

Worksheet 3.6b: Situations that lead to disputes

Decide which way of resolving disputes, listed on Worksheet 3.6a, would be best for each of the scenarios listed below. Give at least one reason for each answer.

1. My husband and I work in the same company. I'm more senior than him, but I wasn't told about a recent promotion that was recommended to him. I asked why. My boss said that it was because we'd just got married and so it was 'obvious' that I'd get pregnant soon and then never come back to work. I'm furious because we don't even want children!

2. I'm really frustrated because I bought an £1800 TV and it's never worked properly. I had the TV delivered and set it up according to the operating instructions. However, the picture is extremely fuzzy and there's no sound at all. The supermarket collected the TV and said they'd refund me that day. Three months later, I still haven't had the refund! They're completely ignoring my emails asking when I'll receive my money.

3. My wife has asked for a divorce because she reckons that my gambling problems are damaging our children. I'm ready to deal with my addiction now and want to avoid divorce. I think divorce could upset our kids. My wife's so angry. She left me a voicemail today saying that she's going to move abroad without telling me, so that I can never see the children again.

4. The lady at my local council's housing department says that I don't qualify for their support. That doesn't make sense though, because my brother gets help from them and he's in exactly the same situation as me. I think it's because I'm deaf. The lady seems embarrassed about trying to communicate with me. She always looks so keen to get rid of me whenever I have an appointment with her.

5. There's a man living next door who works nights. He gets in after work at about 3am and always brings friends home with him. They get really drunk about three or four times a week and end up in the garden shouting and blasting music from their car stereo. I never manage to get back to sleep. I'm exhausted to the point that I keep falling asleep at work.

6. Since being in prison, I've started to notice that some of the prisoners are being treated really badly by the staff here. Yesterday, one prisoner was sworn at several times and another was humiliated about his weight. I explained my concerns about prison staff to the prison governor. She wouldn't even look me in the eye and said I must have imagined it!

Useful vocabulary

formal/informal, biased/impartial, quick/slow process, free of charge/fees, flexible/inflexible, resolution, compromise, etc.