

BUSINESS ENGLISH TELEPHONE VOCABULARY – PART I

From the context of the conversation below, try to guess what the meaning of the words/phrases in bold are. Then do the quiz at the end to check if you are right.

Peter: 'Did you call Mrs Smith this morning?'

Juan: 'Yes, I did. But I didn't speak to her.'

Peter: 'Why?'

Juan: 'I think there was a problem.'

Peter: 'Was there a problem with the phone or with the **line**?'

Juan: 'The line?'

Peter: 'The connection between your phone and hers?'

Juan: 'I don't know how to explain what happened in English, but there was a problem.'

Peter: 'Ok. Let's start from the beginning. On what type of phone did you **ring** her from?'

Juan: 'Ring?'

Peter: 'It means to call. I had a problem with my phone here in the office this morning. My **line was dead**, so I couldn't make or receive any phone calls. Did you call/ring from one of the **landline** phones here in the office?'

Juan: 'No I didn't ring from my phone in the office. I was outside when I rang her. '

Peter: 'So, it couldn't be a landline because it's impossible to make calls on it outside. So, you called her outside on your **mobile**?'

Juan: 'Yes, I did. I was walking to buy some food. But I thought a phone you can carry with you was called a **cell** phone?'

Peter: 'It's called a cell in North America, but a mobile phone in most other countries.'

Juan: 'Ok.'

Peter: 'If it was from a mobile, it could have been a problem with the **reception**. Did you have a good call signal on your mobile when you called her?'

Juan: 'The reception on my mobile was good. My phone had a 100% signal and before the call I rang my wife and the quality of the call was perfect.'

Peter: 'Did you **dial** the right number for her? Tell me what number you dialled?'

Juan: 'I dialled 0871 7656 2390.'

Peter: 'That's the right number. So what happened when you called her?'

Juan: 'She didn't answer. I think the reason why is that she was speaking to somebody else on another phone call when I called her.'

Peter: 'So, her **line was engaged** or busy. Did you leave a message in her **voicemail** asking her to call you back?'

Juan: 'Yes, I did.'

Peter's landline phone starts ringing. He answers it.

Peter: 'Hello Mrs Smith. Thank you for calling us back. Can you hold the line a minute, please. Thank you. I have Mrs Smith on the phone calling for you. What **extension** are you on here in the office so I can transfer her call to your landline phone?'

Juan: 'I'm on extension 1567.'

Peter: 'Hello Mrs Smith, I'll transfer you through to his extension now.'

Quiz:

*Below is a definition/description of each of the words/phrases in **bold** from the above text. Now choose the word/phrase from the box below which you believe answers each question. Only use one word/phrase once.*

line is engaged - cell - extension - mobile - line was dead - dial - landline - reception - ring - voicemail - line

1. When you call somebody, but you can't speak to them because they are already on another call, the _____
2. A phone which you can carry with you, is called in North America a _____
3. The signal that a mobile/cell phone gets, is often called the _____
4. The service on phones where you can leave spoken messages for the people you call, is called a _____
5. The connection between two phones, is often called the _____
6. A different way to say 'call' somebody by phone, is _____
7. A phone which you can't carry with you and can only be used in a house or an office, is called a _____
8. A phone in offices and companies, is often called an _____
9. When you can't make or receive phone calls because there is a problem on the line/connection, it could be because the _____
10. A phone which you can carry with you, is called outside of North America a _____
11. A verb that means to press/enter somebody's phone number on your phone, is _____

Now that you understand this telephone vocabulary, practise it by making sentences in English with the new words/phrases.

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