English in my home – Someone on the phone

Unit 2a – Cold call
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Video
Introduction
This resource has been produced in two different formats:

- a self-access resource for learners with online activities
- this teacher’s pack, including teacher’s notes and learner resources to download

Overview
This resource, Someone on the phone – A cold call, is part of Unit 2 of English in my home, which aims to give ESOL learners the confidence and the language to deal with situations they may encounter in their homes.

The three units of English in my home are:

Unit 1 Someone at the door aims to give learners confidence and equip them with the language necessary to deal with situations where unexpected callers (e.g. an electricity meter reader) arrive at the door.

Unit 2 Someone on the phone shows how to deal with incoming phone calls from a range of people. This includes unwanted calls (e.g. marketing cold calls).

Unit 3 Something in the post features some common types of mail that people receive (e.g. a utility bill), and enables learners to understand what the text means, and to know what to do in response.

Level: Entry 2 / Access 3 in Scotland / CEF A2. The materials are designed to be flexible in terms of differentiation, and are accessible to established E2 learners and at the same time relevant to E1, as well as E3 and L1.
Structure, learning hours and delivery context

*English in my home* provides a minimum of 11 hours of learning in a classroom or self-access context through a series of three linked units. Each unit can be taught as a standalone. Here is an overview of the content of each unit. Each unit has four topics:

**Unit 1: Someone at the door** (includes films)
- Topic a: Electricity meter reading
- Topic b: Charity collection
- Topic c: Parcel delivery
- Topic d: The neighbour

**Unit 2: Someone on the phone** (includes films)
- Topic a: A cold call (the focus of this set of resources)
- Topic b: Wrong number
- Topic c: An emergency
- Topic d: Getting a plumber

**Unit 3: Something in the post**
- Topic a: Bank statement
- Topic b: Phone bill
- Topic c: Attempted delivery note
- Topic d: Note from a neighbour

Each of the four topics in *Someone at the door* and *Someone on the phone* features a short film. These films have been scripted specifically for the project, and involve actors. The two central characters are a married Indian couple, who have recently moved to the UK, and who are getting used to life here. Each film focuses on them in a specific scenario, such as dealing with a meter reader who arrives at their flat, or dealing with unwanted cold calls on the telephone. ESOL learners should be able to relate to the experiences of the couple.

The learner materials and teacher notes contain activities for use before, during and after watching the films. They enable the learners to notice, learn and use some of the functional language featured in the films.

*Something in the post*, uses semi-authentic material of the kinds that learners may receive in their home, and helps them to understand these and know what action is needed.

Most topics provide approximately 60 minutes of classroom time.
Unit 2 Someone on the phone: overview

This unit provides up to 4 hours of classroom time, and covers 4 topics. Each topic features a short film, commissioned by the British Council for the ESOL Nexus project, and filmed with professional actors. The films aim to show situations in which ESOL learners may find themselves, and the accompanying classroom and self-study materials aim to give learners the language they need to deal with a range of household situations.

The topics of Someone on the phone are called A cold call, Wrong number, An emergency, and Getting a plumber. The first two topics can be used in any order but ideally An emergency should be taught before Arranging a plumber.
Unit 2a Someone on the phone: A cold call – teacher’s notes

Time:
Approximately 1 hour. Timings are flexible.

Aims
- to enable learners to deal with unexpected telephone cold calls

Objectives
All learners will:
- become familiar with and use some common telephone phrases
- take part in a role play, dealing with a cold call
- develop their ability to write a short dialogue

Preparation
You will need:
- learner resources (pages 10-11): one per learner
- transcript (page 12-13): one per learner
- cut-up copies of Task 1(page 14): one per pair
- data projector and internet connection to show the film A cold call
Suggested procedure
To introduce the topic of cold calls, you could tell the learners an anecdote about a cold call you received at a really inconvenient time, for example just before you left home to come to college. Elicit or explain that this is a ‘cold call’.

Lead-in: speaking
Dicate these questions and then write on the board so learners can check. Encourage learners to discuss the questions in pairs before you elicit group feedback.

Do you ever receive cold calls?
Who are the calls from?
What do you do when you get a cold call?
Do you like getting cold calls? Why? / Why not?

First viewing: gist questions
Tell learners they are going to watch a video, which shows some people receiving cold calls. Dictate these questions and then write on the board for learners to check.

• Why did the man prepare the meal?
• Who were the telephone calls from?
• Why did the woman play music on her phone?

Play the film (A cold call). After viewing, tell the learners to discuss the gist questions in pairs before you elicit group feedback.

Task 1: understanding the film
Hand out the learner resources (page 10 and 11). Tell learners to look at the photograph on page 10 and elicit the people’s names (Arjun and Sunita) and that they are a couple. Tell learners to complete Task 1 by putting the events in order. They should work individually and then check their answers with a partner. If you think your learners would benefit, hand out the cut-up version of Task 1 (page 14) to each pair.

Differentiation: check answers of any early finishers, and get them to give feedback to other pairs.
If necessary, play the film again before you check the order as a class.
Task 2: useful phone phrases

Ask if the learners can remember any phrases that Sunita and Arjun said when they spoke on the phone. Accept and value all suggestions and write phrases on the board. You could encourage learners to come to the board and write up the phrases they heard themselves. Explain that the couple used lots of useful phrases when talking on the phone and tell learners to complete Task 2 by matching the phrases with the meanings. Check in pairs before you elicit group feedback.

Model the pronunciation and intonation of the phrases, and drill them chorally and with individual learners. You could write the phrases on the board, get learners to repeat them, then rub out individual words:

- *Could you hold one moment please?* could then become:
- *Could you ____ one moment please?* Then:
- *Could you ___ one ______ please?* Then:
- _____ you ___ one ______ please? Etc

You could also murmur the phrases, using the appropriate syllables, word stress and intonation and ask learners to tell you which phrase you are saying.

At this stage, distribute the transcript (page 12 and 13) and tell learners to find and underline the phrases and read the phrase in context.

Finally, tell learners to put their handouts face-down, and then ask them the phrases from Task 2, as follows:

Teacher: *What can you say to someone on the phone if you want them to wait?*
Learner: *Could you hold please?* etc

Your learners could also test each other in pairs.

Task 3: acting

Put learners into groups of 4 and ask them to focus on the transcript. Tell them they are going to act out the dialogue in small groups and to decide on their roles and to practise reading the dialogue aloud. Monitor, and help with pronunciation and intonation. After reading it once or twice, stronger learners could put the paper away and try to recreate the dialogue (approximately). The learners who still have their papers would then be able to prompt to keep the dialogue flowing.

Task 4: writing a dialogue

Before doing this, elicit other reasons for cold calls (e.g. selling insurance), and other ways of dealing with a call when you don’t want to talk to the caller. Put the learners in pairs, and encourage them to write a dialogue. Monitor, and encourage them to incorporate phrases from the film. When they have written their dialogues they could practise acting them out with, then without the script.
**Extension: freer speaking activities**

Here are some more ideas for activities you could do after using these learner resources:

- In groups, ask the learners to discuss whether it is better to speak to cold callers, or to do what Arjun and Sunita did.
- Ask learners why they think the first caller wanted to talk with the person who pays the energy bills. (Probably to try to persuade Arjun to switch to another energy provider.) Ask if any of the learners have switched energy provider. Tell them that prices can vary a lot; ask if they know which provider has the lowest prices in their area.
- Signpost learners to the Telephone Preference Service where they can opt out of unsolicited sales or marketing calls: [http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/tps/index.html](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/tps/index.html)

On the subject of household bills, you may also like to use these other *English in my home* lessons:

- **Unit 1a: Someone at the door: Electricity meter reading** (includes a video)
- **Unit 3b: Something in the post: phone bill**

You can also refer learners to the online versions of these ESOL Nexus activities on how to deal with cold calls at: [http://esol.britishcouncil.org/english-my-home/someone-phone-cold-call](http://esol.britishcouncil.org/english-my-home/someone-phone-cold-call)
Unit 2a Someone on the phone: a cold call – learner resources

A cold call

Task 1: understanding the film

Watch the film. Put the events in order: 1-10

a. So she asks him to wait.
b. So he asks her not to phone again.
c. But Sunita doesn’t want to speak to him.
d. But Arjun doesn’t want to talk to the woman.
e. The phone rings and Arjun answers it.
f. A man wants to ask her some questions.
g. Then she plays some music to the phone.
h. The phone rings again and Sunita answers it.
i. It is Sunita’s birthday, so Arjun prepares a meal.
j. A woman wants to talk to him about energy bills.
Task 2: useful phone phrases

Read the questions. Then choose the right phrase from the film.

What do you say when…

a. you answer the phone?  
   *Hello? (4)*

b. you want the caller to wait?

c. the caller asks to speak to you?

d. you can’t speak to the caller now?

e. you are going to answer the phone?

f. you don’t want any more calls from the caller?

Task 3: acting

Work in groups of four. Read the transcript and practise saying it aloud.

Task 4: writing a dialogue

Work with a partner. Imagine that you get a cold call. What would you say? Write a dialogue. Then practise your dialogue with your partner.
Cold call – video transcript

Husband: OK. You can come in now!

Wife: Oh thank you. And you’ve cooked a meal and everything!

Husband: Happy birthday my darling.

Wife: How romantic!

Husband: I know!

(The phone rings.)

Husband: Hello?

Cold caller 1: Hello Sir, how are you?

Husband: Well, I’m fine thanks.

Cold caller 1: Can I speak to the person who pays the energy bills?

Husband: Speaking. I pay the bills.

Cold caller 1: Well, I’m calling from a company called Cheap Energy 4 U. Would you like to save money on your energy bills sir?

Husband: Yes, of course, but,… sorry, I’m busy now. It isn’t a good time to talk.

Wife: OK, can I call you back in… in an hour?

Husband: No, that will be worse. I’m sorry, but please don’t call me again. How did you get my number?
Cold caller 1          It’s on our database of numbers.

Husband              Can you delete my number please? I’m sorry, but I don’t want any more calls from you.

Cold caller 1        I understand sir. I’ll delete your number. Sorry for the problem. Good night.

Husband              Thank you. Bye bye.

Wife                 Mmmm Lovely soup.

(The phone rings.)

Wife                 I’ll get it this time… Hello?

Cold caller 2        Hello, I’m doing a customer survey. Can I ask you a few questions?

Wife                 Oh, yes, could you hold one moment please?

Cold caller 2        OK, I’ll wait.

Husband              Cold calls! I really don’t like cold calls.

Wife                 Yeah. They’re calling almost every day now. You know, somebody told me, you can ask the phone company to stop them. If you want.

Husband              Interesting, very interesting. But not very romantic….

Wife                 No, I’m sorry.

Cold caller 2        Hello? Hello? Hello?
Unit 2a Someone on the phone: a cold call – Additional resources for teachers

Task 1: to be cut up

A. So she asks him to wait.

B. So he asks her not to phone again.

C. But Sunita doesn’t want to speak to him.

D. But Arjun doesn’t want to talk to the woman.

E. The phone rings and Arjun answers it.

F. A man wants to ask her some questions.

G. Then she plays some music to the phone.

H. The phone rings again and Sunita answers it.

I. It is Sunita’s birthday, so Arjun prepares a meal. (1)

J. A woman wants to talk to him about energy bills.
Unit 2a Someone on the phone: a cold call – answers

First viewing: gist questions

Why did the man prepare the meal?
• Because it is his wife’s birthday.

Who were the calls from?
• They were cold calls. The first was from a woman who wanted to talk about energy prices. The second was from a man who wanted to ask some questions because she is doing a customer survey.

Why did the woman play music on her phone?
• Because she didn’t want to talk to the caller.

Task 1: understanding the film

1.i
2.e
3.j
4.d
5.b
6.h
7.f
8.c
9.a
10.g

Task 2: useful phone phrases

a.4
b.5
c.3
d.2
e.1
f.6
Someone on the phone – ‘Cold call’ video

The video that accompanies the activities for Unit 2 ‘Someone on the phone – Cold Call’ is available to watch on the ESOLNexus website.