

definition was unsound, the second and third speakers will have to defend it and argue for it being reasonable, or they risk having their first speaker's speech become irrelevant.

As with any other argument put forward in a debate, the adjudicators must decide a definitional challenge, not on the basis of the adjudicators' own opinion (if the adjudicators believe the definition was reasonable or not), but in terms of the strength of the arguments offered. Even if the adjudicators feel the definition was a tautology, the Opposition will need to explain why this is so. If the adjudicators feel the Proposition argued better in its defence than the Opposition did in challenging it, the Proposition will 'win the definition'. But that said, the more unexpected, bizarre or unusual the definition would appear to the ordinary intelligent person, the less argument will be needed to point this out.

A team may still win despite a bad definition. Its marks for style and strategy may be considerably better. It may have much stronger arguments and examples, despite a poorer definition. But while winning remains possible, it has handicapped itself significantly by allowing the other team the opportunity to attack the premise of its case.

(c) Broaden

The third option for the Opposition is neither outright acceptance nor outright rejection, but instead to supplement the definition. The Proposition's definition may be incomplete. It may have omitted to define a word in the motion that the Opposition considers pivotal. In this case, the Opposition can offer a definition of this word, so long as it meets the standards of reasonableness outlined above (or it may in turn be challenged by the Proposition). The best response by the Proposition would be to ignore the Opposition supplementing the definition if this leaves unaltered the basic issue in dispute, and the nature of the arguments and examples being contended. If the word was in fact important, the Proposition might claim its definition was implicit in the case and arguments it put forward.

'Broadening the debate' is a form of supplementing the definition, and is one of the best tactics available to the Opposition. In many cases when there is an unexpected definition, the Proposition will be seeking to debate a narrower version of the motion. What is being put forward is not alien to the motion, it is just a small subset of what it should encompass.

A number of examples have been given above: 'This House believes that we need a world government' meaning that there should be a new body similar to but more effective than the International Criminal Court; 'This House would compromise civil liberties in the interest of security' being restricted to the merits of national identification cards.

In each of these cases it is possible to say, yes, we will take on the example you have given, and show why you are wrong, but this is only one aspect of what the motion encompasses and we will present examples showing that in other aspects it is also wrong, thereby demonstrating that as a general proposition it is wrong. The Opposition is not rejecting the definition and the arguments that flow from it; the Opposition is instead saying they are incomplete, and is supplementing them.

Broadening the debate (back to what was originally expected) avoids the pitfalls of a definition debate, while allowing the Opposition to present its case and arguments, as prepared. If the motion 'This House believes that low taxes are preferable to extensive government services' was restricted to health care (on the basis this was particularly controversial at present), the Opposition could spend a fair amount of time dealing with health care arguments (which it should have anticipated, given these are a major area in which consumer choice policies have been implemented or discussed), but could broaden the debate by noting that such policies have also been applied in education and public