

Telephoning 11: Leaving a Message on the Answering Machine

Practice 1 | Useful Expressions

Directions: Listen and repeat.

- **Leave a message after the beep.**
- **This is _____ speaking.**
- **This is _____ on the phone.**
- **Please press 1 for., press 2 for..**
- **at someone's earliest convenience** - as soon as possible for someone to do something (also a polite way of saying immediately)
- **grievance** - complaint
- **state the nature of a problem** - to say what kind of problem it is (e.g. technical, medical)
- **take note of somebody/something** - to give someone/something your attention
- **overload** - the state of putting a big demand on a computer, an electrical system, etc. causing it to fail
- **component** - one of the several parts of which something is made; parts of a computer

Practice 2 | Dialogue

Directions: Read the dialogue aloud with your teacher.

Scene 1: Phil Lafferty is trying to call his bank to discuss some matters.

He is greeted by the answering machine.

Answering Machine : Hello, you've reached Unibank Headquarters. Unfortunately, we are not available at this time as our offices are under general maintenance. **Please leave a message after the beep.** Thank you for calling Unibank Headquarters. Beep!

Phil Lafferty : Hi, this is Phil Lafferty speaking. I wanted to talk to you about a new special savings account I wanted to open. Please contact me **at your earliest convenience.**

Check your understanding: Answer the following questions.

1. Why were the Unibank Headquarters unavailable at that time?
2. Why did Phil Lafferty try to call?

Scene 2: A client is having some problems with the computers at work and he calls customer support to get some assistance regarding this.

Answering Robot : Hello, you have contacted Fix It PC Customer Support. **Please press 1 for hardware problems; press 2 for software problems; press 3 for other grievances.**

(The client presses button 1)

Answering Robot : You have pressed 1 for hardware problems. Please **state the nature of your problem** after you hear the beep. Beep!

Client : Hi, I seem to be having problems with several of my computers. We had a power **overload** in the building. I fear some of the **components** might be fried. I would like you to send a technician to come look at them.

Answering Robot : Thank you for explaining your situation to us. You will be contacted by one of our technicians shortly.

(After a moment.)

Technician Mike : Hi, I'm Mike and I've **taken note of your problem**. When would be the best time to come over?

Client : **At your earliest convenience**. I'm here until 7 P.M.

Technician Mike : Ok. Could you give me your address please?

Client : 347 Sparrow Avenue.

Technician Mike : Very well. I shall be there around 4 P.M. Thank you very much for your call.

Client : Thank you as well. I will be expecting you.

Check your understanding: Answer the following questions.

1. What problem did the client have?
2. When did the technician say he would arrive at the client's location?
3. What button did the client have to press for this problem?

Practice 3 | Role-Play

Directions: Have a role-play with your teacher in the following situation.

Situation

You are trying to call your business partner's office but no one answers. Leave a message on the answering machine.

Expressions:

- call me back when you get a chance
- earliest convenience
- this is ____ speaking
- cannot state the nature of the problem

Practice 4 | Discussion

Directions: Discuss these topics and exchange thoughts with your teacher.

1. Have you ever had to leave a message on an answering machine?
2. Do you have an answering machine or message on your mobile?
3. Have you ever been greeted by a robot answering machine while trying to contact customer support or some other place?
4. Do you think it is best to have a robot answering machine or should you be greeted directly by an actual person?
5. If you had an answering machine at home what would your message be?