

# Speaking on the phone (telephone)

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The words and phrases that are used for speaking on the phone in English might be different from the phrases you use in your own language. This page gives you the words and phrases that you need for speaking on the phone. It will help you to speak clearly in this situation and in a way that sounds both polite and natural.

## 1. Answering the phone

The phone rings and you pick it up. Use one of these words/phrases:

Hello?  
Hello, Maria speaking.  
Hello, Maria Walker. (*This sounds more formal.*)

## 2. Saying who you are.

You call someone on the phone and they answer. Say one of these phrases:

Hello, it's James.  
Hello, Paolo, it's James.  
Hello, it's me. (*They are expecting you to telephone them.*)  
Hello, is that Paolo? (*You are not sure if it is Paolo speaking.*)

## 3. Replying

Someone calls and asks to speak to you. Reply in one of the following ways:

This is Sylvie.  
Sylvie speaking.

## 4. Asking who is speaking

You answer the phone and you want to know who is calling you. Use one of these phrases:

Who's that? (*Slightly informal.*)  
Can I ask who is speaking? (*This sounds slightly more polite.*)

## 5. Asking to speak to someone else

Someone answers the phone but you want to speak to someone else. Say one of these:

Hello, could I speak to Yuko, please?  
Hello, I'd like to speak to Yuko.  
Hello, is Yuko there, please? (*This sounds slightly informal.*)

## 6. When someone is not available

The person who has called wants to speak to someone who is not there. Say one of these:

He's out/he's not here at the moment. Can I take a message?  
I'm afraid he's out at the moment. Can I ask him to call you later? (*This sounds more formal.*)

## 7. Leaving a message for someone

The person you want to speak to is not available and you want to leave them a message. Say one of these:

Could you tell him Dominic called, please?  
Could you ask him to call Dominic, please, on 273567?

## 8. Taking a message

You promise to take a message for someone. Use one of these phrases:

I'll tell Anna you called and pass on your message.  
I'll make sure Anna gets your message.