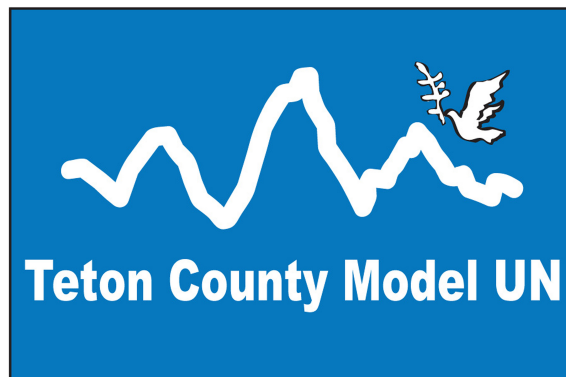


TCMUN PREP SUGGESTIONS



Lesson 4: Researching Committee Topics

Goal: To provide students the resources necessary to research their assigned topics.

Introduction: Hand out document entitled “How to do MUN Research” and ask students to refer to flowchart during the lesson and the rest of MUN research.

Content: Researching a country’s stance on the two assigned committee topics is essential to a delegate’s success at TCMUN. This research will prepare students to write position papers, speak during committee sessions, and write resolutions—the three cornerstones of the TCMUN conference. The background guides provided by InterConnections 21 can be the foundation of students’ research, but because background guides aren’t written from the perspective of one country, students must do additional research to learn what their country’s position would be on each committee topic. It is important to remember that every country has a stake in every issue, even if the topic doesn’t seem to directly relate (see Prep Suggestion #3).

These questions are helpful in preparing students to write their position papers:

- What is the problem? How does it affect their country?
- What has their country done to combat the problem?
- What are the various ‘sides’ in the debate?
- Which aspects of the issue are most important to their country?
- If their country is not involved with the issue, how can it become involved?
- What arguments will other countries make? How should students respond to opposing viewpoints?
- How will their country shape debate at the conference? (Is their country a “main character” in debate? For example, when discussing the Situation in Afghanistan, the students representing Afghanistan and the United States should expect to be very involved in debate).
- How do the positions of other countries affect their country’s position?
- Is there evidence or statistics that might help defend their country’s positions?
- Who will their allies be during conference?

(Source: UNAUSA: <http://www.unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un/how-to-participate/model-un-preparation/research/topic-research>)

Finding resources is an imperative step in topic research for Model UN. However, remembering that some sources are biased or present opinions rather than facts is important. Using sources that have first-hand knowledge of a country's culture and background can be particularly important. Some ideas include:

- A country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.usip.org/library/formin.html>
- United States Embassies Web Site: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>
- United Nations documents can be very helpful in gauging a country's position, and learning about a committee's past work on the topics assigned. To search:
 1. Go to the UN Document Center [UN Document Center](#)
 2. Choose the body that you are interested in, for example the General Assembly, and then click on the Resolutions link underneath the committee section.
 3. Write down the document number for the resolution that you are interested in, and take note of the topic.
 4. Go to [UNBISnet](#)
 5. Find the heading for "Voting Records," and click on "New Keyword Search."
 6. Make sure that under the option "Search by" is set to "UN resolution symbol."
 7. Type the document number that you wrote down
 8. Information about the resolution will appear. Scroll to find your country.
- Voting practices in the UN: <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/>
(Source: <http://guides.library.bloomu.edu/content.php?pid=96634&sid=723869>)

Being up to date with current events is vital to participating in Model UN. The topics that will be debated are some of the most important issues in the world today. Events are constantly in motion, and the way topics should be talked about changes continuously, even as the UN attempts to find solutions to the various issues. It is important to use multiple news sources not only to stay current but also to prevent relying heavily on a biased source. Sources to keep students up to date include:

- UN Specific News Sources: *UN News Center*, *The Interdependent*, *UN Dispatch*, and *UN Chronicle*.
- Reliable news sources: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Associated Press* and the *Economist*.
- Radio sources: NPR programs such as "Morning Edition," "BBC World Service," and "All Things Considered."
- TV sources: "The News Hour," "BBC World," "Charlie Rose," and "Foreign Exchange."
- Getting [Google Alerts](#) is a good way to stay very up to date through many different resources.
- The [UN Global Issues Page](#)
- Non-governmental organizations websites. [NGOs](#) are vital in carrying out the United Nations goals across the world.
- Scholarly journals are also very effective resources. Search in Google Scholar, JSTOR, or Project MUSE for these articles.

Assessment:

- Choose important topics in current events. Ideally, the news should be international, although national or local topics are acceptable if students relate to them more easily.
- For homework, assign students a reading that relates to the chosen current event.
- After reading the article and researching, students should write a brief outline that:
 - Summarizes the political/social/economic state of the country where the current event is taking place, and explains these circumstances are affecting the development of the issue.
 - Describes the problem.
 - Is the problem environmental, political, social, etc.
 - What are the “sides” of the debate?
 - Has the UN become involved with the problem?
 - Connects the current event to the United States and the students’ lives.
 - How is the United States involved in the issue? How is the rest of the international community involved?
 - Should the USA be more involved?
 - Does the current event directly impact the USA, the Northern Rocky Mountain Region, or the students’ lives? If so, how?

Reading and writing about a current event will not only help students grasp the immediacy of current events happening across the world, but will also prepare them for the next lesson, which will be on writing Position Papers. This activity effectively summarizes Lesson #3 and #4, having students think about country research, topic research, and ways in which to connect the two.

Works Cited:

“Research Assigned Topics.” Model UN Website. January 17, 2012. Bloomsburg University. July 16, 2012.

“Researching Conference Topics.” Global Classrooms. April 2012. UNAUSA. July 16, 2012.