

1 Answering the phone

A 1 How do you answer the phone? Tick what you do.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 greet the caller | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 say your department's name | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 say your name | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 say your telephone number | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 say your company's name | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 offer to help the caller | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Listen to four people answering the phone. Tick what they do in each call ...

Call 1: The person...

says her name says her company's name offers help

Call 2: The person ...

greet the caller says his name says his number

Call 3: The person ...

greet the caller says the name of her department says her name

Call 4: The person ...

says her company's name says her number offers help

B Read the article. Are these statements true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Many nationalities greet people differently on the phone than they do face-to-face. T / F
- 2 The Spanish are impolite. T / F
- 3 When an Italian meets you in the street he greets you with the words 'I'm ready'. T / F
- 4 At work, different nationalities use a similar approach to answering the phone. T / F

How many ways to say hello?

When two people meet in Tokyo they say *konnichiwa* which means *hello*. But if they answer the phone, they say *moshi moshi*. Japan isn't the only country to have its own special 'telephone language'. The Spanish say *hola* for *hello* but on the phone they answer *dígame*. Literally translated *dígame* means 'tell me' – but this sounds very rude in English. Similarly, if a caller heard the words: *I'm ready* in London or New York, they'd think this was very strange. They'd ask 'ready for what?'. But in Italy the word *pronto!* means exactly this.

The rules for answering the phone in the international workplace seem to be more universal. Phone a business number and the receptionist is likely to say the name of the company and answer more politely or formally. For example, in English you make the polite offer of help with *How can I help you?* But even this isn't quite as polite as the very formal Norwegian response: *vær so god* literally meaning 'be so good.'



C  **2 Underline the correct phrases in *italics* in this conversation.**

RECEPTION (1) *Ready/Hello*. Sales. (2) *Can I help you?/What do you want?*

RAY Yes. (3) *Give me/Can I speak to Vitale Marini*, please?

RECEPTION Certainly. One moment.

VITALE Hello. (4) *Thirty-three, ninety-two, seventeen./Three four nine, two one seven.*
Vitale Marini (5) *speaking/talking*.

RAY Hi Vitale. (6) *I am/It's Ray Graham* here.

VITALE Oh Ray. Nice to hear from you again. How are you?

Listen to the phone call and check your answers.

D  **3 Listen and repeat these telephone numbers.**

Note we say telephone numbers in groups of two or groups of three. For 0 say *zero* or *oh*. For 22 we can also say *double two*.

1 0708 567 8493

4 00 39 050 364 478


2 0770 336 3309

5 010 350 114 5794

3 00 44 207 657 7467

Write these phone numbers in the table and say them in English.

your home number	
your work number	
your mobile	
your office extension	
a colleague's number	
your manager's number	
your country's international dialling code	

E  **4 Read 1–3. What do you say?**

1 Ask to speak to Vitale Marini.

2 Greet Vitale and say your name.

3 Say how you are.

Listen and respond. Compare your response with the example after the tone.