

Gapped dialogue – TASK

Two students are having a discussion about mobile phone masts. The responses given by Student B are missing. Match the numbered responses in the box with the spaces in the conversation.

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 it's fair.

B: _____

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

B: _____

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: _____

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: _____

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

B: _____

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: _____

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.

Student B responses

1. 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?
2. Do you mean because it might be a health hazard?
3. 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?
4. Well, then I think it's the government's responsibility to regulate the companies more and commission more independent research.
5. 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.
6. 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.