



HOW TO WRITE A POSITION PAPER

WHAT ARE POSITION PAPERS?

The purpose of position papers is to ensure that debate in committee is substantive and to assist delegates in assembling their research into an organized policy statement. Individual position papers are a crucial part of the preparation process, and further information about their format and content is provided in this section. Delegates' position papers should be concise, accurate, and well written.

A good position paper will:

1. Clearly outline the country's policies on the topics and what factors contribute to these policies;
2. Integrate indigenous national factors into the responses;
3. Refer to domestic and international documents and correctly cite the sources;
4. Deal with the in-depth issues of the topic areas as well as the overt topic issues;
5. Provide suggestions for solutions that address the problem areas;
6. The staff looks for the demonstration of the following skills in evaluating the papers:
 - Original and critical thinking,
 - A true understanding of the dynamics of your nation,
 - Functional and applied knowledge of the topics.



Please note that under no circumstances will plagiarism of any portion of position papers be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as the usage of material from another source without appropriate citation. Plagiarism includes both word-for-word borrowing of text and material, and paraphrasing of material without citation. All material acquired from existing sources, including text quotations, charts, graphs, diagrams and data must be cited. Please note that **plagiarism of the Background Guide provided by your Chairs is equally unacceptable.**

It is important to recognize that the amount of information available for use in your position paper will vary according to the size, level of development, and age of your country.

Do not be discouraged by the limitations of your resources. If you are representing a newly formed country or looking for information on a topic that has only recently been in the public eye, you will experience many of the same problems that confront actual UN delegations.

A successful position paper will provide the following information:

Introduction: Discussion of the importance of the topic and the problems that will be encountered in finding a solution

Country policy: There are two parts to this section:

- a. A general, **relevant** history of your state. Include major events that shape its current policy about the topic under consideration.
- b. Your state's general position on the topic, including resolutions that it has or has not signed and reasons for previous votes on these measures.



Proposed actions and solutions: Suggestions for reaching a compromise (*where applicable*): *sometimes a state's position is that the UN should not be discussing the topic because it is not of international concern. If this is the case, it is an extremely valid position to take, and this position should be stated and explained*); this section is the best chance for a delegate's creativity to flourish.

BASIC RULES:

- Do not copy and paste text from websites, books or any other sources:** We will be able to notice plagiarism.
- Never state the obvious:** if you already have explained an aspect, do not waste time in repeating its consequences over and over again.
- Be systematic:** try to structure your position paper by zooming progressively, starting from a general statement on the aspect (within the topic) you are considering; provide information in a logical order.

RESEARCH: make sure to use valid sources, preferably UN's/IGOs'/NGOs'/Governments' official websites.

Wikipedia is not a valid source, because, anyone can edit its items: if you find something interesting on Wikipedia, go to the source from which it has been taken (look for the footnotes³); if you cannot find any sources, desist.

- If you are citing an article, make sure you specify the title of the article, its source (ex.: The Guardian) and the relevant link.
- If you are citing an academic paper, make sure you specify the author.

FORMATTING:

First Paragraph

Here you should summarize the issue. Make sure you develop on what you have read in the Background Guides written by your chairs.

- What are the social, political and economic consequences?
- How is this issue affecting society?
- Why is it necessary to find a solution?
- This is the perfect part to insert statistics and graphs: making this kind of research will really help you during the debate.

DO NOT FORGET TO BRIEFLY STATE YOUR COUNTRY'S POLICY AT THE END OF THE FIRST PARAGRAPH.

Second Paragraph

Here you should answer the following questions:

- What actions has the UN and your country taken towards this issue?
- What was a success?
- What proved to be unsuccessful?
- What were the consequences?
- What actions were taken by other actors in the issue? In addition, what were the consequences of such actions?



Third Paragraph

This is the part where you should mention specifically your country's involvement in the issue at hand.

- What side of the issue is your country on?

- Is your country actively involved in this problem?

- What has your country done to address it?

Fourth Paragraph

In this paragraph, you should mention any solutions proposals you have to tackle the issue at hand. During the debate when you write your resolution, this particular section of your position paper will come in handy.

Please contact the chairs of your committee for any further questions.

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