

## COLD CALLING FOR POSSIBLE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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Instead of waiting for jobs to be advertised before contacting an employer, job seekers are using creative ways to make connections with potential employers. Social networking sites give both employees and employers opportunities to find potential employment matches. Job seekers also may write emails or letters to Human Resource departments at large companies to inquire about future openings. One tried-and-true strategy is the cold call. The cold call is when a job seeker calls a company to introduce himself or herself and to ask about potential employment opportunities.

Before making a cold call, job seekers should research the values and mission of a company and then write a brief introduction about themselves and several questions specific to the company's interests. By doing a little bit of research and then taking time to make the call, a job seeker shows a high level of interest and ambition, which are often valued by employers.

In this week's Teacher's Corner, students write scripts for a cold call that include brief introductions and possible questions relevant to potential employment. Students then practice making cold calls and discuss potential responses to a call.

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### LEVEL

Advanced

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### LANGUAGE FOCUS

Speaking

## GOALS

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During this activity, students will be able to do the following:

- Speak briefly on the phone to introduce themselves and to ask 1-2 relevant questions about internship or job opportunities.
- Recognize and prepare for potential responses.

## MATERIALS

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- Cold-Calling Dialogue Chain (Appendix A)
- Cold-Calling Tips and Sample Scripts (Appendix B)

## PREPARATION

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- Print enough copies of Cold-Calling Tips and Sample Scripts (Appendix B) and Cold-Calling Dialogue Chain (Appendix A) so that each student has a copy.
- Review Cold Calling Tips and Sample Scripts for information on cold calls.

## PROCEDURE

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1. At the beginning of class, ask students if they know the term *cold call*. What is a cold call? When would you make a cold call?
  - a. Explain that a cold call is calling a person you don't know. People often make cold calls when conducting job searches. They call companies they are interested in working for and introduce themselves while also inquiring about employment or internship opportunities.
  - b. Ask students if they have ever made a cold call before. If some have, ask them to share their experiences.
    - i. Encourage students to tell what kinds of information they gave while on the call.
    - ii. As students share their experiences, write on the board the information that students said they included in the call.

2. After students have shared their experiences, explain that cold calls can follow a script. In fact, having a script can help callers prepare to make the phone call and to sound confident.
  - a. Hand out a copy of the Cold Calling Dialogue Chain to each student.
  - b. Give students time to review the script and compare the script to the information written on the board.
    - i. What information is similar? What information is not included on the script?
3. Work with the class to brainstorm possibilities for each step on the dialogue chain. For example, start by asking students to write down a one-sentence introduction of themselves. Have them share some of their sentences. Then ask them to brainstorm possible responses the receiver might have to this introduction.
  - a. Carry on with this brainstorm until the dialogue has a number of possibilities for each step.
4. After the class comes up with ideas for a dialogue chain, have students work individually to write their own scripts using the dialogue chain.
  - a. Ask them to envision they are contacting someone about their dream job at a company where they would like to work.
  - b. Give them time (10-15 minutes) to write and complete their scripts.
5. Pair students with the person sitting next to them and ask them to share their dialogues.
  - a. After sharing dialogues, partners offer two alternative questions for each other to use in their dialogues.
6. Bring the class back together as a group and explain that now you are going to discuss possible responses to a cold call.
  - a. Hand out copies of Cold Calling Tips and Sample Scripts and have students review the sample scripts with their partners.
7. Once students have reviewed the handout, have them practice their dialogues in pairs with one student acting as the caller and the other as a secretary or Human Resources staff member.

- a. Remind students to adjust their script to fit the person that answers the phone.
8. Finally, ask students to practice the cold call imagining that the person who answers the phone is a potential employer.
  9. Tell students that the more they practice, the more confident they will feel when they make real phone calls. Tell them that cold calling takes time and persistence.

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### VARIATIONS

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A variation on this activity could have students practicing complete scripts rather than using a dialogue chain. Before class, use the dialogue chain to write a script that students can follow and practice in class before creating their own.

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### EXTENSIONS

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Extend the activity by changing the possible scenarios so that students must adjust their scripts to fit new situations. For example, in addition to thinking that a receptionist or a human resources person might answer the phone, have students consider other potential scenarios: What would happen if they get a person's voicemail? What happens if the potential boss is not interested in talking? What happens if the person answering directs the caller to a website? All of these are realistic possibilities that students would need to consider before making a phone call.

## APPENDIX A: COLD-CALLING DIALOGUE CHAIN

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Receiver

Caller

Greeting	
	Introduce self: name, where you're calling from, how you found name of person you are calling
Response	
	Request to discuss internship or job opportunities; explain that you have specific questions
Response	
	Question 1
Response	
	Question 2
Response	
	Thanks and Goodbye
Goodbye	

**Cold Calling Tips**

- Smile while calling. Listeners can “hear” a smile.
- Practice, practice, practice. Practicing will give you confidence for the actual call.
- Start by calling employers or company employees whom you know through friends, family, or colleagues. For example, a friend of a friend who is a receptionist can help you.
- During the call, try to set up a time to meet in person. Some employers are willing and available to do this. Be flexible with your schedule as you plan a time.
- Plan for voicemail or for the receiver to take a message.

**Reference:**

University of Minnesota Career and Internship Services. “Cold Calling.” [www.careerhelp.umn.edu](http://www.careerhelp.umn.edu)

**Sample Script: Receptionist Answers Call**

**Receptionist:** Good morning. HG Group. How many I direct your call?

**Caller:** Good morning. I’m looking to speak with someone about work and internship opportunities. Is there someone you can recommend or a person you can connect me with?

**Receptionist:** Certainly. You would probably want to speak with our recruiting team. I’m going to send your call to Jane’s desk. If she doesn’t answer, please leave a message.

**Caller:** That’s wonderful. Thank you. Could you give me her full name and number in case I get disconnected?

**Receptionist:** Sure. Jane Mack is at 712-555-9000, ext. 24. Anything else I can help you with today?

**Caller:** No, thank you so much.

**Receptionist:** You’re welcome. Connecting you now.

**Sample Script: Human Resources Employee Answers Call**

**Human Resources (HR) Staff Member:** Good morning. HG Group, Human Resources, this is John.

**Caller:** Good morning, John. My name is Claire, and I'm looking to speak with someone about work and internship opportunities in the Finance Department at HG Group. Would you be able to direct me to someone for an informational interview?

**HR Staff Member:** Unfortunately, there aren't any positions available right now, but if you are looking to learn more about our company I would be happy to speak with you.

**Caller:** Yes, that would be great. Thank you. Would you be willing to meet with me in person?

**HR Staff Member:** My schedule is fairly full this week, but I could schedule 30 minutes on the phone sometime Thursday afternoon. Would that work for you?

**Caller:** Yes, I could call at 2:30 p.m.

**HR Staff Member:** What is your name and phone number in case we need to reschedule?

**Caller:** Claire Tatum and I'm at 555-555-7098. And John, what is your last name?

**HR Staff Member:** John Fletcher.

**Caller:** Thank you. I look forward to speaking with you on Thursday at 2:30 p.m. at this number.

**HR Staff Member:** I'll be here. Have a great day.

**Caller:** You as well. Thank you and good bye.

**HR Staff Member:** Bye.