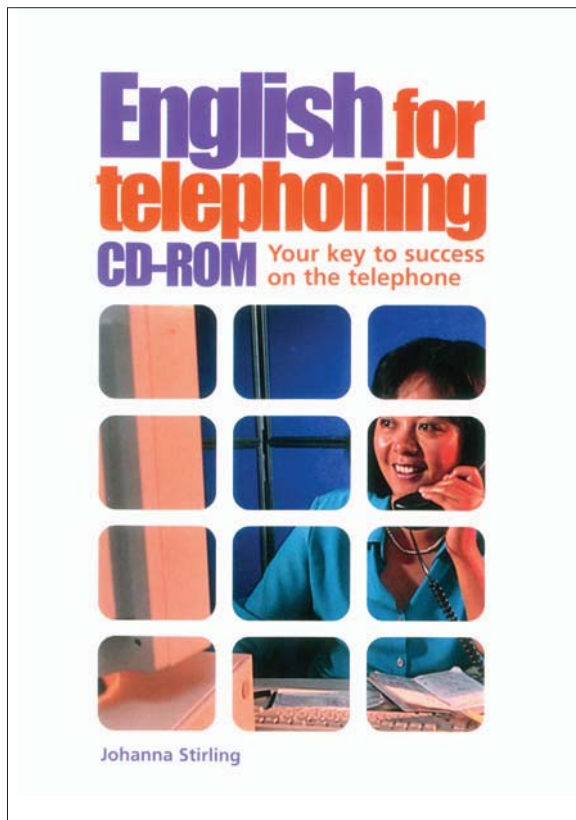


Telephoning in English with DELTA Publishing

Anna Pławecka

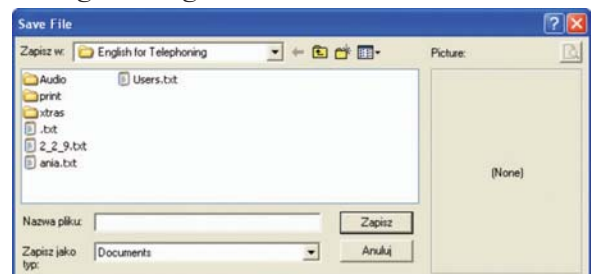


English for Telephoning CD-ROM by Johanna Stirling, designed and adapted by Bell International and published by DELTA Publishing (2004) is an interactive course for people who have to deal with telephoning in English in their work and everyday life. The cover of the CD-ROM informs that it is aimed at working professionals but it can be easily adapted by every EFL learner. Although the telephone conversations are bound by the subject of office work, they may be made a good use of in each EFL classroom. The ability to understand telephone English has become a requirement of the present time similarly as IT skills for teaching and learning English.

The software is very easy to use even for IT beginners. The user needs speakers or headphones in order to hear the abundance of listening comprehension exercises the CD-ROM contains. It installs automatically once it is put into your

CD-ROM drive. It is designed for a PC computer so unfortunately iMac users can't make use of it. Additionally, the inexperienced computer users are given a possibility to dispel their doubts connected with the functions the CD-ROM offers by the omnipresent *Help*.

In the section *How to use the CD* the user is at once given advice where to start work, which direction to go and that there is a possibility to use the glossary and note-taking facilities to make vocabulary, feedback and all the other notes while working. The moment the learner opens the programme, s/he is asked to type his/her full name, which signifies that a special file with his/her notes will be created and all the information s/he types will be saved in the folder created by the programme itself called *English for Telephoning* that is created as a default one among the Program Files.



The next section, called *Demonstration*, after clicking the button, opens a complete set of information how to do the particular exercises. Here is detailed advice referring to using the menus, doing an exercise, using the side tabs and navigation. The thing that is quite misleading here is the mouse cursor that is moving by itself indicating the particular elements of the menu. For a while the user may be worried that there is something wrong with his/her computer, as s/he is not moving the mouse and the cursor is moving. It lasts the while till s/he realizes it is not the cursor s/he has the control of but an additional one. Anyway, this cursor should be of a different shape or colour.

The last section devoted to information is called *System check* and here the user is informed that s/he can see this programme at its best resolution if s/he

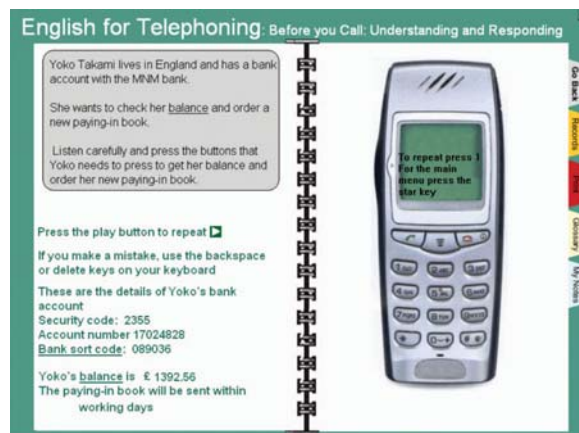
sets their screen Display to 800x600 (the notation in the programme is in its wrong sequence – 600x800 – which for an inexperienced IT user may be disastrous). It is an inconvenience because changing the settings of your computer while using a programme is not desired, especially when one wants to use several programmes together (for example the internet or dictionaries). This CD-ROM could contain an in-built function of automatic switching the resolution if it was really important. Again, it is just a trifle fault and can be neglected as it does not influence the quality of using the software for telephoning significantly.

Once you have got acquainted with the *Help* section, the big *Enter* button allows you to start the adventure with telephoning. The real exercises are just here: neatly ordered in a circle, particular elements of the menu connected with arrows. *Before you call*, *Making contact*, *Letters numbers and symbols*, *Checking and correcting*, *Telephone maze* can be entered at any order, anyway it is best to follow the suggested sequence taking advantage of the opportunity to come back to required exercises at any time. What is more, the *Help* section is available from the level of this menu.

While working on the exercises there is always a possibility to enter the side tabs that lead to the wonderful functions the programme contains. There are five functions, namely:

- *Records* – it helps you keep the complete track of your scores and the history of your use of the course
- *Print* – the user may print whichever exercise s/he wants
- *Glossary* – here all useful expressions and vocabulary are explained
- *My notes* – a simple edit box that allows the user to keep records of all s/he wants and that could be valid while using the software in the form of note-taking

The exercises themselves are of extremely varied type. For giving yourself time on the phone, taking messages, checking understanding and ending a call in the *Before you call* section there are many “drag&drop” tasks, jigsaw puzzles or finding key words in telephone messages. If you take the “Englishes” (Turkish, Romanian and other accents) presented in real life listening comprehension exercises, the programme appears to be an invaluable teaching aid. Probably the most interesting task here is the one with checking the bank balance with the possibility of clicking the buttons of a picture of a mobile phone.



For preparing your call, writing down contact details, getting connected, leaving a message, getting through, finishing the call, being polite and next follow-up contact (responding correctly, calling back, making and changing arrangements) in the *Making contact* section there are many spelling exercises (very challenging – e.g. taking down names – sometimes it can even be too difficult, but necessary), selecting questions that can be asked by the interlocutor, putting the phone conversations in its correct order. Here is a very good idea of correcting mistakes exercise: it is said that the firm representative is tired and she is making mistakes that should be corrected by the programme user. There are also tasks which require the register switch: from being rude to politeness. One thing that may be a bit discouraging is the fact that when the user writes a wrong answer, there is only a notice that it is “incorrect” but the programme does not give the correct answer immediately.

In the *Letters, Numbers and Symbols* section there is a very good idea of teaching the learners how to read ones. In this group there are prices, numbers and others. This function may be used in general English classroom equally effectively. In further sections there are also varied and interesting tasks devoted to teaching appropriate intonation, note-taking while telephoning, correcting mistakes by the interlocutors while speaking (for example while making a hotel booking). The last section *The telephone maze* joins in itself all the acquired telephone skills while using the DELTA software. When the user wants to quit the programme, s/he is informed that all s/he wants has been saved in a file called with his/her name.txt.

English for Telephoning CD-ROM may easily be considered a great success: being easy to use, full of ideas and varied tasks, inexperienced user-friendly, fills in the space on the multimedia ELT market.