



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Leaving a Message

Topic: Social Interactions

Level: Intermediate

Practice on Your Own

- Imagine a situation in which you need some documents from your classmate. You need to call your classmate's house to ask him/her to bring the documents to class tomorrow. The first time you call, your classmate is not available. You talk to one of your classmate's parents and leave a message.
 - Hello, this is X. I'm Y's classmate. Is Y at home?
 - Hello, I am his father. He is not at home. He will get back late at night...
 - Please ask him to call me back./Please ask him to bring X to class tomorrow./...
- The second scenario is when you call again because you haven't heard back from your classmate. This time your classmate is at home and you talk to him/her, asking him/her to bring the materials to class tomorrow.
 - Hello, this is X. Is Y back yet? Yes, just a minute.
 - Hello, Y. Did you get my message? Will you come to class tomorrow? ...
- In the third scenario, you want to leave a friend a voicemail on his/her cell phone.
 - Here you need to introduce yourself, express the reason for your call, tell your friend how soon you need to hear back from him/her, leave your phone number...
 - You will need to prepare sentences like these:
 - I am calling because...
 - The reason I am calling is that...
 - Please call me back before X time... (I am up until X time...)
- Take notes of what you want to express but do not know how to say. You can ask your conversation partner and work on it in your conversation session.

Practice in Conversation Session

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- To warm up, have a conversation with your conversation partner about school matters, like exams, papers, homework, group projects...
- Now role play the first scenario you have worked on. Your conversation partner will play the role of your classmate's parent, and you are calling your classmate to talk about some school matters. Then switch roles; this time you play the role of the parent.
- Now role play the second scenario that you prepared for, calling back to see if your friend is back yet, a follow-up call. First one of the parents picks up the phone, then you talk to your classmate. Switch roles and repeat the conversation.
 - Pay attention to the cultural aspects of a phone call – what greetings are appropriate; are calls usually short or long; is it polite to call back...?
- Now you call your friend's cell phone and leave a voicemail. Your conversation partner will play the role of the voicemail greeting ("You have reached the voicemail box of X."/"Please leave a message and I will call you back as soon as possible...").