

## BUSINESS ENGLISH TELEPHONE VOCABULARY – PART II

**In the following conversation, Claire is telling her friend Sally about a phone call she made to her bank. From the context, 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.**

Sally: 'Hi Claire, you look stressed. Has anything happened?'

Claire: 'I just had to make a call to my bank to change my home address on my bank account.'

Sally: 'I hate calling banks. So, what happened?'

Claire: 'Well, the first three times I rang them I **couldn't get through** to them. No one was answering my phone call there.'

Sally: 'I suppose they were busy.'

Claire: 'Anyway, on the fourth call somebody **picked up** the phone there. So, I started to tell a woman there that I wanted to change my address. But then the call started to **break up**. I couldn't hear everything that she was saying and could only hear parts of words. Then after a minute of this happening, the line went dead.'

Sally: 'So, what did you do?'

Claire: 'I had to **call them back**.'

Sally: 'You called them again?'

Claire: 'Yeah. The same woman picked up and told me that her line had gone dead as well.'

Sally: 'So you were **cut off**?'

Claire: 'Yeah. She told they had been having problems with their phones all morning.'

Sally: 'So, she changed your address?'

Claire: 'No! She didn't know how to change addresses on bank accounts. So, she had to go and speak to her manager. She put me **on hold** while she went and spoke to him.'

Sally: 'How long were you on hold for?'

Claire: 'Only about 2 minutes. But I hate the music they play while you are waiting. When she started speaking to me again, she told me she couldn't speak to her manager because he was in a meeting with a customer. She offered to call me back when she had spoken to him, but I told her that I would **hold on** until she had spoken to him.'

Sally: 'So, how long were you waiting?'

Claire: 'I held on for a long time. But after 20 minutes of waiting, I was so angry that I ended the call.'

Sally: 'You **hung up**?'

Claire: 'Yeah. I was really frustrated with having to wait. But I did call them back about an hour later. The same woman answered and apologized for me waiting so long. She told me that she couldn't change the address on my bank account, but her manager could. So, she **put me through** to his extension and I started to talk to him. He changed my address.'

## 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.

on hold – pick up - call them back – couldn't get through - hung up – cut off – to be put through – break up - hold on

1. To return or make again a telephone call to somebody, is to  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When you are waiting for somebody to start speaking to you again (and normally hear music) on a telephone call, you are \_\_\_\_\_
3. When a telephone calls suddenly ends because of a problem with the line/connection, you are \_\_\_\_\_
4. When somebody transfers your call to another phone/extension, is to  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. When somebody ended a phone call (probably because they were angry) when the other person was still speaking or listening, we say they \_\_\_\_\_
6. When you tell somebody that you will wait on the telephone for either somebody to become available or until they finish doing something, you tell them to  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. A different way to say 'answer' a call on a landline phone, is to  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. When there is a problem on a phone call where you can't hear everything the other person is saying, we say their voice is starting to \_\_\_\_\_
9. When you were unable to contact somebody by phone, you say you  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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