

## 2.4 Speaking Dealing with problems by telephone

**Giving instructions**

**1** With a partner, practise giving instructions by describing a symbol so that your partner can draw it. Do not look at each other's pages during the exercise.

Student A: turn to page 111.

Student B: turn to page 115.

**Listening**

**2** 1:24 Listen to a software helpline conversation and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the customer's problem?
- 2 What help does the operator give?

**3** Listen again and find expressions that mean the same as:

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1 I'm just putting you on hold for a moment.   | 7 I'll connect you to ...         |
| 2 This is Dean.                                | 8 The line's engaged.             |
| 3 What can I do for you?                       | 9 Can I get her to call you back? |
| 4 Could you explain the problem you're having? | 10 So, your number is ...         |
| 5 The line's bad.                              | 11 What's your name please?       |
| 6 Can you talk a bit louder?                   | 12 You're welcome.                |

**Improving a conversation**

**4** With a partner, read this conversation aloud.

Helpline: Superword helpline, wait a minute ... Yeah? What's your problem?

Customer: I'm having trouble with PDF files. I can't print them.

Helpline: What? I can't hear you.

Customer: I said I can't print PDF files.

Helpline: Oh, I don't do PDFs.

Customer: Well, could you connect me to someone who does?

Helpline: Can't. The PDF expert's gone out for lunch. Give me your name and we'll call you later.

Customer: Oh, all right. It's Gearhirt. Jamila Gearhirt.

Helpline: Er, come again?

Customer: That's G-E-A-R-H-I-R-T.

Helpline: OK.

Customer: All right. Well, I'd appreciate it if you could call me as soon as possible. Goodbye.

Helpline: Yeah, right.

- 1 Decide how the conversation could be improved.
- 2 Practise your improved version.
- 3 Now change roles, turn to page 110 and do the same with a similar conversation.

**Handling problems**

**5** 1:25 Listen to another helpline conversation, which is based on a true story, and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the customer's problem?
- 2 What is the operator's solution?

### Internet research

Go to the BBC World Service Radio Player (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/index.shtml>) and find a radio programme about one of your interests. Listen extensively, then tell a partner about the three most interesting points in the programme.

6 Listen again and complete the expressions.

**A Explaining the problem**

I'm having \_\_\_\_\_ with WordPerfect.  
It doesn't \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ accept anything when I type.  
Nothing \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ type anything.

**B Diagnosing the causes**

Was it \_\_\_\_\_ before that?  
What does your screen \_\_\_\_\_ now?  
Have you \_\_\_\_\_ 'Escape'?  
\_\_\_\_\_ quit WordPerfect?  
\_\_\_\_\_ move the cursor around?  
\_\_\_\_\_ a power indicator?

**C Giving instructions**

\_\_\_\_\_ on the back of the monitor?  
Now \_\_\_\_\_ follow the cord to the plug.  
\_\_\_\_\_ look back there again.  
\_\_\_\_\_ go and get them.  
Then \_\_\_\_\_ take it back to the store.

**D Promising help**

\_\_\_\_\_ the electricity company.

7 Decide in which category in 6 (A, B, C or D) the following expressions belong.

- Have you installed any new software?
- I'll get our technical expert to help you.
- I'm having difficulty connecting to the Internet.
- It keeps crashing.
- You'll have to adjust the settings in the control panel.
- We'll get back to you in a couple of hours.
- What happens if you press 'Control' - 'Alt' - 'Delete'?
- I'll have a technician call as soon as possible.

### Pronunciation

8 1:26 Listen to these questions from 5.

- 1 Note whether the intonation goes up (↗) or down (↘) at the end of the question.
  - a) What does your screen look like now?
  - b) What's a toolbar?
  - c) Did you quit WordPerfect?
  - d) Does your monitor have a power indicator?
  - e) Can you see the toolbar on the screen?
  - f) What do I tell them?

2 With a partner, practise reading questions a)–f) above with appropriate intonation.

### Roleplay

9 With a partner, use the chart to roleplay helping a colleague with the technical problems below. Take turns being Student A and Student B.

- You can't print your report.
- Your mobile phone doesn't work.
- The video projector doesn't work.
- There are no lights in your office.
- Your car won't start.
- Your laptop is frozen.
- (your own problem)

**Student A**

Explain the problem.

Answer Student B's questions.

Problem solved?

Yes.

No.

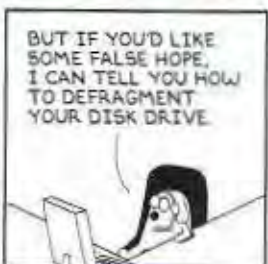
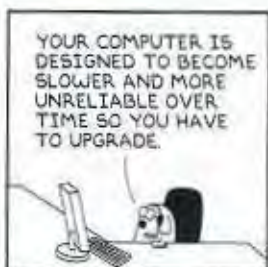
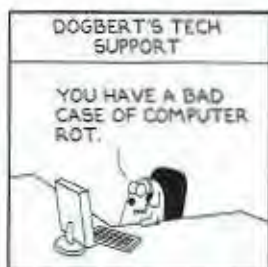
Thank Student B.

**Student B**

Diagnose possible causes.

Give instructions.

Promise help.



Cartoon from Dilbert.com 28/5/95