

RWS MUN | FLOW OF DEBATE



It's the order in which events proceed during a Model UN conference. The chart below shows the various stages of debate that take place during a Model UN simulation. Being familiar with how the action will proceed, from the first "scene" to the last, is an important way to prepare yourself for a Model UN conference.

Roll Call

The Chairperson will announce each country's name. After delegates hear their country, they should answer "present."

Debate

Formal Debate

Formal debate revolves around the speakers list. The Chair begins by asking all delegates who would like to speak to raise their placards. The Chair then chooses delegates to be placed on the speakers list. A country can only be on the speakers list once, but delegates may add their country again after they have addressed the committee.

1a. When the session begins, speeches focus on stating **country positions** and offering recommendations for action.

2a. After blocs have met, speeches focus on **describing bloc positions to the entire body**

3a. Delegates now **make statements describing their ideas to the committee.**

4a. Delegates try to **garner more support** through formal speeches and invite others to offer their ideas.

5a. Delegates make statements **supporting or disagreeing with specific draft resolutions.**

6a. Delegates declare any **amendments** they have created.

Informal Debate

Informal debate is divided into moderated and unmoderated caucuses.

During moderated caucuses, the Chair calls on delegates one-by-one so that each can address the committee in short speeches.

During unmoderated caucuses, the committee breaks for a temporary recess so that delegates can meet with each other and discuss ideas.

⇒ **1b.** After several countries state their positions, the committee breaks for caucuses (often in blocs for now) to **develop regional or group positions.**

⇒ **2b.** Writing begins as countries work together to **compose draft resolutions.**

⇒ **3b.** Countries and groups meet to **gather support for specific ideas.**

⇒ **4b.** Delegates **finalize draft resolutions.**

⇒ **5b.** Draft-resolution sponsors **build greater support** for their resolution and look to incorporate others' ideas through friendly amendments.

Close of Debate

Once the speakers list is exhausted, the committee automatically moves to voting. Also, once a delegate feels that his or her country's position is clear to others and that there are enough draft resolutions on the floor, he or she may make a motion to proceed into voting procedure by moving for the closure of debate.

Voting Procedures

Once a motion to close debate has been approved, the committee moves into voting procedure. Amendments are voted on first, then resolutions. Once all of the resolutions are voted on, the committee moves to the next topic on the agenda.



MODEL UN TERMINOLOGY

Abstain – During a vote on a substantive matter, delegates may abstain rather than vote yes or no. This generally signals that a state does not support the resolution being voted on, but does not oppose it enough to vote no.

Adjourn – All UN or Model UN sessions end with a vote to adjourn. This means that the debate is suspended until the next meeting.

Amendment – A change to a draft resolution on the floor. Can be of two types: a "friendly amendment" is supported by the original draft resolution's sponsors, and is passed automatically, while an "unfriendly amendment" is not supported by the original sponsors and must be voted on by the committee as a whole.

Caucus – A break in formal debate in which countries can more easily and informally discuss a topic. There are two types: moderated caucus and unmoderated caucus.

Chair – A member of the dais that moderates debate, keeps time, rules on points and motions, and enforces the rules of procedure. Also known as a Moderator.

Decorum – The order and respect for others that all delegates at a Model UN conference must exhibit. The Chair will call for decorum when he or she feels that the committee is not being respectful of a speaker, of the dais, or of their roles as ambassadors.

Draft resolution – A document that seeks to fix the problems addressed by a Model UN committee. If passed by the committee, the draft resolution will become into a resolution.

Formal debate – The "standard" type of debate at a Model UN conference, in which delegates speak for a certain time in an order based on a speakers' list.

Moderated Caucus – A type of caucus in which delegates remain seated and the Chair calls on them one at a time to speak for a short period of time, enabling a freer exchange of opinions than would be possible in formal debate.

Unmoderated Caucus – A type of caucus in which delegates leave their seats to mingle and speak freely. Enables the free sharing of ideas to an extent not possible in formal debate or even a moderated caucus. Frequently used to sort countries into blocs and to write working papers and draft resolutions.

Motion – A request made by a delegate that the committee as a whole do something. Some motions might be to go into a caucus, to adjourn, to introduce a draft resolution, or to move into voting bloc.

Operative clause – The part of a resolution which describes how the UN will address a problem. It begins with an action verb (decides, establishes, recommends, etc.).

Point – A request raised by a delegate for information or for an action relating to that delegate.

Position paper – A summary of a country's position on a topic, written by a delegate before a Model UN conference.

Resolution – A document that has been passed by an organ of the UN that aims to address a particular problem or issue. The UN equivalent of a law.

Signatory – A country that wishes a draft resolution to be put on the floor and signs the draft resolution to accomplish this. A signatory need not support a resolution; it only wants it to be discussed. Usually, Model UN conferences require some minimum number of sponsors and signatories for a draft resolution to be approved.

Speakers' List – A list that determines the order in which delegates will speak.

Sponsor – One of the writers of a draft resolution. A friendly amendment can only be created if all sponsors agree.

MODEL UN PREPARATION



Q: How should I prepare for my model UN conference?

A: Researching is the first and most important step in preparing for a conference. Not only is it necessary to have a grasp on information about the country you are representing and its position on the policies being discussed, it is also important to understand the UN body that your committee is representing.

Q: How do I write a position paper?

A: Before attending a conference, it is necessary to have a clear understanding about the workings of your country, as well as its position on the issues that are being discussed. Most conferences will even require a position paper in advance to ensure that delegates have properly researched their country. Position papers should contain your country's relation to the topic, as well as its suggestions for how to solve the issues discussed. For more information about position paper form, as well as a sample position paper, refer to the position paper sheet.

Q: How do I dress for a Model UN conference?

A: Dressing professionally and appropriately is an important aspect of Model United Nations preparations. Just like being polite and having proper manners, dressing appropriately is an important way to show respect for the nation you are representing, for your fellow delegates and for the United Nations. Delegates may wear their own national dress. Western business attire, or international standard business attire, serves as customary dress for workplaces. It entails wearing a suit, which is made up of trousers, a matching jacket, a button-down dress shirt, and a tie. Conservative dress shoes and socks are also important. Skirts and dresses may also be worn as long as they fall to a decent length and do not expose a lot of skin. The main thing to remember is to always insure that your appearance is tidy and put together, and that you are well covered.

Q: What are the rules of procedure at a conference?

A: In order for a committee session to progress smoothly, it is important for delegates to follow the rules of procedure. These rules ensure that order is kept and delegates have equal opportunities to contribute to the discussion. Rules of procedure also provide the proper format to ask questions, make speeches etc. For a complete explanation of the rules of procedure, refer to the Rules of Procedure sheet.

Q: What is caucusing?

A: Caucusing is informal debate that occurs during a model UN conference. Caucusing can be either "moderated" when speakers are called on by the chair after raising their placards or "un-moderated", which is a designated time for delegates without the intervention of the chair to have discussion and work on resolutions. For more information on the different types of caucuses, as well as tips on how to use caucus time successfully, refer to the Caucusing sheet.

Q: How do I write a resolution?

A: During committee session resolutions are essential to promote debate and create solutions to issues that are being discussed. Resolutions not only acknowledge the issues that are being debated, but they also present a series of steps that can be taken to resolve the conflict. Writing resolutions can be challenging since they must appeal to a broad range of members with differing concerns if they are going to be successfully passed. For information on correct format and helpful tips, refer to the Resolution Process sheet.

Q: How do we select a country?

A: A lot will be taken in order to designate each delegation with a country. Even the "smallest" member state not only has an important role to play, but can sometimes wield considerable influence. Therefore, bear in mind that size and powers are not the only important criteria for an interesting country to represent.



POSITION PAPERS

It is an essay detailing your country's policies on the topics being discussed in your committee. Writing a position paper will help you organize your ideas so that you can share your country's position with the rest of the committee. Many delegates use their position papers as their opening remarks.

How to Write a Position Paper

Writing a position paper might appear to be a daunting task, especially for new delegates. But with enough research, you will find that writing a position paper will be easy and useful.

Position papers are usually one to one-and-a-half pages in length. Your position paper should include a brief introduction followed by a comprehensive breakdown of your country's position on the topics that are being discussed by the committee.

A good position paper will include:

- A brief introduction to your country and its history concerning the topic and committee;
- How the issue affects your country;
- Your country's policies with respect to the issue and your country's justification for these policies;
- Quotes from your country's leaders about the issue;
- Statistics to back up your country's position on the issue;
- Actions taken by your government with regard to the issue;
- Conventions and resolutions that your country has signed or ratified;
- UN actions that your country supported or opposed;
- What your country believes should be done to address the issue;
- What your country would like to accomplish in the committee's resolution; and
- How the positions of other countries affect your country's position.

Position Paper Tips

Keep it simple: To communicate strongly and effectively, avoid flowery wording and stick to uncomplicated language and sentence structure.

Make it official: Try to use the seal of your country or create an "official" letterhead for your position paper. The more realistic it looks; the more others will want to read it.

Get organized: Give each separate idea or proposal its own paragraph. Make sure each paragraph starts with a topic sentence.

Read and reread: Leave time to edit your position paper. Ask yourself if the organization of the paper makes sense and double-check your spelling and grammar.

Speech! Speech! Do you plan to make an opening statement at your conference? A good position paper makes a great introductory speech. During debate, a good position paper will also help you to stick to your country's policies.

Let the bullets fly: Try not to let your proposals become lost in a sea of information. For speechmaking, create a bulleted list of your proposals along with your most important facts and statistics so that you will not lose time looking for them during debate.



BASIC MODEL UN PROCEDURAL RULES	REQUIRED TO PASS
A motion to set the speakers time sets or changes the amount of time each delegate has to speak.	Simple majority vote
A motion to open the speakers list allows delegates to sign up to speak. At some conferences a motion to close the speakers list closes the list for the remainder of the session or topic. However, at most Model UN conferences the speakers list can be opened and closed multiple times. This motion requires an immediate vote.	Simple majority vote
Delegates propose a motion to suspend debate for the purpose of holding a caucus. If you move to suspend the meeting, be sure to specify the purpose and the amount of time.	Simple majority vote
A motion to adjourn meeting ends the committee session until the next session, which might be the next year's conference, or after lunch or dinner.	Simple majority vote
A motion to adjourn debate (also known as motion to table debate) is not the same as a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rather, it is used to table, or put on hold, all of the work that the committee has completed on a particular topic. At some Model UN conferences you can return to this topic later, while at others the topic cannot be discussed again.	Two-thirds majority vote
A delegate makes a motion to close debate in order to move the committee to a vote, usually when the delegate has made his or her country's position clear and there are enough draft resolutions on the floor.	Two-thirds majority vote
A point of order is used when a delegate believes the chair has made an error in the running of the committee. The Delegate should only specify the errors they believe were made in the formal committee procedure, and may not address the topic being discussed.	Decision of Chairperson
A point of inquiry (also known as a point of parliamentary procedure) can be made when the floor is open (i.e. when no other delegate is speaking) in order to ask the chairperson a question regarding the rules of procedure.	No vote
A delegate may raise a point of personal privilege in order to inform the chairperson of a physical discomfort he or she is experiencing, such as not being able to hear another delegate's speech.	No vote
A delegate raises a point of information in order to pose a question to a speaker during formal debate. The speaker chooses whether or not to yield his or her time to points of information.	Decision of speaker
A delegate makes an appeal to the chair's decision when he or she feels the chairperson has incorrectly decided a point or motion. At some conferences, this formal challenge must be made in writing. The appealing delegate speaks and the chairperson defends himself or herself before the vote.	Two-thirds majority vote



CAUCUSING

Caucusing provides an opportunity for delegates to collaborate, negotiate and formulate draft resolutions. During a Model UN conference, caucuses can be either moderated or unmoderated.

When a motion for a moderated caucus is passed, the Chair calls upon delegates as they raise their placards to address the committee for a specific amount of time. Here, speakers are usually able to convey one or two key points to the entire committee or share new ideas that have developed through the course of debate.

During an unmoderated caucus, the committee breaks for a temporary recess from formal proceedings so that delegates can work together in small groups during this time delegates can meet informally with each other and the committee staff to discuss draft resolutions and other issues. Many delegates feel this is the easiest way for them to collaborate and start to formulate draft resolutions.

Tips for Effective Caucusing

Enter the caucus with a plan in mind: Formulate ideas on what your country would like to see included in a resolution. Decide which clauses you are willing to negotiate on and which you are not.

Provide ideas: Tell others what your country is hoping to achieve. If you do not agree with an idea, do not hesitate to say that it is against your country's policy.

Negotiate: While it is often necessary to give up something that you want, make sure that you are not giving up anything too important.

Listen: By listening to what others are saying you will be able to build on other people's ideas and add more to the discussion. Listening also shows respect for each delegate in your group.

Do not interrupt: Allow other delegates to finish their thoughts rather than interrupting others in the middle of a sentence. It sometimes helps to write down your idea so that you can bring it up when the delegate is finished speaking.

Record ideas: Start to formulate a resolution in writing. Rather than waiting until the last minute, begin recording fellow delegates' ideas right away.

Have one-on-one conversations: Speaking with an individual or in a small group is the best way to find out a delegate's position on an issue. Larger groups are better suited to brainstorming.

Stay calm: In caucuses, delegates can sometimes "lose their cool." Staying calm will not only help your group be more effective, but will be noticed by the conference staff.

Use time effectively: Try not to waste time arguing over small details that do not seriously affect the draft resolution.

Show respect: Never give orders or tell other delegates what they should or should not do. Be polite and treat all your fellow delegates with respect.

Establish connections with other delegates: Although it can be tempting to call a fellow delegate "Pakistan," "Brazil" or "Sweden", you can form a better connection with a delegate by learning his or her name and where he or she comes from. Ask the delegate about his or her ideas and impressions of the debate. Showing interest in your fellow delegates at the beginning of the conference will help you gain more support later on and can help you to form lasting friendships.



RESOLUTIONS

The final results of discussion, writing and negotiation are resolutions—written suggestions for addressing a specific problem or issue. Resolutions, which are drafted by delegates and voted on by the committee, normally require a simple majority to pass. Only Security Council resolutions can compel nations to take action. All other UN bodies use resolutions to make recommendations or suggestions for future action.

Draft Resolutions

Draft resolutions are all resolutions that have not yet been voted on. Delegates write draft resolutions alone or with other countries. There are three main parts to a draft resolution: the heading, the preamble and the operative section. The heading shows the committee and topic along with the resolution number. It also lists the draft resolution's sponsors and signatories (see below). Each draft resolution is one long sentence with sections separated by commas and semicolons. The subject of the sentence is the body making the statement (e.g., the General Assembly, or Security Council). The preamble and operative sections then describe the current situation and actions that the committee will take. The first word in each clause should be underlined. All operative clauses end with a semicolon except the final clause, which ends with a period.

Bringing a Resolution to the Floor for Debate

A draft resolution must always gain the support of a certain number of member states in the committee before the sponsors (the delegates who created the resolution) may submit it to the chair. A staff member will read the draft resolution to ensure that it is relevant and in proper format. Only when the chair formally accepts the document and assigns it a number can it be referred to in formal debate.

The basic structure of a draft resolution will look like this:

(HEADING)

Committee: i.e., the committee or organ in which the resolution is introduced
Topic: the topic of the resolution.

Sponsors: list of sponsoring countries.

Signatories: list of countries that have signed the draft.

(PREAMBLE)

The preamble of a draft resolution states the reasons for which the committee is addressing the topic and highlights past international action on the issue. Each clause begins with a present participle (called a preambulatory phrase) and ends with a comma.

(OPERATIVE SECTION)

References to the *UN Charter*;

Citations of past UN resolutions or treaties on the topic under discussion;

Mentions of statements made by the Secretary-General or a relevant UN body or agency;

Recognition of the efforts of regional or nongovernmental organizations in dealing with the issue;
and

General statements on the topic, its significance and its impact.



Preambulatory Phrases

Affirming	Deeply disturbed	Guided by	Noting with approval
Alarmed by	Deeply regretting	Having adopted	Observing
Approving	Desiring	Having considered	Reaffirming
Aware of	Emphasizing	Having considered further	Realizing
Bearing in mind	Expecting	Having devoted attention	Recalling
Believing	Expressing its	examined	Recognizing
Confident	appreciation	Having heard	Referring
Contemplating	Expressing its satisfaction	Having received	Seeking
Convinced	Fulfilling Fully	Having studied	Taking into account
Declaring	alarmedFully	Keeping in mind	Taking into
Deeply	aware	Noting with regret	consideration
concerned	Fully believing	Noting with deep concern	Taking note
Deeply conscious	Further deploring	Noting with satisfaction	Viewing with
Deeply convinced	Further recalling	Noting further	appreciation
			Welcoming

Operative Phrases

Operative clauses identify the actions or recommendations made in a resolution. Each operative clause begins with a verb (called an operative phrase) and ends with a semicolon. Operative clauses should be organized in a logical progression, with each containing a single idea or proposal, and are always numbered. If a clause requires further explanation, bulleted lists set off by letters or roman numerals can also be used. After the last operative clause, the resolution ends in a period.

Accepts	Declares accordingly	Further proclaims	Regrets Reminds
Affirms	Deplores	Further reminds	Requests
Approves	Designates	Further recommends	Solemnly affirms
Authorizes	Draws the attention	Further requests	Strongly condemns
Calls Calls	Emphasizes	Further resolves Has	Supports
upon	Encourages	resolved	Takes note of
Condemns	Endorses	Notes	Transmits
Confirms	Expresses its appreciation	Proclaims	Trusts
Congratulates	Expresses its hope Further	Reaffirms	
Considers	invites	Recommends	

Sponsors and Signatories

Sponsors of a draft resolution are the principal authors of the document and agree with its substance. Sponsors control a draft resolution and only the sponsors can approve immediate changes.

Signatories are countries that may or may not agree with the substance of the draft resolution but still wish to see it debated so that they can propose amendments.

A certain percentage of the committee must be either sponsors or signatories to a draft resolution in order for it to be accepted.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

Resolution GA/3/1.1



General Assembly

Sponsors: United States, Austria and Italy

Signatories: Greece, Tajikistan, Japan, Canada, Mali, the Netherlands and Gabon

Topic: "Strengthening UN coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies"

The General Assembly,

Reminding all nations of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which recognizes the inherent dignity, equality and inalienable rights of all global citizens, **[use commas to separate preambulatory clauses]**

Stressing the fact that the United Nations faces significant financial obstacles and is in need of reform, particularly in the humanitarian realm,

1. Encourages all relevant agencies of the United Nations to collaborate more closely with countries at the grassroots level to enhance the carrying out of relief efforts; **[use semicolons to separate operative clauses]**

2. Urges member states to comply with the goals of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to streamline efforts of humanitarian aid;

4. Calls for the development of a United Nations Trust Fund that encourages voluntary donations from the private transnational sector to aid in funding the implementation of rapid deployment forces;

5. Requests the expansion of preventive actions and assurance of post-conflict assistance through reconstruction and development. **[end resolutions with a period]**

AMENDMENTS

Approved draft resolutions are modified through amendments. An amendment is a written statement that adds, deletes or revises an operative clause in a draft resolution. The amendment process is used to strengthen consensus on a resolution by allowing delegates to change certain sections.

SAMPLE OF AN AMENDEMENT

Committee: General Assembly

Subject: Strengthening U. NM Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance.

Sponsors: France, Romania, and Poland.

Signatories: Togo, Australia, Fiji, Brazil, Pakistan and Argentina.

Add as the final operative clause...

Requests the expansion of preventive actions and assurance of post conflict assistance through reconstruction and development.

COUNTRY PROFILE



General

- Conventional Long Form CountryName
- Government Type
- Chief of State
- Head of Government
- Language(s) (note which, if any, are official)
- Population (include year data compiled)
- Major religions (include %)

History

- Describe this nation's independence (how, when, from whom etc.)
- Has your country ever controlled colonies? If so, where and for how long?
- What is your relationship with your former colonies?
- Was your nation ever a colonial possession or occupied territory?
- If so, in whose sphere of influence and for how long?

Geography

- Size (in sq. miles or sq. km)
- Border countries
- Capital
- Major cities
- Major ports
- Major waterways
- Climate



Standard of Living

- Annual income (per year)
- Literacy rate of total population (include year and definition)
- Birth rate (include year)
- Death rate
- Infant mortality rate (include year)
- Unemployment rate (include year)
- Major ethnic/cultural issues
- Current refugee/IDP concerns

Politics

- Political allies/blocs
- Conflicts: past and present
- Do citizens freely participate in the political process (vote, hold office, etc.)? At what age?
- Is there freedom of speech and of the press in this country?
- Does this nation regularly hold national elections?
- What are the active political parties, and is more than one party tolerated?



Economy

GDP and growth rate (include year)
Major trade partners

Major exports and total amount (include year)

Major imports and total amount (include year)

Amount of Overseas Development Aid (ODA) given (include year)
Amount of ODA received (include year)

Agricultural products

Industries

Natural Resources

Energy sources (include % and year)

Military

Military expenditures (% Gross National Product (GNP) spent on defense; include year)

-Major weapons, arsenal, nuclear capability, etc.

Is this nation threatened by neighboring nations? Do these border nations have nuclear weapons?



UN Relations

Date admitted to UN

UN dues payment

status

Has this nation signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Has the UN ever had to intervene in any conflict involving this nation? If so, what conflict(s)?

RULES OF PROCEDURE SHORT FORM



Motion	Second required	Interrupt speaker	Special notes
Establishment of agenda	yes	no	Used to set the order in which topics will be addressed.
Point of personal privilege	no	yes	Raised when a delegate experiences personal discomfort.
Point of order	no	yes	Raised by a delegate to address a procedural matter. Does not allow delegate to speak on topic of debate.
Point of inquiry	no	no	Raised when a delegate has questions regarding the proceedings. Directed to chair.
Point of information	no	no	Directed at other delegates for the purpose of asking questions in relations to speeches and draft resolution.
Yields	no	no	Can be done after a delegate speaks. Can only yield to questions, another delegate or to the Chair.
Right of reply	no	no	Must be submitted in writing to the Chair. Requested when a delegate feels that someone has made a derogatory comment or insult.
Appeal to the chair's decision	no	no	Made when a delegate feels that the Chair has made an incorrect decision. This motion is made to the chair in writing.
Closure of debate	yes	no	End debate and move into voting procedures.
Adjourn meeting	yes	no	End the meeting for the day. Adjournment of the final meeting shall adjourn the session.