

Unit 3: Telephone and communication problems

SUMMARY

You can use this summary to guide the learning objectives and target setting for your class.

Can-do statements:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to say:

- I can cope when I experience communication difficulties.
- I can ask people to repeat themselves in different ways.
- I can use weak forms and run words together.

Vocabulary

Communication difficulties: *I'm getting a delay. You're breaking up. You keep coming and going. My connection went. We got cut off. The reception here's terrible. My battery's low. I didn't get most of what you said. I didn't hear a word of that. I didn't catch ...*

Appropriateness

Using weak forms and running words together

Function

Describing communication difficulties
Coping with communication problems
Asking people to repeat themselves

connection; Conversation 3: cut off, bad reception, low battery; Conversation 4: unclear announcement)

2. Books open. Allow students to listen again and follow the conversations in their books.

Using Language note

1. Read the *Language note* to the class. Ask students to scan the conversations and note down any phrases that mean *I can't hear you*. (Answers: *I didn't get most of what you just said. You're breaking up. You keep coming and going. The reception here's terrible. What are they saying? I didn't hear a word of that. I didn't catch ...*)
2. Ask students to discuss in pairs different ways to ask someone to repeat what they have said. They can use phrases from the conversations and their own ideas.

Using Understanding

1. Ask students to write the phrases in their vocabulary books under the correct heading. Check answers.
2. Play the conversations again, pausing after the phrases in bold. Ask students to repeat the phrases, paying attention to how the speaker uses stress and intonation. Students can annotate the phrases in their notebooks to show how the phrases are spoken.
3. Ask students to practise reading the conversations in pairs, remembering to copy the pronunciation of the key phrases. Encourage students to convey emotions (e.g. annoyance and frustration) in the way they speak. Ask one or two pairs to perform their dialogues to the class.

Using Saying it accurately

1. Ask students to complete *Exercises 1* and *2*. They should try to remember the missing words and then check the answers in the conversations, rather than getting their answers from the conversations straight away.
2. Students can practise the phrases in *Exercises 1* and *2* by testing each other in pairs. One student should say a sentence, replacing one word with *beep*. The replaced word doesn't have to be the gapped word in the exercises. The other student must say the complete sentence. For example:

Student A: We got cut 'beep'.

Student B: We got cut off.

Ask pairs to feed back any difficult sentences to the class.

CLASSROOM EXTENSION IDEAS

You can use some or all of these ideas to check and enhance your students' understanding as they work their way through *Unit 3 of Speaking B2+* in class.

Using Getting started

1. Ask students to look at the photograph and say how the woman is feeling. Elicit *annoyed* and *frustrated*.
2. Brainstorm why she might be feeling this way. Elicit or pre-teach *delay, breaking up, poor connection, cut off, no reception, low battery* as these words will be useful in *Conversations*.
3. Ask students to discuss the *Getting started* questions in small groups. Invite them to share their own experiences of communication problems.

Using Conversations

1. Books closed. Play *Recording 10* and ask students to listen and note down the communication problems experienced. Check answers. (Answers: *Conversation 1: a delay, sound breaking up; Conversation 2: poor*

Using *Saying it appropriately*

1. Tell students to read the sentences and point out that the words in grey show the weak forms. Ask students what happens to weak forms. (*Answer: They are not normally stressed in connected speech.*)
2. Play *Recording 11* and ask students to pay attention to how the speakers say the weak forms.
3. Ask students to focus on the underlined words, and ask what is meant by 'where the words run together'. (*Answer: Individual sounds may be omitted, e.g. the 't' sounds of didn't and just.*) Ask students how they think this might sound. Then listen to the recordings and check.
4. Complete *Exercise 2*. Play each sentence of *Recording 12* one at a time and ask students to copy how the speaker talks, paying attention to weak forms and where words run together.
5. Complete *Exercise 3*.

Using *Get speaking*

1. Tell students to read the situations and decide what they would say in each one.
2. Put students into pairs. One student in each pair is 'A' and the other is 'B'. Tell students to listen to *Recording 13* and respond in the way they have prepared. Student A should answer odd numbered questions and Student B should answer even numbered questions. Swap roles and repeat.
3. Allow students to repeat the exercise. They can vary what they said the first time, or say the same thing and focus on pronunciation.

Using *Everyday language*

1. Ask students to find the phrases in the conversations. They can check their answers by referring to page 88.
2. Ask students to choose a scenario from the *Communication scenarios* activity and write a dialogue or two mini-dialogues containing at least one of the *Everyday language* phrases plus other phrases from the unit. This can be set as a homework task.

Using *Next steps*

As an alternative to this step, use the photocopiable sheet *Communication scenarios*.

1. Copy the sheet and cut out the ten scenarios along the dotted lines. One copy is sufficient for a class of 20 students.
2. Put students into pairs and give each pair a scenario. They must improvise the scene, using language from the unit where possible. They can then swap scenarios with another pair and repeat the activity.
3. Scenes can be performed to the class. Take a class vote on the best one.

PHOTOCOPIABLES

Communication scenarios

<p>You are calling a friend, arranging a time to have dinner together. The reception is very poor.</p>	<p>You are calling a friend from a train, talking about your arrival time. Your train goes into a tunnel and you lose your connection. Return the call.</p>
<p>You have seen a car accident in the countryside. You call the police. The phone signal is very bad.</p>	<p>You call a friend in another country to catch up on news. You get a delay.</p>
<p>You ask someone for directions in the street. There are noisy roadworks in progress. You can't hear very well.</p>	<p>A friend calls you for directions to a café where you are meeting. Your phone battery is very low – talk fast!</p>
<p>You call a friend on his mobile to get information about an event. Your friend is out hiking and they keep breaking up.</p>	<p>You hear an announcement in a train station about a platform change, but it keeps coming and going. Discuss with a bystander what you heard.</p>
<p>You are on holiday abroad. You want to make a call, but reception is poor. Discuss with a friend where you can get signal.</p>	<p>You are talking with someone via the Internet. One of you has a faulty microphone so their voice keeps coming and going.</p>