

## Dealing with Requests and Enquiries- Line-by-line Brainstorming

### Dialogue 1: Face to face enquiry

*Cover everything except the first line of the dialogue below. Read what you can see and work together to think of all possible answers to that phrase. Discuss which is the most likely of those replies, then reveal just the response on the one line below. Do the same with responses to that line, then repeat the same activity one line at a time until you reach the end of the dialogue.*

Staff: Good morning. Can I help you?  
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Enquirer: I hope so. I need some information about space for club activities.  
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Staff: I should be able to help. What exactly do you need to know?  
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Enquirer: I was wondering how I should book a room for our society.  
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Staff: Can I check what you mean by "society"?  
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Enquirer: I'm sorry, I don't really understand the question.  
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Staff: I'd like to know if you mean an official university society or a more informal club.  
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Enquirer: Oh, I see what you mean. It's not an official club yet. We're just a few people who get together to chat in German.  
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Staff: In that case, you need to use the online reservation system.  
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Enquirer: I thought that might be the case. Could you possibly tell me the address of the page that I need to go to?  
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Staff: Of course. Just a moment and I'll find it for you.  
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Enquirer: Thanks.  
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Staff: Okay, nearly got it. Just a second. Right, here it is. It's <http://grrm.keio.ac.jp/j349> .

Enquirer: Sorry, could you write that down for me?  
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Staff: Sure. Just a sec while I find a pen and some paper.  
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Enquirer: Okay. Thanks.  
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Staff: Got it. I'll just write it down. Done. Here you are.  
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Enquirer: Thanks a lot.  
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Staff: Is there anything else that I can help you with today?  
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Enquirer: There is just one more thing, actually. Can you tell me how we can register as an official university club?  
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Staff: I'm sorry but I'm not sure what the process is. I'm afraid we don't deal with that here. You need to go to the student affairs department.  
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Enquirer: Oh, okay. Do you mean the office of the fourth floor?  
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Staff: Yes, that's right.  
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Enquirer: Okay, I'll go right there now then. Thanks for all your help.  
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Staff: You're very welcome. Please come again any time if you have any problems with the online booking system.  
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Enquirer: Thanks, I will. See you again, then. Bye.  
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Staff: Have a good day. Goodbye.

*Perhaps after changing partners, go through the dialogue again and discuss what other phrases could be said in those places.*

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**Dialogue 2: Telephone enquiry**

*Do the same things with the dialogue below, this time for a telephone call with enquiries.*

Staff: Good afternoon. Keio University Library. Media Section. Alex Case speaking. How can I help you?

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Enquirer: Good afternoon. Can I speak to the person in charge of ordering new publications, please?

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Staff: That's Mr Kaneko. Please hold the line and I'll check if he's available.

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Enquirer: Okay, thanks.

-----  
Staff: Hello?

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Enquirer: Yes?

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Staff: I'm afraid Mr Kaneko is abroad this week. Can I help you at all? What is it concerning?

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Enquirer: It's about one of the journals which we regularly refer to. It's recently been bought by a different publisher, so we'll need a new, separate subscription if we want to continue reading it.

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Staff: That sounds like it might be possible, but unfortunately Mr Kaneko will have to make the decision. If you can give me the details, I'll make sure he gets your message as soon as he gets back.

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Enquirer: Okay. The publication is the Belgian Journal of Deep Shaft Mining. It's now published by PMT PLC.

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Staff: Sorry, I didn't quite catch the first word. Can you spell it for me?

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Enquirer: Sure. It's "Belgian". B, E, L, G, I, A, N.

-----  
Staff: Okay, got it. Could you also let me know your name and department?

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Enquirer: Of course. My name is Alan Dupont and I'm head of Geological Sciences.

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Staff: Sorry, was that Geographical Sciences?

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Enquirer: Actually, it's Geological.

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Staff: Oh, sorry. Got it now. Can I check all of that back?

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Enquirer: Of course. Please go ahead.

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Staff: It's the Belgian Journal of Deep Shaft Mining from PMT PLC, for Alan Dupont in the Department of Geological Sciences.

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Enquirer: Yes, that's perfect, thanks.

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Staff: Great. I'll pass that message onto him. Can I help you with anything else today?

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Enquirer: No, that's all, thanks.

-----  
Staff: Okay, thanks for calling.

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Enquirer: Thanks for your help. Bye.

-----  
Staff: Bye.

-----  
*Perhaps after changing partners, go through the dialogue again and discuss what other phrases could be said in those places.*

**Brainstorming stage**

*Without looking above for now, brainstorm at least two suitable phrases into each of the gaps below.*

**Initial greeting****Offering help****Asking polite questions/ Asking indirect questions****Checking/ Clarifying/ Dealing with communication problems****Confirming that you understand**

**Asking people to wait/ Filling silence while you do something**

**Offering more help/ Checking that the conversation can finish**

**Explaining why a question can't be answered (now/ yet)**

**Polite language at the end of a conversation**

**Final greeting/ Social language at the end of the conversation**

*Look back at the model dialogues for more phrases, and use those to help come up with more ideas.*

## Dealing with requests and enquiries line by line brainstorming

### Brainstorming stage

#### Suggested answers

*Phrases in italics are not in the dialogues above. Phrases in italics and brackets with NOT or PROBABLY NOT are almost certainly not suitable for these kinds of situations. Many other phrases are possible, so please check any other phrases that you wrote with your teacher.*

#### Initial greeting

Good morning./ Good afternoon./ Good evening.

Hello.

#### Offering help

Can I help you (at all)?

How can I help you?

*How may I help you?*

*How can I be of assistance?*

I should be able to help.

#### Asking polite questions/ Asking indirect questions

I was wondering...

I'd like to know...

Could you possibly tell me...?

Can you tell me...?

Could you (also) let me know...?

*Can I ask...?*

*Can I check...?*

*Could you possibly give me some information on...?*

*Do you mind if I ask...?*

*Would you mind telling me..?*

#### Checking/ Clarifying/ Dealing with communication problems

What is it concerning?

What exactly do you need to know?

Can I check what you mean by...?

I'm sorry, I don't really understand...

Sorry, could you write that down for me?

Do you mean...?

If you can give me the details, I'll...

Sorry, I didn't quite catch...

Can you spell it for me?

Sorry, was that... (or...)?

Can I check (all of) that back?

*Can I read that back?*

*Can I just check what your question is?*

*Just to double check, you'd like me to tell you...*

*So, basically you'd like to know...*

*So, if I understand you correctly, you need to know...*

**Confirming that you understand**

Oh, I see what you mean.

I thought that might be the case.

*That's what I expected.*

Okay, got it (now).

Okay, that's all very clear, thanks.

That's much clearer now. Thanks.

*(PROBABLY NOT I understand PROBABLY NOT I see)*

**Asking people to wait/ Filling silence while you do something**

Just a moment and I'll...

Please hold the line and I'll...

Just a second.

Just a sec while I...

*Just a mo while I...*

*Please take a seat and I'll...*

Okay, nearly got it.

Right, here it is.

I'll just... Done.

*(NOT Please wait X)*

*(PROBABLY NOT Hold on)*

**Offering more help/ Checking that the conversation can finish**

Is there anything else I can help you with today?

Can I help you with anything else today?

Please come again any time if you need more help with...

*Does that answer all your questions?*

*(PROBABLY NOT Is that everything?)*

**Explaining why a question can't be answered (now/ yet)**

I'm sorry but I'm not (really) sure.

*I'm afraid I don't have that information (at the moment).*

I'm afraid we don't deal with that (here).

I'm afraid Mr... is... abroad/ *out of the office/ not at his desk/ in a meeting/ on another line.*

(That sounds like it might be possible, but) unfortunately Mr...will have to make the decision...

**Polite language at the end of a conversation**

Thanks for (all) your help.

Thanks for calling./ Thanks for your call.

*(NOT Thanks for your calling X)*

**Final greeting/ Social language at the end of the conversation**

See you again.

Have a good day.

Bye./ Goodbye.

*(NOT Bye bye X)*

### Dealing with requests and enquiries problem roleplays

Choose situations from the list below and roleplay the full conversation each time, starting with the ones which are most realistic for you.

The information they need is in a leaflet/ pamphlet/ prospectus that you don't have.
The information they need is on a specific page of your website.
They need to speak to someone else to get the information that they are asking for.
They need to go to a different office to get the information that they are asking for.
They need to talk to someone outside the university to get the information that they are asking for.
Problems with technology makes it difficult for you to answer the question.
Many other people are waiting with enquiries.
The information is not available at the moment.
You don't know the answer(s).
The office is closing soon.
The enquirer has already been given a document with all the answers in it.
The answers are not positive for the person who receives them.
The enquirer has the wrong idea about something.

The information which you give is not what the enquirer wanted to know.

The information is secret/ confidential/ personal information which you can't share.

The person who knows isn't available.

The enquirer doesn't believe your answer(s) (perhaps because they've heard different elsewhere).

The enquirer is not happy about the answer(s).

The enquirer is surprised by the answer/ expected a different answer.

You don't understand the question(s).

The enquirer doesn't understand the answer(s).

You don't have the authority to answer their question(s).

It will take some time to answer the question(s).

The answer(s) depend on something (e.g. who is asking, time of year)

*Roleplay similar conversations which are more like your work.*

**Suggestions:**

- Academic credits
- Accommodation (students houses/ shared houses, students halls = dorms, etc)
- Another part of the university
- Budgets
- Complaints/ Complaints procedure
- Contact information
- Cost/ Payment
- Discounts
- Disputes/ Disagreements
- Documents/ Materials/ Publications (e.g. making copies)
- English
- Equipment/ Technology (including websites and software)
- Failing courses
- Getting around
- Getting to the university
- Government policies/ rules
- Health
- Help for family members
- Immigration and customs (e.g. visas)
- Japanese language
- Language issues (e.g. translation and proofreading)
- Lengths of courses
- Location of things in the university
- Other staff/ Students
- Pay and expenses (travel expenses, tax, national insurance, etc)
- Refunds
- Rooms (lecture theatres, labs, faculty rooms, library, etc)
- Scholarships
- Something that your team/ department is in charge of
- Technical problems/ Equipment
- Tests and exams
- Times and dates (deadlines, timetables, office hours, national holidays, payday, etc)
- Transferring
- Translation
- Travel/ Transport
- Visa restrictions (part-time work etc)

*For homework, write out one of those conversations in full.*