



Introduction for those new to Model UN

Once you have signed up for the conference, you will receive your delegation's country assignments, committees, and their respective topics. We will also provide a 'Background Guide' that will serve as an introduction to the topics to be discussed in each committee. Before starting individual research, it is definitely worth reading the background guide in detail. We will simulate U.N. committees such as the U.N. Security Council, the U.N. Environment Programme, and the Economic and Financial Committee. Each committee will consider two topics, to be posted on the Oxford Global website; committee and topic background guides will be posted under the 'Model UN' tab of the website one month before the conference.

Before the Conference

There are two main items that each delegate should prepare before the conference: the 'Position Paper', a short essay outlining their country's position on the topics to be debated, and a 'Research File', containing relevant information and data on countries, as well as their stances on the committee's topics. This should be printed out as there are limited instances in which delegates are permitted to use electronic devices during committee time.

1. Position Paper

The Position Paper is a one or two page document that is essentially a summary of your knowledge of the topic and the position your country plans to take when it enters committee. It typically contains four sections: Background of Topic, Past International Actions, Country Policy, and Possible Solutions. Position Papers are usually due on the first day of the conference.

The key starting points for researching each section are as follows:

- **Background of topic:** Background guide of the topic provided by the conference, Google, the news, Wikipedia (to frame the topic – don't rely on this!)
- **Past international actions:** UN website, your committee's website, key treaties or resolutions mentioned in your background guide, UN or NGO reports
- **Country policy:** CIA World Factbook, your country's foreign ministry website, domestic programs within your country, and your country's voting record on key treaties or resolutions
- **Possible Solutions:** NGO or think tank policy recommendations, past UN resolutions that you'd like to change or expand on, and your own creativity!

2. Research Files

Research Files are optional but highly recommended, especially since the conference will only allow the use of technology in committee during 'unmoderated caucuses'. An organized Research File will be your go-to resource during the conference as new terms and acronyms, previous resolutions and treaties, and possible solutions are mentioned. Normally research files will include some or all of the following:

- rules of procedure – how the committee runs and the language used;
- your committee's mandate (why it was created), powers (what it can do), organization (how it fits into the UN and the larger international community), and membership (who's in it);

- basic information on countries (CIA World Factbook); a compilation of latest news and resolutions, conventions etc. that are relevant to the topic;
- an understanding of country policy and implementation, including voting records;
- potential solutions – use think tank research & publications, UN suggestions.

3. Opening Speeches

It may also be worth thinking about an opening speech before the conference has started: this typically lasts about 1 minute and is the first speech that delegates will give to the committee. It is the best opportunity for every delegate to explain their country policy and the key sub-issues they would like the committee to focus on.

During the Conference

1. Writing a Resolution

The goal of every committee is to produce and pass a document called a 'Resolution', which outlines the problems that the countries want to solve within a topic and the proposed solutions to those problems. Delegates will write this document in committee along with other countries that they will be working with. It's important to know the resolution format and phrases, but we don't encourage pre-written resolutions as we want countries to collaborate together during the committee. Resolutions typically include two sections, the first with 'preambulatory clauses' that explain the current situation and past efforts to rectify it, and the second with 'operative clauses', which state the solutions that the sponsors (those who have helped to write the resolution) propose to resolve the issues. See <http://bestdelegate.com/model-un-made-easy-how-to-write-a-resolution/> for a good summary of what is required.

Students are welcome to bring their own computers so that they can write up joint-resolutions during committee sessions. Typing will be allowed only when the committee is in unmoderated caucus (this will be explained in the training session on Friday).

2. Rules of Procedure

To help maintain order, Model UN conferences adopt rules of procedure to establish when a delegate may speak and what they may address. Formal and informal debate may occur:

- **Formal Debate:** During formal debate, the staff maintains a speakers list and delegates speak in the order they are listed. At this time, delegates have an opportunity to share their views with the entire committee. Delegates make speeches, answer questions, and introduce and debate resolutions and amendments.
- **Moderated Caucus:** A moderated caucus, which is a type of formal debate, occurs when a delegate makes a motion to discuss a particular issue that they feel deserves focussed attention at that point in time. Caucusing helps to facilitate discussion on specific matters, especially when there is a long speakers list and delegates feel debate can benefit from a directed discussion. In many conferences, moderated caucuses are the main way intellectual progress is made during debate. If the motion for a caucus is voted upon and passed, anyone may speak if they raise their placard and are called on by the Chair. We will review how such motions should be phrased during the training session.
- **Unmoderated Caucus:** In an unmoderated caucus, delegates meet informally with one another and the committee staff to discuss and negotiate draft resolutions, amendments and other issues. Laptops are permitted during unmoderated caucuses, so this is often when the bulk of the resolution writing takes place.

Rules of procedure can be slightly daunting at first, but we will provide a training session for new delegates on Friday before the conference starts. The full rules of procedure can be found on the [Oxford Global website](#).