

# NHSMUN50

National High School Model United Nations



## BEGINNER DELEGATE GUIDE

### DELEGATE GUIDES



### About IMUNA

Founded in 1979, IMUNA is an educational non-profit organization devoted to global issues education through simulation of international debate. To achieve this goal, we strive to build up the Model United Nations (MUN) community at all levels by leading premier MUN conferences, connecting students with the world of professional diplomacy, and creating resources that can put the power of MUN in every classroom.

Our flagship program, [NHSMUN](#), is the largest MUN conference for secondary school students in the world. Every year, we welcome more than 5,000 participants from more than 60 countries to the United Nations Headquarters in New York City for four days of lively debate and critical thinking. NHSMUN is run by a diverse, all-volunteer staff of more than 150 university students from the top colleges and universities. Our talented staff have gone on to become prominent diplomats, academics, business leaders, and lawyers who shape global politics today.

IMUNA's impact is not just limited to NHSMUN. To foster the growth of quality MUN experiences everywhere, we publish the resources that drive NHSMUN's success online, free of charge. We also partner with organizations in numerous countries, including China, Italy, Mexico, and the United Arab Emirates, to build high quality conferences in every region of the world. To support MUN in the classroom, we hold personalized training sessions for students and faculty to help them make the most of their MUN experience. We also partner with various UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide unique opportunities for students to experience first-hand the world of diplomacy and international relations.

What separates IMUNA from other MUN organizations is our belief that exceptional educational quality must be at the core of the MUN experience. Our staff prepares research materials for delegates that push them to develop critical thinking skills about complex global issues. For our faculty partners, we provide resources to expose students to new ways of thinking in clubs and classrooms around the world. At the conference, delegates learn from each other as they work to achieve consensus across diverse points of view. This passion for educational quality has earned IMUNA the reputation of being among the most academically rigorous conferences in the world.

IMUNA's goal is to shape next generation of globally-minded leaders through global issues education. Through MUN, we are able to prepare students for an increasingly interconnected future that will require cross-cultural understanding. If you are interested in working with us, please don't hesitate to contact us at [info@imuna.org](mailto:info@imuna.org).

## Overview

Hello and welcome to the wonderful world of MUN! We are thrilled that you are interested in becoming a MUNer. Global issues are becoming increasingly relevant to the lives of everyday people than ever before, and MUN is one of the best ways for primary and secondary school students to learn about international relations. We are certain that you have a lot of questions, and we hope that this guide helps you get started.

This guide is intended for students and teachers who have not participated in MUN at all or who are still developing their understanding of how MUN works. However, this guide is even useful for more developed MUN programs as a tool for training new delegates. Many of the example lessons provided in this guide are written with teachers in mind but can also be used by student leaders as well. We will begin this guide with some foundational information about what the United Nations (UN) is and its role in the world, since many students (and even adults) either do not know much about the UN or have some unfortunate misconceptions about it. Later, we will discuss the different skills that MUN demands of students and how to sharpen those skills. By the end of this guide (and a lot of practice), students will be more than prepared to participate in their first conference. For ongoing reference, we have also included a glossary at the back of this guide to help navigate MUN's sometimes confusing jargon.

The guide consists of various sections that will gradually introduce new concepts to students, and each will have at least one activity to check for students' understanding. The activities are generally designed for teachers leading an after-school club, since that is by far the most common way students participate in MUN. For teachers fortunate to have a class dedicated to teaching MUN, these activities can easily be converted into lesson plans.

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If you have any questions about this guide, please feel free to contact IMUNA at [info@imuna.org](mailto:info@imuna.org). We are always happy to support new MUN programs as they begin their wonderful journey exploring what it means to be a global citizen.

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## Introduction to Model United Nations

Model United Nations (MUN) is among the most popular student activities available today, with millions of students participating from nearly every country in the world. In MUN, students take on the role of **delegates** who represent one of the 193 Member States of the United Nations (UN). Because MUN delegates are representing governments, they don't advocate for their own beliefs in their debates. Instead, they research their country's **policy** on the topics assigned to them so that they can represent their country as best they can. After researching, delegates from many different schools come together at MUN **conferences**, each playing the role of different countries. Delegates must remain true to their country's policy while also finding areas to compromise with other delegates to create a solution to their topic. These conferences usually take place over the weekend but can range from a single day to as long as a week.

Participating in MUN will help students develop important argumentative skills that don't get the full attention they need in traditional classroom environments. Students' public speaking skills improve as they learn to advocate for their policy in small and large group settings. Students also become better critical thinkers by thoughtfully compromising on parts of their policy during negotiation to preserve the more valuable elements. Beyond academic learning, MUN also provides students with opportunities to connect with students from different countries and cultures, broadening their global perspective. Colleges and universities know that MUN trains these skills, so participation in MUN can also be a cornerstone of a strong college application, especially for those that achieve leadership positions in their clubs and classes.

This may sound challenging, and MUN can often be a rigorous activity. However, many current and former MUNers say that the experience of a MUN conference is well worth the work required. Don't just take our word for it. Here's what MUNers have to say:

“Of all my experiences...Model UN has been the finest. The writing and speaking skills I have learned are ones that I will hold with me for a lifetime” – *Zev Mishell, Rochelle Zell Jewish High School*



“The NHSMUN conference was a very unique and different experience for me. I was able to meet many different people from countries all over the world, which was an awesome learning experience” – *Holden Brown, Mira Costa Model United Nations*

“[NHSMUN] provides the right exposure for our students to learn the rudiments of leadership at global dimension. It broadens their knowledge on international diplomacy and relations. It gives them a multi-racial exposure and enhances their team work skills and builds up confidence.” – *Mrs. Olumayemisi Adekoya, Whitestone School*

### **Activity: Debating Candy Bars**

**Objective:** Students will be able to argue for opinions that are not their own, defending those opinions with just as much evidence and passion as they would their personal opinion.

**Materials Required:**

- Paper for students
- Small container

**Time Requirement:** 10-30 minutes

**Procedure:** Start by having students write their favorite type of candy (or something else enjoyable and subjective like television shows, ice cream flavor, etc.) on a small slip of paper. Collect the papers and mix them together in the container. Then, have a student pick one paper from the container at random. The student should then have between 2-5 minutes to prepare a 45 to 60 second speech explaining why the candy they drew from the bowl is the best candy in the world. The student must argue in favor of the candy they drew from the container even if it is not actually their favorite. Note that it is important to have students deliver a speech at least 45 seconds so that they are forced to provide a strong defense of their candy. If speaking in front of the class is too intimidating for students, another option is to break them out into groups of 2-5 and have everyone draw a slip of paper at the same time. In this case, students would give their speech to the small group. Either way, students listening to each speech should give positive, constructive feedback to the speaker for 1-2 minutes after each speech.

### **Activity: Rebuttal Tennis**

**Objective:** Students will be able to sustain a debate in the face of rebuttals without preparation, thereby improving their argumentative and impromptu speaking skills.

**Materials Required:** N/A

**Time Requirement:** 2-10 minutes

**Procedure:** This activity makes for a great warm up activity for both new and experienced students. Students should first split up into pairs. Then, one student starts the debate by making any claim, which the second student then has to rebut. If the second student successfully rebuts the claim, then the first student has to rebut the second student's rebuttal. This continues until one student doesn't address the rebuttal or commits a logical fallacy. Once one round is over, the second student starts a new round by making a claim. For new delegates, we suggest focusing largely on getting the debate going and to focus less on ensuring that the rebuttals directly oppose the previous claim. That will come in time!

Before starting this activity, it's important to discuss with students what exactly a claim is. If one student starts off with the "claim" that he/she is five feet tall, that's difficult to argue against because it's simply a statement of fact. Similarly, it would be hard (but not impossible) to refute a claim like "my favorite candy is Twix." How can one student tell another student what their favorite candy is? Students should be pushed to make claims that are contentious. Often, these claims only need to be tweaked to be appropriate. In the above example, the claim "Twix should be declared the national candy" is something that is very arguable and not personal.

Many MUN programs use this as a warmup at the start of their meetings to get students thinking about debate, in which case this might only take a few minutes. However, for newer students that might be more challenged by this activity, an instructor could set up an entire tournament with their class to see who is the most skilled at rebutting arguments.

## What is the United Nations?

Before discussing how MUN simulations take place, it's important to understand what the **United Nations** (UN) is and does. There are entire classes taught on this subject, so we will barely scratch the surface here. However, we strongly encourage students and teachers alike to do their own research on the UN, as it is one of the most important international organizations today.

The UN is an international organization with countries as members whose mission is, loosely, to tackle the major issues that transcend national borders. These issues take many forms. Perhaps most famous are the security issues that often make headlines, such as the Syrian Civil War. However, there are also humanitarian issues (e.g. ensuring access to water for everyone), social and cultural issues (e.g. preserving historical sites), economic issues (e.g. promoting fair trade among nations), criminal issues (e.g. the international drug trafficking), and much more. It would be difficult for individual countries to take on any of these issues alone, so the United Nations provides the best forum for countries to coordinate their efforts and agree on a common strategy.

The UN is **not** a place where laws are made and passed. With rare exception, decisions made by the UN are not binding on members, meaning they don't have to obey the agreement. Therefore, the UN often works on the principle of **consensus**, where all countries reach the same agreement and there is no need for a contentious vote. Because the UN cannot force countries to take certain actions, achieving consensus is the best way to encourage all countries to implement the agreement in their own countries. Otherwise, the countries that disagree with a resolution would just disregard it! This is a critical way in which the UN differs from national governments, which frequently pass laws that are binding on all people in that country via contentious votes.





## The UN System

When students visit the website of a large MUN conference for the first time, they often comment first on the sheer number of confusing acronyms, many of which begin with “UN...” The UN is a single organization, but it is also quite vast, which makes sense given the sheer number and magnitude of issues facing the world. This system is broken up into six **organs** of the UN, which are further broken down into **committees**. The six organs are outlined below.

- **General Assembly (GA):** This is what most people think of when they think of the United Nations. The General Assembly is the organ in which every country has one vote and every member of the UN is represented. The GA cannot pass any binding resolutions, but it does have the power to set the UN’s budget and elect members of most other organs.
  - Example Committees: Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), Economic and Financial Committee (ECOFIN)
- **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):** Many mistakenly view this organ as part of the GA, but it is its own organ of the UN. ECOSOC does have some of its own committees, such as the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), but the organ is better known for the independent agencies that report to it, such as the World Health Organization (WHO). Unlike the GA, ECOSOC does not have every country represented. There are always 54 members of ECOSOC that are elected to three-year terms by the General Assembly. As the name implies, they primarily concern themselves with economic and social matters.
  - Example Committees: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- **Security Council (UNSC):** Like the GA, this organ also gets a lot of media attention. The UNSC is made up of fifteen members: five permanent members and ten members elected by the GA to two-year terms. The UNSC is unique for being able to pass binding resolutions on member countries, but even then, it is limited by the UN Charter in what kinds of resolutions can be binding. The five permanent members all hold veto power on the UNSC, meaning that if any of them disagree with a resolution, the resolution automatically fails, even if everyone else votes for it.
  - Example Committees: Typically, the UNSC is simulated outright rather than one of its standing committees.
- **International Court of Justice (ICJ):** The ICJ is the UN’s legal organ, reviewing international issues through the lens of international law. The ICJ is made up of fifteen judges elected by the GA to nine-year terms. For the ICJ to hear a case, it must be recommended to them by the GA or the two countries in question must agree to have the ICJ decide their case.
  - Example Committees: Typically, the ICJ is simulated outright.
- **Secretariat:** The Secretariat is the administrative wing of the UN. They focus on the implementation of the UN’s resolutions and prepare reports for Member States so that they have the latest information when deciding on important issues. The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General, who is elected to five-year terms by the General Assembly.
  - Example Committees: Typically, the Secretariat is not simulated by delegates at MUN conferences, though the leaders of conferences usually adopt titles similar to those of the Secretariat (e.g. Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General)
- **Trusteeship Council:** This organ is now defunct, as its mission was completed during the era of decolonization. Its purpose, however, was to shepherd various “trusts” around the world towards independence. These trusts were largely inherited from the League of Nations, the UN’s spiritual predecessor that existed between the two World Wars.

- Example Committees: In the MUN world, The Trusteeship Council is sometimes seen as a historical simulation, but even then, it is quite uncommon

It should also be noted that some international organizations work closely with the UN but may not be formally part of the UN. For this reason, delegates will often hear reference to the **UN System**, a network of international organizations that collaborate under the leadership of the UN. Organizations like the WHO and the World Bank are examples of non-UN organizations that are part of the UN system.

## UN Resolutions

**Resolutions** are the agreements and decisions passed by either the GA, ECOSOC, or UNSC. They can be considered analogous to the laws that a country's government might pass, but remember that unlike laws, UN resolutions are usually not binding. A resolution is essentially the text of what the countries agree to, written in formal language to ensure that there are no misunderstandings between countries. All UN resolutions are archived online, so they make a great resource when researching for MUN conferences.

In the MUN world, these resolutions are the objective of each committee. Students simulating delegates from each of the UN's Member States meet and decide exactly how they are going to approach the problem their committee is tasked with solving. The resolution is the document that delegates write and present to the rest of the committee. At the end of most conferences, the committee votes on the various resolutions that have been proposed to determine which ones will pass.

## Activity: Committee Reports

**Objective:** Students will be able to perform independent research on UN committees and understand how they fit into the broader UN system.

### Materials Required:

- Chart paper

**Time Requirement:** 60-120 minutes

**Procedure:** The UN is a vast and often complicated organization, so understanding it can take time. A great way to help make it manageable for students is to break it down committee by committee. Assign each student a UN committee to research, such as the Disarmament and Security Committee (part of the GA). Ask each student to answer a few questions, such as the ones below (though we encourage instructors to think of their own):

- When and why was this committee founded?
- What issues does this committee discuss?
- What countries are represented on this committee?
- What is one example of an important resolution or decision that came from this committee?

Students should prepare a written report on these questions no longer than a single page (good preparation for position papers, which we'll discuss later), which shouldn't take more than 60 minutes by itself. Then, have each student make a one-minute presentation of their committee to the group, ideally having them go in an order that will help them understand the connections between committees (e.g. having each of the GA committees go first). After each presentation, the teacher should draw up the six UN organs on chart paper and place each committee under the organ it is part of. Classes can also identify committees that



# The United Nations System

## UN PRINCIPAL ORGANS

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Subsidiary Organs**
  - Main Committees
  - Disarmament Commission
  - Human Rights Council
  - International Law Commission
  - Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)
  - Standing committees and ad hoc bodies
- Funds and Programmes<sup>1</sup>**
  - UNDP United Nations Development Programme
  - UNCDF United Nations Capital Development Fund
  - UNV United Nations Volunteers
  - UNEP<sup>2</sup> United Nations Environment Programme
  - UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
  - UN-Habitat<sup>3</sup> United Nations Human Settlements Programme
  - UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
  - WFP World Food Programme (UN/FAO)

### SECURITY COUNCIL

- Subsidiary Organs**
  - Counter-Terrorism Committee
  - International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)
- Other Entities**
  - International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals
  - Military Staff Committee

### ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

- Functional Commissions**
  - Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
  - Narcotic Drugs
  - Population and Development
  - Science and Technology for Development
  - Social Development
  - Statistics
  - Status of Women
  - United Nations Forum on Forests
- Regional Commissions<sup>4</sup>**
  - ECA Economic Commission for Africa
  - ECE Economic Commission for Europe
  - ECLAC Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
  - ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
  - ESCWIA Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

### SECRETARIAT

- Departments and Offices<sup>5</sup>**
  - EOSG Executive Office of the Secretary-General
  - DESA Department of Economic and Social Affairs
  - DPS Department of Field Support
  - DGACM Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
  - DM Department of Management
  - DPA Department of Political Affairs
  - DPI Department of Public Information Operations
  - DPKO Department of Peacekeeping Operations
  - DSS Department of Safety and Security
  - OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
  - ODA Office for Disarmament Affairs
  - OHCHR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Other Bodies**
  - Committee for Development Policy
  - Committee of Experts on Public Administration
  - Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
  - Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
  - UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
  - UNGEIN United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

### INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

- Research and Training**
  - UNICRI United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
  - UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
- Other Entities**
  - OSAA Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
  - PRSO Peacebuilding Support Office
  - SRSO/CAAC Office of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
  - SRSO/SVC Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict
  - SRSO/YAC Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children
  - UNODC<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
  - UN-CHRRLLS Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States
  - UNON United Nations Office at Nairobi
  - UNOP<sup>2</sup> United Nations Office for Partnerships
  - UNOV United Nations Office at Vienna

### TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL<sup>6</sup>

- Related Organizations**
  - CTBTO Preparatory Commission Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
  - IAEA<sup>13</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency
  - ICC International Criminal Court
  - IOI<sup>1</sup> International Organization for Migration
  - ISA International Seabed Authority
  - ITLOS International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
  - OPCW<sup>2</sup> Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
  - WTO<sup>14</sup> World Trade Organization
- Specialized Agencies<sup>15</sup>**
  - FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
  - ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization
  - IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development
  - ILO International Labour Organization
  - IMF International Monetary Fund
  - IMO International Maritime Organization
  - ITU International Telecommunication Union
  - UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
  - UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization
  - UNWTO World Tourism Organization
  - UPU Universal Postal Union
  - WHO World Health Organization
  - WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization
  - WMO World Meteorological Organization
  - WORLD BANK GROUP<sup>7</sup>
    - IBRD International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
    - IDA International Development Association
    - IFC International Finance Corporation

### Peacebuilding Commission

Peacebuilding Commission

HLPF High-level political forum on sustainable development

**Notes:**

- Members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).
- UN Office for Partnerships (UNOP) is the UN's focal point vis-a-vis the United Nations Foundation, Inc.
- IAEA and OPCW report to the GA, but contribute on an ad hoc basis to GA and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) work on, inter alia, finance and development issues.
- Specialized agencies are autonomous organizations whose work is coordinated with ECOSOC (intergovernmental level) and CEB (inter-secretarial level).
- The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994, as on 1 October 1994 Palau, the last United Nations Trust Territory, became independent.
- International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) are not specialized agencies in UN Doc E/1994/L.4, paras. 57 and 63 of the Charter, but are part of the UN system.
- The secretariats of these organs are part of the UN Secretariat.
- The secretariat also includes the following offices: The Ethics Office, United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, Office of Administration of Justice and the Office on Sport for Development and Peace

This Chart is a reflection of the functional organization of the United Nations System and for informational purposes only. It does not include all offices or entities of the United Nations System.

have similar mandates as well, such as UN Women (part of the GA) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW; part of ECOSOC).

By the end of the activity, the class should have built a good organizational chart of the UN that the students themselves have created. This is a great reference resource to post in the classroom for future reference throughout the year.

### **Additional Resources**

- [UN System Organizational Chart](#) (as of July 2021)
- [Descriptions of GA committees](#)
- [Descriptions of ECOSOC committees](#) – There are a lot of them. The Functional Commissions are most frequently encountered in MUN conferences.
- [Overview of the UNSC](#) – Here, the UN describes the past and present priorities of the Security Council.
- [Overview of how the ICJ works](#) – This source is a bit dense, but ICJ simulations are typically reserved for more advanced delegates anyway.
- [Insider's Guide to the UN](#) – A great book by a longtime UN reporter that does an excellent job describing how the UN works in today's world.

## Flow of a MUN Committee

Instead of going chronologically through the process of preparing for a MUN conference, we're first going to start with the overall flow of a MUN committee. This will help students understand exactly what they are preparing for and why they are doing each of the preparation steps listed below. Both students and instructors shouldn't be concerned if they don't totally understand this after reading it the first time. Most MUNers have told us that no matter how well they are taught, they didn't really understand how conferences work until they actually got to their very first one. MUN really is a one-of-a-kind activity!

MUN—like many forms of debate—is governed by the **rules of procedure**, which are the rules that determine when and how delegates are allowed to speak. Without the rules of procedure, MUN conferences would just turn into shouting matches, which wouldn't really create meaningful conversations. **Here, we must note that there is no single set of rules of procedure that all conferences share.** The major themes are usually shared among conferences, but each one may have its own special set of rules. In this guide, we'll discuss the IMUNA Rules of Procedure which are similar to the rules of procedure at most North American conferences.

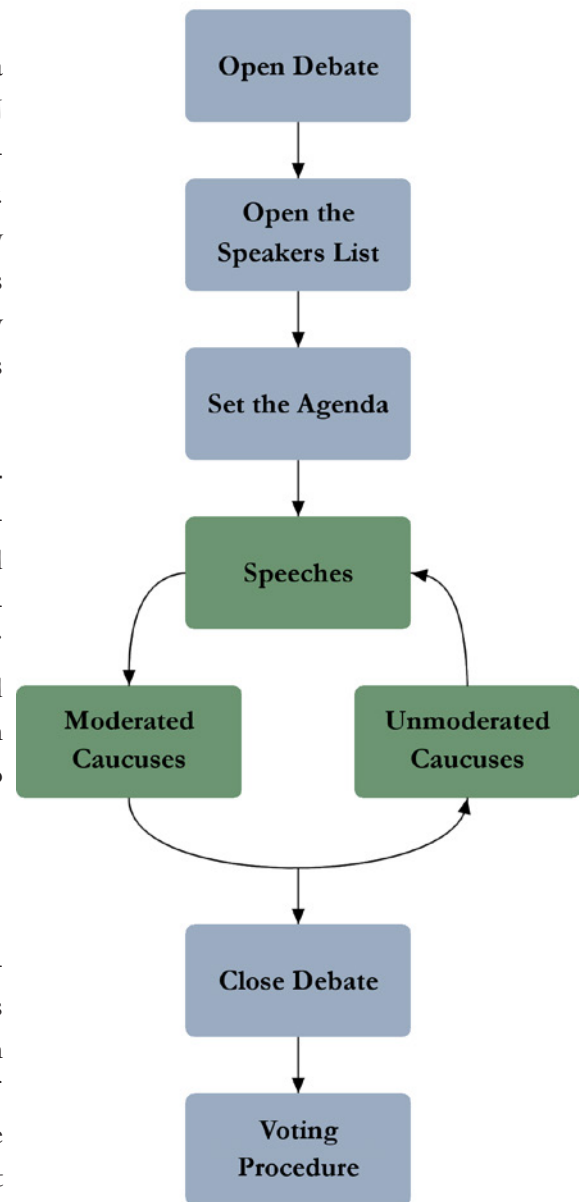
### The Chair

Every MUN committee has a chair – the person who leads the committee and administers the rules of procedure fairly. The chair is almost always seated at the front of the room and is typically a student at the institution that is hosting the conference. The chair also holds a **gavel**, the symbol of their leadership over a committee which can be used to call the committee to order. Typically, there are multiple people at the front of the room that share the responsibilities of being a chair. This group is called the **dais**, and they may pass the gavel between each other to symbolize who is leading the committee.

Conferences tend to have different philosophies regarding the role of the chair. Some conferences, like IMUNA's conferences, believe that the chair is a well-researched figure and can serve as an educator, helping the students reach compromises and explore new ideas in committee. Other conferences have a more hands-off approach, preferring that chairs simply make sure that the rules are being followed. Either way, the chair is someone that delegates will hear from often in committee.

### Opening Debate

Debate typically starts with a speakers list: the list of countries in the order in which they will have the floor to speak. The speakers list is the most democratic of the forms of MUN debate. Each country is allowed to be on the speakers list only once at any given moment, allowing everybody in the room to share their positions equally. Speeches during the start of debate are typically expository in nature. Each country will frame the problem in a way that makes their solution make the most sense. They'll also



explain their country's involvement in the issue and discuss the kinds of solutions they want to see pass.

This is also the time where countries identify their **blocs**: groups of countries that share beliefs about how to address the problem. Blocs are critical for getting anything passed through the committee, as a resolution with a single sponsor is unlikely to pass. By listening for opening speeches that advocate for similar policies, delegates can easily identify potential allies.

## Working Papers

After many speeches have passed and the different blocs have come together, each bloc will start to write their resolutions outlining how they want to see the issue addressed by the UN. However, because resolution is a term reserved for things that have been voted on and approved by the committee, MUN uses the term **working paper** to describe the documents drafted during this phase of debate. A working paper is a document that aspires to be a resolution but hasn't been submitted to the chair yet. Once a working paper is submitted to the chair, it is then introduced to the committee (usually by projecting it at the front of the room or making and distributing copies of it to each delegate). At the point that it is distributed to the committee, the document is known as a **draft resolution**. This distinction will become important when we discuss voting procedure.

The chair never formally announces that it is time to begin drafting working papers, and therefore the transition between opening debate and the start of writing working papers is never precise. However, once a bloc feels like it has enough members to start developing their solution to the problem, they should feel empowered to begin writing a working paper.

During this phase, the speakers list will continue, but the committee will more often vote to enter **caucuses**. In short, caucuses are a suspension of the rules, meaning that countries no longer follow the speakers list. The committee usually decides when it will go into a caucus. First, a delegate raises their **placard** (a card with their country's name on it), is recognized by the chair, and then makes a **motion**. A motion is essentially a proposal for the committee to temporarily change the rules of debate. Delegates most often move to enter caucuses. The two types of caucuses are:

- **Moderated Caucus:** Sometimes, the committee will want to focus on a specific subtopic. For example, in a discussion about water scarcity, the committee may decide it wants to focus on the effects of desertification for a short period. This is where a moderated caucus is useful. In this form of caucus, delegates pick a single, narrow topic they want to make short speeches on. The chair will then call on countries that want to speak on that topic, and they must speak *only* about the topic.
  - Example Motion: "I move to enter a five-minute moderated caucus with a thirty second speaking time on the topic of water rights in Chad."
- **Unmoderated Caucus:** An unmoderated caucus is where all delegates are invited to get out of their seats and move about the room. This is extremely useful when it comes time to draft working papers, as it allows blocs to speak freely with each other and debate ideas as they commit them to paper. It's much easier to write together in a group than scattered across the room!
  - Example Motion: "I move to enter a ten-minute unmoderated caucus."

Closely related to motions are **points**. Points are questions to the chair or comments about the way committee is being run. They rarely relate to the topic being discussed and have more to do with the way debate is being run. An example of a point is the point of order, used to notify the chair that one of the rules of procedure may have been violated.

Throughout this phase, different blocs may split or merge depending on whether any issues become more or less important to the committee. It is not unusual for there to be varying numbers of working papers and draft resolutions as debate progresses.



These changes are usually the effect of caucus blocs splitting or merging, a normal thing for MUN conferences.

Finally, more advanced conferences will allow time to alter draft resolutions with **amendments**. We believe that new delegates should not be terribly concerned by this, and even many advanced conferences don't feature amendments because the students don't have any to propose. For those curious about amendments, please see the Advanced Delegate Guide.

## Voting Procedure

The committee ends with voting procedure. Voting procedure begins when a delegate moves to close debate, which requires a two-thirds majority of the committee to pass. Once this motion is approved, *only* the draft resolutions continue to be recognized; any working papers are ignored. However, by this point, delegates have had ample time to write their draft resolutions and read everyone else's draft resolutions, so a decision must be made. The committee does a final review of each draft resolution and then votes on them one by one. New delegates should only be concerned with whether they are going to vote yes or no on each resolution. The chair will walk the committee through the various steps on how to cast those votes. However, it is important to note that the UN and MUN committees can pass more than one resolution at a time, so there is no need for tit-for-tat voting. Countries are encouraged to vote according to their policy to produce the most realistic result from the simulation.

## Multiple Topics

Some conferences will have the delegates debate two topics instead of one. If so, the committee will begin debating the second

topic immediately after voting procedure on the first topic has ended.

## Activity: New School Rules

**Objective:** Students will be able to clearly describe the major phases of a MUN committee and understand the flow of debate.

### Materials Required:

- One gavel
- One teacher or other adult familiar with the rules of procedure to serve as chair
- Placards with students' names on them (*optional*)

**Time Requirement:** 40-60 minutes

**Procedure:** There's simply no better way to understand how a debate evolves than to experience it. In order to focus on how debate unfolds and not get bogged down in research-related questions, pick a topic that is already familiar to the students. One we've seen be successful is "This classroom can pass one new school rule that the principal must adopt. What rule will it be?" Students will likely have very different opinions about what that school rule should be, but the restriction that they can guarantee only one new rule will force them to compromise.

Ask students to make brief introductory speeches (~30s) explaining the rule they would like to see implemented. Then, once all speakers have gone, invite them to begin motioning for caucuses. Depending on the direction debate goes, the chair may direct them towards the kind of caucus that would be better at addressing their issue (moderated or unmoderated). Be sure to allow the debate to return to the speakers list sometimes, too, to show delegates how the speakers list can be a great opportunity for someone from their bloc to address the whole committee.

By the end of committee, there should hopefully be a few rules that have widespread support among the students. Once debate begins to reach a stable point (or if there is simply no more time), have the students vote to determine the single rule that they would like to see passed.

Remember to leave time to debrief with the students. What caucuses were the most productive (or the least)? When did most of their resolution writing get done? Did anyone use their speakers list speeches very well? Having the students generate their own observations about the class will strongly reinforce their own understanding of the flow of debate.

### Additional Resources

- [5 Stages of Committee Every Delegate Should Know](#)
- [THIMUN Rules of Procedure](#) – This set of rules differs from the rules described above and is especially popular in Europe.
- [UN4MUN Rules](#) – The UN has also released its own rules of procedure, which are also quite different from the ones above.



## The Art of Speechcraft

### Speeches and the Rule of Threes

There's really only one thing to remember when it comes to speechcraft for novice delegates: the **rule of threes**. This rule states that a good speech features ideas organized into groups of threes, which makes it very easy for a listener to understand the speech.

Let's break down what this means. First off, a good speech of reasonable length (1-5 minutes) should have a thesis supported by three supporting arguments (in addition to a brief introduction and conclusion, each about one sentence long). Each argument should, in turn, have three pieces of evidence to support them. Good evidence means statistics, quotes from reputable sources, past UN resolutions, etc. So, in an outline format, a good speech looks something like this:

- SHORT Introduction (State Thesis)
- Argument 1
  - Evidence 1
  - Evidence 2
  - Evidence 3
- Argument 2
  - Evidence 1
  - Evidence 2
  - Evidence 3
- Argument 3
  - Evidence 1
  - Evidence 2
  - Evidence 3
- SHORT Conclusion

Advanced delegates are often able to tinker with this structure; novice delegates are encouraged to adhere to it more strictly. The practice of either narrowing or expanding arguments to reach the number three is good practice for less experienced students who are learning how to compare, evaluate, and prioritize the arguments in their favor. While it may be challenging sometimes to get to three arguments, giving exceptions to younger delegates often robs them of important critical thinking experience.

The rationale for three is as follows. First off, if a delegate has only one argument, it's easy for another speaker to give a strong rebuttal in one or two sentences. Having more arguments helps make the position more resilient against other counter-arguments. However, some delegates have a natural tendency to dump tons of information in their speech, flooding the listener with ideas and ensuring that they remember none of them. By selecting only the three best arguments, delegates are delivering the three most compelling reasons other delegates should agree with them in a memorable way.

### Public Speaking

No matter how strong the content of a student's speech is, if they fail to present their speech well, they'll lose their audience's attention. This is why public speaking skills are critical to the art of speechcraft.

Unfortunately, it is *very* difficult to teach public speaking skills—which are inherently auditory—in a written guide. However,



the good news is that most people have a natural sense of what kinds of speeches are the most compelling. So, our main tip for public speaking is to study how well-known orators make their speeches. It's easiest to use the most obvious examples of strong public speakers. Former President Barack Obama is one example, and there are plenty of videos of him speaking online. Historical figures also work well as public speaking coaches, such as Martin Luther King, whose videos can also be found online. Great speakers need not be famous, though. Every community is likely to have local leaders to look up to.

Regardless, there are some tips we can provide to address some of the most common public speaking issues we see among delegates. Overall, the best way to address these issues is simply practice. If a student has a glaring issue in a practice speech, address it there and then; otherwise, they may learn bad habits that will be more difficult to eliminate later.

**Audibility:** Easily the most common issue is students who don't know how to project their voice. More often than not, this stems from nervousness around public speaking (which is completely natural and should not be chastised). Instead, the easiest way to acclimate students to public speaking is for them to give more numerous but shorter speeches with feedback after each speech. Do public speaking activities in small groups (like the ones suggested below) where they won't be the only ones in an uncomfortable position. However, once they are speaking, don't give them a pass on their audibility. Push them to be louder until they reach a good public speaking volume and hold them accountable for remaining at that volume until they're done speaking. It will be uncomfortable for them, but some discomfort must be overcome. Most importantly, allow students breaks between speeches. If a student feels like they are being picked on, they may retreat further into their shell.

**The Sound of Silence:** Many students also struggle with the idea that they don't always have to be speaking during a speech. Most teachers know to look for when students use filler words (e.g. "um," "like), which is the most common way students avoid

silence. However, this resistance can also take other forms as well. Some students tend to ramble with long run-on sentences that lose track of their original idea. Other students may force themselves to speak in a more plodding, monotone voice so that there isn't any temptation to use filler words. Highlighting speeches from public figures where the pauses help captivate the audience can help students understand why silence can be powerful.

**Speaking Quickly:** Similarly, some students get nervous and push themselves to speak quickly just to get the speech done faster. If the audience can't understand the student's words, though, the speech is effectively useless. Hold students accountable when they are speaking too fast and make them start again from the beginning.

**Tapering Off:** Finally, many students have an issue where they quickly get quieter at the end of a speech such that the last few words are inaudible. During short speeches (such as those in a moderated caucus), this can make the main point of their speech entirely inaudible. When students do this, it's often beneficial to make them repeat the last sentence that they tapered off to make them practice ending their speeches audibly.

## Activity: Monologues

**Objective:** Students will be able to present a written text using strong public speaking skills.

### Materials Required:

- Database of monologues (or Google)

**Time Requirement:** 30-120 minutes

**Procedure:** This activity is simple, but the execution can be time consuming. Essentially, the idea is for students to practice public speaking in a manner similar to the speakers list by preparing monologues to deliver in front of the class.

Usually, we find it helpful to have the full class read one monologue together and identify how they might interpret written word into spoken word. If your school has a drama teacher, they will likely be a great resource for this activity. An important note here is that the instructor should not perpetuate the idea that there is one way to go about delivering a monologue. In any monologue, there are multiple interpretations possible.

Once students learn how to creatively interpret a monologue, they should find their own, or have a unique monologue assigned to them by the instructor. It is important that students believe that preparing to deliver their monologue takes time and effort. It is very obvious when students don't prepare a monologue and sound like they're reading it for the first time. Students should be given ample time to read and analyze their monologue, as well as practice it in small groups. Most students also find it helpful to annotate the words on paper to mark words they want to emphasize. However, once everyone is ready, the instructor should have students deliver their monologues one by one in front of the full class, with other students offering "grows and glows" (what students did well and what they can improve on) after each speech.

## Activity: Tongue Twisters

**Objective:** Students will be able to use this warm up activity to prepare their voices for a full day of debate

### Materials Required:

- List of tongue twisters

**Time Requirement:** 1-5 minutes

**Procedure:** This activity is a great warm up before MUN conferences. The idea is simple: a teacher or student leader brings a series of tongue twisters with them to each MUN conference. Students are then able to practice saying the tongue twisters to warm up. Not only does this awaken their voices, but it also gives them an early opportunity to fail in a friendly environment, which can take some of the stress and anxiety away from public speaking.

## The Art of Caucusing

Caucusing is a quite vague term, as moderated and unmoderated caucuses are quite different in the way they are run and the objectives for delegates. Therefore, there isn't a coherent strategy for caucusing overall, but rather two separate strategies – one for moderated and one for unmoderated caucuses. In this section, we will treat both separately. Before we start, here is a quick recap on what each kind of caucus is.

- **Moderated Caucus:** A rapid, yet structured style of debate, a moderated caucus is used to discuss a predetermined, *specific* aspect of the topic. Some prefer to think of these as mini-speeches, as the speaker is still addressing the entire room.
- **Unmoderated Caucus:** An unmoderated caucus is a suspension of structured debate and is used to facilitate the free flow of communication among delegates. During unmoderated caucuses, it is encouraged that delegates walk around the room

## Motions

First, let's discuss how to motion for a caucus. As we mentioned in the "Flow of a MUN Committee" section, motions are made by a delegate raising their placard and being recognized by the chair. However, to properly make a motion, the delegate must know what parameters need to be defined. Caucuses come in different shapes and sizes, so without these parameters, the chair won't know how to administer the caucus.



- **Moderated Caucuses:** Motions for these caucuses can be complicated, as they have three parts: the total time for the caucus, the speaking time per person, and the topic. For example, a delegate may make the following motion: “Indonesia moves to enter a five-minute moderated caucus with thirty second speaking time for the purpose of discussing Draft Resolution 1.2.” If passed, this would feature ten speakers, as ten blocks of 30 seconds fit within five minutes).
- **Unmoderated Caucuses:** These are simpler, largely because an unmoderated caucus represents a suspension of the rules. Motions for an unmoderated caucus only need to specify the length of time for the caucus, which may sound like this: “Germany moves to enter a ten-minute unmoderated caucus.”

Note that both motions used similar language “[Country] moves to enter.” First, delegates should refer to themselves as the country they are representing rather than their name in all formal settings (but you don’t need to say, “Germany needs to go to the bathroom.”). Furthermore, the proper language for making any motion is “moves to enter.” Delegates will often hear “Germany motions for a…” in MUN conferences. This is the norm for many delegates but is technically incorrect.

When the total time for a caucus expires, the committee automatically moves to the speakers list again *unless* a motion to extend the caucus is made or a motion for a new caucus is made. Because the committee reverts to the speakers list when there are no other motions, we sometimes call the speakers list the “default form of debate.”

## Moderated Caucuses

In a moderated caucus, like in speeches, delegates have an opportunity to address the entire committee. Therefore, this makes moderated caucuses still well suited for broadcasting a delegate’s policy and solutions. However, the key difference is that the speaking time for a moderated caucus is usually 30 or 45 seconds. This does not provide enough time to fully implement the rule of threes. However, there is also only one topic that the delegates are permitted to speak on. Therefore, delegates should view a moderated caucus speech as a small section of a full speech, specifically focused on one of their arguments. In that sense, the rule of three still applies: speakers should have three pieces of evidence to support the main argument of their moderated caucus. Delegates should not try to make more than one argument in such a short amount of time or they will risk rushing through their content.

Additionally, the short speeches in a moderated caucus usually cause the pace of debate to be quite fast! If each speech is only 30 seconds, there are six speakers in just three minutes (not including the short time between speeches). Each of those speakers is likely bringing new evidence and a new perspective to the debate. Therefore, it’s also important that moderated caucuses not be too deeply planned. If a delegate spends three minutes preparing their moderated caucus speech, then at best, they’re responding to points made six speakers ago! Moderated caucuses require delegates to be reactive and think on their feet and are thus a great way to hone their improvised speaking skills.

## Unmoderated Caucuses

Unmoderated caucuses require a quite different approach to speaking and diplomacy. These caucuses are where most of the compromise between delegates in a bloc takes place, which is a critical step towards drafting a working paper and draft resolution. Furthermore, there is no recognized speaker. The caucus is essentially a free for all, with the delegates competing for the attention of the rest of the caucus bloc. It can get hectic and stressful at times, but the following tips will help a novice delegate feel right at home in a caucus bloc.

**Come Prepared:** Coming prepared with research on a variety of subtopics will help delegates participate during unmoderated caucuses, and the more a delegate is able to participate, the better off they will be. Having a policy or solutions for only one



aspect of a topic is guaranteed to mute that delegate when the conversation naturally flows to other topics.

**Be Assertive:** Delegates will quickly notice a pattern in blocs. After one delegate is done speaking (and often before they are really finished!), other delegates will start talking at the same time to try to be the next speaker “recognized” by the bloc. This leads to delegates talking over each other for a few seconds. Don’t be afraid of being a bit rude. This period of talking over others is natural. Delegates waiting for a lull in the conversation before they jump in will find that they never find a good time to speak. Delegates must be assertive, but also gracious. There’s no need to win every “battle,” and trying to do so will earn the delegate a bad reputation in the group.

**Be a Good Listener:** Lots of delegates in a caucus bloc are going to want to speak and share their policy and solutions. Delegates should remember that no resolution is passed with a single vote, and that blocs are formed intentionally to bring other voices into the group. Trying to dominate a group is a great way to alienate the other delegates and drive them to other caucus blocs. Delegates should share the stage and let other delegates contribute their own ideas to maintain a strong, loyal caucus bloc.

**Be Welcoming:** Especially as committee sessions progress on, it can be quite easy for a caucus bloc to become an exclusive group, with a few key players dominating conversation and blocking other delegates from participating. When other delegates visit the caucus bloc, delegates should be sure to address the people who are hanging out at the fringe of the caucus bloc. Invite them in and speak to problems that their country may be having. They may end up being valuable allies when it comes time to vote, and the personal attention will make them feel more welcome.

Especially as committee goes on and as blocs get further into the resolution writing process, some key points of dissent will emerge between members of the committee. At this point, compromises will need to be made, and every delegate will want that compromise to favor their policy as much as possible. This is where conversations within blocs can become contentious. This can present an opportunity to delegates, though, as the other blocs in the room are likely facing the same issues. Strong delegates therefore also visit other caucus blocs try to pull away some of the members that aren't getting their way in that group. Talking with the same group of people for an entire conference represents a wasted opportunity!

Finally, it's important to note that there is no cookie-cutter strategy to perfecting the art of caucusing. The tips above are a good starting point for new delegates, but their experience will also inform them about what kind of delegate they want to be. Delegates should be encouraged to explore and experiment with different strategies to find one that feels right to them. Not every leader has the loudest voice in a room, but some do!

### **Activity: Impromptu Speeches**

**Objective:** Students will be able to make impromptu speeches more confidently as practice for moderated and unmoderated caucuses.

#### **Materials Required:**

- List of impromptu debate topics
- Gavel
- Small container

**Time Requirement:** 10-30 minutes

**Procedure:** This activity is similar to “Debating Candy Bars,” but it is reframed to focus less on debate and more on speaking skills. Prior to launching this activity, the teacher or students should write out a series of impromptu speech topics that novice debaters can address. These topics should allow room for differing opinions but should not require any expert knowledge. Great topics may include “What is your favorite kind of candy bar?” “Would you prefer the power of flight or invisibility?” or any number of “Would you rather...” topics. Once the topics are prepared, they should be mixed in the small container.

One at a time, students come up and pick a topic at random (or have it assigned by the instructor). The student reads their topic to the class and then has only 15 seconds to mentally prepare themselves before making a 45-60 second speech. Students should be encouraged to argue their own opinion in this version of the activity, as the focus is on keeping prep time short. It is important to urge students to fall within that time range so that they can develop a natural sense of how long 45-60 seconds feels like.

This activity can also make a great warm up at the beginning of a class, too!



## The Art of Resolution Writing

Before learning what it takes to create a stand-out resolution for committee, you must first understand the various stages a resolution goes through, from the very start of debate all the way through to voting. At IMUNA conferences, this is the essential workflow:

Debate → Write → Submit → More Debate → Amend → Vote → Celebrate!

We discussed the process a resolution must go through in order to get passed in the “Flow of a MUN Committee” section. However, let’s be explicit about this process here. Below we have outlined the three main stages of a resolution:

- **Phase I:** While a caucus bloc is putting together its resolution, the document is known as a **working paper**. This means that the document is not formally acknowledged by the chair, meaning that if debate closes, it will not be voted on. At most conferences, working papers are hand-written, but are written with the goal of turning them into resolutions in mind, and so obey the resolution format rules presented below. Working papers are also largely works in progress and are more subject to change than a draft resolution.
- **Phase II:** Once the bloc has written the working paper and it has all the ideas that the caucus bloc wants to include, it is then submitted to the dais. Once the dais recognizes it, it becomes a **draft resolution**. This recognition is critical, as most conferences require the chair to recognize a draft resolution before copies of it will be distributed to everyone. Furthermore, when voting starts, *only* draft resolutions are voted on, not working papers. However, draft resolutions are not the end of the writing process.
- **Phase III:** Prior to being voted on, delegates can write **amendments**, which change other draft resolutions. Some conferences may deemphasize or even skip the amendment phase—either because the chairs want to or the delegates simply don’t have any amendments—but it is usually an option. Once the draft resolution is voted on (and if it is approved by the committee), it finally becomes a resolution.

## Components of a Resolution

Now that we’ve discussed the way resolutions are written, we can turn our attention to how to write a resolution. Resolution format, like many other parts of MUN, may vary between conferences, but they all share the same basic components. Below, we’ll describe how resolutions are written at IMUNA’s conferences.

The first section is the **header** which describes the basic information about the resolution and committee. Headers vary between conferences, but they *always* include the list of **sponsors**: the countries that are proposing the draft resolution and support it fully. Usually, conferences also ask for **signatories** (countries that aren’t signing to the resolution but think it should be debated) and a title for the resolution. Here’s an example header from a resolution that was debated at NHSMUN.

Resolution 1.1
<b>Committee:</b> United Nations Development Programme
<b>Topic:</b> Facilitating Primary Response to Natural Disasters in South America
<b>Sponsors:</b> Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guinea, Indonesia, Lesotho, Morocco, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United States
<b>Signatories:</b> Djibouti, Egypt, France, People’s Republic of China, South Africa

Getting into the real content of the resolution, we start with the **preambulatory clauses**, or the “why” of the resolution, which explain the context for the topic under debate. These could include general statements about the situation, references to actions already taken by the committee or other resolutions, quotations from Secretaries-General, statistics related to a topic or subtopic, etc. These clauses always start with words or phrases written in italics and starting with gerunds (“-ing words”).

Example preambulatory clauses: *bearing in mind, deeply concerned, further deploring, keeping in mind, recognizing.*

The General Assembly,

*Recognizing* the increasing severity of the El Nino effect and the consequent flooding of South America,

*Noting with regret* the immense casualties of the earthquake in Haiti,

*Taking into account* the developing status of many South American countries,

Once the “why” is out of the way, resolutions describe the “what” and “how” with **operative clauses**. These detail the *actions* that the committee wishes to take, which can include recommendations from Member States, establishments of protocols and subcommittees, collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), etc. These clauses always start with a present tense verb that is underlined.

Example operative clauses: calls upon, endorses, encourages, further invites, recommends, requests

1. Recommends that governments establish cash-for-work programs to build disaster resistant infrastructure, with:
  - a. Funding from foreign direct investments, World Bank loans, and regional disaster funds,
  - b. Urban cash-for-work programs, which will include:
    - i. Building better housing for urban slum dwellers,
    - ii. Constructing better, more stable roads for easy evacuation and communication between rural and urban areas,
2. Endorses a radio-data-system (RDS) establishment in rural South America for early response systems that:
  - a. Supports the use of two-way FM broadcasting signals to allow rural areas to communicate with cities,
  - b. Utilizes a high frequency signal to transmit early warnings
  - c. Distributes cheap radios that contain rechargeable batteries or use solar power
3. Encourages the use of cheap, well-established companies such as 2Wcom to institute the RDS program.

It’s safe to say that no resolution is perfect. That is why before voting on draft resolutions, the delegates can create **amendments**,



which alter and edit the clauses of a draft resolution before it is finalized. Ultimately, amendments tend to be a tactic reserved for more advanced delegates, so we will reserve our discussion of amendments for our Advanced Delegate Guide.

### **Activity: UN Resolution Book Club**

**Objective:** Students will be able to analyze and describe the effect of resolutions actually passed by the United Nations.

**Materials Required:**

- Prepared list of UN resolutions to read

**Time Requirement:** 30-60 minutes

**Procedure:** Every good MUN student should get into the habit of reading and analyzing real UN resolutions. This kind of detailed knowledge can easily set a delegate apart from the rest of an otherwise talented committee. However, *many* UN resolutions are difficult to read. They may focus on assigning research to the Secretary-General or asking for regular updates on developing situations. Therefore, resolutions need to be vetted and pre-selected by a teacher or student leader. Picking one at random and hoping it makes sense is more than likely to leave a student confused.

In this activity, students work individually, in groups, or as a full class to analyze a resolution that the UN has passed, focusing on the format of the document and the nature of the steps taken. Students will likely quickly realize that although UN resolu-

tions are as complex as they may seem, they are still very dense documents that approach problems from multiple angles. After students have had time to analyze this on their own or with their groups, they should present their findings to the full class to reinforce their knowledge.

## Additional Resources

- [United Nations Digital Library](#) – A database run by the UN that includes all working papers and resolutions that are available digitally.
- [UNSC Resolutions](#) – This page has links to all UNSC resolutions since the founding of the UN.
- [Model UN Made Easy: How to Write a Resolution](#) – This article from Best Delegate does a great job explaining how to write resolutions.

## Crafting a Position Paper

A delegate's experience does not begin when they walk through the committee's doors; instead, it begins the second they start researching. Dedicating time to research and preparation in the months leading up to the conference will result in a well-rounded, prepared delegate ready to both contribute unique ideas to the committee and defend those ideas against others. Chairs at nearly every conference are trained to notice evidence of strong research and look favorably on it.

Before talking about the position paper itself, it's first important to draw a distinction between **policy** and **solutions**. Policy is a country's stance on a topic. It's their opinion about what exactly the issue even is. The solutions are the concrete, specific steps that a country wants to take to address the issue. Let's look at an example between Egypt and Ethiopia to see how dramatically policies can differ. In the simplest possible terms, Ethiopia, a country in East Africa, is building a dam on the Blue Nile River, which feeds into the famous Nile River which flows through Egypt. This dam would be used for electricity generation and would require a large reservoir to fill before it became operational. Egypt has strongly protested this dam for years on the grounds that it will threaten their water security. Ethiopia, on the other hand, argues that it will actually help Egypt manage their water resources. The two countries' policies are clearly opposed: Egypt opposes the dam because of water security, Ethiopia supports it for electricity production. The solutions are how each side wants to carry out their policy. Egyptian leaders have suggested opposing the dam in a variety of ways, including building support among regional leaders to join them and even funding rebel groups in Ethiopia to attack the dam. These solutions support Egypt's policy of opposing the construction of the dam.

At most MUN conferences, delegates compile their research on their country into what is known as a **position paper**, which is often a requirement for delegates to receive awards at the conference. These papers are read carefully by the dais and returned to the delegates with feedback and suggestions to help them during the final stages of their research. Furthermore, the position paper often comes in handy for delegates throughout committee as reference material when they need to recall some of their research.

More importantly, though, the position paper is also a reference document. Many delegates also bring research binders with them, which we'll describe in the next section, but the position paper is a chance to highlight the most important facts and policies into one quick reference sheet. The act of writing a position paper forces students to prioritize information and succinctly summarize their policy. Pages and hours of research must be condensed into a few paragraphs. This prioritization of extensive research helps delegates to have a more focused debate, as delegates will be more likely to stay on-policy when they have already chosen the most important elements of that policy.

There is no standard format for a position paper, and they tend to vary widely between different MUN conferences. However, most position papers include at least these three sections (or variants of these sections)

- **I: Topic Background** – Entire books could be written about most MUN topics, but delegates don't have time to write an entire book. This section should just highlight just the parts of the topic background that are most important to the student's country and proposed solutions. Don't waste time on superfluous details!
- **II: Country Policy** – This section focuses on the delegate's country policy about what needs to be done on the topic. Again, simplicity is key. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms, and then include some statistics or facts that support the effectiveness of that policy. Supporting evidence is critical because if someone challenges the policy in committee, the evidence will help shut down that opposition voice.
  - **By far the area where students struggle most with position papers is their country policy.** This is because not every country has a clearly laid out policy on every topic around the world. Given the number of issues facing

the world, this isn't surprising, but it doesn't mean that the country doesn't have a policy. Let's consider the dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku Islands. Most students will not be representing either China or Japan, so their countries might not have a stated policy. However, students should always consider **their allies, regional balance of power, and precedent**. Countries are typically more likely to support their allies first, so if they are allied with a country involved in the dispute, they will support them. Countries also weigh the regional balance of power. Countries that are afraid of China's growing influence are likely to support Japan's proposals (and vice versa!). Finally, precedent is also important, as countries are usually reluctant to pursue solutions that might be used against them in the future. Even if the tiny island nation of Vanuatu doesn't have a stated policy about the Senkaku Islands, these three tools can be used to infer a policy.

- **III. Proposed Solutions** – This section tests each student's out-of-the-box thinking, but proposed solutions need to be realistic. While a solution that costs \$100 trillion might work, the world doesn't have \$100 trillion to throw at every problem. The solution should also clearly be a natural extension of the country's policy. It should clearly answer the question: "why is this solution the one that this country would favor above all others?"
  - The most common question students ask about developing solutions is why they can't just side with one country/party/group in a conflict. For example, if the committee is debating about the tensions between Russia and Ukraine, many students may be included to give their full-throated support to Ukraine. This, however, does not show much creative thinking nor does it address the real issues of the topic. Many of Ukraine's powerful neighbors do, in fact, support them! But that support has not yielded a complete and total triumph for Ukraine. Students should think about what the real obstacles to peace are and how they can address them.

Make sure to check each conference's website for their exact position paper guidelines, since they change slightly from conference to conference.

### Activity: Delivering Solutions

**Objective:** Students will be able to think creatively about a country's policy and infer solutions that country could pursue in line with that policy.

#### Materials Required:

- Brief overview of a topic of your choice, no more than one page
- Blank paper

**Time Requirement:** 20 minutes not including topic familiarization

**Procedure:** Select a global issues topic for this activity. One example could be the conflict taking place in the South China Sea, which the New York Times has summarized [here](#). This topic is a good example because it offers many different countries to simulate in a debate. Before this activity can start, students must be familiar with the topic.



Separate the students into groups, one group for each country involved in the topic (for the South China Sea, this group could include China, the Philippines, Vietnam, the United States, Taiwan, and Malaysia, among others). Each group should receive one blank page on which they should write down their country's policy at the top of the page. The policy should be descriptive and should try not to mention specific solutions.

Once every group has written their country policy, the groups should pass their pages around the room so that each group is now looking at the page for a new country. Then, under the policy, the group should decide a solution that reflects that policy. Students should be strongly discouraged, if not prohibited from suggesting solutions that are too simplistic (e.g. in the case of the South China Sea dispute, no solution should be "My country should receive all of the islands"). Once every group is done, continue to pass the pages around the class and repeat until every group has their original country document.

At the end of the session, the instructor should lead a debrief focusing on the most creative solutions on each page were and why they stand out. Shoutouts should go to students who managed to develop solutions that would be amenable to all sides in a conflict (even if that solution is a stalling tactic!).

## Research for Beginners

### Research Binders

**Research binders** are a staple of MUN. Any conference is likely to have many delegates carrying binders or notebooks of various sizes where they have collected their research. The proliferation of smartphones and other technology hasn't replaced the practice of creating a researching binder, either! Many conferences may ban the use of technology in committee, but even if they don't, many delegates find it helpful to bring a physical page or notecard with them during speeches to reference research material. It looks much more prepared than staring into a smartphone screen during a speech.

Like position papers, creating a research binder requires prioritization of information. There is an enormous amount of information out there, so a binder could be hundreds of pages long! A delegate could easily find the population of every city, town, and village in their country with only a little bit of effort. However, not all of this information is useful, and the more information there is in a research binder, the harder it is to find something. Therefore, we have a few tips for delegates starting to create their research binders.

### Background Guides

Thankfully, students aren't alone when it comes to research. Nearly every MUN conference in the world publishes research documents for each committee introducing students to the topics being debated. At IMUNA conferences and many others, these are called **background guides (BGs)**, although they go by other names as well. Conferences often pride themselves on the quality of their BGs, so they can be quite informative for delegates. Before doing any other research, students should familiarize themselves with their committee's BG as a useful springboard for research. Many delegates also print out the BG as the first item in their research binder. Longer BGs may be too bulky for a research binder, so students may want to create their own summary of the BG to include instead.

### Discovering a Country: GREET

All research binders should start with information about the country being represented, which should be restricted to a few pages at most. This is where many delegates tend to print out everything they can find, making it more difficult to find the important information. We teach the acronym **GREET**, broken down below.

#### Government

It's simply not possible to accurately represent a country without understanding its form of government. Governments are as diverse as the people around the world. Countries can have monarchs with near absolute power or monarchs relegated to ceremonial duties. Democracies may decide to concentrate power in an individual president or keep power within the larger legislative body. Some countries have overt religious involvement in their government while others make religion in government illegal. Understanding the big picture of how a country's government operates will help delegates understand how it perceives the world.

#### Religion

Religion can be a common bond between two people of different cultures who speak different languages. In this regard, governments are no different. Many countries still primarily find allies within their religious group who are likely to understand their



values. However, delegates should be wary of taking too broad a look at this. The world's major religions all feature various sects that may work together or be bitterly divided. In most cases, these conflicts aren't intrinsic to people's beliefs, but are rather used by leaders to rally support for their cause. Take, for example, the intense rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Saudi Arabia follows a form of Sunni Islam and Iran Shia Islam. Both countries are quite influential in their region, but they compete for influence by supporting Shia or Sunni factions in their neighboring countries. However, even within Sunni Islam, Saudi Arabia follows a fundamentalist sect called Wahhabism, which some other Sunni Muslims oppose.

## Environment

A country's environment is the geographic and climatic conditions in which it exists. Geography often has a profound influence on how a country develops. Kyrgyzstan, in Central Asia, is an extremely mountainous country far away from the nearest coastline. This has led the country to develop smaller, more remote villages rather than large urban centers; in fact, only 36% of its people live in cities (vs. a global average of about 54%).<sup>1</sup> However, in a harsh desert country like Libya, much of which is covered by the hostile Sahara Desert, roughly 80% of its people are concentrated in a handful of urban areas. These environmental factors will likely shape both countries' views on topics regarding urbanization, slums, and the urban poor. For many countries, their environment can also be among their greatest enemies. Countries like Japan are prone to frequent, powerful earthquakes and countries like India are subject to dangerous monsoons. Both of these natural disasters and others take many lives each year, so they will shape both countries' policy on disaster preparedness and relief. Finally, with global climate change playing a growing role in international relations, it's also useful for delegates to understand the potential risks of climate change to their country.

## Ethnicity

Understanding a country's ethnic groups is a critical part of understanding a country's policy on any issue. Reaching a firm definition for ethnicity is difficult, but it is commonly a group of people who share a common cultural heritage and practices. Interactions between ethnic groups within a country have been both a driver of conflict and of prosperity. Canada continues to work to manage its relationship with French Canadians and with its various First Nations. In the 1960s, Singapore, formerly part of Malaysia, was actually expelled from the country, in part because of tensions between the majority Chinese population of Singapore and the Malay population of Malaysia. All countries are host to multiple ethnicities, whether they are native to the country or immigrants to it. Understanding these dynamics will offer a unique insight into how the government perceives the world.

## Trade

Wealth continues to be a major way in which a country's prosperity is measured, so understanding your country's economy is essential, especially what it trades with other countries. Sometimes, the economic profile is easy to understand. Many states on the Arabian Peninsula rely on oil exports to drive economic growth. Many of these states are also members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a group of countries that sets oil export caps and quotas to manipulate the global oil market. These countries are more likely to maintain positive relations given that their economic futures are intertwined. In addition to what a country produces, it's also important to understand what other countries it trades with. For example, before the 2014 revolution in Ukraine, Russia was a close ally and a major trade partner, accounting for 24% of Ukraine's exports. After the revolution and the contested annexation of Crimea by Russia, that number fell to just 12%.<sup>2</sup> Understanding who a country trades with and how that changes over time will often indicate who the country's closest allies are.

<sup>1</sup> "Urban Population (% of Total) | Data," *The World Bank*, accessed August 19, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>.

<sup>2</sup> "Where Does Ukraine Export to? (2015)," The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed August 19, 2017, [http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree\\_map/hs92/export/ukr/show/all/2015/](http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree_map/hs92/export/ukr/show/all/2015/).

## Where to Research

While a handy tool, there is still a lot of information to capture in GREET. However, the internet is full of fantastic resources that can help build an understanding of any country. Some of the resources we recommend are listed below:

- **Wikipedia:** Many teachers will attempt to steer students away from Wikipedia because it can be edited by anyone and is sometimes vandalized with false information. However, most pages are accurate and can provide a great summary of a country or topic. Wikipedia should still not be cited, though! Position papers should only cite sources that have credibility in their field. Anyone can edit Wikipedia, though, expert or otherwise.
- **The CIA World Factbook:** This is a great statistical database that provides a wealth of information about every country in the world. In fact, it's a bit of an old tradition in MUN for students to start their research here. There are some good uses for the Factbook, especially when trying to understand a country's balance of trade. However, many delegates fall into the trap of just listing as many numbers as they can find and believing that is effective research. The Factbook is a great resource when looking for something specific, but it is recommended that delegates spend the bulk of their time on other sites.
- **Committee Websites:** Most UN agencies have well-run websites that can be valuable sources of information. This can include policy overviews about a topic, summaries of recent UN meetings, or even detailed breakdowns of what the committee is doing to fulfill its mission. For example, the website of the [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) has detailed breakdowns of its operations by country. So, for the topic of "Preventing State Failure in South Sudan" (which is not explicitly related to food!), a student could check out the FAO's page on South Sudan, where one of their priorities is "Increased resilience of livelihoods to threats and crisis." In a room where most delegates would be focused on political violence, supporting the livelihood of individuals so that they don't turn towards violence would be a unique and valuable approach!
- **UN Digital Library:** Any delegate should be familiar with the UN's past action on a topic before walking into committee. For any UN documents or speeches, the UN Digital Library is the best place to find them. This searchable database contains links to agendas, Secretariat research, draft resolutions, and final resolutions for nearly every UN meeting that takes place. The ability to see draft resolutions is also helpful because looking at resolutions that did not pass is a great way to research potential solutions to a topic.

These resources are just a small sample of what's available out there, and with time, delegates and FAs will develop their own sense of what resources are helpful. And remember, the goal of a research binder is not to have all possible information available during committee. Any internet connection will do a better job of storing all available data than a binder! However, the research binder is a log of what's important for when delegates need to quickly pull an idea from their research.

## Activity: Internet Scavenger Hunt

**Objective:** Students will be able to use their research skills to find information related to international relations from across the internet.

### Materials Required:

- Scavenger hunt (a sample is included below, but teachers are encouraged to make their own!)
- Computers for students

**Time Requirement:** 30 minutes

**Procedure:** Students may be placed into groups or assigned to work independently depending on their skill level. The teacher should begin by framing the activity and giving the instructions. Students will have 30 minutes to complete an online scavenger hunt. Students may use any online research technique to find this information. The group that finishes first can be given a prize of the teacher's choosing. (These instructions and the exact items to look for may vary.)

The answers to the sample scavenger hunt in this guide are given below:

1. The United States
2. Rohingya
3. Equatorial Guinea
4. Bhutan
5. Cyprus
6. Aral Sea
7. The United Arab Emirates and Oman
8. The Great Green Wall
9. The Human Development Index

### **Activity: Shading the World**

**Objective:** Students will be able to make connections between countries to better identify a country's friends and foes.

**Materials Required:**

- Large black and white map of the world, printed out or projected ([example](#))

**Time Requirement:** 15-60 minutes

**Procedure:** This activity is especially useful when preparing for a conference and students will be representing the same country. The teacher should post or project the blank world map for all students to see and shade in the country the students are representing in any color. Then, the teacher should ask students for a fact about the country (e.g. majority religion, climate, largest trade partner, etc.). When a fact is given, the teacher (or student!) should work with the students to shade all countries that share that property in a certain color. For example, if Islam is the dominant religion in the country being researched, then the teacher might color all other countries where Islam is dominant green. Students can assist with researching which countries these are. Repeat this process as more facts about the country are called out by the students. When shading, it is recommended to use diagonal lines, as a country may share more than one thing in common with the original country. The final result should be a handy tool to visualize the things that the country being researched has in common with other countries.

# MUN Scavenger Hunt

*Instructions:* Students will have 30 minutes to complete an online scavenger hunt. Students may use any online research technique to find this information. Responses should be recorded in the appropriate lines.

1. What country was India's largest export destination in 2015?
  2. What predominantly Muslim ethnic group has been the target of violence in Myanmar?
  3. What country with territory in mainland Africa has its capital on an island?
  4. What is one country that does not have a US embassy within its borders?
  5. What UN Member State uses a flag with a map of itself on it?
  6. What lake was one of the largest in 1950, but has since shrunk to just 10% of its former size?
  7. An enclave is a part of a country that is surrounded by another country. A counter-enclave is an enclave within an enclave. There are two sets of counter-enclaves in the world. One is between the Netherlands and Belgium. The other is between what two countries?
  8. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is investing in projects to plant trees and restore degraded land in Africa as part of a project that it calls what?
  9. What statistic, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), seeks to measure a country's standard of living, lifespan, and education quality?
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## Glossary

**Amendment:** Before a draft resolution is finalized and voted on, delegates have the ability to alter, edit, or remove the clauses using amendments.

**Chair:** The chair is the leader of the committee who administers the rules of procedure. They sit at the dais at the front of committee and use the gavel to get the committee's attention. The chair does not participate in debate like delegates do. Instead, they listen to delegate's motions and conduct votes to determine how the committee would like to debate. Many conferences will have multiple dais members, so the chair is usually the person holding the gavel.

**Background Guide:** An informative guide prepared by a MUN conference that explains the background behind the topic each committee is debating. These can vary widely in terms of format and length between conferences, but the goal is always to educate. However, delegates should not see these background guides as being the only research they'll need. The background guide is simply a jumping off point for delegates' individual research.

**Bloc:** A group of countries with similar policies that work together to advance their ideas. Blocs often draft working papers together during unmoderated caucuses.

**Caucus:** A suspension of the rules. A caucus is when the speakers list is temporarily abandoned, and the committee instead moves to different forms of debate to better serve its needs. See **moderated caucus** and **unmoderated caucus**.

**Chair:** The chair of a committee is the person that manages the committee's rules of procedure. The chair is almost always a student at the institution that is hosting the conference (i.e. Harvard University's conference is chaired mostly by Harvard students). The chair has the power to bend the rules of procedure as needed if it is for the purpose of helping the delegates reach a fairer compromise before the conference ends.

**Clause:** The basic unit of a resolution. See: **preambulatory clause** and **operative clause**.

**Committee:** The UN body that is being simulated. MUN committees meet at MUN conferences to debate their topic with other students representing UN Member States.

**Conference:** The conference is the main event of MUN. At MUN conferences, delegates from different schools come together and advocate for their country's policy with other countries that may have similar or very different policies. Conferences are usually hosted by universities and can last anywhere from a few hours to a whole week.

**Consensus:** The primary way in which the UN works. Because most UN resolutions are non-binding, UN resolutions are often passed by consensus so that all countries feel motivated to implement the resolutions in their own countries.

**Dais:** The term dais literally refers to the long table that the committee's leaders sit at (e.g. "The dais in the town hall is made of oak"). However, in MUN, the term more often refers to the people who sit at the dais and run the committee. See: Chair.

**Delegate:** A representative of a country to the United Nations. Delegates don't speak for their own points of view, but rather the policies of their home country.

**Draft Resolution:** After a working paper is submitted, it is redistributed to the committee, then becoming a draft resolution. Prior to being voted on, draft resolutions are debated and amended.

**Gavel:** A tool somewhat similar to a hammer that chairs and dais members use to get the attention of the committee and indicate

when a speaker's allotted speaking time has run out. The "best delegate" of a committee is sometimes given the committee's gavel as an award for their performance.

**Moderated Caucus:** Used to discuss a predetermined, *specific* aspect of the topic, a moderated caucus is a formal style of caucusing, as a specific number of speakers are designated by the motion and called on by the chair. When moving to enter a moderated caucus, the delegate proposing the motion must specify the length of the caucus, a speaking time, and the purpose (e.g. "I move to enter a five-minute moderated caucus with 30 second speaking time for the purpose of discussing Draft Resolution 1.2."). This motion would allow ten speakers participate in the caucus (ten 30-second speeches in five minutes). When the caucus time has exhausted, debate defaults back to the speakers list unless another motion is made.

**Motion:** Motions are proposals from delegate to change the way that the committee is debating. The two most common motions are to enter a moderated and unmoderated caucus. However, there are also motions to open and close the Speakers List, close debate, etc. See also: Points

**Operative Clauses:** These are the "how" of the resolution, detailing an *action* that the committee wishes to take, which can include recommendations from Member States, establishments of protocols and subcommittees, collaboration with NGOs, etc. These always start with a present tense verb that is underlined. Examples: calls upon, endorses, encourages, further invites, recommends, requests.

**Organs of the United Nations:** The UN is organized into six organs (one of which is now defunct) that each have their own domain of responsibility described in the UN charter. Most UN committees fall into one of these organs.

**Placard:** A name card or name tent that has the delegate's country printed on it. Primarily used to signal to the chair that the delegate has a point or motion or wishes to speak.

**Points:** Points are similar to motions (chairs will ask "are there any points or motions on the floor?" between speeches) but are intended to be questions or comments to the chair that are not related to the debate itself. Examples include point of inquiry (used to ask a question about the rules), point of order (used when a delegate believes the chair has misapplied the rules), and point of personal privilege (used when a delegate isn't comfortable with the environment, for example if the room is too hot). The points at each conference will be listed in that conference's rules of procedure. See: **motions**.

**Policy:** A country's opinion on a topic is often called their policy. For example, a country might have a policy that nuclear weapons are too dangerous and that no country should have any nuclear weapons. At a MUN conference, delegates with different policies meet and negotiate a solution to the world's problems that everyone can agree on.

**Position Paper:** The research document that delegates typically put together prior to attending a MUN conference. Position papers typically reflect research the delegate did on their own country's policy, past actions on the topic, and their proposed solutions.

**Preambulatory Clauses:** These are the "why" of the resolution, explaining *why* the topic and resolution are important. These could include general statements about the situation, references to actions already taken by the committee or other resolutions, quotations from Secretaries-General, statistics related to a topic or subtopic, etc. The first word or phrase is always written in italics and is an "-ing word" (a gerund). Examples: *bearing in mind*, *deeply concerned*, *further deploring*, *keeping in mind*, *recognizing*.

**Research Binder:** Most delegates come prepared to MUN conference with a research binder, a physical collection of their research on a topic. Research binders are more effective when they are detailed enough to have the most important pieces of evidence, but short enough so that they are easy to find.

**Resolution:** After being amended and voted on, this is the final document that the United Nations (or a MUN simulation) passes, describing the action the committee wants to take.

**Rule of Threes:** A common speaking strategy where a speech has one main idea, three supporting arguments, and three pieces of evidence for each argument.

**Rules of Procedure:** These are the rules that govern how delegates debate in committee. The rules of procedure specify when and for how long delegates are allowed to speak and on what topic, as well as what motions are permitted, how voting procedure works, among many other topics.

**Signatory:** This is a delegate who recognizes the resolution as debate-worthy but does not necessarily contribute any content to the working paper or draft resolution.

**Solutions:** The concrete steps that a country proposes the UN take to address the topic being debated in a way that is consistent with that country's policy.

**Sponsors:** The main authors and contributors of the resolution.

**Unmoderated Caucus:** A much more casual style of debate, an "unmod" allows for the free flow of communication among delegates. During unmoderated caucuses, delegates are encouraged to walk around the room, form blocs with other delegates, and begin writing working papers. Unlike the specifics required when motioning for a moderated caucus, a delegate moving to enter an unmoderated caucus only needs to specify the total length of time for the caucus (e.g. "Germany motions for a ten-minute unmoderated caucus").

**United Nations (UN):** The most prominent international organization, bringing together nearly every recognized country in the world in the spirit of peace and diplomacy. MUN conferences simulate various committees of the United Nations.

**UN System:** The series of international organizations, primary constituent organizations of the UN, that work to further the UN's mission. Although it is called the UN system, there are some organizations that are not formally part of the UN, but work closely enough with the UN to be considered part of the UN system (e.g. the World Trade Organization)

**Working Paper:** A rough draft of a resolution that is still up for debate. A precursor to a draft resolution.

The National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN) is a project of IMUNA, a non-profit organization formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). IMUNA is dedicated to promoting global issues education through simulation.

Prepared by IMUNA

