: We will happily waive the penalty if you're interested in keeping your home phone for the next three months.

Customer: No, I'm not interested. I'm afraid you won't be able to talk me into any promotions today.

CSR: No problem. **I'll just need to transfer your call to another department. Please have your four-digit access code ready.**

***Note:**

CSR is short for "Customer Service Representative."

Practice

Work with your partner. Role-play the dialogue on page 2, substituting the different expressions below. Then switch roles.

1. **How can I help you today?**

- What can I do for you?
- May I ask the reason for this call?
- How can I be of service today?

2. **I'd like to cancel my home phone service.**

- I'd like to cut off my phone service.
- I want to cancel my Internet.
- I'd like to break my contract.

3. **Is this about a change in residence?**

- Are you moving?
- Does this involve an address change?

4. **Well, we do have a package that may be of interest to you.**

- Can I interest you in a special package?
- We have a deal going on right now.
- Have you thought about bundling your services?
- I think you may be interested in a promotion we have going on now.

5. **I'm sorry. I'm not interested in any promotions.**

- Thanks, but I'm not interested.
- Thanks, but no thanks. (*informal*)
- No, thank you. That's not what I'm calling for.
- I'm afraid that doesn't interest me.

6. **There will be a \$50 penalty for canceling your contract.**

- There is a \$50 charge for that.
- There is a \$50 fee.
- There is a \$50 cancellation fee.

7. **I'll just need to transfer your call to another department.**

- I'll just put you through to another department.
- Please hold while I pass you on to my supervisor.
- Please hold while I connect you to another representative.

8. **Please have your four-digit access code ready.**

- Can you give me your PIN, please?
- Do you by chance remember your secret code?
- I'll just need your password to verify your identity.
- I'll need your date of birth, please.

Listening Practice

Listen to the recording of the dialogue from page 2. Fill in the missing words as you listen. Listen again. Now look back at page 2 and check your work. Did you fill in the correct words? Did you spell everything correctly?

CSR: Good morning. How can I help you today?

Customer: Hello. I'd like to cancel my _____ .

CSR: May I ask your reason for canceling? Is this about a change of _____ ?

Customer: No, I just don't use my home phone service anymore.
I mainly use my _____ .

CSR: I understand. Do you presently use TeleTalk as your Internet _____ ?

Customer: No, I have Internet at work. I just use it for long distance...which I can do on my cell.

CSR: Well, we do have a package that may be of interest to you. TeleTalk has a special deal on...

Customer: I'm sorry. I'm not interested in any _____ . I'm just calling to cancel.

CSR: That's no problem. There will be a \$50 penalty for canceling your contract. You understand that, right?

Customer: \$50? I don't remember signing any _____ .

CSR: We will happily waive the _____ if you're interested in keeping your home phone for the next three months.

Customer: No, I'm not _____ . I'm afraid you won't be able to talk me into any _____ today.

CSR: No problem. I'll just need to transfer your call to another department. Please have your four-digit access code ready.

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Chart

Work with your partner to classify the following concerns and inquiries. Which call center is required? Some items may be added to more than one column.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> lost credit card | <input type="checkbox"/> income tax question | <input type="checkbox"/> unemployment benefits |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> stolen passport | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> money missing from savings | <input type="checkbox"/> immigration question |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not enough channels | <input type="checkbox"/> lost birth certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> monthly fee question |
| <input type="checkbox"/> apply for a mortgage | <input type="checkbox"/> change of marital status | <input type="checkbox"/> high speed Internet question |
| <input type="checkbox"/> slow to download files | <input type="checkbox"/> address change | <input type="checkbox"/> balance inquiry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> garbage disposal inquiry | <input type="checkbox"/> want a different phone number | <input type="checkbox"/> retirement savings question |
| <input type="checkbox"/> want long-distance deals | <input type="checkbox"/> canceling service | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overcharged for movies | <input type="checkbox"/> want a car loan | |

Bank	Phone	TV / Internet	Government
<i>money missing from savings</i>		<i>not enough channels</i>	<i>stolen passport</i>

B. Practice

Work with your partner to practice starting conversations between a customer and a CSR. Use the concerns and inquiries from the chart above.

Examples:

CSR (bank): How can I be of service today?
Customer: I'd like to open a retirement savings account.

CSR (TV): What can I do for you today?
Customer: I was overcharged on my bill this month.

Review

Task 1

LISTEN & ANSWER

Listen to the conversation and answer the questions.
Your teacher will tell you if you have to write or say the answers.

1. What is the main reason for the call?

2. Why does the customer not need Internet at home?

3. Why does the customer interrupt the CSR?

4. What does the customer not remember signing?

5. What does the customer need to provide in order to complete the request?

Review cont.

Task 2

IDENTIFYING YOUR REASON FOR CALLING

Imagine that you have just phoned these call centers to make a complaint about a service or fee. What introductory sentence do you use to identify your concern? (Your teacher will pretend to be the CSR.)

#	Call Center	Introductory Sentence
Ex		<i>Hello, I'm calling about/to...</i>
1	TV	
2	Internet	
3	Bank	
4	Government	

Task 3

ROLE-PLAY

Find a partner. Imagine that one of you is the CSR and the other is the customer. Create a role-play. Your audience will have to be able to answer the following questions:

1. Why is the person calling?
2. What type of company does the CSR work for?
3. What help does the CSR provide?
4. What does the caller NOT want?
5. Is the caller satisfied at the end of the call?