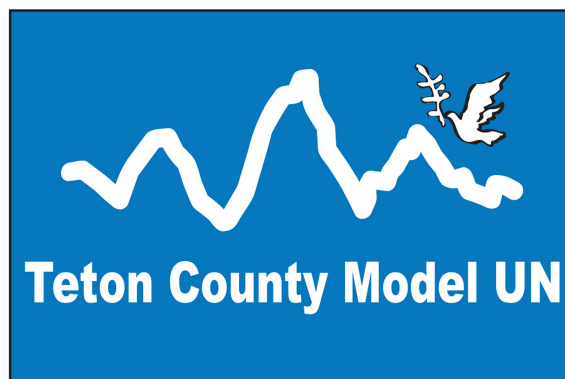


TCMUN PREP SUGGESTIONS



Lesson 5: Writing a Position Paper

Goal: To teach students how to write a position paper.

Introduction: Discuss the components of a good paper, i.e. thesis, organization, clarity, evidence backing up claims, citations, etc.

Handout for Students/Visual: Sample position paper from Amy Fulwyler, Jackson Hole Community School. Students should also be provided the lists below that detail what should be included in a position paper.

Content: Writing a position paper is the culmination of all the research a student does. A position paper is an essay that details a country's position on a topic. Delegates should write a single position paper that will address each of the two topics their committee is assigned. A position paper can be a helpful way to organize research and to prepare for speaking during the conference; the first speech a delegate will give in the committee sessions will essentially be a condensed version of his or her position papers.

While this process may seem daunting, it should be fairly simple for delegates to write position papers after reading background guides and doing research. However, it is important that delegates have plenty of time to work on them, as it is a great way to organize research, prepare for giving speeches, and increase a delegate's confidence in their knowledge and abilities going into the conference.

Position Paper Format

A position paper should meet the following requirements:

- No more than one page in length
- 10 point font in Times New Roman
- Single spaced with spacing between paragraphs and headers
- Heading with the official country name, the name of the school representing the country, and the name of the individual serving as a delegate for that committee
- Short introductory paragraph, followed by one longer paragraph on each topic

- Topic sections divided by topic headings. Topics should appear in the order they appear on the topic list and in the committee background guides on the MMUN website. Each topic heading should be bold and centered.
- Either left alignment or justification of the body of the text is acceptable

How to Write Your Position Paper

A position paper should be written in diplomatic language. That is, it should express a country's position on the issues in the most favorable and respectful light possible. A position paper consists of a short introductory paragraph, followed by a longer paragraph for each topic.

The introductory paragraph lists the topics before the committee and summarizes the country's basic approach to the topics with a general greeting focused on collaboration and expressing a country's desire to address the issues.

The two topic sections should consist of a single paragraph. These paragraphs should include and be organized as follows (written to your student; a copy for students is available on our Student Delegate Resource page: <http://interconnections21.edublogs.org/prep/resources/>):

1. History

- a. The beginning of each topic's paragraph should provide a short introduction to the topic, the previous work of the UN and/or Member States collectively on the topic (especially actions that one's country has supported), and current issues that need to be addressed, from your country's point of view.
- b. It should refer to important treaties or past resolutions that your country has supported.
- c. At the conference, you can refer to these documents in your speeches and in preambulatory clauses of draft resolutions to provide other delegates with insight into your country's position.

2. Position, Domestic Issues, and Past Actions

- a. Next, the paragraph should state your country's position in diplomatic terms.
- b. It should refer to your country's work on the issue within its borders, with allies, with regional partners, and/or within the world community.
- c. It should explain why your country is a shining example, or needs assistance, or has made progress, or can help other countries on this topic.
- d. At the conference, you can refer to these positions and issues in your opening speech about your country's concerns, priorities, and preferred agenda order, as well as in later speeches about the operative clauses you would support in draft resolutions.

3. Proposal

- a. Finally, the paragraph should summarize your country's proposal for addressing the issues related to this topic.
- b. It should assess the progress that has been made on this issue, describe areas for improvement, and suggest specific measures.
- c. Conclude with a strong, forward-thinking sentence.
- d. At the conference, you can refer to these statements in your speeches and negotiate to have them included in draft resolutions

Helpful Tips

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- Be organized. Each paragraph should have one main point that is supported by facts.
- Keep it simple. Write with uncomplicated sentences and maintain an overall structure to make the paper accessible and easy to convert into a speech. This will ensure that delegates communicate effectively when tackling complex issues. Delegates will find that diplomatic language can be used to express their countries' position in a straightforward, favorable and respectful way.
- Cite sources. Papers should include both in-text citations and a Work Cited page, cited in proper MLA format.
- Edit. Leave plenty of time to review position papers, and ask a teacher or fellow delegate to edit as well.
- Prepare for speeches. When delegates make opening speeches in conference, they often use position papers as their introduction. By doing this, delegates maintain organized ideas and templates that will help them stick to their country's policies. Keep this in mind when writing a position paper.

Resources: The resources used for country and committee research are the same as those used to write position papers. Students should cite at least three different sources, and refer to lesson 3 and 4 for more resources. Additionally, some good options include:

- Topic Background Guides: students should examine the questions at the end of each guide as well as the "recommended reading" list;
- Website of a country's foreign ministry;
- Website of country's permanent mission at the United Nations in New York: go to <http://www.un.int/index-en/webs.html> and click on Member States;
- UN Bibliographic Information System: provides an index of speeches (listed by topic, country and committee) and voting record; <http://unbisnet.un.org/>;
- www.cyberschoolbus.un.org;
- UNA-USA resources on Model UN: go to <http://www.unausa.org/modelun> and look on the right side for links to MUN preparation;
- Reuters.com: a news site where it is possible to search for topics like "Turkey climate change UN" and potentially find interesting and relevant articles.

Assessment: Students write a position paper and teachers help edit and collect final drafts. InterConnections 21 recommends giving students at least two weeks to work on position papers, allowing time for self and peer editing. Also, it may be helpful for students to complete the "Outline for My Position Paper" at the end of this chapter.

For students to be considered for the "Best Position Paper" award, teachers must submit their two best position papers from their class(es) to IC21 one week prior to the conference. A panel will review submitted position papers prior to TCMUN and one award will be given to a student from each school.

Sources Cited:

"Position Papers." Global Classrooms Model UN. January 2012. United Nations Associated of the United States of America. July 21, 2012.

"How to Write a Position Paper." Ask a Librarian. February 8, 2011. Xavier University Library. July 21, 2012.