**Brown’s culture fosters a community in which students challenge the ideas of others and have their ideas challenged in return, promoting a deeper and clearer understanding of the complex issues confronting society. This active engagement in dialogue is as present outside the classroom as it is in academic spaces. Tell us about a time you were challenged by a perspective that differed from your own. How did you respond? (200-250 words)\***

As a proponent for the environmentalists, I strongly believe in making a more sustainable world. Imagine my discombobulation when I had to argue against establishing environmental laws at the final round of the WSC debate at Yale University.

Both teams had 15 minute-research time; as the opposition team, I had to gather all possible arguments against establishing the laws. The affirmative team started their stance by pointing out everything I agreed with: protecting every component of the environment and aiming to achieve environmental conservation.

I was confused; how could environmental laws that helped the environmental law possibly be harmful? I felt uncomfortable having to take a side that I oppose. I brainstormed hard, thinking about the negative impacts that environmental laws could bring. Eureka: Business! These laws would negatively affect many unsustainable businesses by jacking up materials prices, causing a chain effect that eventually impacts every industry and harms the country’s GDP.

Both teams carried out heated arguments, and even though my team lost at the end of the debate, I came out learning something new.

Before this debate, if someone asked, “Should we implement environmental laws?” I would have automatically said yes without thinking twice. But in reality, I failed to see how it could negatively affect others. I learned that by taking the time to reflect and see how it could affect different people, I could see the whole picture. This interaction helped me understand the importance of looking at problems from a different perspective.

Hi Brian! I see that you’ve stayed within the word limit, and that is quite a feat ☺

However, the prompt is asking you to recall a time where your belief is challenged by other people, and how you respond to other people’s perspectives. I think that this part has not been covered yet in your essay as you personally recounted a time where you had to take another stance to oppose what you originally believed in (environmental conservation).

To provide a more relevant answer, try to recall a time when you had a disagreement with someone else regarding an important social issue. How did the dialogue go? How did you resolve the disagreement with the other person? This essay is prompting you to provide a response so that the admission committee can get a glimpse into your conflict management style, the way you communicate, and how you handle difficult conversations, so this is the part you need to focus on ☺

Best of luck!

Melinda