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MACMILLAN PUBLISHING COMPANY **New York**

COLLIER MACMILLAN INTERNATIONAL New York

COLLIER MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS

London

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Photography Credits: Katharine Gibbs School, pp. iv, 11, 18, 22, 32, 36, 45, 52, 58, 77, 84, 93, 98; Martha Coss, pp. 67, 107.

Cover Design Rudy Michaels

Sec.

Cover Photo ©Richard Wood from Taurus Photos

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Macmillan Publishing Company
866 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022
Collier Macmillan Canada, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 0-02-973760-5 9876543



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MAY I ASK WHO IS CALLING?

Conversation

(Sue, Mr. Moe's secretary, answers the telephone.)

SUE: Good morning, Pulchritude Products. Mr. Moe's office.

VOICE: This is the New York office. Mr. Cole would like to

talk to Mr. Moe.

SUE: Mr. Cole? Please tell him Mr. Moe is not in his office

at the moment. I'm his secretary. Does Mr. Cole want

to leave a message?

VOICE: Just a minute. Hold the line, please.

COLE: Hello. Jim Cole here. You say that Moe isn't in his

office?

SUE: No. Mr. Cole, he isn't available now, but I expect him

back soon. May I take a message?

COLE: Well-yes. Why didn't he answer my letter?

SUE: Your letter? Mr. Cole, I don't remember receiving a

letter from you recently.

COLE: It's about our visit down there this weekend.

SUE: Your visit? This weekend?

COLE: You're Moe's secretary, aren't you? Didn't he say any-

thing about arrangements for a conference?

SUE: No, Mr. Cole. We didn't receive any notice from you.

Mail is running late because of the holidays. Nothing has come from your office for a couple of weeks.

COLE: That's funny. I have the copy here. We sent the letter

eight days ago. Jones and I are coming down to talk

about the promotion of the new product. We want Moe to set up meetings with your group at the plant and with our branches and outlets.

SUE: I'll give him your message as soon as he returns, Mr. Cole. When are you arriving?

Next Sunday. We have booked reservations on TWX, COLE: flight number 787, arriving at eleven P.M.

SUE: What about your hotel reservations?

COLE Oh, yes. Please make the same accommodations as last year's—same hotel, and the same suite, if possible. Tell Moe to give me a ring as soon as he gets in.

SUE: Of course. You're going to be in your office until noon, aren't you, Mr. Cole?

COLE: Yes, I'm going to stick around until he calls.

SUE: Fine. Don't worry, Mr. Cole. We'll take care of everything on this end. You'll be hearing from Mr. Moe soon.

COLE: Thanks. I'm relying on you. We'll be seeing you soon.

Good-bye.

(to her assistant) Whew! That was a close call, wasn't SUE: it? Where's Mr. Moe? He usually lets me know when he's late. Cee, I hope he comes in soon. Mr. Cole didn't

seem very happy at first, but he brightened up a little.

Good for you. The secretary didn't let her boss down. EVE: It pays to be tactful, doesn't it? ill, doesn't it? the tell yer land

A.M.

Vocabulary

accommodations arrangements branches conference | discretion outlets plant promotion pulchritude (/ 1/2

Common Expressions

book reservations close call give someone a ring-to telephone hold the line let (someone) down

King Dir warin

let (someone) know P.M. running late set up a meeting stick around

dis brit than try, take a m take care this end take a message take care of what about . . . ?

Discussion

- 1. A secretary always uses discretion when answering the telephone. Do you think that Sue was discreet in saying that Mr. Moe wasn't in his office? Imagine you are Sue. Which of the following replies are appropriate?
 - a. He's late this morning.
 - b. I don't know where he is.
 - c. He's not available right now.
 - d. He's stepped out for a moment.
 - e. He's in conference.
- 2. Imagine you are Mr. Cole. How would you feel toward Sue—friendly, unfriendly, indifferent?
- 3. Does a person like to be addressed by name, as "Yes, Mr. Cole?"
- 4. A secretary answered the phone saying, "Mr. Clark's office speaking." The caller responded, "A talking office? How unusal." How should she answer the telephone?

A. Progressive Substitution Drills

Substitute each of the following words or phrases in the model sentence.

May I take a message?

Example: she

May she take a message?

1. May I take a message?

she send

call you back give you a ring

telegram can

2. Does Mr. Cole want to leave a message?

give me Sue information Doesn't her number Would she like

4 SPECIAL ENGLISH FOR SECRETARIES

3. You're going to be in the office until noon, aren't you?

He's . . . isn't he out of

Sue is . . . she

out of Mr. Cole

all morning

three

B. Structures

- 1. Look at these sentences:
 - 1. A. I'll give your message to her.
 - B. I'll give her your message.
 - 2. A. Please send your latest catalog to us.
 - B. Please send us your latest catalog.

Sentences 1A and 2A have this structure: verb—object—prepositional phrase (to the person)

Sentences 1B and 2B have this structure: verb—indirect pronoun—object

We use an indirect pronoun to show to whom or for whom something is done.

These two structures are used with verbs like give, tell, lend, send, show, and read.

With the verbs explain, say, speak, and report, only use structure A:

Example: Mr. Moe explained the letter to me.

With the verb ask, only use structure B:

Example: She asked her a question.

Study the examples above and write these sentences using an indirect pronoun. Make sure to change structure A to structure B.

- a. She handed the file to Sue.
- b. Sue always tells the truth to Mr. Moe.
- c. Did she send a telegram to Mr. Cole?
- d. Eve read the letter to Sue.
- e. Don't lend money to the children.
- 2. The following sentences from the Conversation express a polite command, with you understood.

Hold the line, please. Don't worry.

Following the above examples, write sentences requesting a person:

- a. to give your boss a message
- b. to postpone a meeting
- c. not to call before seven A.M.
- d. to answer your letter soon
- 3. The following statements all express an act in the future:

I'll give him your message. (Will or shall denotes future time.)
We are arriving Sunday. (Are arriving is used with a future date.)

You are going to stay in your office until noon, aren't you? (The phrase going to expresses future time.)

Write sentences using the verbs arrive, stay, and visit in these three different forms to express an action that will take place in the future.

C. Punctuation

 Notice the contractions in the Conversation: I'm, isn't, you're, he'll, let's. The apostrophe in these words takes the place of missing letters. These forms are commonly used in everyday speech, but rarely in business correspondence.

The apostrophe is also used to show possession: Mr. Moe's secretary, the boss's briefcase, the Board of Directors' meeting. Note also that the apostrophe comes before the s in singular words (Moe's, boss's), but after the s in plural nouns (Directors').

An apostrophe may also be used to replace numbers when a date is abbreviated: Oldtimers still talk about the flood of '21.

Punctuate these sentences correctly by adding necessary apostrophes.

- a. Isnt it the employers duty to secure his employees rights?
- b. Arent there two rs in "correspondence"?
- c. Shell soon be eighty years old, because she graduated in 28.
- d. The company is giving a childrens Christmas party.
- e. Sue, were going to leave at 2 oclock.