

DANEIS Beginning of the Round (with Straight Resolutions)

When the debaters, Judge, and Speaker are all in the room, the Judge or the Speaker should flip a coin, asking one of the debaters chosen at random to "call" it. The team that wins the coin flip may choose *either* the resolution *or* the side, whichever it prefers. Before it is required to pick one of these options, the winning team is entitled to hear and see the resolutions offered for the round. Therefore, as soon as the coin flip is completed, the Judge or the Speaker opens the envelope containing the resolutions for the round, reads them aloud to everyone, and then shows them to the side that won the coin flip. The team that won the coin flip now declares whether it will choose side or resolution. The team that lost the coin toss receives whichever of these items the winning team does not choose. Whichever team has the privilege of choosing side may wait until the other team has selected the resolution for the debate before declaring their preferred side. Thus, the team choosing the resolution does so first. The other team then chooses either side "Government" or side "Opposition," whichever side it prefers.

The Government team now has two minutes in which to propose its definitions for a key term or two in the resolution. Both teams remain in the room during this two minute period with the Judge and the Speaker. The Government is not required to outline its case in this two-minute definitions period. Since the resolutions for the debate are *straight* resolutions, the resolutions have been written to make them debatable *as worded*. Any proposed definition for a term, therefore, should only be for clarification on the meaning of the term in the context of the debate, NOT for redefining the resolution as a whole. The purpose of having straight resolutions is to avoid situations where the Government tries to "squirrel" the debate by redefining the resolution broadly to argue about something that they have prepared as a "canned" case. Proposing a proper clarification for a key term would be merely to propose, for example, that the word *government* refers to the federal government, or (alternatively) that the word *government* refers not to the federal government but rather to all state governments, or (alternatively) the word *government* refers to governments wherever you find them.

If the Opposition and the Judge find that the definitions constitute a debatable resolution, *i.e.* one which is not tautological, truistic, or overly narrow, both teams begin their 10 minute preparation period. If either the Opposition or the Judge questions the debatability of the definitions, the Judge should first attempt to negotiate a mutually acceptable compromise. If this effort fails, the Judge should dispatch the Speaker immediately to find the Tournament Director, who will adjudicate.

Here is an example. Suppose the resolution selected for debate is "This House regrets bombing Libya". The terms here are pretty straightforward. "This House" is taken to mean the people in the room, and should be left as such. "Libya" should be defined as the North African country of Libya, and "bombing" as the NATO airstrikes on that country. The only tricky part is "regrets", which should probably be left undefined or, preferably, be given a loose definition. That allows the debate to go in multiple directions and factor in moral, strategic, and other questions. So defining the word *regrets* as "holds to be a mistake", or "would not have, with hindsight, carried out" works well, but "believes did not accomplish its objectives" is probably overly narrow and confining. With that in mind, as long as the terms are reasonable the Opposition cannot object just because they would prefer something else, but if the terms change the nature or crux of the debate, then they should be changed.

Once there is agreement on definitions, the Government prepares outside the room for 10 minutes. When preparation time has expired, the Government returns to the room and the Speaker calls the House to order so that the debate can begin.