



ENGLISH FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

**CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE (CALC)
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

TRAINING SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	SESSION / TOPIC
11 August 2020	8.30 am – 9.30 am	Ice breaking session
	9.30 am – 10.30 am	Session 1: Watch it! Spot it!
	10.30 am – 11.00 am	Morning Tea
	11.00 am- 12.30 pm	Session 2: Use it right!
	12.30 pm – 2.00 pm	Lunch
	2.00 pm - 4.30 pm	Session 3: Converse with Confidence
12 August 2020	8.30 am – 10.30am	Session 4: Effective Email Writing
	10.30 am – 11.00 am	Morning Tea
	11.00am- 12.30 pm	Session 5: Talk with Tact!
	12.30 pm – 2.00 pm	Lunch
	2.00 pm – 4.30 pm	Session 6: Group Discussion and Presentation

UNIT 1: WATCH IT! SPOT IT!



Customer service is often at the heart of a business or an organisation which aims to provide an excellent service that leaves the customer feeling valued and respected. Although providing an exceptional service can involve extra resource, time and perhaps money, when you get it right, it will enable you to maintain a positive reputation among future customers and encourage existing customers to deal with you or purchase from your business again.

Let's watch the videos below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy1h49_L8ME

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8dImol79ew>

What are the Dos and Don'ts of an excellent customer service?

Dos	Don'ts

UNIT 2: USE IT RIGHT!



How many times do you hear this when you are speaking? Even if your vocabulary and English grammar are perfect, it can still be difficult for people to understand you because of your pronunciation. You must speak clearly in order to communicate effectively with another person. To do this, you must make the sounds of the words correctly.

Let's twist your tongue!

Tongue twisters are a great way to improve your pronunciation and fluency. Try them slowly at first, and then read them as fast as you can.

1. I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream.
2. She sells sea-shells on the sea-shore.
3. I saw a kitten eating chicken in the kitchen.
4. A cheap sheep is cheaper than a cheap ship.
5. Betty bought butter but the butter was bitter, so Betty bought better butter to make the bitter butter better.
6. A canner can can anything that he can,
But a canner can't can a can, can he?
7. How much wood would a woodchuck chuck
If a woodchuck would chuck wood?
A woodchuck would chuck all the wood he could chuck
If a woodchuck would chuck wood.

MISPRONOUNCED ENGLISH WORDS

Trivia: Did you know that 'almond' and 'salmon' should not be pronounced with the /l/ sound?



A meaning of a word can be completely changed by the wrong pronunciation. Normally, Malaysians often reduce the unvoiced **th** to **t**. Thus you would hear *tree* (*three*), *trow* (*throw*) and many more. Hence, all speakers of English must adhere to the same standard of pronunciation in order to be understood by others.



ACTIVITY 1: SAY IT RIGHT!

With a partner, pronounce the words below:

1. liaise
2. colleague
3. develop
4. schedule
5. doubt
6. career
7. graduate
8. honest
9. purchase
10. reimbursement

Are you sure you pronounced the words correctly? Check the correct pronunciation in the dictionary.

Mispronouncing words can cause major misunderstanding, and the message you would like to deliver fails to reach the listener. This often happens when you learn the word from your reading rather than listening to it in a lecture or on television.



ACTIVITY 2

Watch the video below and identify the mispronounced words used by the speaker:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzeEq5MvNFg>

Other than mispronounced words, you should also use the language expressions correctly.

Use It Right!



- X That's mean you are not allowed to sit for the final examination.
- X Nowsaday, online learning has replaced classroom learning.
- X I'm agree with your suggestion.
- X The tentative is going to be released soon.
- X I came from Kuala Selangor.
- X I'm not understand the issue discussed in the meeting just now.
- X I feel so boring.

INTONATION



When you speak, you do not only use a single tone. You would vary your voice to convey different meaning and emotion, and this pattern is called intonation. Intonation is about **how** you say things, rather than **what** you say. There are two basic intonation patterns in English.

Falling intonation (↘) and Rising intonation (↗)

Falling Intonation

It begins fairly high and descends on each stressed syllable with the fall on the last main stressed syllable. It is used when the speaker is:

- making a statement e.g. *The results will be out today.*
- giving a command e.g. *Send the report quickly.*
- asking wh-questions e.g. *Why are you late to work?*
- expecting the other person to agree with him e.g. *Do you like my idea?*

The falling tone usually conveys emotions such as:

- Sarcasm e.g. *You are the smart one.*
- Anger e.g. *Just do what I want.*
- Disappointment e.g. *I thought he would stand by me.*
- Disinterest e.g. *Really. Have a good time then.*

Rising Intonation

The rising tone begins fairly high and descends on each stressed syllable but rises again on the last stressed word and remains high for any unstressed syllables which follow. It is used when the speaker is:

- reassuring the listener or encouraging him e.g. *I think so.*
- unsure of himself e.g. *She's from the Faculty of Modern Languages, I think.*
- expecting a 'Yes' or 'No' answer e.g. *Is she coming to our meeting?*
- checking for information e.g. *Where did you say you were from?*
- not expecting the listener to agree with him e.g. *You do like it, don't you?*

The rising tone usually conveys emotions such as:

- Happiness e.g. *I just got promoted.*
- Eagerness e.g. *Ahmad, meet my good friend, Mazlan.*
- Interest e.g. *How long will you be attending the course?*
- Sympathy e.g. *Don't worry. It'll be alright.*



ACTIVITY 3

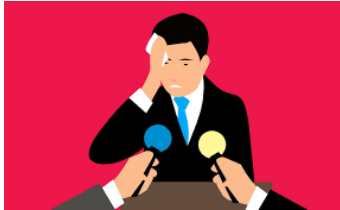
Read the following sentences and decide the suitable intonation (falling or rising). Then, with a partner, read the sentences aloud.

1. How can I help you?
2. Please calm down.
3. Here's what we are going to do to help you.
4. It'll be fun to meet up again.
5. Are you alright?
6. What action do you think should be taken to curb this problem?
7. We deeply regret that we are unable to give you a refund.
8. Have a nice day everybody.
9. Good morning! Have we met before?
10. I'm sorry for taking so long to get back to you.

UNIT 3: CONVERSE WITH CONFIDENCE

The basic unit of a conversation is an exchange which involves two moves: an initiating move, and a response. Conversation-making usually involves starting a conversation, maintaining it, and finally, closing the conversation. In this module, we will learn:

- (1) How we can start, maintain and close a conversation and
- (2) The language we can use to convey our intended meaning in conversation-making.



ACTIVITY 1

What are the communication challenges you have/ face at work?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.



STARTING A CONVERSATION

It is important to choose the appropriate way to start a conversation each time; our 'opening move' may affect how the rest of the conversation goes. The following are a few ways to start a conversation:

- Using greetings and introduction
- Talking about your surroundings
- Making small talk

Using Greetings and Introductions

This is an easy way to establish contact with another person, especially if that person is a stranger. Common expression for greetings include:

Hello
Good Morning/ Afternoon/ Day
How are you?
How do you do?

Greetings are usually followed by introductions which usually include disclosing some personal information such as our name, where we come from, and our occupation. Following that, we may include other relevant information, for example:

How do you do? I'm Zahra from Academic Division.
Pleased to meet you. My name is Arif. And you are...?
Good afternoon. You look familiar. Haven't we met before?



ACTIVITY 2

In pairs, list down greetings and expressions of self-introduction to start a conversation.

a. _____

b. _____

Talking about Your Surroundings

Topics on the surroundings to start a conversation should relate to the context of your conversation, for example, the noise level, the weather, and the furnishing of the room.

It is noisy in here, isn't it?

Today is rather hot, isn't it?

This office isn't large, is it?

The manager has replaced the furniture, hasn't he?

Note: Turning a comment on your surroundings into a tag question is a good way to elicit response from the other person.



ACTIVITY 3

In pairs, list down two expressions to start a conversation using the surrounding.

a. _____

b. _____



ACTIVITY 4

Turn each statement into a tag question.

a. The decorations are so lovely _____

b. You have eaten _____

c. This room is very stuffy _____

Making Small Talk

Small talk is casual and light discussion of everyday topics such as your work, the weather, and current affairs. The following are some examples:

Was the traffic heavy on the way to work?

When is our department meeting?

Did you read the papers today?



ACTIVITY 5

What conversation topics interest you (and others)?

Weather	News	Meeting	Food	Employee benefits
Products	Travel	Hobbies	Sales	Traffic
Entertainment	Salary	Politics	Family	Work
Marriage	Office politics	Religion	Shopping	Office safety



Which of the topics above is suitable for small talk at the workplace?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.



ACTIVITY 6

You met a foreign visitor at UPM CIMB Bank. Start a conversation with this person using any of the three ways you have learned.



MAINTAINING A CONVERSATION

Once a conversation has been started, both speakers should try to develop and maintain it. There are various ways to maintain a conversation, which include:

- Highlighting what we have heard
- Asking questions
- Disclosing personal information

Highlighting What We Have Said

Highlighting what we have said involves referring back to something that was said earlier, for example:

Earlier you seemed interested when I told you about.....

A moment ago I heard you say.....

We can also repeat keyword or phrases to highlight what was said earlier, for example:

A: *I usually send in my report in the first day of every month*

B: *First day of every month?*

Asking Questions

There are two types of questions: closed questions and open ended questions.

Closed questions require yes/ no answers or one/ two-word responses.

Do you enjoy working here?

When did you start working here?

Who is your boss?

Open-ended question begin with *wh*-words *what*, *how* and *why*.

What are your job specifications?

How do you feel about this report?

Why do you like working at MARDI?



ACTIVITY 7

State whether the following questions are open-ended (O) or closed (C).

1. Are you new to this office? _____
2. Why do we need a community service programme? _____
3. Was this procedure included in the report? _____
4. What are the advantages of enrolling this course? _____



ACTIVITY 8

In pairs, write appropriate responses to the comments below in order to maintain the conversation. Use a variety techniques in your answers.

1. I was rather late for our department meeting this morning.

2. The meeting lasted for four hours instead of the usual two hours.

3. I bumped into the director in the lift this morning.



CLOSING A CONVERSATION

When we wish to close a conversation, we do not stop talking suddenly as we would appear to be rude. In many situations, there are signals that will enable us to end our conversation naturally, for example, when a meeting begins or when your telephone rings. In such situations, we can end the conversation by saying. *It looks like the meeting is about to begin, or I apologise but I need to take this call.*

In situations, where we do not have such signals for a natural closing, we may politely end a conversation. This typically involves three steps:

- pre-closing
- closing
- taking leave
-

Pre-closing

When we want to end a conversation, we may signal to the other speaker that we wish to end the conversation. We may use any of the following expressions to signal the closing of a conversation:

Well...

So...

Look at the time!

I know you're busy

Closing

After we have signalled our wish to close the conversation, we can explicitly end the conversation by saying:

I'll let you get back to your work now.

I'm afraid I've got to leave now. It's getting late.

I've to rush off now.

I've enjoyed our discussion. But I have an appointment at 2 p.m.

Taking leave

After we have explicitly ended our conversation, the next step is to take leave. Below are some expressions we can use:

Good-bye

See you soon.

See you some other time.

Have a good weekend.



ACTIVITY 9

In pairs, select a job-related topic for a short conversation. Use the different types of expressions you have learnt so far to start, maintain and close the conversation.

UNIT 4: EFFECTIVE EMAIL WRITING



PRE-ACTIVITY

Discuss in group

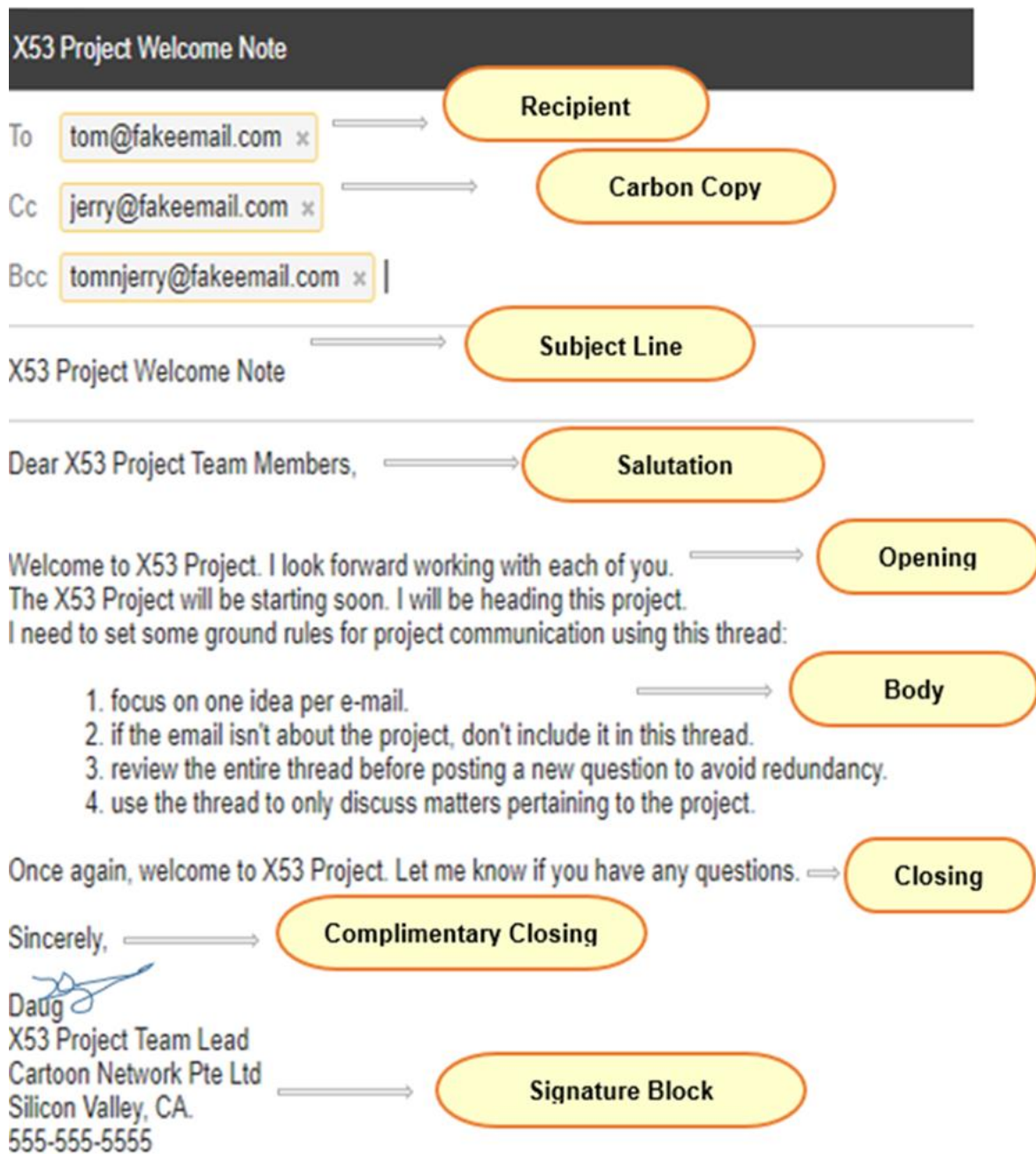
Is the following email suitable for internal and external communication of a company? Why?

E-mail A
From : Andrea (bigdude45@yahoo.com)
To: Stephen Choong (stephenchoong@builderpro.com)
CC: Maisarah (prettygurl29@gmail.com)
Subject: Serdang Heights Development
Attachment : Proposal 1.doc
Hey whatsapp, Hope you're all right. I was surprise to hear from you. Say, why we don't meet sometime. Need to thrash out this big project and pick your brain. See you soon. You know who

Format of an email

There are many different formats used in writing a business email. However, the full block format is the most common layout used. A good business email should have a logical structure, precision, clarity, accuracy, and conciseness.

For example:



Here are some common business vocabulary and phrases that can be used in business email writing according to the intended purposes.

Example

Starting

Dear Sir or Madam

Dear Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss Brown

Hi / Hello

Ending

Yours faithfully (after Dear Sir or Madam)

Yours sincerely (after Dear Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss)

Best regards / Kind regards

All the best

Bye for now

Giving reason for writing

I am writing with regard to / about ...

I am writing to request / inform / enquire / complain about / apply for ...

Just a quick email to ask ...

I am writing on behalf of

Referring to previous contact

Further to our previous meeting ...

With reference to your letter dated 15/6/13 ...

Following your letter ...

About your email ...

Sending an attachment or enclosure

I am attaching / enclosing ...

Please find attached / enclosed ...

As you will see from the attachment / enclosure ...

Here is ...

Offering more information or help

Please feel free to contact me if you would like any further information.

Email me / Give me a call if you want any more information.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further assistance.

Referring to future contact

I look forward to hearing from you.

We look forward to working with you in the future.

See you soon.

Introducing good news

I am delighted to ...

I am happy to ... / I am pleased to ...

Fortunately ... / Luckily ...

Introducing bad news

We regret to inform you that ...

Unfortunately ... / Sadly ...

I am afraid (that) ... / I am sorry, but ... / I regret that ...

Requesting

I would be grateful if you would send ...

Could you possibly send ...?

Can you send ...?

Please send ...

Thanking

I would like to thank you for ...

I appreciate your assistance with this.

I am grateful for ...

Thank you for ... / Thanks for ...

Apologising

My apologies. / Sorry. / I am sorry that ...

Please accept my apology / I sincerely regret ...

Inviting / accepting / declining

Would you like to ... ? / Do you want to ... ?

That would be great. / I'd love to. / That sounds great.

I am sorry, but I am busy. / I am afraid I can't.

Arranging

Can you meet at (time) on (day)?

What day suits you?

Tuesday would suit me.

Tuesday is good for me.

Look forward to seeing you there.

See you next week.

Checking and clarifying

I am writing to check / confirm that ...

I do not understand what you mean

Do you mean ... ? / Are you saying that ... ?



ACTIVITY 1

Work in pairs

Compare the following email messages by observing the style of writing. Which of the email creates a better impression and rapport? Why?

E-mail 1

Subject: Re: Problem solved

Hey Jackie – We spoke this morning and note your problem is solved. Should you require any further assistance kindly revert.

Thanks & regards

Linda Omar

E-mail 2

Subject: Re: Problem solved

Hello Jackie

Thanks for your call today.

I am so pleased that we have been able to find solution to this. Good luck with future progress on this project.

I will be here when you decide how we can help you again.

Linda

Even though formal language is preferred in writing emails, it should not lack of the natural, conversational style, as it is a less formal way of communicating than writing a letter or even making a phone call. Writing as speaking helps to keep emails short, personable and friendly. This will allow rapport building and eventually a better relationship with the client can be developed.

Language Point

Common Words and Expressions

Writing emails in English quickly and correctly can be challenging due to time constraints and little margin for error. English emails for work do not always have to be very formal, but they do have to be professional, which means that being objective, polite, and accurate with spelling and grammar are highly recommended. Therefore, it is best to be familiar with some common words and expressions to speed up the email writing process.



ACTIVITY 2

Work in pairs

Fill the table below with common words or expressions used for the given functions.

Function	Expressions or Words
Request for information	Example: <i>I am writing to enquire about...</i> • •
Response to request	Example: <i>Enclosed is the information you requested</i> • •
Introduction of Product/Service	Example: <i>Our new product will be launched next month.</i> • •
Reference	Example: <i>I am writing in reference to...</i> • •
Goodwill	Example: <i>Thank you for your hospitality.</i> • •



ACTIVITY 3

Work in groups

Outline and write an email to a potential international postgraduate student to inform her that the course she would like to register for is not available at the moment.

Consider the following questions:

- Are you going to promise any action, give additional information, offer help, or simply say that you will tell them when the course is available again?
- What courses does your PTJ/faculty/university usually offer, but not available at the moment? Why? When is it going to be available again?
- What solution(s) can you provide?

Email template:

From:

Date:

To:

Cc:

Subject:

UNIT 4: TALK WITH TACT!

Interacting effectively on the telephone is a vital skill. The effective use of the telephone can result in:

- improved levels of personal contact and the development of relationships – both internally and externally, especially with our customers/clients,
- immediate response to issues which are important in maintaining good relations with our clients,
- good information flow within and around an organisation,
- a reduction in time spent on writing letters which will in turn reduce administrative costs,
- an overall enhanced performance of an organisation.

In this section, we will look into the use of appropriate language expressions in managing effective telephone interactions in relation to:

- 1) making telephone calls,
- 2) receiving telephone calls,
- 3) handling inquiries, and
- 4) directing calls to the relevant personnel.



MAKING TELEPHONE CALLS

Making effective telephone calls is a process requiring some preparations. These include:

- setting aside a specific time to make our phone calls,
- having a calendar and a pen at hand,
- gathering all our information before making our calls:
 - ✓ having the correct telephone number to call
 - ✓ knowing the name of the person we need to speak to
 - ✓ having our personal information at hand, such as full name, address, telephone number and email to reach us
- thinking about what we need to accomplish with the call and making note of it. It may help to write down our "talking points,"
- making note of any questions we need to ask,
- placing the telephone call,
- taking time to thank the other person and reiterate the important information before we end the call.

Below are some useful language expressions we can use in making telephone calls:

IDENTIFY WHO WE ARE

Hello, this is Cynthia from Giant Securities Berhad. (caller)
Hello, my name is Cynthia. I'm calling from Giant Securities Berhad. (caller)
Hi, it's Cynthia from Giant Securities Berhad (caller, informal)
Hi, Cynthia here. (caller, informal)

SAY WHO WE WANT TO SPEAK TO

I'd like to speak to Mr. Nazri, please.
Could I have the Marketing Department, please?
Can you put me through to Mr. Nazri, please?
Could I have extension 8600, please?
Could I speak to someone in the Sales & Purchase Department, please?
Is Mr. Nazri there, please?

EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE OF OUR CALL

The reason I'm calling is...
I need some information about...
It's in connection with...
I'd like to...
I'm ringing to....

Besides using these standard language expressions in making telephone calls, please note that **can**, **could**, **will** and **would** can be used to:

- **ASK PEOPLE TO DO THINGS**

For example:

Can you give him a message for me?
Could you give him a message for me?
Will you give him a message for me?
Would you give him a message for me?

*Note that: *can* and *will* are more direct than *could* and *would*.

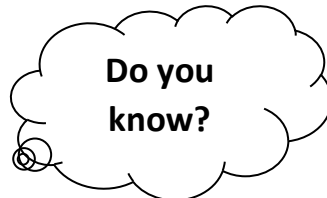
- **ASK FOR PERMISSION**

For examples:

Can I leave a message? (which means is it possible)

Could I leave a message? (which means would it be possible)

May I leave a message? (which means do you give me permission)



Can and *Could* are both used to ask for permission or requests. However, *Could* sounds more polite and formal than *Can*.

Level of formality:

Can		Could	
Level 1 speaks to Level 1	Can you speak more slowly, please?	Level 1 speaks to someone of a higher level (level 2 and above) or a stranger	Could you speak more slowly, please?
Level 2 or above speaks to Level 1	Can you put me through extension 2, please?		Could you put me through extension 2, please?

An example of an informal call:

A : Hello.
 B : Is that Seth?
 A : Yes.
 B : Hi. It's Danny. Is your team leader in?
 A : Yes?
 B : Can I talk to him?
 A : Okay. Wait.

An example of a formal call:

A : Good morning. Legend securities.
 B : Good morning. Could I speak to Mr. Alif, please?
 A : Yes. May I know who is calling, please?
 B : It's Seth here / My name is Mr. Seth.
 A : Right, Mr. Seth. I'll put you through to Mr. Alif. (*refer to no.14 at the box below*)

Telephone Terms

No.	Term(s)	Meaning
1	Line is engaged	Line is busy
2	On the phone	Someone is using the phone
3	Give you a ring	Call you
4	Returning your call	Call you back
5	Call display	A screen that show you who is calling
6	Someone is engaged	Someone is busy
7	Pick up	To answer the phone
8	Available	Free to talk
9	Hold on (for a moment/a minute/awhile)	Hold the line until the receiver gets back to the caller
10	Hang on	To wait on the phone
11	Relay your message	To repeat what someone has said
12	Line is choppy	Poor connection; can't hear a word you are saying
13	Call was cut off	Sudden termination of the call
14	Put (someone) through	To connect one person to another
15	Get through	To reach someone by phone
16	Get back (to someone)	Come back/return to



ACTIVITY 1

Fill in the blanks using the correct word(s). Use the words below to fill in the blank spaces provided.

available	get back	relay	cut off
call me back	please	get through	
hold on	speaking	put you through	

- Ms. Tina : Hello, good morning! May I speak to Mrs. Diane, please? I tried to call her yesterday, but I just couldn't _____?
- Secretary : She's on medical leave, madam. Could you _____ for a minute? I can _____ to her manager, Mr Douglas if you need further assistance.
- Ms. Tina : It's alright. I will speak to her when she returns.
- Secretary : Perhaps you would like to leave her a message? I will _____ the message as soon as she returns to work. Who shall I say called?
- Ms. Tina : This is Tina from Head Office. Please tell her next Monday's meeting has been postponed to the following Monday and to _____ as soon as possible.
- Secretary : No problem. May I have your contact number, please?
- Ms. Tina : It's 03-8947 9394.



RECEIVING TELEPHONE CALLS

'You never get a second chance to make a first impression'. So, it is important for us to project a professional image in receiving telephone calls. Pause before picking up the receiver to give yourself time to adopt a positive attitude.

When we answer the telephone, we need to use the right phrase involving greetings and identification of who we are i.e. *Good Morning/ Good Afternoon/ Good evening* + Company/Organisation name.

For example:

Good Morning, Universiti Putra Malaysia. How may I help you?

Good morning. Universiti Putra Malaysia. Azam speaking, how may I help you?

Good morning. This is the Science Faculty.

Good morning, Emma speaking.

Below are some useful language expressions we can use when we:

ASK FOR REPETITION

Sorry, I didn't catch your name / your number...

Sorry, could you repeat your name / number...

Sorry, I didn't hear that.

Sorry, I didn't understand/get that.

Could you spell that?

ACKNOWLEDGE REPETITION

*Ok, I've got that.
(Mr. Nazri). I understand.
I see, thank you.*

SAY SOMEONE IS NOT AVAILABLE

(always try to include Time Expression/duration)

*I'm sorry; he/she is not available (right now).
Sorry, he/she's away for the week.
Sorry, he/she's not in.
I'm afraid he/she' is in a meeting (at the moment).
He/she is in London. He/she won't be back until Monday.*



Phrases such as "I'm sorry/I'm afraid....." is used to show that you have a feeling of pity or concern to the caller.

TAKE MESSAGES

*Can I take a message?
Would you like to leave a message?
If you give me your number I'll ask him/her to call you later.
Shall I ask him/her to call you back?*

OFFER TO HELP IN OTHER WAYS

*Can anyone else help you?
Can I help you perhaps?
Would you like to speak to his/her assistant?*



ACTIVITY 2

You are the secretary for Mr. Ammar. Write appropriate responses based on the dialogue given.

Mr Noah: Hello, good morning! May I speak to Mr Ammar, please? I tried to call him yesterday but I couldn't get through. What happened?

Secretary: _____ (1) _____
_____.

Mr Noah: Oh, yes I forgot that it was a holiday yesterday. Thanks! Is he in the office, now?

Secretary: _____ (2) _____
_____.

Mr Noah: Yes please. Can you tell Mr Ammar to return my call? My number is 04-755-2525. Tell him it's Malayan Logistics.

Secretary: _____ (3) _____
_____.

Mr Noah: Thank you so much!



ACTIVITY 3

Work in pairs. Study the situation below for two (2) minutes. You will then perform an impromptu role play for the situation. Do not prepare a dialogue/script.

You are the Coordinator for your department. A caller would like to speak to your Head of Department, but he is out of the office. Take a message and make sure you get the following information:

- name and telephone number (may include company name)
- message the caller would like to leave for the intended receiver
- how late the Head of Department can call the caller at the given telephone number



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HANDLING INQUIRIES

When we handle inquiries on the telephone, there are a few pointers we need to bear in mind. These include:

- listening carefully to the details expressed by the caller,
- making the callers feel that they have your full attention, mentioning the name of the caller, if possible,
- never give wrong information. (If you do not know the answer, transfer the caller to the right person).

LANGUAGE EXPRESSIONS

Below are some useful language expressions we may use to:

- Show that we are being attentive to what the caller is saying

Right.
I see.
Okay.
Hmm...Hmm...

- Let the caller know what we are doing on the other line

Just a second.
I'm looking at the computer system right now.
Just a moment, I'll get a pen and paper.
I'm putting you through to the person in charge.
I'll check if my colleague is available to help you now.

- Help the caller to find information online

Are you online now?
Do you have access to the internet while we are speaking?

- Say we will call back

If you can give me your contact details, I'll phone you back as soon as I've found the information you are looking for.

- Inform the caller that someone else may be able to help him/her

I'm putting you through to my colleague now.
I've explained what your problem is and he/she said he/she can definitely help you with this.

- Clarify the caller's question(s)

*Can you explain a little more of what you want to know?
 Can you make it clearer what you need?
 If I understand you correctly, you would like to know.... .*



At times, in handling inquiries, we come across difficult clients/customers. We can deal with difficult situations by:

1. Allowing the client to express his opinion or dissatisfaction while you shift to the "stay clam" mode. Remember that he/she is not angry at YOU, but he/she is in distressed for solution.
2. Asking questions after the client has completed his/her case. Having the facts and details of the matter at hand will help you to understand your clients' frustrations.
3. Apologizing when appropriate. A simple gesture can help to soothe the situation.
4. Presenting a solution where both you and your client agree upon. Take action and follow-up as promised.

Whenever you come across these:

Abusive	Offensive
1. Are you stupid? 2. Is this your first day, because it seems like you do not know anything? 3. Can you transfer my call to someone who actually knows something?	1. Your company is making the same mistake over and over again as if it is being run by useless people! 2. Do you know who you are talking to? I can get you in trouble in no time, do you know that?

First, calm difficult clients by trying to apologise by saying these:

"I apologise that we did not send your order on time."

"I'm sorry and I apologize that this occurred, Mr Taib."

"I'm sorry. I don't blame you for being upset, Mr Faiz."

"Madam Lina, I can truly understand why you said what you have said. I would too, if I were you."

I am sorry for any misunderstanding you may have experienced.

Below is some language expression used to handle difficult situations:

*I have been given full authority to help resolve your concerns.
May I have the opportunity to resolve this first?*

*Please give me an opportunity to try and resolve this for you.
That's why I'm here.*

*I'm trying to help you, but if you continue to yell and swear, I
am going to ask that you call back another time. It's up to
you...which would you prefer?*

*I'm sorry that I have not been able to help you. If you don't
object, I would like to let a colleague/manager of mine
attempt to better meet your needs.*



ACTIVITY 4

Look at following pointers for handling inquiries on the telephone. Write the most appropriate response for each.

1. Inform the caller what you are doing if there is going to be some silence at your end.

2. Ask the caller to repeat and spell the complete name of the caller.

3. Explain to the caller who called back that the line was cut off.

4. Acknowledge to the caller that you understood the message from the caller.

5. Informing the caller that there is no such person (who the caller wants to speak to) in the department.



ACTIVITY 5

Read the jumbled-up dialogue and rearrange them accordingly, from 1- 10.

Dialogue	Sequence Number
Mary: Thank you for calling Aquaria Wonders. This is Mary, how may I help you?	
Lisa: You have a nice day, too Mary! Bye.	
Mary: Yes, we are currently having this promotion but it is only applicable during the weekdays.	
Lisa: I see. I think I will be coming with my family next Monday.	
Mary: Oh, we are opened from 11am to 8pm every Monday to Friday. On weekends, the operating hours starts at 10am and we are closed at 9pm.	
Lisa: Hello, this is Lisa. I would like to enquire about the opening hours and admission fee?	
Mary: Alright, thank you for calling Aquaria Wonders. Have a nice day!	
Lisa: No, I'm good for now. Thank you for your assistance.	
Mary: My pleasure, Miss Lisa. See you on Monday! Is there anything else that I can help?	
Lisa: Great. I have one more question. Do we get a 10% meal discount if we come in with two adults and two children?	



ACTIVITY 6: Role-Plays

Work in pairs. Study the situation below for two (2) minutes. You will then perform an impromptu role play for the situation.

Situation 1

A: You are helping your head of department to invite the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Nestle Malaysia to grace the opening ceremony of a conference.

B: You answer the phone. The person on the other end of the line wants to speak to the secretary to the CEO, but she is not around. Take down the caller's message.

Situation 2

A: You want to reserve a hall for 50 admin officers to attend a short course. Call the management who owns the hall and make a reservation for 8am to 5pm on 30th August 2020.

B: You work as a human resource officer for a freelance company. Someone called to book a hall for the purpose of a short course. Tell the caller that the hall is reserved on that particular date. Suggest another date or a bigger hall for that purpose.

Situation 3

A: Your house was robbed while you were away for a short holiday. Call the security management to talk to the head of security and make complains.

B: You are newly hired as a security guard for a housing area. The person on the other end of the line called the office and angrily asked to speak to your superior who is on medical leave. Calm the caller down and take down her report.

Situation 4

A: You are working as an account manager, and you want to schedule a meeting with the Human Resource manager to discuss of ways to improve the payroll system. Call the HR department and make the appointment.

B: You work in the Purchasing Department answering the phones. Transfer the caller to the correct department.