

## VOCABULARY · EPISODE 78

## 5 Min Survival Kit The Phone Call

Key words &amp; expressions · English + Español

10 words

Your English Toolbox

1

## Could you repeat that, please?

¿Podría repetirlo, por favor? · ¿Me lo puede decir otra vez?

## DEF

a polite request to hear something again because you did not hear or understand it the first time

*Could you repeat that, please?* is one of the most essential phrases for phone calls in English — phone audio is often imperfect and the absence of visual cues makes listening harder. Using this phrase confidently signals you are a competent speaker.

## ES

Una solicitud educada de escuchar algo de nuevo porque no lo escuchaste o entendiste la primera vez.

Es una de las frases más esenciales para las llamadas telefónicas en inglés.

***If you miss something on the phone, say 'Could you repeat that, please?' — it is natural and polite.***

If you miss something on the phone, say 'Could you repeat that, please?' -> Si pierdes algo por teléfono, di '¿Podría repetirlo, por favor?'

***She used 'Could you repeat that, please?' three times on her first English phone call — and that was perfectly fine.***

She used this phrase three times on her first English phone call — and that was perfectly fine. -> Usó '¿Me lo puede decir otra vez?' tres veces en su primera llamada en inglés — y eso fue perfectamente correcto.

2

## to hold the line

quedarse en línea · no colgar y esperar

## DEF

to wait on the telephone without hanging up, usually while someone goes to find information or transfer you

*Hold the line* is essential phone English — you will hear it constantly from call centres, doctor's surgeries, and banks. The phrase comes from military communication (keep the connection open). Knowing how to respond confidently ('Of course', 'Certainly') is just as important as understanding it.

## ES

Esperar al teléfono sin colgar, generalmente mientras alguien va a buscar información o transferirte.

Es inglés telefónico esencial — lo escucharás constantemente de los centros de llamadas, consultas médicas y bancos.

***Could you hold the line for a moment while I check our records? — You will hear this on almost every English phone call.***

Could you hold the line for a moment while I check our records? -> ¿Podría quedarse en línea un momento mientras compruebo nuestros registros?

***She learned to say 'Of course, I'll hold' without panic — and it changed every phone call she made in English.***

She learned to say 'Of course, I'll hold' without panic. -> Aprendió a decir 'Por supuesto, no cuelgo y espero' sin pánico.

## to put someone through

3

### transferir la llamada · conectar a un llamante con otra persona — transfiriendo la llamada

#### DEF

to connect a caller to another person or extension — by transferring the call

*Put someone through is the telephone transfer phrase. When you call a company and are transferred, the phrase used is 'I'll put you through to...' or 'Let me put you through to the right department'. The equivalent response when waiting is 'I'm being put through'. This is a core telephone English phrase — knowing it signals professional telephone competence.*

#### ES

Conectar a un llamante con otra persona o extensión — transfiriendo la llamada.

La frase de transferencia telefónica. 'I'll put you through to...' es la forma en que las empresas transfieren llamadas en inglés.

**When asked 'I'll put you through' — say 'Thank you' and wait; the silence is normal.**

When asked 'I'll put you through' — say 'Thank you' and wait; the silence is normal. -> Cuando te digan 'I'll put you through' — di 'Thank you' y espera; el silencio es normal.

**She was told the receptionist would put her through to customer services and was connected within thirty seconds.**

She was told the receptionist would put her through to customer services and was connected within thirty seconds. -> Le dijeron que la recepcionista la transferiría a atención al cliente y fue conectada en treinta segundos.

4

## to leave a message

### dejar un mensaje · comunicar información para alguien que no está disponible

#### DEF

to record or communicate information for someone who is unavailable — so they can receive it when they return

*Leave a message is the voicemail and receptionist phrase. When someone is unavailable on the phone, you are typically asked 'Would you like to leave a message?' The response involves giving your name, number, and reason for calling, clearly and at a moderate pace. For English learners, leaving a clear, well-structured voicemail is a practical skill that requires specific formulaic language.*

#### ES

Registrar o comunicar información para alguien que no está disponible — para que puedan recibirla cuando regresen.

La frase del buzón de voz y del recepcionista. Dejar un mensaje claro y bien estructurado en inglés requiere un lenguaje formuláico específico.

**When leaving a message, state your name, number, and purpose clearly — and speak slower than you think you need to.**

When leaving a message, state your name, number, and purpose clearly — and speak slower than you think you need to. -> Cuando dejes un mensaje, di tu nombre, número y propósito claramente — y habla más despacio de lo que crees necesario.

**She left a message with the receptionist and received a call back within the hour.**

She left a message with the receptionist and received a call back within the hour. -> Dejó un mensaje con la recepcionista y recibió una llamada de vuelta en menos de una hora.

## to be on hold

5

### estar en espera · estar esperando en una línea telefónica mientras la otra parte gestiona algo

#### DEF

to be waiting on a telephone line while the other party deals with something — typically with music or a recorded message playing

*On hold is the telephone waiting state. Being put on hold is one of the most common telephone experiences and one of the most frustrating. Key phrases: 'You are being placed on hold', 'We will be with you shortly', 'Your call is important to us'. For English learners, the challenge of being on hold is that when the line finally connects, you must be ready to speak clearly and quickly.*

#### ES

Estar esperando en una línea telefónica mientras la otra parte gestiona algo — típicamente con música o un mensaje grabado.

El estado de espera telefónica. Las frases clave: 'You are being placed on hold', 'We will be with you shortly'.

**Stay focused while on hold — the connection can happen suddenly and you need to be ready.**

Stay focused while on hold — the connection can happen suddenly and you need to be ready. -> Mantente concentrado mientras estás en espera — la conexión puede ocurrir de repente y tienes que estar preparado.

**She was put on hold for twenty minutes and used the time to prepare exactly what she needed to say.**

She was put on hold for twenty minutes and used the time to prepare exactly what she needed to say. -> La pusieron en espera veinte minutos y usó el tiempo para preparar exactamente lo que necesitaba decir.

## to get cut off

6

### cortarse la llamada · ser repentinamente desconectado durante una llamada telefónica

#### DEF

to be suddenly disconnected during a telephone call

*Get cut off is the call disconnection phrase. In telephone English, being cut off means the call ended unexpectedly — not that the other person hung up deliberately. It is useful to distinguish: 'We got cut off' (technical disconnection) versus 'They hung up on me' (deliberate ending). If you get cut off mid-conversation, standard practice is for the person who placed the original call to call back.*

#### ES

Ser repentinamente desconectado durante una llamada telefónica.

La frase de desconexión de llamada. 'We got cut off' (desconexión técnica) versus 'They hung up on me' (finalización deliberada).

**If you get cut off, call back immediately — it signals competence and commitment.**

If you get cut off, call back immediately — it signals competence and commitment. -> Si se corta la llamada, vuelve a llamar inmediatamente — señala competencia y compromiso.

**She got cut off in the middle of explaining the problem and had to call back and start again.**

She got cut off in the middle of explaining the problem and had to call back and start again. -> Se cortó la llamada en medio de explicar el problema y tuvo que volver a llamar y empezar de nuevo.

## to speak up

### 7 hablar más alto · hablar más fuerte o con más claridad — a menudo porque la otra persona no oye bien

#### DEF

to talk more loudly or clearly — often because the other person cannot hear well

*Speak up is the volume request phrase. On the telephone, background noise, poor connections, and differences in accent can all reduce intelligibility. 'Could you speak up?' is a polite, professional way to ask someone to be louder. For English learners, it is important to know both how to make this request ('Could you speak up a little?') and how to respond to it without becoming flustered.*

#### ES

Hablar más fuerte o con más claridad — a menudo porque la otra persona no puede oír bien.

La frase de solicitud de volumen. 'Could you speak up?' es una forma educada y profesional de pedir a alguien que hable más fuerte.

***If you cannot hear, say 'Could you speak up a little? I'm having trouble hearing you' — it is polite and professional.***

If you cannot hear, say 'Could you speak up a little? I'm having trouble hearing you' — it is polite and professional. -> Si no puedes oír, di 'Could you speak up a little? I'm having trouble hearing you' — es educado y profesional.

***She asked the caller to speak up because the background noise on their end made it impossible to hear.***

She asked the caller to speak up because the background noise on their end made it impossible to hear. -> Le pidió al llamante que hablara más alto porque el ruido de fondo en su lado hacía imposible escuchar.

## to call back

### 8 devolver la llamada · devolver una llamada telefónica — porque perdiste la llamada original o porque te pidieron que llamas más tarde

#### DEF

to return a telephone call — either because you missed the original call or because you were asked to call again later

*Call back is the return call phrase. It is used in two directions: 'I'll call you back' (the person you are speaking to will call you again later) and 'Could you call back tomorrow?' (you are asking the caller to try again). Knowing the difference between 'call back' and 'call again' is a small but important telephone competence detail.*

#### ES

Devolver una llamada telefónica — porque perdiste la llamada original o porque te pidieron que llamas de nuevo más tarde.

La frase de llamada de vuelta. 'I'll call you back' (llamaré más tarde) y 'Could you call back tomorrow?' (llama de nuevo mañana).

***If someone says 'I'll call you back' without a time — it is polite to ask 'When can I expect your call?'***

If someone says 'I'll call you back' without a time — it is polite to ask 'When can I expect your call?' -> Si alguien dice 'I'll call you back' sin especificar cuándo — es educado preguntar '¿Cuándo puedo esperar tu llamada?'

***She was unable to speak at that moment and asked the caller to call back in twenty minutes.***

She was unable to speak at that moment and asked the caller to call back in twenty minutes. -> No podía hablar en ese momento y pidió al llamante que volviera a llamar en veinte minutos.

## to spell something out

9

**deletrear · decir cada letra de una palabra individualmente para que el oyente pueda escribirla correctamente**

### DEF

to say each letter of a word individually — so that the listener can write it down correctly

*Spell something out (telephone sense) — on the telephone, names and addresses must often be spelled out letter by letter. The NATO phonetic alphabet (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie...) is often used for professional clarity. Standard English telephone spelling uses everyday words ('S for Sierra, or S for sugar'). Being able to spell your name confidently on the phone is a basic but important telephone competence for language learners.*

### ES

Decir cada letra de una palabra individualmente — para que el oyente pueda escribirla correctamente.

En el teléfono nombres y direcciones a menudo deben deletrearse letra por letra. El alfabeto fonético OTAN se usa a menudo para mayor claridad.

***When giving your name on the phone, offer to spell it out before being asked — it prevents errors.***

When giving your name on the phone, offer to spell it out before being asked — it prevents errors. -> Al dar tu nombre por teléfono ofrece deletrearlo antes de que te lo pidan — previene errores.

***She spelled her surname out letter by letter and used simple words to make each letter clear.***

She spelled her surname out letter by letter and used simple words to make each letter clear. -> Deletreó su apellido letra por letra y usó palabras simples para que cada letra estuviera clara.

## to wrap up a call

10

**terminar una llamada · llevar una conversación telefónica a su conclusión — señalando que estás a punto de terminar la llamada**

### DEF

to bring a telephone conversation to a conclusion — signalling that you are about to end the call

*Wrap up a call is the telephone closure phrase. Ending a phone call gracefully in English requires specific phrases: 'Well, I think that covers everything', 'Is there anything else I can help you with?', 'Thanks for calling, I'll let you go'. These phrases signal closure without abruptness. Many non-native speakers end calls too abruptly or struggle to find the exit — knowing these phrases makes the ending as smooth as the beginning.*

### ES

Llevar una conversación telefónica a su conclusión — señalando que estás a punto de terminar la llamada.

La frase de cierre telefónico. Frases: 'Well, I think that covers everything', 'Is there anything else I can help you with?', 'Thanks for calling, I'll let you go'.

***Wrap up a call with a clear summary of what was agreed — it prevents misunderstandings and sounds professional.***

Wrap up a call with a clear summary of what was agreed — it prevents misunderstandings and sounds professional. -> Termina una llamada con un resumen claro de lo que se acordó — previene malentendidos y suena profesional.

***She wrapped up the call by confirming the next steps and thanking the client for their time.***

She wrapped up the call by confirming the next steps and thanking the client for their time. -> Terminó la llamada confirmando los próximos pasos y agradeciendo al cliente su tiempo.