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What is Model United Nations?

Everybody's heard of the United Nations. The UN, with its headquarters in New York City is the largest organization of its kind in the world. Formed after the conclusion of the Second World War, it is an avenue for countries to solve mutual problems and resolve international conflict without force or weaponry. The UN itself is a complicated organization with a multifaceted agenda, but nevertheless, it remains a community that embodies unity and symbolizes continual human progress. This of course does not mean that the United Nations is without faults; indeed, many aspects of the UN are in desperate need of reform. Nevertheless, the UN is an important part of the global community and continues to play a major role in an increasingly interconnected planet.

Evidently, the United Nations caters quite well to simulations, aptly termed Model United Nations conferences. By no means are these conventions few and far between: from Harvard, to Stanford, to the Hague, to Hong Kong, intellectual institutions around the world have realized the importance of learning about the views of different countries and using this knowledge to achieve a tangible solution. The MUN experience, however, goes beyond mere comprehension. Not only do you have to *know* your country's views on various issues, but you have to *be* your state; adopting a dynamic way of thinking to ensure your country's interests are being served. The beauty of the conference is that this mode of thought is not confined to the sessions taking place each day. Should you choose to fully immerse yourself into the MUN world, you can be assured that the simulation will find its way into your hotel room, onto your breakfast table and anywhere else you choose. Unmoderated caucuses will spring up throughout each day as you endeavor to compromise, and find a solution that can be applied to real life problems. You will find yourself discussing issues that currently are affecting millions worldwide, and striving to find some way to reconcile your own moral viewpoints with the demands of your home government and the earth as a whole. Model United Nations is not just a club or conference, rather, it is way of thinking. By realizing this at the onset of your conference, not only will you be better able to contribute as new proposals arise during sessions, but you will also attain a greater understanding of the dynamics of world community after each trip. Simply, the more you put into each conference working on strategies and solutions, the more you will get out.

Welcome to the world of MUN.

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3 Simple Steps to Effective Research

The most laborious aspect of the MUN experience is often researching your country and your committee's topics and sifting through the seemingly endless stream of background information.

Before you start though, it's important not to overlook your committee itself. Understanding how your committee functions will be very important later on; at the very least, you should know where it stands in the bigger picture (is it part of the UN, or is it a separate regional body?), what it can or cannot do (the Disarmament and International Security Committee, for instance, cannot impose sanctions), how it has dealt with similar issues in the past, and its members.

With a firm grasp of your committee, it's time to begin the bulk of your research. The following questions will help guide you through that process.

Step 1: What is the problem I'm being presented with?

This should be evident from your committee background guides, which are usually available for download on the conference's website. These documents will be the basis of your research into the topic areas, as they describe the events that may have precipitated the conflict you will have to deal with.

Depending on the conference, the background information will be taken to various levels of detail. Whatever the case, it is important to read everything that is given to you. Often, there will be a section specifically outlining the issues that are at the heart of the topic area. Following this, will be a list of bibliographic material and websites of particular interest. All of these resources should be used in order to find what the central problems are, and correspondingly, to identify possible solutions or ways to change the status quo.

It's good to have material with perspectives different to those being advocated by in the background guide. Creativity and originality in approach to the situation will undoubtedly create a great deal of interest from other delegates in your country's positions and views. Think outside the box: try to determine not only the policies and actions that are currently proposed or employed to deal with the issue at hand, but also what led to these approaches being instituted in the first place. Specifically, discover the relationship between the current situation and past actions. Find the reasons why previous responses have not had the desired effect on the area of concern and observe the nature of the current strife.

Step 2: What is my country's position on the issue?

Answering this question involves three steps. Firstly, you must research your country in general. Following this, you should look at how your country's foreign policy specifically relates to the topic at hand. Finally, you should look at past actions your country has taken,

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and use this to predict what ways it might respond to deal with the present problem.

The first part of this research section is the most time consuming, but is absolutely essential in order to accurately articulate the views and concerns of your nation within committee sessions. The country research should encompass the economic and political systems of the country, the history and culture of the society, the demographics of the society, the geography of the country, the international and regional associations the country belongs to, and the country's current domestic situation. Specifically, you should look for statistics that can be used to provide a general understanding as to how the country works, where the government's power is derived from, and what role the nation plays with its regional and global community. When researching pay particular attention to measures such as GNP, foreign debt, political philosophy, type of government, internal language and religious boundaries, population density, division of the workforce, and various geographic regions. All of these factors combine to define the unique nature of the country you will be representing, and will become particularly useful in the formulation of a foreign policy pertaining to the topic areas.

The assimilation of this research into a specific and coherent policy on the issues that your committee will discuss is the ultimate goal of your gathering of background information. By first putting yourself in the mindset of your state, you will be better able to understand the factors influencing government decisions, and therefore, be more representative of your country when confronted with various scenarios during the conference that you might not have expected.

After identifying the problem (Step 1), you must search out existing policies designed to meet the problem in your country, how the problem affects the population of your country and its relative importance to your nation at the current time. Sometimes, your country's government will explicitly state their policies; on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, for instance, it explains in considerable depth Korea's stance on climate change. However, there is a legitimate possibility that your state has no official policy towards areas being discussed (the Sultanate of Oman, for instance, has only four articles of foreign policy in total); if this is the case, your job becomes more difficult.

You should then try to identify the groups that exert power and control of the operation of the country (often political parties or the government, but not always) and find what their views on related matters might be. In doing this, you must be careful to weigh each viewpoint according to the relative support that it holds; that is, you should place the greatest importance on opinions held by the organizations with the greatest power.

For instance, if my topic area related to the legalization of medicinal narcotics and I were assigned Canada, I would look to the majority party's political platform in order to gain insight as to how the country should be represented. If this avenue yields no success and information on major interest groups are limited, you may then have to rely on the broad ideology of the government and the information uncovered in your general survey to make

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an educated guess at your country's position.

Another valuable way of generating a country position is to look at the views of other countries that have traditionally sided with your nation. For example, many African nations have similar policies regarding the availability of generic drugs to deal with the HIV crisis. Certain blocs will also be specified in your background papers. Keep these in mind for policy formulation as well as for finding potential allies during the conference.

What additional resources do I need to use?

There is no limit to material that can be used in writing your position paper. Apart from the information presented in the background guide, there are many different sources that you should look into. Obviously, there is general Internet research where you type in various keywords into a search engine and explore until you find something useful; this is helpful to get the gist of the topic, but it's advisable to build up a diverse knowledge base.

Firstly, you should look to embassies in your country's capital city. Write or phone them, outline your questions, and see if they can send you material or at least briefly answer your query. Often, they will direct you to someone who is willing to spend some time with you and ensure that you understand how their country functions. There are dozens of other organizations (such as the United Nations Information Center, Amnesty International etc.) that release detailed reports outlining new developments and giving insight as to how certain problems should be dealt with (see the list of resources below).

Spend some time at a local university's political library. Even if you can't take books out, it's helpful to go and read up on different interpretations of the problem you're facing from. Talk to your social studies, government & politics, or economics teacher; they may have suggestions as to how you should attack the issue.

Finally, check with your friends and classmates who have attended MUN conferences in the past. There's a very good chance that at least one of them will have done something similar previously. They should be able to point you into the right direction and help you start on your position paper, the next major part of MUN preparation.

Addresses of Helpful Resource Centers

The UN Information Center — Contains General Assembly and Security Council resolutions as well as free information on many topics. While (given its location in Washington, DC) you will most likely be unable to visit it personally, it is possible for them to suggest books that may be helpful.

UN Information Center
1889 F Street N.W. Ground Floor
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone: (202) 289-8670

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UNA-USA — The UNA-USA has a wide variety of information materials including fact sheets on numerous topics. You can contact them and request certain resources or, if attending a conference in the New York area, pick some up for future MUNs.

UNA-USA
485 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10017
Telephone: (212) 697-3232

Embassies — By talking to your local MP, the address of a specific embassy can be obtained. As a general rule, however, written responses can take a very long time.

The United Nations — If you can't get a certain document from a library, you can contact the UN directly and obtain or purchase it from the Public Inquiries Unit.

Public Inquiries Unit
Department of Public Information
New York, NY 10017
Telephone: (212) 963-4475

4 Steps to Writing a Position Paper You Can Be Proud Of

The position paper is your go-to reference throughout the conference. Essentially, the paper forces you to write out your country's viewpoints in paragraph form. It's also the first important mode of evaluation for the committee staff. Naturally, given its significance to the MUN experience, the position paper is something you want to excel at, and to do this, several criteria must be met.

At the onset of this discussion on the position paper it is particularly significant to stress that it must be written from your country's perspective. Again, as this document will be your guideline for action throughout the entire conference, it's in your best interests to give an accurate portrayal of your country's stance on the issues at hand. Simply put, the position paper is meant to give delegates an opportunity to organize their research into an organized policy statement.

Before you start writing, it's important to look at the discussion questions that outlined in your background guide. Suggesting a comprehensive course of action that answers these queries is the ultimate goal of your write-up. A good position paper should make clear reference to these guidelines and demonstrate that the students clearly comprehend the creative and compositional depth required for an MUN simulation.

If one were looking for some sort of rubric as to what the ideal position paper should consist of, there would be a number of clearly identifiable elements. The position paper has a definite general structure to it: three sections (totaling one page in length) each of which serves a clear purpose within the general context of the paper. With reference to the Sample Position Paper on [page 9](#), we can analyze these different parts and comment on the relative successes of specific techniques used to elucidate points.

The first section (labeled **A**) serves the purpose of outlining the topic in general and providing insight into the root of the conflict. As the subject of the paper is Free Trade, the write-up begins by first stating the areas of concern, discussing some of the positive and negative aspects of globalization, as well as emphasizing the controversial nature of the topic at hand. Your opening paragraph should, as this paper attests to, be a brief summary of the current perception held towards the status quo. It should state the problem and express why it is significant.

The second section (labeled **B**) is where your background research on your country pays off. Firstly, you should identify and describe your country. Be sure to state how your nation relates to the topic for discussion, specifically citing how your state has been affected (**B1**). It is imperative to emphasize the extent to which change has taken place. Hold off any normative judgments in this section, the purpose of this paragraph is not to evaluate the institution or development in reference to your country, but rather, to merely discuss how

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it has altered domestic dynamics.

The third section (labeled **C**) is where you outline your country's policies and what factors contributed to those policies being established in the first place. At this point, you are to address the relative benefits (if any) and detriments of the development, specifically relating to your nation and the actions you have taken to maximize or minimize these effects. You should explain why your country has acted in a certain fashion historically (**C1**), and why it will continue to follow this course of action. Outline your state's particular interest in the issue being discussed, and begin to discuss what needs to be changed about the current interpretation of the situation. Cite the areas needing reform (**C2**) and provide suggestions as to how this revision process should be accomplished. Following this, you may want to focus on one area of particular concern for your country (**C3**). Depending on your topic area, this could be anything from the affect of a war on a nation's health care infrastructure to how creating new national boundaries may affect resource deposits running along the potential borders. In this particular paper, attention is brought to Regional Trade Alliances (**C4**) and their associated problems, something that, as been noted, holds special significance to Oman.

By approaching a problematic scenario in greater detail, you are demonstrating to your committee staff that you have the capacity to think critically and can identify the issues with which your country has the greatest concern. This being said, choose this area carefully: given the issue's prominence in your position paper (and correspondingly the problem's significance to your country as a whole), you will have to stress its importance during committee session. Be sure to select an area of concern that could potentially form the basis of a resolution, or at least one that can stimulate prolonged debate.

Finally, a conclusion should be written to restate your country's position and sum up what you hope to achieve throughout the duration of the conference (**D**).

The position paper leaves the committee chair with a first impression of your delegation. Naturally, it's important to make that impression as strong as possible. The staff looks for original and critical thinking, a true understanding of the nature of your nation and both a function and applied knowledge of your topic. Be sure to demonstrate this through presenting a concise yet effective paper.

Between the time you submit your position papers and the conference, you'll probably be busy with schoolwork, so don't worry excessively about preparation. On weekends, however, you may find it helpful to review material and do more researching so as to keep up to date with the latest happenings. Other than that, get ready for showtime!

Sample Position Paper

Topic: Free Trade

Country: Oman

Committee: Economic and Financial (ECOFIN)

(A) The tumultuous conflict surrounding the issue of free trade and its variegated ramifications has been a moot point ever since the creation of the modern state. While exponents of free trade argue that comparative advantage and the development of economies of scale outweigh the associated detriments of a free market economy, their adversaries purport that smaller, national economies that are inundated with cheaper international goods from free trade begins to flounder and lose self-sustainability. Those in opposition to free trade, also make reference to the exponentially rising human rights and environmental violations that are a direct consequence of burgeoning global market.

(B) Oman is perched in the putatively lofty position of an oil-exporting nation. However, this appraisal is a mere simulacrum of our actual situation. **(B1)** Oman relies on entities such as the World Trade Organization to help facilitate the purchasing and exchange of good across the global market, thus enabling essential goods to disseminate across our land. Prior to the admission of the Sultanate of Oman into the WTO, the country was involved at an economic level with the nations of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), although Oman was never a member. In spite of this, Oman generally adheres to their collective mandate in order to Eix oil prices and protect the special interests of this conglomerate.

(C) Oman joined the WTO in order to voice its support for the continuing liberalization of world markets. **(C1)** Furthermore, Oman believes that this unique amalgamation acts as a vehicle for increased prosperity by raising the amount of Foreign Direct Investment and domestic stimulation. Oman, due to its new position in the WTO, has now broadened trade with Western nations, and hopes for this trend to continue. **(C2)** However, Oman also recognizes that in order for the economic infrastructure of not only Oman, but also other developing countries to remain stable, the steps of tariff reduction, and all encompassing globalization must be gradual, lest there be recurrences of strife, as initially seen in the Former Yugoslavia and the Russian Federation. The WTO must also take further steps to impose a universal human rights and environmental standards operating code, which must be enforced uniformly. With the need for international cooperation has come the desire for regional association. This chain of motivation for many a nation has manifested itself in the formation of Regional Trading Associations. **(C3)** Although this arrangement ostensibly accommodates both desires, it actually results in alliances whose members are common enough in geographic similarity to have some consensus, but diverse enough to yield almost unremitting disapprobation from some of the parties on any given issue. Therefore, these theoretical constructs when applied in reality are far from seamless and are not the definitive solutions to conflicting national agenda.

(C4) In Oman's specific scenario, the aforementioned generalization holds true. Consequently, Oman is not a member of OPEC. In addition, not only do there exist the problems inherent to RTAs, but also the members of OPEC lack significant economic diversity in various industrial and resource sectors to make such a pact mutually pragmatic. Rather, this specific concern is ignored in light of the prodigious matter of oil, which takes the forefront in any discussions of world trade. **(D)** Oman believes that the benefits of comparative advantage, economies of scale, and specialization outweigh the problems associated with a world abiding by principles of increasing economic globalization and free trade. This being said, Oman pushes for the continued expansion of such policies while urging organizations such as the WTO to refine specific clauses so that the exploitation of labour and the environment does not go unchecked.

Thriving during the Conference

When the conference begins, it's time for all your research to finally pay off. Once the opening ceremonies have concluded (be sure to relax and enjoy the speakers during this section), it's time for the first session of the MUN.

As the delegates filter in, many will take the opportunity to come up and introduce themselves; they'll tell you their names (and serial numbers if applicable), what they feel the topic of greatest concern is, and just about anything else they can to get you initially on their side. At this point, you have the opportunity to join in and talk to other entering delegates, or sit down and collect your thoughts. Be advised, though it may seem pointless (and while some of your fellow delegates may frighten you with their infinite pool of knowledge), now is a good time to build connections. Find out where everyone stands on the issues at hand, and particularly socialize with those who seem to have similar positions to yourself. It's also good to take the chance to relate countries to faces, so that you'll know exactly who to look for if a question arises.

Most important, however, is to scout out a chair in the front of the room, in plain view of the committee staff. The reasons for this are two-fold: firstly, this location allows the Chair to clearly identify you and correspondingly, call on you throughout session. Secondly, the most motivated and eager delegates tend to locate themselves at the front. These are the people you want to associate with. Proximity to them leads to dialogue and eventual alliance-building. This will be incredibly helpful later on as you scramble to get endorsers for your resolution.

Setting the Agenda

Eventually, the Chair will call the room to order after which he or she will proceed with role call to ensure that everyone is present.

So long as a quorum exists, the Chair will ask for someone to move for the agenda to be set. This is the first major action of the committee. Before any debate on a specific topic can take place, UN procedures dictate that the order in which the topics will be discussed must be established. In most cases, this involves the committee deciding whether or not Topic A or Topic B should be addressed first. This is the time for you to voice your opinion as to which holds the greatest relevance to the committee and the world as a whole. Naturally, you're also going to want to pick the area that you are the most proficient at as well.

The Chair will entertain a motion to set the agenda to one of the topics, then speakers in favour and against the motion. Raise your placard (you are provided with these before the conference; a *placard* is a sign with your country's name on it) if you wish to go up and talk. As there will no doubt be a number of them in the air, hold it high and straight so that it's easy for the chairperson to see you. Delegates who are recognized speak for roughly one minute (the exact times are set by the Chair).

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After a certain number of speakers, the Chair will eventually call for a motion to close debate on setting the topic order. A vote will be taken and within a few minutes you'll find out what the committee will be covering first. At most conferences including VMUN, the committee will eventually discuss the second topic as well.

Making Major Motions and the Rules of Procedure

Before discussing the process of making speeches and tips for negotiations, it's helpful to have a grasp of the rules you're expected to adhere to while in simulation. There are certain ways of bringing up points, and terms that you'll have to commit to memory. The best way to cover these is simply to list them off. The following items are arranged in order of precedence (which point is recognized by the Chair first):

Point of Personal Privilege: This can be used at any time and states to the chair that your ability to participate in the discussions is being hindered in some way. This could be as a result of too much noise or talking by fellow delegates, or because you simply can't understand what the speaker is saying (a malfunctioning microphone, for instance). Simply raise your placard (even if someone is up at the front speaking — though only in very serious circumstances) and you will be called upon to state your point.

Point of Order: This again can be used at any time (but may only interrupt a speech when the speaker himself has violated a procedure) and states to the chair that one of the rules governing debate may have been broken. The Chair's ruling on this point is not subject to appeal.

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: This can be used only when the floor is open (when no one is speaking or addressing the Chair). Raising this point allows a delegate to ask a question about procedure (not regarding substantive material) directly to the Chair.

Adjournment or Suspension of Debate: This motion occurs at the end of every session and calls for all discussion to be carried over to the next meeting. Everything remains exactly as it was before (the Speaker's List stays the same). One-half of the committee must vote in favor of this motion for it to pass.

Closure of Debate: This calls for an end of all debate on a substantive matter (for example, a topic area). It requires the approval of two-thirds of the committee, and if passed, the Speaker's List is closed and a vote immediately takes place on the resolutions currently on the floor (with the first to receive a majority of the votes passing). When this motion is introduced, two speakers are permitted to speak against it.

Postponement of Debate: This calls for a postponement of any discussion of any resolution or amendment. This would result in the document being taken off the floor, and, as a result, it could no longer be referred to be delegates. This motion requires a two-thirds majority and when it is introduced, one speaker is allowed to speak in favor of it, and another, against it.

Division of The Question: This is arguably the hardest motion for new delegates to comprehend. When a resolution is about to be voted on (after debate has been closed) or an

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amendment has been proposed, a delegate can motion to divide the question, or split up the resolution (or amendment) up into different sections (i.e. clause by clause) and each of these sections to be voted on individually. This is helpful when one particular part of a resolution is controversial, and the majority approves the rest. If successful, dividing the question allows for the good parts to be kept, and the bad parts to be edited out, without completely rejecting the resolution. Two speakers are allowed to speak for and against this motion when it is introduced, and it requires a one-half majority to pass.

Introduction of an Amendment or Resolution: This motion is used to bring a resolution or amendment to the floor so that discussion can begin on it. It requires a one-half majority. If it passes, the writers of the amendment or resolution are usually invited up to read it aloud, clause-by-clause, and answer any questions.

Resumption of Debate: This motion is used to propose that debate be resumed on a resolution or amendment. This cancels the effect of a postponement motion. A two-thirds majority is required, and when this motion is made, two speakers can stand up and voice their opinions against it.

Reconsideration: If you voted with the majority on a motion, you can ask that the chair allow for a second vote to take place with the hopes that the decision may be reversed. This motion is extremely rare, and requires a two-thirds majority and gives two speakers the opportunity to voice their opinions against it.

Appeal: This motion requires a two-thirds majority and goes right to the Moderator. An appeal is used to question the ruling of a Moderator or Chairperson. He or she then defends the decision and the motion is then put to a vote.

Right of Reply: If at any point in time during the committee session, you are personally insulted, you may request an opportunity to defend yourself from aforementioned erroneous allegations.

There are two specific procedural motions/rules that have not been discussed thus far because of their particular importance and the need the stress them separately: namely, motions for caucus and yields.

Caucus: The Most Intense Part of The Conference

Without a doubt, caucus is where the most meaningful discourse during the committee sessions occurs. There are two types of caucuses: unmoderated and moderated. Both caucuses are established by motions (in terms of precedence, these rank right after adjournment of a meeting). The motion requires the support of one-half of the committee, and must, when it is made, have a specific time limit and purpose (for example, to discuss a new resolution or idea that's just been brought up).

In moderated caucuses, delegates who raise their placards are called on, one by one, to speak for a certain period of time. The Speaker's List tends to move very slowly, and moderated caucuses are useful to focus the committee's attention on specific issues. During a

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moderated caucus, you should try to not only advance your own ideas, but also critique and evaluate the policies of those speaking before you. Clash not only stimulates debate, but also makes you seem “on the ball” to the committee staff. Take good notes while the other delegates speak, as you will never know when you will be recognized by the Chair; so long as you keep your placard raised, you can be next or tenth in line.

While the moderated caucus provides structure for discussion, the unmoderated caucus is the exact opposite. Once an unmoderated caucus has been declared, the room turns into anarchy: it is, more or less, a period where the rules of procedure are suspended and the room turns into a free-for-all. During this time, take an opportunity to walk around the room, discuss ideas with fellow delegates, or work on a resolution. While it’s a break from MUN rules, it’s not a break from the MUN. This is time that can be used constructively, and with all the other delegates completely at your disposal, you should take advantage of this opportunity.

Yields

Instead of simply sitting down at the conclusion of your speech, you should yield the remainder of your time to three different sources. Yields can be made to the Chair, to questions, to comments, and to another country.

Yielding to the chair prevents any comments from being made on your speech. If you have just said something particularly controversial and do not want to give any opposition faction the chance to refute your points, this is the best option.

Yielding to questions allows for other delegates to pose inquiries about your contentions or about the topic in general for your remaining time. This is usually the best option so long as you have an opportunity to answer the queries (do not yield to questions when you have four seconds remaining).

Yielding to comments allows other delegates, selected by the Chair, to comment on your speech. This may be useful if you wish to solicit general feedback on an idea.

Yielding to another country gives a delegation of your choice your remaining time. Often, delegates may yield to allies, who in turn, use the period to support their mutual case.

One final point: you may only yield on constructive speeches, that is, speeches for which you have been called from the speakers list. Moderated caucuses do not offer yield opportunities.

General Speaking Tips

When going up to make a speech, confidence in your biggest asset. If you give the impression that you feel strongly about what you are saying, others will feel the same way too. Be sure that you look presentable (blazer done up, shirt tucked in): first impressions are very important. The first speech you make (after being called up from the speakers list — make sure that you raise your placard quickly once the topic has been set) should outline your

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country's foreign policy and how it relates to the issue at hand. As this is a descriptive statement, you can prepare this well in advance. Be sure to mention any current or historical action that your country has taken in reference to the topic. From then on, your speeches should be mostly (impromptu) analysis of committee happenings and evaluations of the suggestions put forth by other delegations. It's always impressive when you can directly quote statements made by other nations and use them to emphasize a point. Other than that, make sure to relax, keep yourself involved in discussions happening in and out of the session room, and stick to your country's policy.

As the conference progresses, delegates will begin to talk about writing working papers or, later on, draft resolutions. This is the next step in the MUN process.

A Bite-Sized Guide to Writing Resolutions

Writing a comprehensive resolution as a solution to the problem presented in your topic area is the goal of your committee. By passing this document and ending all substantive debate, you and your colleagues are not only reaffirming your solidarity and commitment to honouring this mutual pact, but also are demonstrating that you have reached an equitable and viable solution.

The resolution reflects everything that has thus far been discussed: compromise, your national policy, and new developments occurring during session. It is not meant to be something prepared beforehand, nor a word-for-word account of your position paper; rather, it is meant to be a result of debate and negotiation with your allies, fellow bloc nations, and other countries sharing your viewpoints.

This being said, for you to support a resolution, you must be sure that it falls within your national policy. You cannot simply sign on to every piece of paper that passes your way. Often, to ensure that one's interests are being met, delegates will often start their own resolutions. So long as you have the input of other countries (that will support the document during committee session), this is a fantastic idea. Be sure, however, that there aren't already ten resolutions already on the floor; joining a group already espousing ideas you agree with would be far more productive than simply starting from scratch and repeating many of their ideas.

Working Papers

Before the resolution stage, comes the Working paper stage. A working paper can be described as a “baby resolution”, as it lacks great deals of complexity and detail that are often found of the latter paper.

Essentially, the working paper serves the function of codifying various ideas major ideas buzzing around the room, and organizing them into a clear statement. While they do not have the importance of a resolution, working papers are still an integral of the MUN experience. By identifying yourself with a particular viewpoint or stance, you can attract other delegations to your side. Other groups are able to have easy access your bloc stance (working papers are usually digitally projected to the entire committee), and as a result of this, they will know exactly how much they can compromise, and can find their relative compatibility with your position. By having a hard copy of your stance throughout the session, they can make reference to their concerns during moderated caucuses or speaking times. By compromising and receiving constructive feedback, you can add or change clauses so that your resolution (the next logical step) will be met with greater support and popularity.

Writing a working paper is fairly simple. The rules of format are not as strict or comprehensive as those regulating resolutions. While working papers can be written in resolution format (discussed later), there are no rules about format — they can be written in

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bullet-point form, paragraphs, etc. It's the content, not the organization, that's the biggest concern. Finally, you should know that working papers are informal documents: they are not introduced in the same fashion as a resolution.

The Resolution In Brief

Once some working papers have been put on the floor and several ideas have been debated and discussed both in unmoderated and moderated caucuses, it is a good idea to get together with other delegates with similar views and begin writing a draft resolution. As noted before, a resolution is a formal and comprehensive course of action to react to the problems presented by the topic area.

Once it has been written, a draft resolution must be submitted to the Director, who will read over the paper, possibly make edits to it (or ask you to revise specific parts), and authorizes the distribution of the paper to your committee. Before submission, you must collect the signatures of several delegates (this varies depending on the size of your committee) who wish for the resolution to be introduced to the committee as a whole. These delegates prove to the Director that there is enough support for the document to justify bringing it before all the delegates during the session.

Often, these signatories will form the backbone of the resolution's support group but this is not always the case. A delegate who signs a resolution may simply be voicing his or her interest in debating the resolution

Writing the Resolution

At the very top of any resolution should be the committee you are in, sponsor countries (delegates who have written considerable portions of the draft resolution), and signatories (delegates who want to hear the resolution discussed)

The first part of the resolution are the *preambulatory clauses*: adverbial and adjectival phrases used to describe the committee's intent, motivation, and frame of mind when writing the resolution. As shown by sentence **A** of Sample Resolution A on [page 18](#), preambulatory are meant to be concise and effective. All preambulatory clauses begin with capital letters and have the first word (the adverbial or adjectival modifier) underlined (**A1**). When writing a resolution for the first time, you may find yourself at a loss for "first words"; to help you out, some of the more common modifiers have been listed on [page 17](#). Be sure to vary these throughout your write-up.

After the preambulatory clauses, come the *operative clauses* (**B** on Sample Resolution A): the main body of the resolution. The operative clauses contain the action of the resolution: literally, what is being proposed or suggested. As a general rule, the clauses are grouped by subject matter. In terms of format, each operative clause starts with a capitalized, present-tense verb in the third-person singular, as with the preambulatory clauses, to demonstrate the intentions and goals of the committee. Remember this is where your content must go!

Battlefield Earth

Be sure to put as much material as possible in your resolution: the more comprehensive and all encompassing it is, the less likely it will need to be amended or changed. Furthermore, by submitting a large resolution you are allowing for the more controversial factors to be discussed and edited out (by Division of the Question) without having a major impact on the resolution as a whole.

Be willing to compromise: the most successful resolutions are those that result from the combination of many different ones. Also, try to work in smaller rather than larger groups. We've all heard the saying too many cooks spoil the broth, and MUN is not different. If you are with a group of thirty people, nothing will be accomplished. Everyone will try to talk at the same time, and it will be impossible to control order. An hour after beginning, you'll find yourself with nothing accomplished and a massive headache. Work with a few people, then go individually to other countries and bounce ideas off them. This way, you can still work constructively and get input from other blocs.

Below are lists of preambulatory clauses, and operative openings that are commonly used. These are just a few samples that may come in handy during session:

Preambulatory Clause Opening Modifiers

Affirming	Declaring	Gravely concerned
Alarmed by	Deeply concerned	Having considered
Approving	Deeply convinced	Having examined
Aware of	Desiring	Keeping in mind
Believing	Emphasizing	Noting further
Bearing in mind	Expecting	Noting with regret
Confident	Fulfilling	Noting with zest
Considering	Fully aware	Reaffirming
Contemplating	Further deploring	Recognizing
Convinced	Further recalling	Welcoming

Operative Clause Opening Modifiers

Accepts	Considers	Further reminds	Reminds
Affirms	Decides	Further recommends	Renews
Appeals	Declares accordingly	Further resolves	Requests
Approves	Demands	Further requests	Solemnly declares
Authorizes	Deplores	Has resolved	Strongly urges
Calls	Designates	Notes	
Calls upon	Further endorses	Offers	
Commends	Further invites	Proclaims	
Condemns	Further proclaims	Reaffirms	
Congratulates	Further reminds	Recommends	

Sample Resolution

n.b. The topic area of this resolution is free trade.

The Economic and Financial Committee:

Reaffirming the importance of such organizations as the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to ensure Global growth and prosperity to both developed and developing nations (**A**),

Recognizing (**A1**) that certain Developing Nations are faced with the adverse effects of free trade,

Understanding that feasible measures ensuring the benefits of trade liberalization will enable the economies of developing nations to prosper,

Fully believing that a Regional Trading Agreements (RTAs) provide stable networks of nations with common economic goals which serve as safety nets to any potential economic crisis,

Fully aware that a nation's sovereignty must not be infringed upon through any measure taken to increase global prosperity in the International community,

Bearing in mind that a definite goal of the ECOFIN Committee is to successfully integrate developing nations into a more equitable global economy,

Noting with zest that strong infrastructures are crucial to sustainable development.

1. *Strongly suggests* (**B**) reform in the IMF's policies pertaining to:
 - a. Strengthening the security with the IMF to prevent corruption,
 - b. Development of nations' economic profiles before the IMF enters the nation,
 - c. Increasing funding to underdeveloped nations,
 - d. Using tranches more than giving extensive loans or credits to nations;
2. *Urges* UNCTAD and the CSD to take more direct action in helping to construct infrastructures that will aid underdeveloped nations in getting on the road to economic stability and entrance into the international economy in such areas as:
 - a. Banking,
 - b. Exchange rates
 - c. Tariffs (protective or general),
 - d. Internal and external fiscal and monetary policy;
3. *Calls upon* the United Nations Development Programme to continue to support development programs with the primary objective of building basic societal infrastructure:
 - a. This shall be accomplished by expanding current programs based on political and legal reconstruction in a larger global scale,
 - b. Such aid by the United Nations Development Program will be dispensed at the discretion of concerned nations;
4. *Calls for* the transfer of relevant science and technology information between existing regional agreements and between individual nations in the effort to build infrastructure;
 - a. Regional trade agreements such as the Asian Free Trade Agreement (AFTA), which have

- lowered their tariffs by 85% on exchanges of technologies and other information, are representative of the goals of the WTO/TRIPS rules and guidelines;
5. *Further implores* that developing nations follow a multi-step plan to assist their transition into the global economy:
 - a. Increase the asset allocation to those economic sectors which they are most disposed to promoting i.e. those sectors which hold the greatest potential for specialization in order to gain a comparative advantage on the world stage through the concentration of foreign direct investment (FDI), funding from the UNDP, WB, and IMF upon request from that nation and review by the aforementioned organizations,
 - b. Expand imports of goods into those nations only to the extent that it initiates enough competition for that native, domestic economic sector to see the need to continue the pursuit of improvement in its respective sector,
 - c. Satisfy domestic markets i.e. they can successfully compete through domestic competition, and a review will take place to decide whether or not the industries have grown while similar products compete on the regional and international scale with review conducted by UNCTAD, ensuring this will be done,
 - d. Begin a large scale expansion of exports to raise GDP (through net exports), as well as the stabilization of the value of the domestic currency;
 6. *Recognizes* that there are alternatives to protective tariffs and pushes for the creation of many permanent joint-committees by the respective national governments and United Nations agencies for the purposes of:
 - a. Encouraging foreign investment into nations emerging economically,
 - b. Preparing industries for competitive imports by granting general and targeted subsidies upon review of that specific domestic economic sector, to be administered and evaluated by the national governments in tandem with advisors from UNCTAD,
 - c. Reviewing whether a firm will experience competitive, profitable advantage under free trade so that firms will not depend upon government protection of imports,
 - d. Stimulating market innovations by assisting market research and locating strategic partners for competition;
 7. *Realizes* the necessity of regional trade agreements as interlocutory arrangements (i.e. between the status quo and the free open market) for developing nations to reduce or drop tariffs while expanding their exports;
 8. *Acknowledges* many of the benefits and associated detriments of amalgamating and expanding RTAs, hence, calls for a committee to be struck with the purpose of evaluating the viability and equity of growing RTAs:
 - a. This board would also be responsible for advising member nations as to the relative sustainability of new RTAs,
 - b. This committee would also be responsible for giving guidance (structure, format etc.) to prospective or new RTAs, and aiding in various other matters at the discretion of the RTAs member states;
 9. *Strongly deplores* the use of dumping in developing nations and encourages anti-dumping agreements to be implemented between developed and developing nations;
 10. *Encourages* the World Trade Organization to expand its mandate and support a commission for the

purposes of arbitrating various grievances and disputes between nations regarding dumping legislation and issues deriving there from.

11. *Requests* that the World Trade Organization annually evaluate the continuing liberalization of the world markets, recognize the subsequent consequences, and set pragmatic goals based on continual observation to avoid a quixotic globalization agenda;
12. *Affirms* the need for a degree of transparency within countries seeking economic restructuring by organizations of the international community while recognizing the desire to protect sovereignty, hence proposes that:
 - a. Those countries wishing for assistance from the WTO, UNCTAD, UNDP etc. accept a commission with the purposes of charting economic progress and identifying notable problems so that the concerns of LDCs can be better articulated,
 - b. This commission will consist of independent observers, as well as WTO and domestic authorities to allow the most objective assessment to be formulated.

The Grand Finale

As seen with the sample resolution on the previous page, the final goal or objective of Model United Nations is not complexity or sophistication; rather, it is to provide a sense of direction for action to be taken. The solution should be straightforward yet comprehensive, taking the best of all possible solutions and removing the infeasible and excessively controversial aspects. MUN is all about compromise and creative decision-making. If you ever reach an impasse, remember one easy-to-follow rule: there is no problem that cannot be negotiated out of. Be sure to stick to your national policy throughout the conference: this is vital to the simulation. While at times this can be challenging, the experience will ultimately be more rewarding if you arrive at a resolution that falls within your country's foreign policy.

Don't feel pressured to sign a resolution or advocate a position that you don't believe is equitable for the world as a whole. Often, delegates have trouble reconciling their nationalistic interests with those of the greater global community. Be sure not to fall into this trap. The United Nations has a mission to make the best decisions for all of humankind, not just for a few countries. Try and speak as much as you can; you have a responsibility to defend your nation's views and ensure that your voice is not disregarded or forgotten.

When the dust clears and a resolution has passed, when the Chair's gavel hits the podium for the final time, you should leave with a sense of accomplishment. By no means is an MUN conference easy: it requires great deals of time and effort. At the Closing Ceremonies, some delegates will be singled out for outstanding contributions during committee sessions. If you have subscribed to what has been discussed in this manual, and have accurately represented your state's interests, then one of these awards may be in the cards. If not, think of the conference as a learning experience. Next time you'll be more confident and ready to deal with the challenges that confront you.

At the end of the conference, be proud of yourself. Not only will you have learned the procedures for formal debate and discourse, but you will also have realized the difficult nature of consensus among a diverse international community. When you arrive home, reflect on what happened during the sessions, and start working on all the schoolwork you missed.

Good luck and *bon voyage* on your MUN journey.



Vancouver Model United Nations

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our conference, visit us at vmun.com.