

Phoning in sick

Topic: Employability

Level: SfL Entry 1 / SQA National 2 / CEFR A1

Time: 90 mins

Aims

- To develop learners' gist and detailed listening skills listening to a phone call
- To practise the language needed to phone a manager to report in sick
- To build learner's confidence with simple form-filling.

Introduction

This lesson is based around employability and deals with the language needed to phone an employer to report in sick. This is followed by some work on form-filling in the context of completing a self-certification form. There is some vocabulary work around the kinds of illnesses which might prevent you from going to work, but this is not the primary focus of the session.

You will need:

Worksheet 1 (image of sick employee): 1 copy to display either on paper or via data projector

Audio 1

Worksheet 2 (detailed listening): 1 per learner

Worksheet 3 (dialogue): 1 copy per pair, cut up

Glue (optional)

Copies of the audio transcripts (optional)

Highlighters: 1 per learner

Worksheet 4 (ailments): 1 per learner and 1 copy displayed via data projector, plus 1 or 2 copies cut into pictures – 1 picture for each learner

Worksheet 5 (receptionist cards for role-play): 1 card each for half the class (there are 10 cards on each sheet)

Worksheet 6 (self-cert form): 1 per learner

Audio 2

Worksheet 7 (alternative for **Task 5**): 1 for each learner doing the alternative task.

Procedure

Lead-in / Gist listening (10 mins)

- Show the picture from **Worksheet 1** and elicit what it shows (a lady with a headache making a phone call).
- Elicit who she might be calling and write learners' suggestions on the board (could be the doctor, hospital, a friend, her manager etc.).
- Tell the learners that they are going to hear the phone call and ask them to listen and find out who the lady is calling.
- Play **Audio 1** once and elicit the answer from the group. If it helps, go through the list on the board ticking or crossing each suggestion.

Task 1 – Detailed listening (15 mins)

- Hand out **Worksheet 2** and draw learners' attention to **Task 1a**.
- Ask learners to read through the list in pairs and tick the correct information.
- Play **Audio 1** again for the learners to check / amend their answers.
- Check answers as a class, playing extracts of the audio again as needed.
- Ask pairs to complete **Task 1b**.
- Play **Audio 1** again for them to check together before checking as a class.
- Ask pairs to complete **Task 1c** then check as a class.

Differentiation

Pair weaker learners together and allow them to use the transcript of the audio for extra support. As an extension task, stronger learners can practise the questions with one learner giving the alternative form from **Task 1c** and their partner trying to remember the question from **Task 1b**.

Task 2 – Language (15 mins)

- Hand out the cut up dialogue from **Worksheet 3** and ask pairs to put it in order. Explain that **R** is the receptionist and **F** is Florence.
- Play **Audio 1** again, pausing if necessary, for them to check.
- Learners could stick their dialogues onto a piece of paper or into their notebooks so they have a copy to take home, or you could give them a copy of the transcript.
- Once learners have completed the task, hand out the highlighters and ask the learners to highlight:
 1. The sentence where Florence gives her name
 2. The sentence where she says why she's calling
 3. The sentence where she says what the matter is.
- If possible, display the transcript on the whiteboard and highlight the phrases Florence uses. Alternatively write them on the board.
- Draw learners' attention to the fact that when we say who we are on the phone we usually use 'This is...' (some learners might want to say 'I'm...').
- Quickly drill the phrase round the class with learners saying: 'Hello. This is...' and giving their own name.
- Focus on the second sentence and model the pronunciation and intonation for learners to repeat.
- Hide one word at a time, asking learners to say the sentence each time, until the whole sentence is hidden and they are saying it from memory.

Differentiation:

- Pair weaker learners together and allow them to refer to a copy of the transcript.

Task 3 – Ailments (10 mins)

- Focus on the third sentence identified in **Task 2** and draw learners' attention to how we say 'I've got a...' with 'headache' and 'I feel..' with sick.
- Display **Worksheet 4** and / or hand out copies with the words at the bottom hidden.
- Explain that the pictures represent other illnesses people might have and ask the learners to discuss in pairs what they think the problem is.
- Use the displayed copy to elicit the ailments represented by the pictures and drill the pronunciation.
- Tell learners to match the words at the bottom with the pictures.

Differentiation:

- With a weaker group drill individual words. With a stronger group drill the whole sentence with 'I've got a ...' With a mixed group you could ask the stronger learners to give you the whole sentence.

Extension:

- Ask pairs to test each other with one learner looking at just the pictures and their partner looking at the words as well.

Task 4 – Role-play (15 mins)

- Put the learners into pairs and assign each person either the role of employee or receptionist.
- Give each receptionist a role card from **Worksheet 5** and ask them to read and practise the questions, modelling the pronunciation if necessary.
- Give each employee a picture from **Worksheet 4** and explain this is their illness, but they need to think about when they can come back to work. If you don't think your learners can invent a manager's name, give them a manager's name as well.
- Allow pairs a few minutes' individual preparation time then ask them to practise the role-play, sitting back to back.
- Ask pairs to practise the role-play again, swapping roles. You could give the new employees a different ailment to ring in about.

Differentiation:

- Ask stronger learners to practise the dialogue without the card prompts.
- With some strong learners you could take the role of receptionist yourself and ask more challenging questions.
- Some learners might enjoy performing their role-play in front of the class.

Task 5 – Self certification form (15 mins)

- Ask learners to focus on the sentence from the dialogue: *If it's less than 7 days we don't need a fit note from the doctor. You just need to fill in a form when you come back.*
- Elicit what a Fit Note is (a letter from the doctor to say you can / can't work).
- Tell the group that Florence does go back to work the day after tomorrow and ask whether she needs to bring a fit note (no) and what she does need to do (fill in a form).
- Hand out **Worksheet 6** and explain that this is her form, but there are five mistakes.
- Ask learners to listen to Florence talking to her manager, and correct the mistakes.
- Play **Audio 2**.
- Ask learners to check in pairs and then as a class.

Differentiation

- Pair weaker learners together and allow them to use the transcript of **Audio 2**.
- Pair stronger learners together and ask them to complete the blank form on **Worksheet 7** instead of doing **Worksheet 6**.

Cooler – Class discussion (10 mins)

- Lead a class discussion about learners' own experiences of sickness reporting, either in a job or phoning college. Do not worry about accuracy but allow learners to share their experiences using whatever language they have available. Questions you could ask are:
 - What happens if you are sick where you work?
 - Do you have any problems phoning your manager to say you are sick?
 - What do you do when you come back to work?

Extension activities / Homework

- Next time learners miss class due to sickness you could ask them to fill in a self-cert form for themselves when they return.
- Learners could record themselves performing the role-play and listen for errors before recording it again.

Audio 1 Transcript

Receptionist: Good morning. NECompany, how can I help you?

Florence: Hello. This is Florence Makumbo. I'm sorry. I'm not feeling very well. I can't come to work today.

Receptionist: OK Florence. Just let me take a few details. First, can you spell your surname, please?

Florence: Yes. It's Makumbo. M – A – K – U – M – B – O.

Receptionist: OK. Who is your manager?

Florence: Mark Smith.

Receptionist: OK. What's the matter?

Florence: I've got a headache and I feel sick.

Receptionist: When can you come back to work?

Florence: I'm not sure. Not tomorrow. Probably the day after tomorrow.

Receptionist: OK Florence. If it's less than 7 days we don't need a Fit Note from the doctor. You just need to fill in a form when you come back.

Florence: OK.

Receptionist: I'll let Mark know you can't come in today. Take care of yourself.

Florence: Thank you. Bye.

Receptionist: Bye.

Audio 2 Transcript

Manager: Hello Florence. I'm glad you're feeling better. We need to fill in your Self-Certification Form so I need some information.

Florence: OK.

Manager: First name...

Florence: Florence: F-L-O-R-E-N-C-E.

Manager: And your surname is...

Florence: Makumbo: M-A-K-U-M-B-O.

Manager: And is that Mrs...Miss...?

Florence: It's Ms.

Manager: Do you know your payroll number?

Florence: Just a minute. Yes, it's 654321.

Manager: And what was the matter?

Florence: A headache and sickness.

Manager: And this started...

Florence: Two days ago. The 9th of December.

Manager: And you're back at work today, the 11th of December.

Florence: That's right. I was sick yesterday but I feel OK today.

Manager: Thank you. If you could just sign here...

Answers**Task 1a**

The receptionist asks for: 2, 5, 7, 9.

Task 1b

1. Can you spell your surname, please?
2. Who is your manager?
3. What's the matter?
4. When can you come back to work?

Task 1c

- a) 3 b) 2 c) 4 d) 1

Task 4

(pictures from left to right) 6, 7, 2, 9, 1, 5, 3, 4, 8.

Nb The difference between a cold and 'flu will probably need explaining

Task 5

1. Makumbo is spelt incorrectly.
2. Florence is **Ms** not **Mrs**.
3. Florence's payroll number is 654321, not 655321.
4. Florence had a headache, not a stomach ache.
5. Florence returned to work on the 11th of December, not the 12th.