



Front cover: The New York skyline featuring the newly-completed United Nations headquarters, 1952.
Back cover: The New York skyline featuring the United Nations headquarters, 2011.

Contents

Preface	7
The Model UN Experience	8

Preface

This guide is designed to help you prepare for any Model UN or crisis simulation, whether as a teacher, staff member or delegate, whether at a huge General Assembly session or a small specialized body, a regional organization or a crisis simulation. The emphasis throughout is on practical advice to help participants contribute, excel and enjoy the event. The examples come from Old Dominion to any of the hundreds of comparable events that take place every year around the world.

For anyone who has experienced any kind of committee design-making, much of what you read here will not come as a surprise. With apologies to Gertrude Stein, a meeting is a meeting is a meeting. Preparation, presentation and negotiation are much the same wherever they happen. Experience with earlier versions of this guide showed that the ideas developed here apply to any college or high school simulation conference. Actual UN regular sessions and special conferences in Geneva or New York are surprisingly similar.

While many participants are drawn to Model UN by the practical experience simulating international relations, for a large proportion it is more appreciated as a chance to polish their professionalism. Model UN stands out for the intensity of the experience, applying a wide range of professional skills to achieve clear goals. Regardless of why you are engaged, this guide is designed to help you do it better.

This guide builds directly on almost forty years of continuous work by previous ODU Model UN directors: Jerry Bookin-Wiener, Chris Drake, Maria Fornella and Fred Warren. It also is the product of my personal experience, beginning as an undergraduate in Springfield, Missouri, at Drury College (now Drury University) where I was introduced to Model UN. It started me on a path that led to graduate study in New York and work at the UN. Closer to home, Alan Rogers and Valerie Sprouse have been continuous sources of experience, insight and correction.

The Model UN Experience

Model United Nations is a diplomatic simulation. Role players take the place of diplomats at the UN and other international conferences, representing country delegations as they deal with major issues, try to advance global and national interests. Like the UN itself, the simulation combines skill and bluster, cooperation and compromise, selfishness and assertiveness.

On the Model UN circuit, hubris prevails. Grandstanding is normal and inflated egos are almost as common as country placards. Neophytes are routinely told to go with the flow; d
hour it all will make sense. A lot can be learned from School of Hard Knocks, but a lot of nonsense hides there too. Another approach treats simulation as a legal exercise; keep studying the UN Charter and your Rules of Procedure. The Charter and rules matters enormously, but they are not a how-to guides. The truth is

MUN Roots

Teaching and study through simulation goes back to ancient times. One such example is the casual improvisations of the rock drills of military commanders preparing for battle. Simulations became part of college curriculums with the rise of business schools in the 1920s. Already legal scholars were using simulations to teach the concepts of courtroom litigation, including the newly created World Court in The Hague and the League of Nations, the predecessor of the United Nations.¹ In the United States, legislative simulations like Boys

MUN versus the real thing

Box 2. Why you are there

Part of the excitement and the weirdness of the Model UN experience is the opportunity to visit major cities and other interesting places and not see much of them. You have one job at a conference. You were sent to represent your school, to engage the simulation, to make it go well for other participants, to learn and compete. So be in session, be attentive, and always be ready to spring to action.

Sessions are for work. Down time is for rest. Behave yourself, excel and support your delegation. Sorry, but you were not sent for studying, tourism, partying or any of a hundred other imaginable diversions. No bar crawls, tasteless t-shirts or mystery tattoos. Not this time. short, but you will have other chances to see the town.

You Are Your Country

Learning about the country you represent is one of the most rewarding parts of preparation. That means mastering much more than just geographic facts and government basics. The *CIA World Factbook*, *Wikipedia* and other web resources are great for basics. Those details about the country are essential, but there is far more to it. K . After favorite dessert, you need to understand their goals at the UN.

To get a sense of national politics and foreign policy, study speeches, official statements, and news reporting. Useful overviews can be found on the country pages of major media outlets like *BBC News Country Profiles* and the *New York Times*.⁴ Pay special attention to government policy and the priorities of national leaders; those are your bosses!

Just as important as familiarity with your country is knowing how it operates in the UN and other international organizations. What issues are most important to it and what are its general goals in international diplomacy? Essential country guidance can be found at:

Annual General Debate speeches. This is the single best resource for any diplomat, the ultimate quick guide. The annual session of the General Assembly begins with two weeks of General Debate. Every September-October, heads of state, prime ministers and foreign ministers come to New York to address the international community. Since virtually all 193 member states speak in General Debate, the annual speech is the best and approach to UN deliberations. All General Debate speeches are available on the UN website at <http://gadebate.un.org/>

⁴ *BBC News Country Profiles* are available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/ On the *New York Times* looking by country under *Times Topics*, <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/topics/>

Country missions. Every member state has a permanent mission (embassy) to the UN. The mission website usually links recent speeches by national leaders and UN representatives. Start with the UN Mission Directory, <http://www.un.org/en/members/index.shtml>. Smaller countries may not have an English page; use Google Translate.

Foreign Ministry website. Where does your country stand on major issues of the day? What are your national priorities? Foreign Ministries have websites largely to update their own diplomats, so expect them to help you too. Often you will find an English version, but sometimes *Google Translate* is necessary. Use it; it works.

News reporting. For country positions in the UN see the *Inter Press Service*, a UN oriented news agency. Search your country or issue at <http://www.ipsnews.net/>. Also be sure to check national news services, which usually have an English version. Most countries have an English-language news service. If not, put Google Translate to work. *UN News Centre*, <http://www.un.org/news/> is also very good, but stresses the work of UN leaders and agencies, not the member states.

Specific topics: When the topics get particular, it often is easiest to troll the Internet. Search with: issue + country + United Nations

Voting Practices in the United Nations is a periodic American report, congressionally mandated and prepared by the U.S. Department of State, showing how often member states voted with the United States. Although it lacks detail on country positions, it is a revealing guide to

Box 3. Call Home

They hesitate, if only because it is not about them but those they represent. Most immediately, it is about their superiors in their Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

But do you know what your bosses think? Study helps, but surprises are guaranteed. Your Mission or their MFA colleagues in the national capital, their home government. You can do the same. Consult your support staff (faculty sponsor) or your *Home Government*.



(Photo: ODUMUNC)

The conference Home Government office is your government, your capital on the telephone. Its staff of international relations experts can advise on how your delegation would act in a particular situation. It is the place to stop for substantive policy advice on your country's position on any issue, including help with Working Paper composition, speech preparation, or country policy. If you are not sure where your country stands, call your home government.

Position Papers should be in a formal style, written from the perspective of your government, delegation or organization. It requires a heading. Although the specifics vary (check submission rules) the heading usual

Role Playing

It is not who you are, but how you do it. China has 1.3 billion people and Tuvalu a total of just over 11,000, but both are sovereign states, diplomatically equal in the UN General Assembly, each with a single vote. Even more than the real world, in model UN simulations sovereign equality makes all delegations equal. One of the realities of MUN simulations is they reward strategically minded delegates, regardless of which country they represent. The mover and shaker in a body may be the well-prepared delegate representing a country you never heard of the day before. Preparation, style and skill can trump all the numbers. Unlike the real thing, in a model UN simulation, superpowers can become mice and mice can emerge as superpowers.

Stay in character – advocate positions consistent with the policies of the country or character you represent – but expect differences. The simulation environment usually brings greater equality, allowing small countries to be more assertive than they might elsewhere. At a MUN, diplomatic skill often matters more than GDP or oil reserves. An inspired performance, or a sleepy one, often trumps realism. It is not realistic, but nor is it unusual in MUN for a delegate playing a country like Burkina Faso or Seychelles to run rings around a tortoise-like China or United States.

No delegation can be faulted just for being too effective. What matters most is that their positions are in character and consistent with national policy. When a microstate is muscling like a superpower, it is

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Allies, friends, others

Conference Organization

Who are all these people? UN bodies range from the Security Council with just fifteen members to General Assembly Committees where all 193 member states are eligible to speak. What they all have in common are basic procedures, and the roles of secretariat and delegations. The players:

Conference Secretariat

Secretary-General: The SG is in charge of the conference, with authority over all conference activities, participants and staff, subject to conference rules and procedures.

Under Secretaries-General: USGs are delegated specific roles under the authority of the SG.

Secretary-Treasurer: The ST maintains conference registration and financial records, receives registration payments and makes refunds, prints badges and certificates.

Assistant Secretaries-Treasurer: ASTs assist the ST in all of their duties, as delegated by the ST.

Committee Secretariat (dais staff)

Chair: In charge of the committee in all aspects, under the authority of the conference SG.

Vice-Chair: Assists the Chair and in their absence is acting chair.

Director: Receives and edits Working Papers for approval and designation as Draft Resolutions. They verify the final text of approved Resolutions.

Rapporteur: Committee Rapporteurs handle roll call, the speakers list, and voting. They receive delegation notes requesting to be added to the speakers list.

Country Delegations

Head Delegate: Equivalent to a member state ambassador, a Head Delegate is

the delegation, and resolves delegate issues with the Conference Secretariat. They usually represent their country in the committee or body of their choice. They also represent their delegation at Head Delegate meetings, convened to help keep the conference working efficiently.

Delegates: May have the rank of Ambassador (especially in the Security Council) or First Secretary. Delegates are assigned to a specific body by their Head Delegate and Faculty Sponsor.



Tough call? Dias staff confer
(Photo: ODUMUNC)

Procedure: How it Works

For most first-time delegates, the rules are the least familiar part of the simulation, but it is surprising how quickly they are mastered. How does the UN manage 193 sovereign countries, all demanding to speak simultaneously, without sparking the seemingly inevitable brawl? If you are new to this, it might look like the monkey house at the UN Zoo. In reality, it is an orderly diplomatic process that respects the sovereign equality of all member states. UN bodies use modified parliamentary procedure, a simplified version of the classic *Tqdgtyou"Twngu of Order*.

The rules follow a simple logic. Expect the rhythm to become clear after about an hour of deliberation. Your Committee Chair should explain procedures as they move along. Rules of procedure vary from conference to conference and always should be studied before, but the basic features usually are the same. The basic process is known as the *flow of debate*.

Flow of Debate

Guided by the rules, UN bodies follow a standard process to get things done, a process designed to insure all member states get to speak and are treated fairly. The process begins long before anyone shows up, not when the first gavel cracks against the dais, but when delegations submit their Position Papers to the Committee Secretariat prior to the opening of the first session. A well-organized
own as

Formal Debate opens a session for Roll Call and General Debate (general country policy statements). Formal debate does not permit recessing to caucus or points of information to the speaker; it usually is reserved for opening the session and voting procedures. Informal debate allows for caucuses, points of information and note passing. Delegates must motion to move into informal debate. See the Quick Guide, below, or *ODUMUNC Rules* for detailed procedures.

Once the session has opened, *parameters* must be set. These include: speaking time, question limits and response time limits. Parameters are set by the body via motions, which might be solicited by the Committee Chair, and agreed by vote. There must be a Speakers List opened and maintained by the Committee to organize General Debate, before a topic is agreed. Once the topic is set a new speakers list is opened on the topic being addressed. The speakers list is an on-going list that allows delegations to address the assembly. It also gives other delegations a chance to question speeches given by the speaker. If the speakers list is completed during debate on a resolution, the committee moves directly into voting procedure.

A Point of Order is a procedural inquiry by a delegate directed at the Chair. Examples include failure to follow Rules of Procedure or a breakdown in order. A Point of Order may interrupt a speaker, but only if it is relevant to their presentation, such as not being able to hear.

A Point of Information is used by a delegate to raise a question. It may be directed to the Chair or the Point of information directed to the

. The Chair may respond that the delegate may proceed. A Point of Information directed at the chair could be any question the delegate has for the chair, whether to ask clarification on a rule or for any other question.

Procedural Motions allow delegates to change what the committee is doing. Common motions are for a moderated caucus, un-moderated caucus, recess, adjournment of debate, closure of debate or suspension of the rules. For a thorough explanation of the various motions see the ODUMUNC Rules. Motions

Box 7



Draft resolutions

A Working Paper with sufficient sponsors and signatories and approval of the Committee Director is stamped, introduced, given an official number, and becomes a Draft Resolution, ready for copying, distribution and debate. Draft Resolutions are official documents; they can be changed only through amendment.

Resolutions

A Resolution is the final product of the deliberative process, based on a Draft Resolution that has been adopted by a committee, and possibly amended, passed either by vote or consensus.

Resolution elements

United Nations resolutions follow a common format (see sample, below). Each resolution has three parts: the *heading*, *preamble*, and *operative clauses*. Working papers and Draft Resolutions should be single-spaced with each line following the heading numbered in the left-hand margin. The preamble and operative sections are written as a single long sentence with commas and semicolons, and one period only at the very end. Short resolutions might have three perambulatory and three operative clauses. Longer resolutions can be several pages long.

The heading includes an official document number, the topic and list of sponsors. A typical Draft Resolution number is ODUMUNC/37/GA3/1.a (for *conference/session/body/topic.draft*). If passed, the final Resolution receives a final number instead of a final letter (as in ODUMUNC/37/GA3/1.1).

Preamble explains the justifications for the resolution, previous UN action that is relevant guidance, the problem it addresses, and the goals of the resolution. Each preamble clause begins with their first word italicized, and ends with a comma.

Operative clauses specify specific action for the international community and the UN. They begin with their first word underlined, and each clause ends with a semicolon, except the final clause, which ends with a period. For more information see the *Resolution Writing Guide*.

Resolution Language

Here are some of the most commonly used verbs and adverbs to begin perambulatory and operative clauses in resolutions. Resolutions of the General Assembly and most other UN bodies cannot *insist* upon action by sovereign states. The GA can demand action only by the UN itself: by the Secretary-General and specialized agencies. Because states alone are sovereign, and the General Assembly is essentially a club house it cannot dictate to the members the tone is always recommending:

Preambulatory language

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

Operative language

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

Additional Operative Terms for Security Council

Only the UN Security Council can require specific action of sovereign states and alter international law. Consequently, the language of its operative clauses can be imperative:

Approves	Decides	Requires
Authorizes	Demands	Strongly condemns
Condemns	Mandates	

Placard Vote allows delegations to vote *yes*, *no* or *abstain* by a show of placards.

Roll Call Vote can be requested by a delegation for voting on a resolution only. A roll call vote is

Preparation

Crisis simulation is designed to facilitate learning about how people manage critical situations. Delegate preparation is vital. Preparing for a crisis simulation involves studying topical information as well as the approach of your assigned character, to gain an understanding of the topic through the eyes of the character.

This requires mastering the *situation* (group preparation) as well as history or background of your *character* (individual preparation). Group preparation starts by examining the political environment of the day and related problems. A well-designed crisis simulation includes a website and issue briefs to get everyone oriented. There also is individual preparation. A delegate should examine whether their personality was aligned with a particular political movement or party, their personal views of current events, and how those views may have changed through their lifetime. The better informed a delegate is about the situation and the character, the better they can portray how the character might react to the crisis at hand.

Once a general understanding of the character has been developed, delegates should research the relationship between the character and situation. Some questions to consider are:

How is the character *involved* in the rise of the topic?

How does the crisis issue affect the *affiliations* (family, clan or nation) of the assigned character?

How does the crisis affect the character *power or influence*?

How will particular *outcomes* affect the character?

Position papers are just as vital in a crisis body as any other Model UN simulation. A crisis position paper can take different forms, but they allow you to arrive better prepared, give a basis for opening remarks, and help guide other participants. A crisis position paper should be written from the



*A crisis simulation:
The war room in
Stanley 1964
film, Dr. Strangelove,
or How I learned to
Stop Worrying and Love
the Bomb.*

Participant

also are accepted. If there are no motions, debate automatically defaults to moderated debate. In special circumstances, the chair may intervene in debate to facilitate a compromise solution to an immediate crisis.



The real thing:
US Ambassador Adlai
Stevenson presents
evidence of Soviet
missiles in Cuba to the
Security Council, 25
October 1962
(Photo: United Nations)

Quick Guides

UN Caucusing Blocs

The 193 member states divide into five official UN regional blocs: the *African Group* (AG) with 55 member states, *Asia-Pacific Group* with 53 member states, Eastern European Group with 23 member states, the *Latin American and Caribbean Group* (GRULAC) with 33 member states and *Western European and Others Group* (WEOG) with 28 member states including Canada and the United States) plus 1 observer (Israel). UN regional blocs are the basis for dividing UN responsibilities, jobs and allocations. Other major groups often are more important in resolution voting. These include:

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM): Functionally the same as the Group of 77 (G77), now 120 countries caucus with the NAM (not all present at ODUMUNC). The largest UN voting bloc, it includes nearly all nations of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia. NAM members also caucus with their regional blocs.

African Union (AU): The AU includes all countries of the African continent, as well as adjacent island states: Madagascar, Sao Tome and Principe, and Seychelles

Organization of American States (OAS) includes all sovereign states of North and South America, and the Caribbean, except Cuba which refuses to participate in OAS events. Several Latin American countries including Cuba caucus separately as the **Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas**.

The League of Arab States (AL)

Members Djibouti Kuwait

Blocs make their own rules. Member states are free to form *ad hoc* blocs as they wish.

Flow of Debate

Roll Call

delegation of _____

Setting the Agenda

ODUMUN committees and councils have more than one topic they can discuss; therefore the body

Sample Draft Resolution

Date: 17 February 2016

Resolution: ODUMUNC/37/GA4/3.a

Body and committee: General Assembly, Third Committee

Topic: Strengthening UN Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies

Sponsors: Lesotho, Malawi, Tuvalu

Signatories: Angola, Bangladesh, Yemen, Zambia

The General Assembly,

Reminding

Sample Position Paper

Old Dominion University Model United Nations Conference 45
Human Rights Council

Position paper of the Republic of Costaguana
State A&M University

The Republic of Costaguana is honored to contribute to international deliberations of the UN Human Rights Council. Protection of human rights is among the greatest duties of all sovereign states and the international community. Having witnessed great tragedies, crimes and generosity Costaguana strives to assure the standards of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention and all other international treaties guiding the international community.

The topic *International Intervention to Protect Human Rights*, Agenda Item 1, is a source of special concern. The government and people of Costaguana strongly believe in the necessity to protect the rights of all men and women. But we also believe this responsibility is best achieved by individual governments, who alone assure the dignity and welfare of their people. The intentional community cannot afford to let bedrock principles of peace and stability be compromised in a misconceived rush to misuse military capabilities, risking completely unpredictable results.

Although small and impoverished, Costaguana has special insight into the dangers of sacrificing principles of international order. We have painful experience with imperialist policies by certain major powers, who used allegations of torture and abuse to justify immoral intervention in our affairs. Having seen our precious sovereignty mocked by foreign powers, our leaders denied proper respect and the territory of our country abused. The people of Costaguana stand behind the government that strives to assure them the rights we all cherish. Determined to protect national sovereignty above all, the government and people of Costaguana speak as one against the misuse of principles of human rights to intervene in the affairs of others.

Instead, the people of Costaguana rise in unity to reaffirm that the best protection of human rights comes from restraining the interventionist instincts of foreign powers, those who would undermine bedrock principles of sovereignty and non-intervention to serve their own interests. Instead of punishing the victims of oppression, the Human Rights Council will be better served to focus its attention on the unjustified excesses of greater powers, those who act in violation of international law, twisting the meaning of sacred treaties and conventions to serve their own purposes and enslave the weak.

The best way for the international community to help those who suffer in poorer countries is

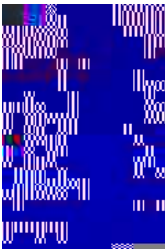
For Further Reading



Model United Nations: Student Preparation Guide, by Linda S. Adams and Janet E. Adamski (Kendall/Hunt 2002)



Coaching Winning Model United Nations Teams: A Teacher's Guide, by Edward Mickolus and Joseph Brannan (Potomac Books 2013)



The Winning Delegate: An Insider's Guide to Model United Nations, 2nd edition, by Kerem Turunç (iUniverse, 2009)



How to Win Awards in Model United Nations, by Ryan Villanueva and Kevin Felix Chan (Best Delegate, 2011). Order from <http://bestdelegate.com/>

Authors

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Valerie Sprouse (*Procedure and Resolutions*) received her BA in International Studies from ODU in 2008 and an MA from the ODU Graduate Program in International Studies with a concentration in Interdependence, Transnationalism and Power in 2009. She is a past ODUMUNC Secretary-General and a five year veteran working for the ODU Model UN.

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