

Telephoning

Knowing how to talk on the phone is an important skill to have nowadays. Everyone uses them! Learning key phrases that you can use while on the phone will help you make appointments, ask questions, or just have normal conversations with friends or family.

Below, you'll find important formal and informal phrases that will be helpful whenever you need to make a phone call. Take a look at the tables below and start mastering this important skill!

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Formal German on the Phone

Politeness goes a long way - even on the phone! Below, you'll learn formal phrases that you can use when talking on the phone. Use them whenever you call a business, someone that you don't know very well, or try to make an appointment for something.

German

Könnte ich mit Herrn Hartmann sprechen?

Ich würde gerne mit Herrn Demir sprechen.

Darf ich fragen, wer am Apparat ist?

Könnten Sie mir Ihren Namen nennen?

Hier spricht Finn Hartmann.

Fiedler am Apparat.

Würden Sie bitte eine Minute am Apparat bleiben?

Es tut mir leid, Herr Fiedler ist momentan nicht verfügbar.

Möchten Sie eine Nachricht hinterlassen?

English

Could I speak with Mr. Hartmann?

I would like to speak to Mr. Demir.

May I ask who's calling?

Can I get your name?

This is Finn Hartmann.

Fiedler speaking.

Would you mind holding for a minute?

I'm sorry, Mr. Fiedler is not available right now.

Would you like to leave a message?

 **German**

Darf ich eine Nachricht entgegennehmen?

Könnten Sie später zurückrufen?

Könnten Sie das bitte wiederholen?

Könnten Sie bitte etwas langsamer sprechen?

Vielen Dank für Ihren Anruf.

 **English**

May I take a message?

Could you call back later?

Could you repeat that, please?

Could you speak a bit slower, please?

Thank you for your call.

Fiedler am Apparat (*Fiedler speaking*)

To very formally and directly answer the phone, use the sentence pattern NACHNAME + am Apparat (*LAST NAME + speaking*). This is most commonly done in business settings. The person calling would then most likely say their name. Here is an example response Hallo Herr Fiedler, hier spricht Jan von der PR-Abteilung (*Hi Mr. Fiedler, this is Jan from PR*).

Würden Sie bitte eine Minute am Apparat bleiben? (*Would you mind holding for a minute?*)

If you make a phone call and the person you want to talk to is not available, then you might hear this sentence. It is simply asking you to wait until they are available. You could respond to this sentence with something like Sicher, ich kann warten (*Sure, I can hold*).

Informal German on the Phone

Talking with friends and family on the phone is almost exactly like talking to them face-to-face. It's very relaxed and informal. The following phrases will be useful to you whenever you want to speak informally with someone on the phone.

 **German**

Hier spricht Finn.

Ist Lisa zu sprechen?

Hat Finn gerade Zeit?

Wer spricht?

 **English**

This is Finn.

Is Lisa there?

Is Finn free?

Who is this?

 **German**

Hier ist Leon.

Warte eine Sekunde.

Einen Augenblick.

Tut mir leid, sie ist im Moment nicht hier.

Wann wird Philipp wieder da sein?

Kannst du ihr etwas ausrichten?

Entschuldigung, ich glaube, ich habe mich verwählt.

Entschuldigung, das habe ich nicht verstanden.

Kannst du das nochmal sagen?

Ich rufe später zurück.

Ich kann dich nicht gut hören.

Tschüss!

 **English**

It's Leon.

Hang on a second.

Just a moment.

Sorry, she's not here right now.

When will Philipp be in again?

Could I leave a message?

Sorry, I think I dialed the wrong number.

Sorry, I didn't catch that.

Can you say that again?

I'll call back a little later.

I can't hear you very well.

Bye!

Entschuldigung, ich glaube, ich habe mich verwählt (*Sorry, I think I dialed the wrong number*)

If you dial the wrong number, then you can apologize to the person by using this sentence. They would most likely respond with a sentence like *Kein Problem! (No problem!)*.

Entschuldigung, das habe ich nicht verstanden (*Sorry, I didn't catch that*)

It can sometimes be hard to understand someone while speaking on the phone. Use this sentence to tell someone that you misunderstood what they said. In response, they'll likely repeat the last thing they just said. Here's an example *Ich sagte, willst du später etwas unternehmen? (I said, do you want to hang out later today?)*.

Kannst du das nochmal sagen? (*Can you say that again?*)

This is a very useful sentence to know when talking on the phone. Use it whenever you can't understand someone and want them to repeat themselves. The person would most likely respond by repeating what they just said. Here is an example response *Ja, weißt du, wann sich die Mannschaft heute Abend trifft? (Yeah, do you know what time the team is meeting up tonight?)*.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the most essential German phrases I need to know when talking on the phone?

Könnte ich mit Herrn Hartmann sprechen?	Could I speak with Mr. Hartmann?
Würden Sie bitte eine Minute am Apparat bleiben?	Would you mind holding for a minute?
Könnten Sie später zurückrufen?	Could you call back later?
Könnten Sie das bitte wiederholen?	Could you repeat that, please?
Ist Lisa zu sprechen?	Is Lisa there?
Hier ist Leon.	It's Leon.
Warte eine Sekunde.	Hang on a second.
Kannst du ihr etwas ausrichten?	Could I leave a message?

What is formal German like when talking on the phone?

Formal German used on the phone is characterized by the use of the formal pronoun Sie and phrases like Guten Tag, Danke vielmals, and Auf Wiederhören. Whenever you make a formal call, you should also stick to calling someone by their last name. You'll use formal German whenever calling businesses, doctors, your boss, and really anyone you want to be polite to.

What is informal German like when talking on the phone?

Informal German used on the phone is really no different to speaking German informally with someone face-to-face. Instead of the pronoun Sie you'll use the pronoun du, and you should refer to everyone by their first name or nickname.

What do I say at the beginning of a German telephone conversation?

Starting a telephone conversation is really no different to beginning a normal face-to-face conversation. You'll start by greeting the other person - usually with a simple Hallo. (*Hello.*). Then the speakers identify themselves. You can use the following sentence pattern in any situation to do this:

Hier spricht + NAME. (*This is + NAME.*)

Hier spricht Finn. (*This is Finn.*)

Hier spricht Jonas aus dem Yoga-Unterricht. (*This is Jonas from yoga class.*)

Hier spricht Philipp von der Arbeit. (*This is Philipp from work.*)

In informal situations you could also use:

Hier ist + NAME. (*It's + NAME.*)

Hier ist Leon. (*It's Leon.*)

Hier ist Niklas aus dem Yoga-Unterricht. (*It's Niklas from yoga class.*)

Hier ist Philipp von der Arbeit. (*It's Philipp from work.*)

How do I ask to speak with someone on the phone in German?

There are many ways to ask to speak with someone on the phone.

Here is the most common way:

Könnte ich mit + NAME + sprechen? (*Could I speak with + NAME?*)

Könnte ich mit Herrn Hartmann sprechen? (*Could I speak with Mr. Hartmann?*)

Könnte ich mit Herrn Graf sprechen? (*Could I speak with Mr. Graf?*)

Könnte ich mit Herrn Nowak sprechen? (*Could I speak with Mr. Nowak?*)

This can be used in either informal or formal calls.

To formally ask to speak with someone, use:

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Ich würde gerne mit + NAME + sprechen. (*I would like to speak to + NAME.*)

Ich würde gerne mit Herrn Demir sprechen. (*I would like to speak to Mr. Demir.*)

Ich würde gerne mit Frau Graf sprechen. (*I would like to speak to Ms. Graf.*)

Ich würde gerne mit Herrn Nowak sprechen. (*I would like to speak to Mr. Nowak.*)

Informal ways to ask to speak with someone are:

Ist + NAME + zu sprechen? (*Is + NAME + there?*)

Ist Lisa zu sprechen? (*Is Lisa there?*)

Ist Julia zu sprechen? (*Is Julia there?*)

Ist Lena zu sprechen? (*Is Lena there?*)

Hat + NAME + gerade Zeit? (*Is + NAME + free?*)

Hat Finn gerade Zeit? (*Is Finn free?*)

Hat Niklas gerade Zeit? (*Is Niklas free?*)

Hat Philipp gerade Zeit? (*Is Philipp free?*)

How do I end a German conversation on the telephone?

It's easy to end a telephone conversation. You simply end it like any other conversation by saying goodbye. Here are some ways to informally end a telephone conversation:

Tschüss. (*Bye.*)

Auf Wiederhören. (*Talk to you later.*)

Bis bald. (*Talk to you soon.*)

You can end a formal conversation with any of the following:

Auf Wiederhören. (*Goodbye.*)

Danke, schönen Tag noch. (*Thank you, have a nice day.*)

Danke für deinen Anruf. (*Thank you for your call.*) (use this only if someone called you).



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