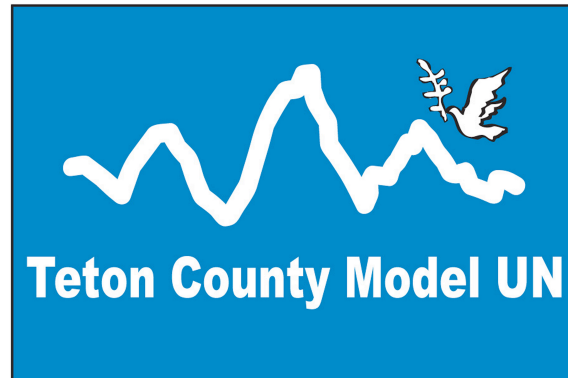


TCMUN PREP SUGGESTIONS



Lesson 3: Researching a Country and Committee

Goal: To provide students the resources to begin country and committee research.

Introduction: With students, brainstorm facts they think would be important to know about a country when doing research for Model UN. As students provide suggestions, write them on the board, providing hints and ideas when necessary. To complete the exercise, compare the students' list to the list below detailing the type of country research students should do.

Content:

Country Research: Country research is critical to success in Model United Nations. Everything delegates write for or say in committee is from the point of view of the country they are assigned, and the goal should be to represent their country as realistically as possible. Thus, it is vital to have an understanding of a country's history, culture, and practices. The basics that delegates should know about their country include:

- Geography and culture (climate, terrain, religious and ethnic groups, official language(s), etc.)
- Type of political system, current leadership, and recent political issues (elections, ethnic conflict, civil wars, human rights record, environmental issues, etc.)
- Economic and social conditions (major industries, standard of living, national debt, size of population, life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy rates by gender, etc.)
- Foreign affairs (alliances, membership in international organizations, military capabilities, amount and type of international trade, recipient or donor of international aid, etc.)
- Natural resources: (what type the country possesses and how they are distributed, trade partners, is the country's economy mostly import or export based? etc.)

It is very important to know these facts because they will affect the way delegates interact with others during committee sessions, and dictate delegates' stances on any given issue. For example, if a committee is debating whether factories should have to follow stringent environmental regulations or not, a country that has a large export economy and many factories would have a different stance on the issue than a country with less manufacturing. Similarly, a country with a

high HIV/AIDS rate would likely have a different perspective on providing medication to those infected by the disease than a country less affected by the disease.

When participating in Model United Nations it is important to remember that every issue that comes before committee affects every country. Although a country may seem unaffected by a conflict on the other side of the world, they are still influenced. There are several ways to connect a seemingly irrelevant issue to any country:

- If the topic up for debate is, for example, The Situation in Sudan, and the student's country has no apparent relationship or connection, look at history.
 - Has the country ever been in a civil war?
 - Has a country bordering the students' ever had a civil war? If so, how did the country react?
 - How has the country treated those who have committed war crimes in the past?
 - Does the country trade with Sudan or countries in that region?
 - Does the country have a history of colonization?
 - Does the country have a large Muslim population?
 - What is the country's stance on Responsibility to Protect (R2P)?
 - How has the country treated issues of sovereignty in the past?

The answers to these questions would help infer a position on the topic. For any topic, it is possible to create and answer questions like this that will help connect any issue to any country.

- Look at what regional or political blocs a country is a part of, and who its allies are. Even if a country does not have an immediate stake in an issue, a country in a bloc (or an ally) may, in which case a country would likely align its views with its ally. For a description of the political alliances in the United Nations, see: [Eye on the UN](http://www.humanrightsvoices.org/) (<http://www.humanrightsvoices.org/>).

Committee Research: It is important for delegates to know about their assigned committee—the scope of issues that it deals with, its history, and their countries' past experience in the committee. **Before TCMUN, InterConnections 21 will provide facilitators and students with background guides about each committee and the two topics on each committee's agenda. These guides should be used by students to gain a basic understanding of their assigned committee and topics.** Using these guides and alternative research, delegates should learn:

- When their committees were established
- Which countries were original members of their committees, and which countries are now permanent members
- Their committees' recent and current work
- Whether or not their resolutions are binding (see Prep Suggestion #2)
- What topics will come before their committees during TCMUN
- What the scopes of the committees are (where does their jurisdiction lie?)

Important Vocabulary:

Ally: A partner, friend, aide, colleague. In the United Nations, allies are often countries that work together towards, or defend, common goals.

Assessment: Students should complete the "Getting to Know Your Country" worksheet to help with researching countries:

Resources:

United Nations Cyber School bus: <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/>

CIA World Fact book: <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

Look up your country's permanent mission in the UN: <http://www.un.org/en/members>
Getting in touch with your country's mission is an excellent way to do primary research and to hear directly from people in the country's points of view on an issue.

US Department of State notes on countries: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>