

Finish with the same plan

DC1 | B1-B2 | Adults and older teens | Original fictional calls

A caller is unhappy. What do they need now? Read the calls with a partner. Then explain what is agreed and what is still unknown.

1. A customer calls about a delivery

Caller: Only four of our ten workshop packs arrived. This is frustrating.

Staff: I'm sorry about that. How many do you need today, and when?

Caller: Six in total by four this afternoon. Can you deliver the rest today?

Staff: I can't confirm that yet. I can update you by one. We have two packs you can borrow. Could someone collect them at two and return them by Friday at five?

Caller: I can. So I'll collect two at two o'clock, return them Friday by five, and wait for your one o'clock update. That gives me six for four.

Staff: Exactly. The update is about delivery; it is not a delivery promise.

2. A colleague calls about printing

Caller: We requested sixty copies. Are they ready?

Print colleague: Twenty-four are ready. The printer has stopped. When do you need them?

Caller: Twenty-four for one today. The other thirty-six are for tomorrow at eight.

Print colleague: You can collect twenty-four at twelve. The engineer will check the printer at two. I'll update you by two fifteen, but I can't confirm when the rest will be ready.

Caller: Right: I collect twenty-four at twelve and get your update by two fifteen about the other thirty-six.

3. Check what you understood

In each call, find:

1. The number needed today and the deadline.
2. What is confirmed, and who will do it.
3. The update time and what is still unknown.

In call 1, will the missing delivery definitely arrive by one? Explain.

Practise the last two turns of one call. Then cover them and say the plan.

4. Choose phrases for your own call

Find the need: How many do you need today? By what time?

Check: Do you mean ... in total? Could you say that again?

Recognise the problem: I'm sorry that happened.

Explain: I can confirm ... / I can't confirm ... yet.

Offer: What I can offer is ... Would that work?

Close: So you'll ... and I'll ... Is that right?

Workshop packs: sets of printed materials. **Borrow:** use something and return it. **Update:** new information, which may still include an unknown answer.