

How to write a Position Paper?



Introduction

The Model United Nations Conferences (MUN) move around debate and negotiation. The constant training of the Delegates and the proper preparation of the documents that strengthen their foreign policy, such as the speeches and the Position Papers, allow for a better representation of the country. That is the main reason why writing is included in the MUN and this should be the most important communication tool, before and during the educational simulations. In the MUN, the participants must write two types of main documents: Position Papers and Draft Resolutions. Each of them requires different approaches and writing skills.

Prior to the beginning of a MUN, each Delegation (group of students) prepares its Position Paper for each of the topics that will be discussed in the different committees in which the country will participate. In the event that a Delegation is made up of two people who will represent a Member State of the United Nations (country) as Delegate and co-Delegate in the same committee, both individuals should study the topic and write together the Position Paper of every topic in the Agenda of their committee. If there are several topics on your committee, a Position Paper should be prepared for each topic.

The writing of this document is an important part in the preparation of each person that will be part of the Delegation and its creation is extremely useful. These documents not only help Delegates organize their ideas, but also encourage the entire Delegation in the establishment and representation of foreign policy.

The Position Paper should be the most careful element in the MUN. It exposes and supports the opinion of a nation and is the starting point for international negotiations. The Position Papers must not only define the topic in the Agenda, but they must also present the relationship that the topic has with the interests of the represented country. It allows Delegates define their strategies and possible actions in advance of the working meetings scheduled by the Organizing Committee. For this reason, they must consider the position of the rest of the Member States present regarding the topics that will be discussed.

It is extremely important to comply with the delivery date of Position Papers established by the Organizing Committee.

Format

- Typeface and size: Times New Roman, 12 points.
- Alignment: justified text.
- Margins of the document: 2.54 cm or 1 inch on each side.
- Line spacing: 1.5.
- Header: it is NOT required. The information about the Delegation must be included exclusively in the first page below the superior margin. The line spacing will be simple (without spaces before or after).
- Footer: it must include the Delegation's name and the committee. It should be located 1 cm above the bottom margin.
- Structure of the paragraphs: they must contain indentations at the beginning of each paragraph.
- Referencing style: It will be based on the APA Sixth Edition citation system. The information sources must be included in the section titled **Reference List**, which must come centered and bolded.
- Length per topic: Minimum 500 words and maximum 800, to facilitate reading and distribution.

Content

The Position Paper will be divided into 3 main parts:

1. Delegation's Information:

It should include the name of the Delegates, the name of the country they represent and the topic they will present. In case you decide to include the flag of the country being represented, it must be located at the upper-right corner of the document and must not exceed the space used for the Delegation's information. In strict compliance of the restrictions related to the use of the United Nations emblem (research.un.org/en/maps/flags and www.un.org/en/mun/faq), it is not allowed to employ any emblem for the United Nations System in the Position Papers. Furthermore, it is not allowed to use the logos of GlobalMUNers A.C., the other organizing institutions logos or even the MUN's logo in the Position Papers.

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2. Development of the topic:

It must consist of 3 paragraphs and its structure resembles the one used by academic essays.

First paragraph - Background:

It will consist of a brief exposition on the background of the problem and the progress up to date. It is recommended to briefly describe recent events that are related to the topic, complementing it with data and statistics that support it.

Second paragraph - Foreign Policy:

Its objective is to show the relationship that the topic has with the country you represent and the reason why the issue is of national interest, as well as the contributions that your country has made over time to try to solve the problem.

To build this paragraph you can mention one or more of the following elements:

- a) Articles or paragraphs of the Charter of the United Nations;
- b) Agreements or Treaties that have been ratified by the Member State you represent or Resolutions that have been adopted (approved) as a result of your country's support;
- c) Statements made by the Head of State and/or Government (President, King/Queen, Prime Minister, Chancellor, etc.), Minister of Foreign Affairs or Head of any other ministry or government office, Permanent Representatives or Delegates to the United Nations or any other international organization, about the issue.

Third paragraph - Proposals:

Its goal is to present the conclusions and possible solutions that your nation proposes to address the issue.

You may consult:

- a) Reports of the United Nations Secretary-General on the issue.
- b) Recommendations for actions that were already proposed in the committee and that your Delegation retakes with a renewed vision to facilitate its implementation or execution.

3. References:

The sources of information consulted for the drafting of the Position Paper should be included. If a reference is made to textual citations or statistical information, the APA citation system should be used, and the source incorporated into the text. For more information, visit the SIBIUNAM Libraries website: <https://goo.gl/BUVYj4>.

Recommendations for writing a Position Paper:

- Avoid writing in the singular first person. Use the name of the Delegation or expressions such as "our Government", "our country", "our nation".
- Keep in mind that the Position Paper is written to address a particular issue from the perspective of the country you represent.
- To write a short and concise document such as the one described, the participants must carry out extensive research and put into practice their synthesis and expression skills.

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- It is recommended to complete the process in 4 phases:
 - a) Research the general aspects of the topic to be discussed.
 - b) Get to know the context and cultural aspects of the country you represent (geography; history; foreign policy; economic, cultural and social situation; current national and international conflicts; adherences and reservations to international treaties; official position on the topics in the Agenda of the MUN, etc.).
 - c) Learn the organs, committees, commissions and specialized agencies in which the Member State you represent participates, as well as the main policies and positions (historical and current) that your nation has had on them.
 - d) Identify the policies and positions that their allied countries have had, as well as their counterparts. Anticipating the arguments of other countries can provide some advantage to the Delegates who have prepared their issues in depth.

Sources and websites recommended for consultation

- Libraries and documentation centers of United Nations specialized agencies and programs.
- University and specialized libraries.
- Charter of the United Nations: <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html>.
- United Nations official website: <http://www.un.org/es/index.html>.
- United Nations Official Document System Search (ODS): <http://www.un.org/en/documents/index.html>.
- United Nations Bibliographic Information System: <http://unbisnet.un.org/>.
- United Nations Information Center (UNIC) website: <http://www.onunoticias.mx/>.
- Websites of the Permanent Missions of the countries to the UN: <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/index.html>.
- Websites of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2008/03/foreign-affairs-ministries-web>.
- United Nations web microsite on the activity of the Member States "UN Member States on the Record": <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/unms/>.
- United Nations website on "Matters that matter to us": <http://www.un.org/es/sections/issues-depth/global-issues-overview/index.html>.
- Online database on the terminology used in the United Nations System: <https://unterm.un.org>.
- Governments' websites.
- Media.
- Embassies – A very useful research alternative is to schedule a visit to the embassy or representative office of the country you will be representing at the MUN. An interview with a foreign service officer must be conducted in the most formal manner.
- Read history books of the countries and/or topics to be discussed.

NOTE: Visiting websites and reading documents in different languages will give a broader view to the Delegates on the topics to be discussed.

List of References

United Nations. Delegate Preparation Retrieved on March 10, 2018, from <https://outreach.un.org/mun/content/delegate-preparation>.

United Nations Information Center for Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. *Modelos de las Naciones Unidas. Cómo organizar tu modelo*. Retrieved on March 10, 2018, from <http://www.cinu.mx/modelos/como-organizar-tu-modelo/preparacion/>.