

Telephoning situations modals of deduction

Try to imagine what the most likely reasons are for the situations mentioned below. If you're not sure, you can give negative sentences about the least likely situations.

Useful phrases

almost certainly

almost certainly not

can't

could possibly

might/ may

must

probably

probably not

- Someone *calls* at 2 a.m.
- Someone who you don't know *leaves a message* on your *answer phone* (= *answer machine*) asking you to *call them back* as soon as possible.
- Someone's *home phone* is *engaged* (= *busy*) all day.
- The *receptionist* asks you to *hold* (= *hold the line*) and then nothing happens for five minutes.
- They *put you through* (= *connect you*) to the wrong person.
- They tell you someone is *away from their desk* but don't offer to *take a message*.
- When you answer your wife's phone, the caller *hangs up* without speaking.
- You call an office at 12:30 p.m. and no one *answers*.
- You call an office at 8 p.m. and no one *picks up*.
- You *leave a message* with someone's *secretary* but no one *gets back to you*.
- You phone the girl who you were chatting to in a bar the other night but she gave you the *wrong number*.
- Someone *left a message* on a *Post-It note* for you telling you to *ring* your mother as quickly as possible but not giving the reason.
- You are *cut off* while speaking to someone on their *mobile phone* (= *cellphone*).

- Someone calls you from a *payphone* (= *public phone*) but is *cut off* halfway through the call.
- Your teenage child's *mobile phone bill* is much much higher than usual.
- Someone asks to be *put through* to your boss but refuses to say who they are.
- The official website for the product you just bought doesn't have a customer support *call centre* phone number on it.
- You get lots of salesmen *cold calling* on your mobile number.
- There is lots of *background noise* that sounds like water when you phone a friend on their mobile.

Without looking above, brainstorm language for guessing, including negative and unsure expressions, into the right places below.

100%

0%

Add the phrases on the first page into the right places above.