A. Goal of the lesson

Debaters will learn what difference can definition make for the debate, how to define the debate and what kind of unfair definitions could be rejected.

B. Activities

Exercise (10min.)

Debaters are divided into groups (about 4-5 debaters each). These groups should draw pictures of words trainer will give them. Each group works alone but words are the same for all groups. The trainer gives words such as animal, castle, storm, vehicle, tree. Words are selected in a way that there is a scope of different visual representations, one can think of when the word is pronounced. After three or four words groups will share their drawings. Ideally, most of the drawings will be different in specificity and object drew, but all will represent given word (vehicle can be drawn as bike or car etc.).

The trainer then moderates a discussion about why different groups came up with different representations. In the end, they should recognize that words mean slightly different things for different people and therefore to debate properly, one has to specify words in the given motion.

Lecture (20 min.)

A trainer can base lecture on the text from Harvey-Smith, N. 2011. The Practical Guide to Debating: Worlds Style/British Parliamentary Style. kap. Appendix B. pg. 161-166.

Debaters should learn what a good definition means, how to approach the motion and when is it appropriate to challenge definitions. Additionally, the learn how to interpret motion correctly and recognize examples of types of bad definitions. The debater should understand the unfair place and time setting of the motion - what is squirrel and weasel.

The trainer should stress that not all instances of time and place setting are incorrect and that sometimes they can be also desirable.

Exercise (15 min.)

Debaters are divided into groups (about 4-5 debaters each). Each group will get three motion with definitions (two definitions are unfair, one is acceptable). Groups will decide if they consider definitions acceptable. If not they are supposed to come up with better definitions. After ten minutes all the groups present their opinions and definitions.

C. Preparation

For this topic, you can also take a look at Quinn, S. 2005. Debating. pg. 10 – 20. Motions and definitions for the second exercise have to be prepared beforehand. Please prepare different examples of bad definitions for different groups. Among

acceptable definitions, there should be also correct instances of place and time setting.
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D. Hints
When using examples of bad definitions in lecture or exercise part of the session, try to avoid obvious / grossly hyperbolized bad definitions and work rather with real examples which occurred in your circuit.

E. Verification

Do not forget to conclude the session by making sure that everyone understands the concept of definitions and its importance in a debate. You can have someone to conclude the main points learned. Also, you can use direct questions, such as:
-         What are definitions in terms of debate?
-         Why do we need to think of definitions before the debate