

## **Topic: Resolve that mobile phones should be prohibited in airplanes.**

### **Context:**

The mobile phone, which played an important role in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, is at the crux of another controversy. Some travelers are now defying airlines' ban on wireless devices and a confrontation is on the horizon. Some travelers believe that a ban on cell phones should be re-evaluated, contending that the growth of technology empowers interpersonal communication and people should be able to take advantage of it.

Ryanair, a budget airliner, has taken this concern to heart. It will soon enable passengers to utilize their mobile phones and electronic community devices (e.g., Blackberry) in the air just as people use them on the ground.

On the other hand, not everyone is happy about this proposal. The Federal Communication Commission claims that cell phones can interfere with aircraft instruments and has not supported Ryanair's initiative to do away with the ban. Furthermore, there are other issues on the table in addition to safety. Some people have argued that it would be exasperating to hear some passengers yakking on the phone throughout the flight. It would be impossible to get any shut eye. Regardless of how people feel, it is undeniable that the mobile phone is so much a part of people's lives and although it can be a nuisance, it is also a necessity. What is important in this debate is to consider whether the benefits of lifting the ban outweigh the disadvantages.

### **Reference:**

#### **Topic Summary (Read at least 1 article from each of the following categories)**

1. What is this debate about?  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2006/TRAVEL/08/31/ryanair.mobile/index.html>
2. Should they ever allow mobile phones on airplanes?  
<http://www.elliott.org/technology/2001/cellpermit.htm>

#### **Pro: (Should Be Prohibited)**

1. Are mobile phones during flights safe? <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06060/662669.stm>
2. Is in-flight mobile phone usage the next smoking?  
[http://mobileenterprise.typepad.com/weblog/2005/08/is\\_inflight\\_cel.html](http://mobileenterprise.typepad.com/weblog/2005/08/is_inflight_cel.html)
3. How is it a nuisance? <http://pcworld.about.com/news/Jul152005id121842.htm>

#### **Con: (Should Not Be Prohibited)**

1. Are the benefits of mobile phone usage in airplanes greater than the risks?  
[http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2005/06/risks\\_of\\_cell\\_p.html](http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2005/06/risks_of_cell_p.html)

2. Is it possible to use mobile phones on aircrafts?  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/3665848.stm>
3. Is cell phone usage a right? <http://www.trainweb.org/ct/NYTimes62202.htm>

### **Vocabulary & Idioms:**

1. Stray
2. Inevitable
3. Lament
4. Avow
5. Content
6. Balk
7. Transpire
8. Accessible
9. Radiation
10. Ameliorate

### **Questions:**

1. Do you think people have a right to use their mobile phones anywhere they want?
2. Do you think there should be two different standards for outdoor and enclosed public places? In other words, do you think people should be able to use their mobile phones at restaurants and cafe? What about places like airplanes and trains?
3. Is it safe to use mobile phones in airplanes?
4. Assuming safety was not an issue, do you think people should be able to use their mobile phones anywhere?

### **Essay Question:**

Many people like to take a nap during a flight. Do you think allowing people to use mobile phones in aircrafts would create a nuisance? Or, do you think there are more benefits than inconveniences?

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### **For Teachers:**

#### **Pro: (Should Be Prohibited)**

The use of mobile phones in aircrafts should definitely be prohibited. It's totally unsafe. These phones send out signals that occupy the same frequency as they would if people were talking on the phones or just leaving them on. The only difference is that the individual signal is slightly stronger when someone is talking on the mobile phone. This consequently makes it less safe. Besides safety concerns, it is terribly annoying to have to endure someone talking on the phone throughout the flight, especially when you are trying to rest. The situation is comparable to someone trying to hold a conversation during a movie.

#### **Con: (Should Not Be Prohibited)**

On the other hand, there are good reasons why the ban should be lifted. In cases of emergencies, like 9/11, people who have access to cell phones could communicate for help or send messages to their loved ones. Moreover, airlines, like Ryanair, are mindful of safety issues and have found ways to circumvent the signaling problems. If technology has made it possible for Ryanair to allow passengers to use their mobile phones, then other airliners should follow suit.

## **Topic: Resolve that Fair Trade should be banned.**

### **Context:**

Starbucks sells fair trade coffee beans; Trader Joes sells fair trade fruits; and Whole Foods sells fair trade rice. Fair trade products are popping all over venues across America. However, what makes fair trade fair?

Fair trade promises to provide farmers and farm workers opportunities to empower their economic circumstances. By investing in their farms and communities, ensuring fair labor conditions, and protecting the environment; fair trade hopes to exchange products for a reasonable price in the global marketplace.

Despite noble motivations behind fair trade, not everyone thinks it is a fair solution. Some economists claim that there are broader economic ramifications that are quite harmful to farmers and developing countries in the long-run. For example, fair trade products, like coffee, have a low price simply because of overproduction. By paying farmers a fair trade premium, it encourages other farmers to produce coffee, which ends up driving the overall prices down and making non-fair trade producers in these countries even poorer. What exacerbates the problem is that with a guaranteed premium, governments and farmers in developing countries have less of an incentive to diversify their crops. Hence, this makes fair trade counterproductive. Developing countries cannot achieve higher levels of economic growth because their economies are too heavily dependent on these primary products.

Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been a lot of activism by various organizations to introduce fair trade products. While these groups should be extolled for their effort in trying to help coffee farmers in developing countries, for instance, it is important to consider the short and long-term repercussions of this international campaign.

### **Reference:**

#### **Topic Summary (Read at least 1 article from each of the following categories)**

1. What is fair trade? [http://www.fairtradetoronto.com/whats\\_ft.html](http://www.fairtradetoronto.com/whats_ft.html)
2. How does fair trade help farmers?  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4964152.stm>
3. How is coffee related to fair trade?  
[http://www.ringsurf.com/info/Food/Coffee/Fair\\_Trade\\_Coffee/](http://www.ringsurf.com/info/Food/Coffee/Fair_Trade_Coffee/)

#### **Pro: (Should Be Banned)**

1. How does fair trade benefit communities?  
[http://www.fairtradefederation.org/ab\\_whyft.html](http://www.fairtradefederation.org/ab_whyft.html)
2. How does fair trade help small farmers?

### **Con: (Should Not Be Banned)**

1. How is fair trade unfair?  
<http://media.www.ndsmcobserver.com/media/storage/paper660/news/2007/02/12/Viewpoint/Fair-Trade.May.Not.Be.So.Fair-2711235.shtml>
2. How fair is fair trade? <http://www.cato.org/research/articles/reynolds-031116.html>
3. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4788662.stm>

### **Vocabulary & Idioms:**

1. Stray
2. Obscure
3. Contraband
4. Adamant
5. Allegation
6. Bypass
7. Fluctuation
8. Abstemious
9. Modulate
10. Avow
11. Perpetuate

### **Questions:**

1. What is fair trade?
2. Explain how fair trade works by using the example of coffee beans from Guatemala that are sold to Starbucks?
3. How does fair trade benefit farmers and developing countries?
4. How is fair trade more beneficial to corporations and wealthy countries?
5. How is fair trade related to the environment?

### **Essay Question:**

Do you think fair trade should be encouraged or do you think there is another solution to help farmers and developing countries? Please explain your response in detail.

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### **For Teachers**

### **Pro: (Should Be Banned)**

Fair trade is harmful to developing countries and farmers in the long-run for several

reasons:

1. Fair trade leads to overproduction. By paying farmers a guaranteed Fair Trade premium (which acts as a subsidy), it encourages other producers to enter the market, thereby driving overall prices further down and making non-Fair Trade producers in these countries poorer because corporations, like Starbucks, can get away with paying farmers a lower price for their coffee beans, for instance.
2. With a guaranteed premium, governments and farmers in developing countries have less of an incentive to diversify from coffee farming into other non-commodity sectors. Developing countries are often unable to achieve higher levels of economic growth for the very reason that their economies are too heavily dependent on primary products.
3. In order for developing countries to achieve higher levels of economic growth, they need to, among other things, transition from an agrarian economy into an economy that is based on manufacturing, and fair trade only impedes economic development.

### **Con: (Should Not Be Banned)**

Fair trade should be encouraged for several reasons:

1. The pricing is fair because democratically organized farmer groups receive a guaranteed minimum price and an additional premium for certified organic products.
2. Workers on Fair Trade farms enjoy fair labor conditions, including freedom of association, safe working conditions, and living wages. Forced child labor is strictly prohibited.
3. There is less bureaucracy. Importers purchase from Fair Trade producer groups as directly as possible, eliminating unnecessary middlemen and empowering farmers to develop the business capacity necessary to compete in the global marketplace.
4. Fair trade encourages community development. Fair trade farmers and farm workers invest Fair Trade premiums in social and business development projects like scholarship programs, quality improvement trainings, and organic certification.
5. Fair trade allows for environmental sustainability. Harmful agrochemicals and GMOs are strictly prohibited in favor of environmentally sustainable farming methods that protect farmers' health and preserve valuable ecosystems for future generations.

## **Topic: Resolve that Greenpeace is a terrorist organization.**

### **Context:**

Greenpeace is an organization that grew out of concerns for peace, endangered species and environmental protection. Borrowing from the Quaker philosophy of “bearing witness,” the organization endeavors to make the world a witness to these pressing issues through nonviolent direct action.

Not everyone believes that Greenpeace practices what it preaches, however. Critics have emphasized that the organization has employed “nontraditional” methods to oppose pesticides, commercial whaling, the dumping of toxic waste into the sea, and nuclear testing. For instance, members have purportedly sabotaged a maize farm in Norfolk, England, because the farm genetically modified its crops. In addition to that, a Greenpeace boat allegedly rammed into a French Cup Yacht in response to the French team’s sponsor, which supports nuclear power.

Some of Greenpeace’s disobedient tactics may not have been so civil. Many critics claim that Greenpeace’s activism is way too radical and consider it a terrorist organization. Is this assessment on the mark or is the organization just misunderstood? Or, maybe there are just some bad apples in the organization that have gone too far and, consequently, blemished the reputation of Greenpeace as a whole.

### **Reference:**

#### **Topic Summary (Read at least 1 article from each of the following categories )**

1. What is Greenpeace? <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenpeace>
2. Read the website. <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/>
3. What is the debate about? <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3475218/>

#### **Pro: (Is A Terrorist Organization)**

1. Does Greenpeace have a right to block oil ships?  
<http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/05/21/greenpeace.france/index.html>
2. How nonviolent is Greenpeace? <http://users.aol.com/DaveMcCall/terror.htm>

#### **Con: (Is Not A Terrorist Organization)**

1. Is Greenpeace too radical or too peaceful?  
<http://www.tolerance.ca/Article.aspx?ID=116&L=en>
2. How does Greenpeace spotlight world issues?  
<http://www.ecoearth.info/shared/reader/welcome.aspx?Linkid=47459>

3. Does Greenpeace violate laws? <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5013751/>

### **Vocabulary & Idioms:**

1. Civil disobedience
2. Contraband
3. Haul
4. Behemoth
5. Bawdy
6. Elude
7. Voracious
8. Moratorium
9. Abate
10. Flagging
11. Deterrent
12. Abate

### **Questions:**

1. What is Greenpeace? What are its objectives?
2. Do you think Greenpeace has done a good job spotlighting environmental issues around the world, including whaling, oil and globalization meetings?
3. Would you consider Greenpeace's actions nonviolent or violent?
4. How would you define terrorism?
5. Do you think Greenpeace's approach is too extreme?

### **Essay Question:**

Do you think Greenpeace is a terrorist organization? In your essay, consider whether violence is sometimes necessary to bring about positive change.

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### **For Teachers:**

#### **Pro: (Is A Terrorist Organization)**

Greenpeace resorts to eco-terrorism. Although Greenpeace tries to stir debate and people to act, it has done it in a way that has blemished its reputation as a nonviolent group. In fact, it is affiliated with many radical groups and many of its members receive training from militant organizations. Violence is a needless and counterproductive strategy which serves only to discredit those who resort to it.

#### **Con: (Is Not A Terrorist Organization)**

Greenpeace is certainly not a terrorist organization. Terrorism is a very strong word and should not be used loosely. It is true that some members have practiced violent tactics but

they are not representative of the organization and it is important that people do not judge the organization from a few bad apples' disobedience. These actions, including vandalism and sabotage, have on the whole been rejected by Greenpeace and many mainstream environmentalists.