

Teleconferences – Pausing

Discussion

What do you do when you can't answer a question?

Listening

A: We want to finish preparing this project by the end of February so we can start it in April. Bob? One question. When will we know the total cost of the project?

B: Do you know? Is that next week? Maybe the week after? What should I tell them? Can we say right now or maybe later?

A: Bob? Are you there?

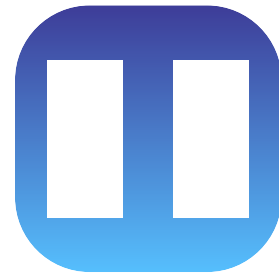
B: Ah. Yes. Sorry. I'm here.

A: Do you need a minute?

B: Yes. Actually, I don't have the information here right now. Can I have a minute to check?

A: Sure. Go ahead.

While Bob is checking on that, are there any other questions?



Taking Breaks

Reason	Statement
I don't have <i>the information</i> here right now.	I should speak with <i>my manager</i> .
We don't have <i>the exact date</i> yet.	I have to discuss it with <i>my team member</i> .
Sorry, I'm not sure <i>of the amount</i> .	I'll need <i>some time</i> to check.

Asking	Offering
Can I have <i>a moment</i> to ask my boss?	<i>Bob</i> , do you need <i>a minute</i> ?
Let me take <i>a short break</i> to check.	Would you like <i>some time</i> to ask someone?
If I can have <i>a minute</i> , I'll find out.	Why don't you take <i>a moment</i> ?

Practice

Practice with classmates. Take turns asking for and offering short breaks.



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Discussion

If you need time to answer a tough question during a call, what do you do?

Listening

A: As you know, we're going live on April first, which means we really need to be prepped and ready to go by the end of February so we can do testing in March. Bob? One question. When will we have the final numbers regarding the total cost of the project?

B: Do you know? Isn't that next week? What should I tell them? Can we say right now or should we hold off?

A: Bob? Are you still with us?

B: Ah. Yes Adam. Sorry. I'm still here.

A: Would it help to take a short break?

B: Yes. Actually, I don't have the information in front of me at the moment and I don't want to give you the wrong information. If I can have a moment, I'll double check.

A: Sure. Go ahead. While Bob's checking on that, are there any other questions?



Taking an Aside

Reason	Statement
I don't have <i>the information</i> in front of me.	I should check with <i>my manager</i> .
We haven't set <i>the exact date</i> yet.	I have to go over it with <i>my team member</i> .
Sorry, I'm not exactly sure <i>of the amount</i> .	I'll need <i>a moment or two</i> to check.

Asking	Offering
Do you mind if I take <i>a moment</i> to check?	<i>Bob</i> , do you need to take <i>a minute</i> ?
I'll need to take <i>a short break</i> to confirm that.	Would it help to take <i>some time</i> to check?
If I can have <i>a moment</i> , I'll double check.	Why don't you take <i>a little time</i> to check?

Practice

Practice with classmates. Take turns asking for and offering short breaks.



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General Lesson Plan

Topical warm-up conversation

- How do you handle difficult questions during a call?
- Do you ever need to take a break during a call?

5 min

Needs analysis / Feedback

Teacher notes down key patterns / phrases from the students' speaking and gives brief error correction, drill, or pattern reinforcement.

Thinking

In a one-on-one discussion, in pairs, or small groups, have students think of strategies or language to handle situations similar to what they'll find in the sample conversation.

5 - 10 min

Possible reasons

- need to retrieve some data, need to confirm with someone, need to move to a quieter location, need to solve a technical issue

Listening

Listen to the conversation. Students write down what they hear.

5 - 10 min

How did the speakers handle the problems they encountered?

Reading

Check the meaning of the conversation. It's not important to understand the whole thing. Make sure students understand the key phrases listed below the conversation.

5 - 10 min

Practice

Have students practice handling the issues encountered using the coping strategies outlined in the worksheet.

5 - 10 min

Helpful hint:

This lesson grew out of a request from the trouble shooting worksheet. It can be used rather well as an introduction or a follow-up to that task.