

The Complete Starter Kit to Preparing for Your First Model UN Conference

Diplomat Track: For Novice MUN
Delegates Ages 11-18 *By Best Delegate*

Preparing for your first MUN Conference

Preparation is a critical part of any Model UN conference- you need to come prepared so you can deliver informed speeches, make strong arguments while negotiating, and write innovative and realistic resolutions on your committee topics. Preparation and research needs to focus on both your country and your topics, and it can add up to a lot of information that there's no way for you to memorize! Here's a sample conference preparation timeline:

| Before the Conference | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 6 weeks before | Print off and read the "Background Guide" for your committee. This is provided by the conference and can usually be found online. |
| 5 weeks before | Put your "Background Guide" into a binder to hold all your information. This is called a "Research Binder". Start filling it with information you find researching your country and topic. |
| 4 weeks before | Complete a "Country Profile", researching your assigned country. |
| 2-3 weeks before | Research your topic- specifically the Topic Background, Past International Action, Country Policy, and Possible Solutions |
| 1 week before | Write an "Opening Speech" and practice it before the conference! |

Researching your Country Profile

Physical Geography

What is your country's official name?
What region of the world is your country located in?
How big is your country? (square miles)
Who are your country's neighbors?
How would you describe your country's physical features and climate?

Culture

What is your country's population?
What is your country's ethnic composition?
What is your country's official language? What other languages are spoken?
What is your country's capital? What are some of the major cities?
How would you describe the quality of life in your country?

Politics & Government

When was your country founded?
What type of government does your country have?
Who are some of your country's leaders?
How many people serve in your country's military?
Who are your country's allies? Enemies?

Economy

What is your country's total Gross Domestic Product?
What are some of your country's natural resources?
What is your country's currency?
What are your country's major imports and exports?
What are your country's biggest trading partners?

Your first step in assembling your research binder should be your country profile- a research packet about what country you're going to represent! While you may not need to know what your 8th biggest export is, it's critical to have a decent understanding of your country if you want to represent them in debate. See above for a list of guiding questions to research for your country profile.

There are many resources to help your research your country. While many resources may be provided by the countries themselves, there are also several credible databases that share information about countries; visit the [Best Delegate Country Profile and Policy Map](#) to check them out!

Researching Topic Background

After researching your country, you should begin looking into the topic that you're going to be discussing. It's important to have a good base of understanding about your topic before you dive in and try to decipher how your country feels about that topic. There are numerous resources on UN websites and across the internet about your topic- even Wikipedia is a good place to start, so you can use their sources at the bottom to find more information about your topic. You should have a strong historical understanding of your topic, as well as the causes and impacts of the issue you're discussing so that you can come prepared to committee on the first day of the conference.



Researching Past International Action and Country Policy

To understand how to represent your country at the UN, you need to know two things- what the international community has already done about the topic, and what your country wants to do about it. To find Past International Action, you can try looking through news sources, but you can also read past UN reports and resolutions on the issue. The [UN Official Documentation Services](#) can help you determine what the UN has done about the topic already. A similar solution can be found for your country's policy on the issue- by looking at the websites of your country's government, foreign ministry, or UN mission, you can find statements and actions related to the topic you're discussing.

Researching Solutions

While researching UN and government websites can be helpful to learn about what the UN has done about your topic in the past, they may not be as helpful as you'd like for finding new solutions to these issues you're researching! However, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can be great resources to find solutions to the topic you're researching. Also, Think Tanks and University Researchers may have published ideas on how the issue can be fixed, and looking through their ideas can be great ways to brainstorm ideas on how to take these issues. The most important thing for finding solutions to these problems, however, is your creativity! Think of ways the UN and Member States could work together to combat this issue in realistic ways, and plan how these solutions would work in your words!

How to Write a Position Paper

Many Model UN conferences require delegates to submit “Position Papers” on their topics before a conference starts to demonstrate their research and knowledge. Position Papers are normally 1-2 pages per topic, and should have 3-4 paragraphs. They should be written from the perspective of the government of your country, include a header, and answering the following questions. Your final Position Paper should look similar to the sample on the next page.

Heading

Committee: [Your Committee Title]
Topic: [Your Topic]
Country: [Your Country]
School: [Your School]

Topic Background

What is the definition of the topic?
Where does the topic take place? Who is involved?
How many people does it affect? Where, and in what ways?
Why is this topic important?

Past International Action

Have there been any interesting statements by UN officials on this topic? Try to find a quote.
What are the most important UN resolutions and treaties on this topic?
Do any major Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) work on this topic?

Country Policy

How has this topic impacted your country?
What has your country tried to do about this topic?
What types of policies would your country want the UN to adopt (or not adopt) on this topic?

Possible Solutions

What specific plans would your country like the UN to undertake to address this issue?
What specific plans would your country like Members States to undertake in their own countries?
Why would your ideas work? Give specific plans.

Position Paper Example

Committee: General Assembly Third Committee

Topic: Gender Equality

Country: Russian Federation

School: Best Delegate High School

According to UN Women, gender equality refers to “the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.” Gender inequality is a global issue: many women lack adequate access to healthcare, are underrepresented in political arenas (women hold only 22% of parliamentary seats worldwide), are victims of gender-based violence (approximately one in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence), face discrimination in the workplace and in wages, and lack equal access to education (two-thirds of illiterate adults are women).

These issues have myriad causes, including cultural beliefs about gender and marital roles, and legal regulation. These detrimental inequalities are cyclical and complex: a female’s educational career, for example, is affected by pregnancy, household work, access to sanitation facilities at school, and the danger of physical and sexual assault.

The creation of United Nations Women in 2010 through resolution A/64/588 was a “historic step” in achieving gender equality, by “bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact”. In addition to UN Women, the main mechanism to promote gender equality worldwide is the legally-binding Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 with nearly universal participation. The UN General Assembly has also recently adopted A/RES/69/149 on combatting trafficking of women and girls, A/RES/69/147 to eliminate violence against women, and A/RES/69/236 to emphasize the role of women in development. Through these resolutions, organisms, and NGO partners, the UN and Member States work to invest in women, provide legal protections, and educate women to accomplish these goals and achieve gender equality.

Given the integral role of women’s economic equality and independence in achieving gender equality, the Russian Federation strives to ensure that women had equal access to education and employment in order to achieve their potential, as Russian President Vladimir Putin has stated to the UN General Assembly. Russia encourages cooperation between UN Women and Developing Countries, not just Developed Countries. Because of the importance of economic development in empowering women, Russia would like cooperation between UN Women and the International Labor Organization as well as other UN bodies to craft plans for equality based in each nation’s traditional values and norms. Russia also feels it is critical that the United States ratifies CEDAW, as it is the largest nation not to do so.

The Russian Federation feels that important subtopics that must be addressed are gender-based violence, women’s lack of access to education and jobs, and women’s lack of representation in politics and political decision-making. To address women’s lack of representation in politics, countries can be encouraged to ensure inclusion of women candidates and create recruitment and training programs to introduce young women to politics. In order to combat and prevent gender based violence, countries can develop crisis centers and hotlines for women and develop rehabilitation programs for victims of violence. Also, Russia believes countries should ensure the safe transport of girls and women to and from schools, invest in hiring female teachers, provide adequate sanitation facilities at schools, and emphasize skill-based hiring programs in all industries, including those normally reserved for men.

Public Speaking

Public speaking is a highly valuable skill you have the opportunity to develop through Model United Nations. Knowing how to prepare and deliver well-organized and thoughtful speeches will help you in school, your future career, and the rest of your life.

At an MUN conference, you will have many opportunities to give speeches. As the representative of your assigned country, you will be expected to speak about your country's policy on the committee topics and your proposed solutions.

There are two main opportunities to make speeches in Model UN:

Speakers List: When the committee begins, the Chair will create a list of delegates who wish to give speeches. These speeches are typically about the how each country feels about the topic, and range from 1-2 minutes long. The first time you speak on the speakers list is referred to as your opening speech. You should prepare this speech before the conference. After your first speech, you can send a note to the Chair to request to be put on the Speakers List again.

Moderated Caucus: Whereas the speakers list is about the topic in general, a moderated caucus is about a specific part of the topic. A moderated caucus has no Speakers List; delegates must raise their placards and wait for the Chair to call on them to speak. Each delegate typically gets 30 seconds to 1 minute to speak, and have to focus on the topic of the caucus.

Public Speaking Structure

One of the easiest way to organize your speeches in Model UN, especially for opening speeches, is to use the following three-part formula:

Hook: An engaging way to grab your audience's attention

Point: Your country policy on the topic

Call to Action: Your possible solutions to the topic

Yield: A delegate surrendering the time remaining after finishing a speech from the Speaker's List.

Decorum: A word used by Chairs to encourage delegates to behave diplomatically.

1. Hook

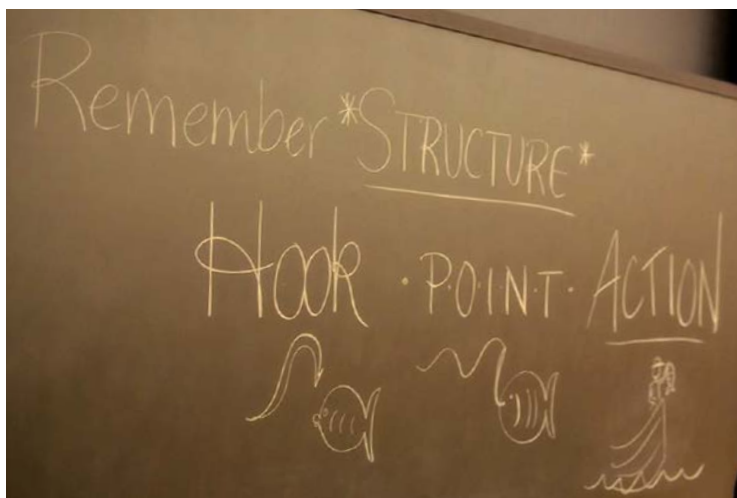
The beginning of a speech should grab your audience's attention. It should give your audience a reason to listen to you – otherwise they won't. An attention-grabbing introduction is often called a "hook." There are many different types of hooks, but here are a few common ones that work well in Model UN.

Question: Asking the audience a question is often an easy way to get their attention.

Example: "Do you think it is possible for us to live in a world without poverty? The people of my country think so. We believe we can achieve the end of poverty."

Quote: A quote engages the audience when they recognize the figure you're quoting.

Example: "Fifty years ago, United States President John F. Kennedy said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.' Today, ask not what the world can do for you, but what you can do for the world."



Statistic: A statistic can grab an audience's attention if it is surprising or interesting.

Example: "Over 1 billion people around the world live on less than US\$1.25 a day. Over 1 billion people live in extreme poverty."

Story: A story is the oldest form of communication and if told well, can certainly grab an audience's attention. But speeches in MUN are typically very short, so keep the story brief!

Example: "Several years ago, in rural Pakistan, a girl was walking to school when a gunshot rang out – and she was shot in the head. The Taliban does not want any girls to go to school. But that girl survived, and today she fights for girls' right to education around the world. That girl's name was Malala."

2. Point

The point is the purpose of your speech. It is the reason why you're speaking. Once you have your audience's attention, you should deliver your point. In opening speeches in MUN, the "point" is to state your country policy on the topic. Then offer 2-3 reasons explaining why your country had adopted this policy.

Example: “The Republic of Korea believes that education is a human right. All people should have access to education. Education is a pathway out of poverty for millions in developing countries, like Korea was just a few decades ago. Education is the driver of change and development in this world, and education is critical for the human race to continue to thrive and grow.

3. Call to Action

Good speeches end with a “call to action,” which is when you tell your audience to go and do something. Your call to action is your specific solution to the problem.

Example: “To provide universal access to education, Korea proposes the creation of an international fund called ‘Education For All’ that will support 3 programs in developing countries: building more schools, training new teachers, and preventing girls from dropping out of school. We call upon the international community to create and donate to this fund, so we can guarantee education as a right globally.”

How to participate in caucuses

In Model UN, a “caucus” means a suspension of the traditional Rules of Procedure, which govern what delegates can or cannot do during a conference. There are two types of caucuses, and both serve very different functions. However, throughout a conference delegates will move between the Speakers List, moderated caucuses, and unmoderated caucuses, so it’s important to be ready for all three main phases of debate.

Moderated Caucuses: In Moderated Caucuses, you continue to deliver speeches but in a different format. Moderated Caucuses are used to narrow debate to specific parts of the topic- for example, if you’re discussing “Climate Change” as your main topic, you may have a moderated caucus to discuss “Agricultural Impacts of Climate Change”. During a moderated caucus, the next speaker is chosen by the Chair when delegates raise their placards to be called upon. To start a speech in a moderated caucus, you can dive into your argument using Hook, Point, Action, but you can also start by responding to another delegate, by saying “In response to the comments of the delegate of Germany”, for example. Moderated caucuses are more conversational, so feel free to use the more flexible format to more directly debate with other delegates, or to try to convince the committee of your specific solutions.

Unmoderated Caucuses: During an Unmoderated Caucus, delegates are free to move around the room and will form into groups to write resolutions. Rather than a focus on debate, unmoderated caucuses are about negotiating resolutions and working together with your group. Groups will form because of common interests or common solutions to the topic, and will try to write the strongest resolution in the committee and lobby other delegates to join and support their group. It’s important to find a group to work with that will allow you to contribute your ideas to the resolution and where everybody can work together fairly to write a great resolution, rather than a group where people may be bullies or trying to dominate all the conversation for themselves. Also, if any delegates are sitting alone during unmoderated caucus, invite them to work with your group! They may have great ideas, and it’s a great way to win more support for your resolution.

How to write a resolution

The resolution is the main result of the work of your committee, and is meant to do exactly what the name implies: “resolve” the problem that your committee is focused on. Resolutions are the documents the UN uses to make decisions, and are written by groups of Member States collaborating on their ideas. Resolutions have two main functions: to determine what the United Nations will do about the issue, and to recommend or request that individual Member States undertake actions to help solve the issue. There is a very specific format to resolutions, and three main sections: the header, the preamble, and the the operative section.

Sponsor: An author of all or parts of a resolution, that agree with the content of the resolution.

Signatory: A delegate that wishes to see the resolution debated before the committee, but does not necessarily contribute content or agree with the content of the resolution.

The Header

There are four main pieces of information in the header of the resolution:

Committee- The name of the committee you’re representing

Topic- The name of the topic you’re debating

Sponsors- The main authors that wrote the clauses of the resolution

Signatories- The delegates that would like to see this resolution introduced in the committee. They don’t necessarily support the resolution, but want it to have the requisite number of signatories so it can be accepted by the Chair (usually about 20% of the committee is required).

Preambular Paragraph: These paragraphs constitute the Preamble of a resolution, and explain why the United Nations is discussing this issue. Also known as Preambulatory Clauses.

Operative Paragraph: These paragraphs constitute the actual actions to come from a resolution, and say what the United Nations and Member States will do about it. Also known as Operative Clauses.

The Preamble

The goal of the preamble of a resolution is to set the scene for the resolution. Here, you can talk about why the resolution is being written, for example by talking about how serious the issue and who it is impacting. You can also refer to past UN Resolutions, Treaties, and International Actions related to the topic.

Preambular paragraphs each start with “preambular phrases”, which should be italicized in your resolution. Each preambular paragraph should end in a comma.

Preambular Phrases

Select a preambular phrase and italicize it to start your preambular paragraph. Here is a recommended list to start with, though there are over 50 preambular phrases used by the United Nations.

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Acknowledging</i> | <i>Expressing concern</i> | <i>Noting</i> |
| <i>Affirming</i> | <i>Expressing its appreciation</i> | <i>Reaffirming</i> |
| <i>Alarmed by</i> | <i>Fully aware</i> | <i>Recalling</i> |
| <i>Bearing in mind</i> | <i>Guided by</i> | <i>Recognizing</i> |
| <i>Deploring</i> | <i>Having considered</i> | <i>Regretting</i> |
| <i>Emphasizing</i> | <i>Mindful of</i> | <i>Taking into consideration</i> |

The Operatives

Operative paragraphs determine what action the UN will take on the issue. This can mean funding solutions, directing members of the UN Secretariat what to do, or requesting actions by UN Member States. Each paragraph takes action, so it's important to be careful with each of the operative paragraphs in a resolution!

Operative paragraphs start with operative phrases, which should be italicized. Each operative paragraph should also be numbered, and end in a semicolon, except for the final operative which ends in a period. If at any point an operative is broken into sub-operatives, you would use a colon to introduce those sub-operatives, which start with lowercase letters.

Operative Phrases

Select an operative phrase to start your operative paragraph, and italicize it. Here is a recommended list to start with, though there are over 100 operative phrases used by the United Nations.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Acknowledges</i> | <i>Confirms</i> | <i>Insists that</i> | <i>Recommends</i> |
| <i>Adopts</i> | <i>Decides</i> | <i>Instructs</i> | <i>Reminds</i> |
| <i>Affirms</i> | <i>Demands</i> | <i>Invites</i> | <i>Requests</i> |
| <i>Approves</i> | <i>Determines that</i> | <i>Notes that</i> | <i>Resolves</i> |
| <i>Authorizes</i> | <i>Emphasizes</i> | <i>Demands</i> | <i>Suggests that</i> |
| <i>Believes that</i> | <i>Endorses the Declaration</i> | <i>Determines that</i> | <i>Supports</i> |
| <i>Calls attention to</i> | <i>Establishes</i> | <i>Realizes</i> | <i>Takes note</i> |
| <i>Calls upon Member States</i> | <i>Expresses its appreciation</i> | <i>Recalls</i> | <i>Urges</i> |
| <i>Condemns</i> | <i>Expresses its concern</i> | <i>Recognizes</i> | <i>Welcomes</i> |

Sample MUN Resolution

Committee: General Assembly 1st Committee: Disarmament and International Security (DISEC)

Topic: The Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (Drones)

Sponsors: Argentina, Ethiopia, Germany, Kazakhstan

Signatories: Poland, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states that the purposes of the United Nations include "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace...",

Recalling its resolution A/RES/68/178 which sought to limit the use of armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles UAVs in combating terrorism without the express permission of Member States,

Concerned by the recent high rate of civilian casualties in the rate of armed UAV strikes,

Aware of potential medical, commercial, agricultural, and other beneficial functions of unarmed UAVs,

Expressing concern that countries' national sovereignty is being violated by certain nations, conducting extrajudicial targeted killing in their territory with UAVs without declaring war,

Welcoming the January 2014 report of the Secretary General S/2014/9 on the need for global cooperation to combat terrorism, specifically in sub-saharan Africa,

1. *Encourages* countries to adopt a UNHCR and UNODA orchestrated 2014 Covenant on Extrajudicial Drone Strikes that:

- a. Treats extrajudicial targeted assassination outside declared conflict zones as violations of the 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- b. Reaffirms the rights of nations to develop drones, especially for nonviolent purposes,
- c. Acknowledges that drone use in self-defense and inside declared war zones is acceptable in accordance with existing international law;

2. *Strongly encourages* the use of drones in peaceful and primarily civilian affairs within each nation for instances of agricultural progress, surveillance, monitoring natural disasters and the environment;

3. *Notes* that the 2014 Covenant on Extrajudicial Drone Strikes will be based on the principles that:

- a. Every state has the right to develop unmanned aerial vehicles for peaceful civilian purposes such as development and transportation of goods,
- b. In times of peace, no state can operate UAVs in another state's airspace without consent,
- c. Parties undergoing war must adhere to the norm of proportionality, which states that the anticipated benefits of waging war are greater than the expected evils or harms;

4. *Calls* for the establishment of the World Forum on Drone Innovation (WFDI) that will meet annually starting in 2015 for private companies, national governments, and NGOs to discuss drone uses for peaceful purposes including but not limited to scientific, agricultural, and economic uses;

5. *Affirms* the use of drones for:

- a. Emergency Preparation and Disaster Responses,
- b. Agriculture, including but not limited to crop dusting, pesticides, infestation eradication, and monitoring of soil moisture levels and crop growth,
- c. Cargo Delivery including but not limited long haul trips, transporting hazardous material, and deliveries during hazardous flying conditions and emergencies,
- d. Environmental Monitoring, including but not limited to wildlife tracking and monitoring droughts and floods,
- e. Maritime Domain Research and Awareness, such as:
 - i. criminal personnel search and pursuit,
 - ii. personnel search and rescue,
 - iii. identification and surveillance of low observable vessels and small craft,
- f. Law Enforcement, such as:
 - i. reconnaissance and criminal personnel search and pursuit,
 - ii. personnel search and rescue,
 - iii. communications augmentation,
 - iv. border Patrol Security;

6. *Encourages* the creation of a fund supported by the UN ICS to develop satellite technology drones (instead of the actual antenna technology drones) in the following five years specifically for efficient longer-ranged operations that contribute to international security;

7. *Recognizes* the work of the “Responsibility to Protect” which was launched in 2005 and insists that drones should be used under the following guidelines:

- a. carry the primary responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing, and their incitement,
- b. international communities have the responsibility to encourage and assist states in fulfilling the protection of their countries,
- c. the international community has the right to use appropriate diplomatic humanitarian and other means to protect populations from crimes;

8. *Emphasizes* the need for protective measures used against any violations that destabilize public security and pose any nation to the threat of terrorism, which can be done by methods including but not limited to expanding the relations between the UN Counter-Terrorism Center and governments;

9. *Calls* for the international community wishing to increase their aid for expanding and enhancing community centres that ensure the rehabilitation of people traumatized and physically affected by drones that can be done by means including but not limited to:

- a. providing psychological aid for those suffering the aftermath of drone attacks such as PTSD,
- b. insuring the medical care for physically injured persons,
- c. providing shelter and food for those affected by drones until they are physically and mentally able to pursue their lives;

10. *Requests* the Secretary General to deliver a global report on the progress toward achieving peace through the use of unarmed UAVs in UN Peacekeeping Operations and UN Special Political Missions.



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