

Teleconferences – Troubleshooting

Discussion

What problems do you have in conference calls or teleconferences?

Listening

- A:** Ok. Let's get started. We have some non-native English speakers here today. So, please speak clearly and not too fast. Bob, why don't you start?
- B:** ThankSH Adam. **LET'SH SHTART** with a look at our **SHALES** num**BERSH** from **LASHT SHU**mmer.
- A:** Sorry, Bob? I didn't catch that. Can you back off the mic?
- B:** Sure. How's this? Is this ok?
- A:** That's good.
- B:** Great. Well, let's look at our sales num...
- D:** **WOOF! WOOF!** Get out of here! Max! Sit down!
- A:** Hold on, Bob. Sorry. Is that a dog?!
- D:** Yeah. Sorry. He just ran in here.
- A:** Everyone, when you're not talking, please mute your mics. Thanks. Go ahead, Bob.



Speaking Issues

Speed	Repeating
Sorry, I missed that.	Sorry, I didn't catch that.
Can you say that more slowly?	Can you say that again, please?
Do you mind slowing down a little?	Do you mind repeating that, please?

Technical Issues

Mic Problems	Noisy Background	Picture Problems
Sorry, can you back off the mic?	When you're not talking,	Sorry, the picture is frozen.
Can you check your mic?	- please mute your mic. - please be quiet.	Sorry, we can't see you.

Practice

Practice with classmates. Take turns handling the issues above.



Teleconferences – Troubleshooting

Discussion

What kinds of problems can occur in conference calls or teleconferences?

Listening

- A:** Ok. Let's get started. We have some non-native English speakers with us today. So, try to keep that in mind and speak as clearly as possible and not too fast. Thanks. Bob, why don't you start us off?
- B:** ThankSH Adam. **LET'SH SHTART** with a look at our **SHALES** num**BERSH** from **LASHT SHU**mmer.
- A:** Sorry, Bob? I couldn't catch that. Can you back off the mic just a little bit?
- B:** Sure. How's this? Can you hear me ok?
- A:** Much better. Sorry for that.
- B:** Not a problem. Well, let's take a look at our sales num...
- D:** **WOOF! WOOF!** Get out of here! Max! Sit down!
- A:** Hold on, Bob, sorry. Does someone have a dog with them?!
- D:** Dave here. That's me. My apologies. He just sort of ran in here.
- A:** Everyone, if you aren't talking, can you please mute your mics. Thanks. Go ahead, Bob.



Clarifying

Sorry, I missed that.	Sorry, I didn't catch that.
Can I ask you to slow down a little?	Can you say that again, please?
Could you say that a bit more slowly please?	What do you mean when you say...?
Would you mind slowing down just a little?	Would you mind rephrasing that?

Technical Issues

Sound Issues	Noisy Background	Picture Issues
Sorry, can you back off the mic just a bit?	If you're not talking, ...	Sorry, your picture has frozen.
Can you check your mic? The sound keeps cutting out.	- can you mute your mic? - make sure to mute your mic.	Sorry, we can't see you here. Sorry, you're off camera.

Practice

Practice with classmates. Take turns handling the issues above.



Teleconferences – Troubleshooting

General Lesson Plan

Topical warm-up conversation

- What kinds of problems can arise in teleconferences?

Needs analysis / Feedback

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

5 min

Thinking

In a one-on-one discussion, in pairs, or small groups, have students think of strategies to handle each of the problems they listed in the warm-up conversation.

Possible answers

- connection issues
- not understanding native speakers' English
- people talking over one another
- people joining a meeting late
- audio / picture issues such as one side can't hear / background noise / no picture

5 - 10 min

Listening

Listen to the conversation. Students write down what they hear. How did the speakers handle the problems they encountered?

5 - 10 min

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:

Some problems simply can't be fixed right away. Keeping a cool head and showing a *willingness* to handle the issues is often just as effective as actually handling the issue itself.