

UNIT 3

Receiving calls

IN THIS UNIT, YOU:

- learn useful phrases for gaining time, checking and clarifying information
- practise using 'fillers' such as *well* or *hm*
- think about how words are grouped and stressed
- practise giving numbers.

Context 1 Cut out the cards on page 45 and place them face down on the table. Turn each card over one by one and respond to the questions on them. Which questions did you need to think about?

2 Read this extract from a book on effective telephoning. Do you agree with what it says?

Receiving a telephone call is very different to making one. When someone else calls you, you don't know what the conversation is going to be about. It could be an enquiry, a complaint or a social call. You might also be in the middle of doing something when the telephone rings, so you will need a few moments to switch your thoughts. However, you can help yourself by gaining time to think and checking that what you have understood is correct. This means 'correct' not only in terms of the language (if the phone call is not in your native language), but also in terms of what the caller actually meant.

Presentation



1 **3.1** Listen to Werner Bader, General Manager in Germany for Eatwell, a chain of restaurants, receiving a telephone call from Louise Giles, Sales Director for Eatwell at the US head office. Number the following items in the order that you hear them mentioned.

- a Louise checks she heard the sales figures correctly.
- b Werner explains why he doesn't have some information.
- c Louise explains the purpose of her call.
- d Werner warns Louise he may not have all the information she needs.
- e Werner gains time to think how sales compare with last year.
- f Werner checks the board meeting is next week.

Tip If you want to practise saying figures, use the worksheet on page 46.

Gaining time 2 **3.1** Listen again. Tick the phrases listed below that you hear.

- 1 Let me just think.
- 2 I'm sorry, I can't say right now.
- 3 I'll have to get back to you on that.
- 4 I'm not the best person to answer that.
- 5 I'd rather not say.
- 6 I'll need to work it out and let you know.
- 7 Can I put it in an e-mail?
- 8 Er, well, I don't really know.
- 9 Hm, good question ...
- 10 Just a moment ...

3 **3.2** Listen to these phrases. Notice how the speaker groups some of the words into 'chunks' and runs the sounds on. This makes the phrases sound fluent. Divide the phrases into chunks. Check your answers on page 55 in the answer key, then repeat the sentences, imitating the pronunciation patterns you hear.

Example Let me just / think.

- 1 I'm sorry, I can't say right now.
- 2 I'll have to get back to you on that.
- 3 I'm not the best person to answer that.
- 4 I'd rather not say.
- 5 I'll need to work it out and let you know.
- 6 Can I put it in an e-mail?
- 7 Er, well, I don't really know.
- 8 Hm, good question ...
- 9 Just a moment ...

Tip If you can't remember the phrases above, try using some 'fillers'. These are short words and sounds that native speakers often use to gain time when speaking. Some examples are: *er...*, *well ...*, *hm ...*

Checking and clarifying 4 **3.1** The following phrases, which can be used to check and clarify information you may receive, are incomplete. Complete them using the words in the box. Then listen to Werner Bader's telephone call with Louise again to check your answers.

which say I didn't did you seventeen

- 1 _____ say that the meeting was next week?
- 2 Excuse me, _____ catch that.
- 3 Did you _____ 'three hundred and seventy' or '_____ '?
- 4 Excuse me, south-west and _____ region?

Tip You can also 'echo' any information you hear, which allows the speaker to correct you if you misheard. Notice how Louise echoes Werner about €16,000. He doesn't correct her, so she can assume she heard correctly.