

4 Underlined dialogue – TASK

Two students are having a discussion about mobile phone masts. As you read the discussion, underline and number specific examples of the language listed below. The first one has been done for you.

1. ask for an opinion
2. present an opinion
3. disagree, partly disagree or counter the other person's opinion
4. refer directly to what has been said previously
5. confirm or check understanding as a listener
6. check understanding as a speaker
7. show you don't understand

A: Have you seen this article in the local paper about mobile phone masts? Residents are protesting about a new mast in the area. There's a new one planned for near the school. I don't think 2 it's fair.

B: In what way? Are you talking about the residents, the school children, mobile phone users in general or the mobile phone companies? I'm not sure I understand who you mean?

A: I'm referring to the children at the school and those who have to live in the shadow of the mast.

B: Do you mean because it might be a health hazard?

A: Yes, that's right. I'm sure there's quite a lot of evidence that schools near mobile phone masts have higher incidences of cancer and other health problems. There needs to be some restrictions on where they can be located? Don't you agree?

B: Well, I take your point about possible health concerns, but they've got to go somewhere. We're practically all mobile phone users. If there are health issues, and I don't think it's been proved conclusively yet, someone's always going to be at risk. Do you see what I'm saying?

A: Yes, but there must be some locations which are higher risk than others. I'm sure that children are at higher risk because they're still growing, so the dangers to health are more pronounced.

B: But surely, there might be children or even babies nearby, wherever you put a mast in a residential district. It seems to me that people protest when they are directly affected, otherwise they're quite happy for the mast to go up in someone else's neighbourhood, as long as they can get a strong enough signal.

A: So in your view, people only act out of self-interest.

B: Generally speaking, yes. I'm sure most if not all the people protesting against the mast near the school are directly affected. Regarding what you said earlier about 'restrictions', I don't see how such restrictions on location can be fair to everyone. If you're a mobile phone user, then you have to accept some element of risk associated with masts.

A: I understand what you're saying, but the mobile phone companies aren't honest with the public about the level of risk. They keep it hidden.

- B:** Well, then I think it's the government's responsibility to regulate the companies more and commission more independent research
- A:** Do you think we can trust it more than the mobile phone companies. Is that what you're saying? If you are, then I'm not sure I agree with you there.