



Employment

Taking a message

This topic will show students how to take and relay a message correctly.

This topic is made up of two parts. You can present them one at a time or follow on depending on the needs of your students and the time you have available.

## Learning Intentions

When students have finished this topic, they will be able to:

- Respond to the person wanting to leave a message appropriately
- Take a message correctly
- Relay the message

They will learn these skills by:

- Reading a comic book or watching a motion comic
- Watching a video
- Role play
- Completing a worksheet

	What the students will do	What you will need before you start
Part 1 'Why is it important to take a message?'	Class activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copies of comic book or computers and the internet to watch the Taking messages motion comic</li><li>• Butchers paper, whiteboard or a Smartboard.</li></ul>
Part 2 'How do you take a message?'	Video, role play and worksheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Computer to show video on OR TV with a DVD player</li><li>• Message taking technique video</li><li>• Role play profile cards</li><li>• Optional: dress up materials for students when doing role play</li><li>• Copies of the Taking Messages worksheet for each student</li></ul>

## Word list:

**Message** = when you write down or tell someone who has come by when you were out, what they wanted to tell you and what their contact details are.

**Contact details** = phone number, address, email address or other means to contact someone.

## Part 1: Why is it important to take a message?

### Objective – What do we want the students to know?

Students will find out about the importance of taking messages

### Overview – How will they learn this?

Students can will either read the Taking Messages comic or work through the Taking Messages online scenario. They will then discuss as a class what impact not taking messages can have on people

### Resources – What will I need?

- Butcher's paper, whiteboard or Smartboard
- Copies of the comic or computers to watch the Taking messages motion comic

### Lesson plan – What do I need to do?

1. Introduce students to today's lesson:  
What: the importance of taking messages.  
How: read a comic or work through a scenario, then have a class discussion  
Why: understanding the consequences of not taking a message helps students to remember to do it properly when needed. Also useful in workplace.
2. Explain the 'when' and 'how' of message taking:  
We use this when someone is busy or out of the school or workplace.  
People can leave messages by phone  
People can 'drop in' and leave a message  
People can pass on messages
3. Tell students that they are going to watch or read the comic and that they need to think about why taking messages is important as they read/watch.

4. Watch or read the comic. This can be done as a class, in groups or individually.
5. As a group, discuss what went wrong and what could have happened if Richard had passed the message on in time.
6. Summarise: taking messages is important, as the person wanting to leave the message is trusting you to pass on the information.

## Part 2: How to do you take a message?

### Objective – What do we want the students to know?

Students will develop skills in answering the phone and taking messages

### Overview – How will they learn this?

Students will watch a video outlining the correct phone answering and message taking procedures. They will then do some role playing (as a class or in small groups) and practise the techniques outlined in the video.

### Resources – What will I need?

- Computer to show video on OR TV with a DVD player
- Message taking technique video
- Role play profile cards
- Optional: dress up materials for students when doing role play
- Copies of the Taking Messages worksheet for each student

### Lesson plan – What do I need to do?

1. Introduce students to today's lesson:  
What: the right way to answer a phone and take a message in a formal setting.  
How: watch a video, then practise taking messages in a role play  
Why: a good skill for using in the classroom and in workplace
2. Introduce what a formal setting means: in the classroom or at work, where you are likely to speak with people who aren't friends or family.
3. Ask students to take notes on the provided sheet that outline how to take messages. Watch the video. Make sure they:  
Think about the main words people use when they write messages.  
Think about how the written message makes it easy or hard to contact the person who left the message.

Think about the ‘follow up’. We need to make sure that the person got the message. ‘Did you get your message?’

4. Collect student input about message taking. Create a list of class ideas about taking messages to stick on the wall. You could ask students to come up with a greeting to be used by your organisation. For example, “Hi, (insert organisation name), (insert student name) speaking.”
5. Once everyone is clear on the rules, do some role play to practise. This can be done in pairs, or as a whole class, with volunteers acting as callers/visitors or message takers. Give the callers their profile cards. This tells them who they are pretending to be and what message they want to leave. The profiles are deliberately pretty silly, hopefully letting students have a bit of fun pretending to be difficult callers and making the message taker focus on using the right technique under a bit of pressure.
6. End the lesson with each of the students completing the short Taking Messages worksheet

You can also ask them to:

- Practice writing small – so you can fit the words onto a Post-It note or message pad
- Practice writing numbers quickly so the phone numbers you take down are right.
- Remember the 5 Ws
  - Who – who called?
  - What – what do they want you to do?
  - When – when did they call?
  - Where – where are they from?
  - Why – why did they call?
- Practice answering the phone
- Talk about taking messages with your mentor/classmates.
  - What information do they write down first?
  - What information do they write down next?
  - What do they leave out?
  - What questions do they ask the person who is calling?  
E.g. ‘Would you repeat that please?’

Name	Time	Message	Contact Number
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7. Summary: it's important to use a clear and polite communication technique when talking on the phone and taking a message.