



ILMUNC

Guide to Writing Position Papers

After you have completed your research, you should write position papers explaining your country's stance on each topic addressed in your background guide. The purpose of position papers is to help you understand your nation's views and interests on the various issues that you will discuss during the conference. In addition to combining all of your research into a concise document, position papers will also help you remember your country's views throughout the course of debate. Papers should be organized into three sections that respectively address your nation's stance on the background of the topic, the various measures that your nation has taken to address the topic, and finally, how you plan to discuss this topic during the conference.

FORMAT

Each conference has slightly different guidelines, but the format used at ILMUNC is the following:

1. Write the name of your committee, topic, country, and school (in this order) on the top left hand corner of the page.

2. The paper is divided into three sections, each in a separate paragraph, as follows:

a. History of the topic: The first section of your papers should discuss the background of the topic. This section should NOT merely be a re-statement of your background guide. Instead, it should elaborate on the issue AS YOUR COUNTRY sees it. According to your nation, what are the fundamental issues at hand? What are the major problems that need to be discussed? Why have these problems arisen?

b. History of your country's position on the topic: The next section should explain your nation's specific history with the topic, explaining and assessing the various solutions that your country has explored. What actions has your country taken to address this problem? How has your country voted on previous UN resolutions on this topic? What general positions have you taken in the past? Which actions have been successful for your nation, and in what areas is further improvement needed? What similar situations has your country had to deal with?

Think of a position paper as essentially an outline for your ideas and goals as a country. Therefore, you should use focus your paper on the goals that your nation is willing and prepared to pursue throughout the conference. This will be key in setting your stance towards the rest of committee. Remember you want the result and decision of the committee to be as according to your plan and as favorable for you country as possible.

c. Proposed solutions to the topic: The final portion of your paper should discuss the various solutions that your nation would like the UN to consider. How do you feel the UN should address this issue? What specific actions would you like to see taken? What solutions would you support in a resolution? What remedies does your country oppose? Furthermore, how will your nation's specific stance on this issue match up with other countries' positions? Make sure to reference the "questions a resolution must answer" section of your background guide in this section of your paper.

3. Position papers should be no more than one side of a typed, single-spaced page for each topic.

Your position paper should also include a Works Cited page in MLA format containing all the sources used in writing your paper. Any facts should have a citation, and it is very important to ensure that the information you are utilizing is coming from a reliable and trustworthy news source, especially if you plan on using that information in debate in committee. You want to be able to back up what you are arguing, and having a good citations page is a key part of doing so.

NOTES ON WRITING POSITION PAPERS

- Do not write them until you are nearly, if not totally, done researching. Before you draft a position paper, outline your facts and ideas so that the paper flows logically.
- Think of a position paper as essentially an outline for your ideas and goals as a country. Therefore, the last section of the paper does not need to contain goals that you could realistically achieve after negotiations and compromise – but they should be goals that your nation is willing and prepared to pursue.
- Remember:
 - By the time you have finished the position paper, you should be ready to defend and explain all of your ideas in committee.
 - Your ideas should reflect your nation's position – only start researching or creating possible solutions once you have fully researched your nation's position on the issue.
 - The solutions you propose should be as original as possible. Solutions already enacted in previous documents or initiatives should not be included unless there is a valid reason to repeat them.
- To give credit to your position and solutions, make sure to give sufficient specific evidence. Include dates, historical background, titles, names, and any other relevant details.
- When explaining ideas, strike a balance between being concise and thorough. Include specifics in your plans but make sure your descriptions of those specifics are brief and easily understood.

Your position paper is your greatest weapon at the start of committee; not only does it reflect how much you've prepared for conference, but it also provides you with a quick reference to your position that you can rely on.