UNIT 9  TELEPHONE SKILLS

Structure
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9.1  Warm Up
9.2  Reading Comprehension: Face-to-Face Conversation versus Telephone Conversation
9.3  Vocabulary: Telephone Language
9.4  Efficient Telephoning
9.5  The Beginning and the Ending
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9.7  Telephone Etiquette
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9.0  OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:
•  differentiate between face-to-face and telephone conversation;
•  understand the importance of having good telephone skills;
•  identify different parts of a telephone conversation;
•  manage different kinds of people;
•  know the appropriate language required for effective telephone conversation; and
•  follow a suitable telephone etiquette.

9.1  WARM UP

Go through the following statements and tick mark “True” or “False” against each:
1)  I always speak softly on telephone.  True ( )  False ( )
2)  I switch off my mobile phone or keep it on silent mode in cinema halls.  True ( )  False ( )
3)  I don’t eat while speaking on the phone.  True ( )  False ( )
4) Whenever I see a “missed call” on my mobile phone, I immediately return the call. True ( ) False ( )
5) I never phone a person at odd hours. True ( ) False ( )
6) I always greet any caller by saying “good morning” etc. True ( ) False ( )

We often get irritated when we receive too many telephone calls. It is also a known fact that we waste a great deal of time on the telephone.

Why do telephone calls sometimes irritate us? List five reasons for being irritated by phone calls:

Reasons:
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2) ......................................................................................................................
3) ......................................................................................................................
4) ......................................................................................................................
5) ......................................................................................................................

9.2 READING COMPREHENSION: FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATION VERSUS TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

How is a telephonic conversation different from a face-to-face one?

You may often have heard people talk about their nervousness while dealing with office situations, especially over the phone. Some people feel that face-to-face communication is usually easier, clearer and more effective than telephone conversation. There are, decidedly, many advantages to having a face-to-face conversation. Facial expressions, gesticulations, visual aids, all come in handy while conveying information when the person you are communicating with is in front of you.

In a telephonic conversation however, you have to convey all you want to say in clearly stated words. Help can come only in the form of voice modulation and stress. Choice of words becomes more critical here, where the listener may need to visualize what s/he is hearing merely from the description being given to her/him. And since you cannot see the listener, you need to confirm if important information has been correctly heard and understood. You can do this by asking the person to repeat what you have said. On the other hand, if you are the one receiving the information, you may need to confirm it by repeating it yourself.

Additionally, business conversations over the telephone are usually to-the-point. You would certainly not want to call back if you forgot to ask for or tell something of significance. Hence, before having a telephonic business talk, you need to make sure that you note down, either mentally or on paper, every point you would like to cover and tick it as you go along. This kind of preparedness will, of course, help even in a face-to-face conversation.
All of these probably make it seem like it is actually a disadvantage to have shop-talk on the telephone. That, as we all know, is definitely not the case, because the advantages of the telephone in business are many.

Telecommunication has made work more efficient in many ways. It saves time and the need to travel long distances. Tele and video conferencing has made it possible to have group discussions and meetings with our business associates in distance places where we can actually see them. Looking at the larger picture, this cutting down on travel means fewer vehicles on the road, less air and noise pollution, and perhaps slowing down the speed of global warming to some extent at least! At the same time we are also saving the hours which we would waste travelling those distances.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answers at the space given below the questions.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

Answer the following questions based on the text given.

1) What are some of the tools that help in understanding a face-to-face conversation?

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2) Why is the choice of words more critical in a telephone conversation than when people are facing each other?

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3) How can you use your voice more effectively, especially in a telephone conversation?

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4) How can you make sure that the person listening to you has correctly absorbed the important information you are trying to convey, and vice versa?

5) How can you ensure that you do not miss giving or getting all the information you wanted to, before you end the conversation?

9.3 VOCABULARY: TELEPHONE LANGUAGE

Activity

1) These are some sentences commonly used in telephone conversations. Complete these sentences by choosing the missing words from the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>after</th>
<th>back</th>
<th>calling</th>
<th>in</th>
<th>hold the line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>moment</td>
<td>reach</td>
<td>ring up</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>checked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confirm</td>
<td>dialed</td>
<td>stand</td>
<td>phone</td>
<td>mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extension</td>
<td>bothered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i) Hello, who’s this ………………?
ii) Just a ………………, please.
iii) I’ll ……………… if she’s here.
iv) I’ll get the information you want; ………………, please.
v) You asked me to ……………… when I was in town again.
vi) Sorry, he’s not ……………… at the moment.

vii) You can ……………… him any evening ……………… six o’clock.
viii) Well, I can ring ……………… later if it’s convenient.
ix) Isn’t that 1421? That’s what I ………………, I think.
x) No, this is the wrong ………………; I’ll put you on to the switchboard.
xi) Sorry to have ……………… you.

xii) He’s not in the office at the moment. But I can try to find him on the ……………….
This is how things ................. at our end. I’m afraid there’s nothing we can do about it.

I’ve ................. up on the prices you asked about.

Now I can ................. the arrangements we made.

9.4 EFFICIENT TELEPHONING

It is very essential to ensure that telephone conversations are made professionally and efficiently. It is a known fact that the success of any organisation depends on customer / client satisfaction. It is also a known fact that the first contact is mostly made over the telephone. These new and potential customers / clients will not return unless they are treated professionally and courteously. Often organisations forget this fact and manage this important telephone function unprofessionally. It is not unusual to have more than 80 per cent of customer contact via the telephone in certain type of organisations, especially public service organisations.

Rencollect the last time you contacted a service organisation over telephone; bank, telephone department, railway station, electricity office, public library, etc. and try to answer the following questions:

- Did you get connected at the time you dialed the number? Yes ( ) No ( )
- Did someone pick up the phone within three rings? Yes ( ) No ( )
- Did the person greet you by saying “good morning” “good evening”, etc.? Yes ( ) No ( )
- Did the person introduce herself/ himself by name? Yes ( ) No ( )
- Did you get the information you wanted? Yes ( ) No ( )
- Did the person end the call with a friendly and courteous note? Yes ( ) No ( )

Main Telephone Complaints

We frequently talk about the inefficiency of the telephone function in organisations. Though the automatic system for answering queries, like the Call Centre type systems, have reduced the problem to some extent, but still the problem persists.

Bad and outdated equipments, untrained staff, inadequate number of staff, inefficient management, etc. are the reasons for most telephone complaints. The common complaints are:

- Can’t get the number, either always busy or not picking up
- Rude behaviour
- Not satisfied with the answer
- Could not hear the person clearly
- Took too much time to get the information
- Lost on hold
9.5 THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING

As a librarian, you may often have to attend to calls from customers who may ask you if your library provides a certain service or has a particular book. To prepare you for all sorts of interactions and encounters we will take you through the various components of a telephone conversation and the courtesies involved.

Components of Telephone Conversation

A typical telephone conversation usually has the following components:

a) Greeting
b) Warm up
c) Purpose
d) Closing

Most of these, apart from the purpose which is obviously different in each case, are common enough. Very often, a warm up sentence accompanies the greeting.

The Beginning

It is most important to open a telephone call professionally. Make the caller feel welcome, and try to give an impression that s/he is an important caller. This could be done in many ways, as shown below:

- Pick up the phone as soon as it starts ringing (within three or four rings)
- Greet the caller
- State your organisation (department)/section
- Introduce yourself
- Offer help

Example: “Good afternoon. Central Library Reference Section, Sunita Sharma speaking. How may I help you?”

The Ending

You should make sure that the customer will come back to you. For this you need to end the conversation properly. You should:

- Thank the customer for calling
- Make sure that the information you have provided is adequate
- Let the customer know you appreciate her/his purpose of calling
- Invite the caller to call again if s/he wants any additional information
- Don’t be in a hurry to disconnect the phone, let the customer do that first.

Example: “Thank you Mr. Sharma. I hope that the information is helpful. Please do get back if you need any further information. It was a pleasure talking to you. Bye now.”
Activity

2) Given below are some such common expressions. Classify each according to the category (a) to (d) as given in section 9.5 of this Unit. The first one is done for you.

i) Good morning. (a)

ii) Good morning Neena, how are you today?

iii) I’d like to go over the training schedule with you today. Would 4 pm suit you?

iv) Thank you for calling Central Library. Have a good day.

v) Thanks and bye.

vi) That’s all for now, thank you.

vii) I’d like to discuss the procurement list with you today. What would be a good time to schedule a meeting?

viii) Hello Ravi, is this a good time to talk to you?

ix) Thank you for calling Central Library, this is Neha. How may I assist you?

x) Hi Neha, did you have a good weekend?

xi) Thank you for your help. Bye.

xii) Good morning, I’m Radha from City Public Library and would like to speak to someone from Accounts, please.


xiv) This is Mira. I’d like to speak to Mr. Murthy please.

xv) Can you give me Mr. Khanna’s mobile number?

9.6 MANAGING SPECIAL SITUATIONS

The Angry Customer

It often happens that the customer starts the conversation with an angry note! This could be because of her/his bad experience on earlier occasions with your organisation. Never retaliate, act cool, and listen patiently for some time. Give enough signals to show that you have taken note of the points. If the person goes on, interrupt and request her/him to come to the point. If the complaints are serious ones, transfer the call to your senior after informing the caller that you are transferring the call. When you transfer a call, say something like:

“I need to transfer the call to Mr. X, because he is the right person to answer your question.”

Often you may not be sure about the answer and you need to check with someone. In that case, say:

“Will you please wait for a moment; I need to check on this with my colleague.”

Managing the angry caller is a difficult job, but an important one. Angry and dissatisfied customers are a threat to the organisation because they are likely to
spread the word that they are unhappy with the way that you do business. This sort of news spreads rapidly. Here are some tips, which one could try, to manage such customers:

- Listen to the customer patiently so that you will understand the problem
- Apologize in a general way, even if you think that situation doesn’t warrant it.
- Propose a plan of action if can’t provide an immediate solution to the problem.

The Talkative Caller
S/he never stops and you won’t get a chance to respond! Some even become too friendly and start talking about anything under the sun! The best way to deal with such a caller is to be “business-like with the caller”. Other ways to manage such callers are:

- Ask closed questions, eliciting one word answers. For example, “Did you? Will you? May I do that?”
- Give only little space between your statements.
- You talk very little yourself.
- Do not invite unnecessary conversation.
- Give the impression that you are a busy person, and other calls are waiting.

The Waiting Time
The first and important advice is that don’t make the caller wait inordinately. If s/he has to, inform her/him and the reasons for it. If you think that the caller will have to wait for long, note down the number and call back. You should indicate when you will call, for example say “in 10 minutes”, “by the end of the day”, “by tomorrow”, etc.

9.7 TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE
Telephones have become a necessary and important part of our life. It is difficult to visualize “life without mobiles”! These days most of our social as well as business conversations and interactions happen through these gadgets. Thus, it is becoming all the more important to manage telephone calls effectively.

Following good telephone etiquette is important, while making as well as while receiving calls. You must keep in mind that it is your call; you need to make sure that it is managed professionally.

1) Speak softly so that others around you do not get disturbed.
2) Do not telephone anyone at odd hours, unless very urgent.
3) Personal calls should not be made from office unless absolutely necessary.
4) Do not discuss personal matters on telephone from office.
5) Be brief on telephone.
6) Avoid speaking in your mother tongue from office.
7) Greet the caller, even if that person is a stranger.
8) Do not terminate a call abruptly.
9) If you notice a missed call, phone that person at the earliest.
10) Do not make the caller wait inordinately.
11) If a person has been made to wait, inform the person the reason.
12) If you are transferring a call to another person, explain the reason for doing so.
13) Check with the person, if s/he can hear you properly, if you feel there is a problem.
14) Do not eat or drink while speaking on the phone.

9.8 LANGUAGE FOCUS

Just as in face-to-face conversation, verbal exchanges on the telephone may be informal, semi-formal or formal. For example, a simple greeting, when you pick up the telephone may be said in any of these ways:

a) Hi, how’s life? (informal)
b) Hello, how’s everything? / How’re you doing? (semi-formal)
c) Good morning, how are you? (formal)

Activity
3) Now classify these sentences as informal/semi-formal/formal. Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.
   i) Would it be possible for you to give me a few days off?
   ii) Should I send you the CDs right away?
   iii) Can I leave her a message?
   iv) Would it be possible for you to meet Ravi Prakash today?
   v) Would you like me to mail you the catalogue right away?
   vi) I want to go on holiday next week.
   vii) Would you like to leave a message?
   viii) Hiten wants to meet you.
   ix) Do you think I could get a week off starting Monday?
   x) Rakesh Jain would like to meet you.
   xi) Do you want me to send the CDs right now?
   xii) I’m afraid I can’t put you through to him, Sir.
   xiii) Do you want to leave a message?
   xiv) You can’t meet him today.
   xv) May I leave a message for her?

You will have noticed that there are certain typical phrases that form the base for formal telephone conversations. The ‘do you want’ is replaced by ‘would you like’; ‘could’ and ‘may’ are more formal than ‘can’ etc.
Activity

4) Rewrite the following sentences to make them sound more formal using phrases from the box given below. You may be able to use more than one option in some cases.

i) Can you give me Mr. Vasu’s number?

ii) What did you say?

iii) Where has he gone?

iv) What’s your name?

v) Yes, I want you to send me the new rate list.

vi) Send it to me today.

vii) Mr. Singh is not available today.

viii) Can I call you tomorrow?

ix) I want some information about the new car repair course you are starting.

x) Is 2.30 p.m. on Friday okay?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Could you tell me………</th>
<th>Would …………………</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like……………</td>
<td>Could you give………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May I ……………………</td>
<td>I beg…………………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like you ………</td>
<td>Please…………………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid………………</td>
<td>Would it be……………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would………………….</td>
<td>Could………</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.9 GRAMMAR: MODALS

You would have noticed that many sentences in the Unit begin with words like ‘would’, ‘could’ and ‘may’. These and others like ‘should’, ‘shall’, ‘can’, ‘will’ and ‘ought to’ are auxiliary verbs known as modals or modal verbs, the use of which is very important in polite language and telephone conversations. Unlike other auxiliary verbs like ‘be’, ‘do’ and ‘have’, modal verbs are only used as auxiliary verbs, and cannot be used as the main verb in a sentence.

The table given below will help you in identifying the functions of modal verbs.

Table 9.1: Functions of Modal Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modal</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>Can I speak to Rita?</td>
<td>Request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can I call you tomorrow?</td>
<td>Asking for permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m afraid I can’t help you with that.</td>
<td>Expressing inability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You can call him at 10 tomorrow.</td>
<td>Stating possibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could</td>
<td>Could you repeat that?</td>
<td>Request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Could I borrow your pen drive?</td>
<td>Permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You could speak to your manager about it.</td>
<td>Suggestion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Workplace Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May</th>
<th>May I know who is calling?</th>
<th>Enquiring/Requesting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The meeting may be cancelled.</td>
<td>Expressing possibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How may I help you?</td>
<td>Offering help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Might     | They might reduce the rates for us. | Future possibility |

| Would     | Would you mind mailing me the brochure? | Request |
|           | I would like to meet Mr. Sharma today. | Stating wish/Request |
|           | Would you like some tea or coffee? | Offering help |
|           | Would you mind if I wrote this down? | Asking for permission |
|           | Would 2.30 on Friday be okay? | Making arrangements |

| Should    | You should discuss this with Mr. Mehra first. | Suggesting/Advising/ Recommending |
|           | The material should reach you by tomorrow. | Making a prediction |

| Shall      | Shall I call the Materials Manager? | Suggesting/Offering |
|           | Shall I call him or will you? | Asking what to do |

| Will       | I’ll mail the details to you right away. | Promising /Assuring |
|           | He won’t be back before Friday. | Certain prediction |

| Ought to   | You ought to prepare all papers in advance | Strong advise |

### Self Check Exercise

**Note:**

i) Write your answers at the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

6) Using modal verbs make appropriate sentences for the following situations.

i) Asking the caller who he wants to talk to.

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ii) Assuring the caller you will pass on his message to your boss.

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iii) Suggesting a meeting time to the caller.

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iv) Asking the caller if he prefers to receive certain information by fax or email.

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v) Informing someone about a possible cancellation of a business trip

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vi) Requesting someone to give information in greater detail
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vii) Offering to help with hotel bookings
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viii) Expressing inability to send material before receiving payment
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ix) Advising your colleague to clarify a confusion with his boss
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x) Predicting how the market will move in the coming week
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9.10 LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Activity

5) Listen to two telephone conversations (refer to CD) and complete the following dialogues by filling in the gaps. Then identify the various components in them, as studied in Section 9.5 under heading Components of Telephone Conversation, i.e. (a to d). Notice the difference in the formal and semi-formal dialogues.

Note: You may play the CD provided and listen to the audio as many times as you require. Please note that the text of the audio has been provided in the answers section (tape script -1).

Conversation 1

A: Hello.
B: Hi Vrinda, Kavita ____________________.

A: Oh Hi, Kavita. How’s everything?
B: Great! I have ______________________ this week. I was wondering if you wanted to go for a movie one of these days.

A: That’s ________________________! Shall we go tomorrow?
B: Perfect. Should I ____________________ at 5 o’clock then and we can watch the 6 pm show?

A: ________________. See you then.
B: Bye. See you tomorrow.
A: Bye.

Conversation 2

A: Good morning, Gupta Securities. How may I help you?
B: Hello, Gagan, its Prabhakar this side.
A: Oh, hello, Prabhakar. _______________________. How’s everything?
B: _______________________. What about you?
A: All good. So tell me, what can I do for you?
B: I wanted ______________________ from you, so I was wondering if we could __________________ some time this week.
A: Sure. Why don’t you come to my office on __________, say ______?
B: __________. I’ll see you then.
A: __________________ to it. Oh, and don’t forget to pick up those delicious samosas from the shop below your office!
B: ___________________. Bye.
A: Bye.

6) Now listen to this conversation between an executive and the Managing Director of a company and tell the difference between this conversation and the two you previously heard. The conversation is given in the answer of question 6 as conversation 3.

9.11 WRITING

Activity

7) Make appropriate sentences for the situations given below. One is given as an example.
   i) Answering the telephone.
      Answer: Good morning, Kavita Nagpal speaking. How may I help you?
   ii) Offering to take a message.
   iii) Saying who you are.
   iv) Asking to speak to Aman.
   v) Asking the caller for more information about the call.
vi) Saying someone is unavailable.

vii) Asking for the caller’s name.

viii) Asking the caller to repeat something.

**Self Check Exercise**

**Note:**

i) Write your answers at the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

Make telephone conversations for three situations given below. The model conversation is given at the end of the Unit.

7) You are calling your colleague Milind to ask after his health. He has been down with a fever for a week.

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8) You are working with Central Reference Library of a university. Receive a call from a customer for the availability of a reference source.

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9) Your boss has asked you to make a call to Mr. Sahu’s office to find out whether they have received delivery of books/periodicals/etc.

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9.12 SUMMARY

Nowadays a great deal business is done over telephone. The large scale and unprecedented penetration of mobile phones has added a new dimension to this. So it is all the more important to ensure that every organisation manages this important activity professionally. Installing the right type of telephone system, placing the employee with the right type of attitude and skills to answer telephones and giving all staff training in telephone use skills etc. go a long way in getting this important function streamlined.

9.13 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

1) Facial expressions, gesticulations and visual aids are some of the tools that help understanding in a face-to-face conversation.

2) Choice of words is more critical in a telephone conversation as the speakers can’t see each other or use any visual aids and gestures. The listener often has to visualize something from hearing a description of it.

3) Enunciating clearly, stressing on important words, raising and lowering pitch in the right place are some of the ways to use your voice more effectively.

4) To ensure that important information is correctly given and received, it is best for the listener to repeat it for confirmation.

5) You can ensure that nothing of importance is left out of a business telephone conversation by preparing for it in advance by noting down all the points that need to be addressed / asked.

6) These are only sample answers; yours could be different.
   i) Who would you like to speak to?
   ii) I’ll inform Mr. Varshney as soon as he comes in, Sir.
   iii) Would 4.30 on Monday suit you?
   iv) Would you prefer this to be sent by fax or email, Sir?
   v) I’m afraid I may not be able to come to Mumbai just yet.
   vi) Could you elaborate on that, please?
   vii) Shall/Should I book the hotel for you?
   viii) I’m afraid I can’t send you the material until we receive the payment.
   ix) You should clarify this with your boss first.
   x) I think the market will make a good recovery in the coming week.

7) Milind: Hello?
   You : Hi Milind, Rakesh this side. How are you doing?
   Milind : I’m okay. What’s up with you?
   You : Oh! Nothing much. Everything is as usual. So how are you feeling now? Do you still have a fever?
   Milind : No, the fever’s down, but I’m feeling really weak! And bored!
Telephone Skills

You : Yeah, I can imagine! Waiting to see you back in the library. Get well soon.
Milind : Yeah, thanks.
You : Bye then.
Milind : Bye.
8) You : Good afternoon, Central Reference Library of IGNOU. How may I help you?
Customer : I’d like to renew two books and two periodicals that are due today.
You : May I have your membership number, Sir?
Customer : It’s IGL1860.
You : Thank you, Sir. The two books and two periodicals against your membership have been renewed. They are next due on 12 July.
Customer : Ok. Thank you.
You : Is there anything else I can assist you with, Sir?
Customer : Yes. Is the January, 2013 issue of the ELT journal available?
You : Let me just check that for you, Sir.
Customer : Ok.
You : I am sorry, Sir. The journal has been issued to another member. You can reserve the journal if you wish. You will be notified by email as soon as it has been returned.
Customer : Ok. It would great if that could be done!
You : Sure, Sir. (Pause) The ELT journal has been reserved. The reference number is J34. The details have been sent to your e-mail.
Customer : Thank you so much.
You : You’re welcome, Sir. Have a good day.
9) Ms. Rupa : Hello.
You : Good morning, Ms. Rupa. This is Manu Khanna calling from Ruby Publication.
Ms. Rupa : Hello, Manu.
You : I’ve called to find out if you have received the copies of the Product Design books you had ordered. We dispatched it last week.
Ms. Rupa : No, Manu. I’m afraid we haven’t received it yet.
You : I’m very sorry about that, Ma’am. I’ll call the delivery department and get back to you immediately.
Ms. Rupa : Please do that. We need the material urgently. The students are all asking for the books.
You : I will look into the matter. Once again, I’m sorry for the inconvenience. I’ll call you back soon.
Ms. Rupa : Okay. Thank you.
9.14 ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES

1) i) calling, ii) moment, iii) see, iv) hold the line, v) ring up, vi) in, vii) phone, after, viii) back, ix) dialed, x) extension, xi) bothered, xii) mobile, xiii) stand, xiv) checked, xv) confirm.

2) i) Good morning. (a)
   ii) Good morning Neena, how are you today? (a, b)
   iii) I’d like to go over the training schedule with you today. Would 4 pm suit you? (c)
   iv) Thank you for calling Central Library. Have a good day. (d)
   v) Thanks and bye. (d)
   vi) That’s all for now, thank you. (d)
   vii) I’d like to discuss the procurement list with you today. What would be a good time to schedule a meeting? (c)
   viii) Hello Ravi, is this a good time to talk to you? (a, b)
   ix) Thank you for calling Central Library, this is Neha. How may I assist you? (b)
   x) Hi Neha, did you have a good weekend? (a, b)
   xi) Thank you for your help. Bye. (d)
   xii) Good morning, I’m Radha from City Public Library and would like to speak to someone from Accounts, please. (a, c)
   xiii) Take care. Bye. (d)
   xiv) This is Mira. I’d like to speak to Mr. Murthy please. (c)
   xv) Can you give me Mr. Khanna’s mobile number? (c)

3) i) Would it be possible for you to give me a few days off? Formal
   ii) Should I send you the CDs right away? Semi-formal
   iii) Can I leave her a message? Formal
   iv) Would it be possible for you to meet Ravi Prakash today? Formal
   v) Would you like me to mail you the catalogue right away? Formal
   vi) I want to go on holiday next week. Informal
   vii) Would you like to leave a message? Formal
   viii) Hiten wants to meet you. Informal
   ix) Do you think I could get a week off starting Monday? Semi-formal
   x) Rakesh Jain would like to meet you. Formal
   xi) Do you want me to send the CDs right now? Informal
   xii) I’m afraid I can’t put you through to him, Sir. Formal
   xiii) Do you want to leave a message? Semi-formal
   xiv) You can’t meet him today. Informal
   xv) May I leave a message for her? Formal
4) i) Can you give me Mr. Vasu’s number?

Could you give me/May I have Mr. Vasu’s number?

ii) What did you say?

I beg your pardon? /Could you repeat that?

iii) Where has he gone?

May I know/Could you tell me where he has gone?

iv) What’s your name?

May I have your name, please?

v) Yes, I want you to send me the new rate list.

Yes, I would like you to send me the new rate list.

vi) Send it to me today.

Please send it to me today. / Could you send it to me today?

vii) Mr. Singh is not available today.

I’m afraid Mr. Singh is not available today.

viii) Can I call you tomorrow?

May I call you tomorrow? /Would it be alright if I called you tomorrow?

ix) I want some information about the new car repair course you are starting.

I would like some information about the new car repair course you are starting.

x) Is 2.30 p.m. on Friday okay?

Would 2.30 p.m. on Friday be convenient for you?

5) Conversation 1

A : Hello. (a)
B : Hi Vrinda, Kavita this side/here. (a)
A : Oh Hi, Kavita. How’s everything? (b)
B : Great! I have four days off this week. I was wondering if you wanted to go for a movie one of these days. (c)
A : That’s not a bad idea! Shall we go tomorrow? (c)
B : Perfect. Should I pick you up at 5 o’clock then and we can watch the 6 pm show? (c)
A : Sounds fine. See you then. (d)
B : Bye. See you tomorrow. (d)
A : Bye. (d)

Conversation 2

A : Good morning, Gupta Securities. How may I help you? (a)
B : Hello, Gagan, its Prabhakar this side. (a)
A : Oh, hello, Prabhakar. Long time no news. How’s everything? (b)
B : All well here. What about you? (b)
A : All good. So tell me, what can I do for you? (c)
B : I wanted some investment advice from you, so I was wondering if we could sit together some time this week. (c)
A : Sure. Why don’t you come to my office on Wednesday, say 4 pm? (c)
B : Perfect. I’ll see you then. (d)
A : Look forward to it. Oh, and don’t forget to pick up those delicious samosas from the shop below your office! (d)
B : Sure. Bye. (d)
A : Bye. (d)

6) Conversation 3

Ajay Sinha : Hello.
Hari Modi : Good morning, Sir. This is Hari Modi from the Personnel Department. Mr. Dewan asked me to speak with you.
Ajay Sinha : Yes, yes, Hari. Good Morning. I need you to do something for me.
Hari Modi : Certainly, Sir. How may I help you?
Ajay Sinha : Let me just brief you about it first. You see, my secretary, Ms. Nene, is on leave, and I need somebody to accompany me to the Singapore conference for three days. Mr. Dewan recommends you highly, so I’d like you to assist me on this trip.
Hari Modi : Certainly, Sir. I’d be pleased to be of assistance. When would we be leaving and what would you like me to do in preparation?
Ajay Sinha : Could you come to my office at, say, 10:30 and we can discuss the details?
Hari Modi : I’m afraid we have a departmental meeting from 10:30 to 11:30. Would it be alright if I come in at 11:30?
Ajay Sinha : Oh, that’s perfectly fine.
Hari Modi : Right, Sir. I’ll be there at 11:30.

Answer

i) The language in conversation 3 is very formal. For example the executive says “How may I be of help to you” instead of ‘What can I do for you’ as in Conversation 2, which is semi-formal. Conversation 1 is totally informal.

ii) Note that there is greater use of modals like ‘would’ ‘could’ and ‘may’ in formal language.

iii) The executive does not address his senior officer by his first name.

iv) There is no small talk or warming up as is the case in many formal conversations.
7) i) Good morning Kavita Nagpal speaking. How may I help you?
   ii) Would you like to leave a message?
   iii) This is Neha Gupta.
   iv) I’d like to speak to Aman Wahi, please.
   v) Could you tell me why you’d like to speak to the Principal, please?
   vi) Ms. Sonia Singh is in a meeting.
   vii) Could you tell me your name, please?
   viii) Could you say that again, please?

9.15 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
