

Virginia Intergenerational Model UN Beginner's Training Guide

1. What is MUN?
2. Parliamentary Procedure
3. Resolution Writing
4. Bloc Building and Other Skills

Basics of Model UN:

Model United Nations, known as Model UN or MUN for short, is a simulation of world diplomacy, negotiations, and policy making. The participants of Model UN are known as delegates. Delegates are given positions as different countries that are members of the United Nations or other international assemblies, and delegates must petition for and debate policy that matches their country's position. There are many facets to Model UN, but the three most important are Delegate Positions, Committees, and Parliamentary Procedure.

Each delegate is given a position of a country or organization who they will represent throughout debate. During debate and policy-writing, delegates must argue and advocate for their country's position. This is why prior to conference weekend, delegates must research the position of their countries on a given topic and any past action the country has taken on an issue. For instance, if a delegate is representing Japan and the topic is climate change, it is important that the delegate have some background knowledge on the Kyoto Protocol and Japanese environmental policy. By representing the policy of another country, delegates are forced outside of

their comfort zone and are able to look at a global issue from a new perspective.

One of the key foundations of Model UN is a suspension of disbelief. What we mean by that is that when participating in debate, both other delegates and the dais are aware that the position a delegate is advocating for does not necessarily coincide with their personal beliefs on a topic. For instance, if a delegate were to represent Afghanistan in a committee where the topic is drug trafficking, the delegate would advocate for the primacy of national sovereignty and for the international community to stay out of individual nation's drug networks regardless of what their personal beliefs on the opiate epidemic in Afghanistan and the world are. Both other delegates and the dais are aware of this; so, please feel free to passionately argue for the position of your country on a given issue without fear of being judged as if you were advocating for your personal beliefs. The whole point of Model UN is to take a stance and argue for something from a new perspective to gain a greater appreciation for the global community.

Another important aspect of Model UN is the committee experience. The United Nations has six General Assemblies: Disarmament and International Security (DISEC), Economic and Financial (ECOFIN), Social,

Humanitarian, and Cultural (SOCHUM), Special Political and Decolonization (SPECPOL), Administrative and Budgetary, and Legal. Each committee of the United Nations looks at issues from a unique perspective. In Model United Nations at VIGMUN, we function as one of the above committees and look at our given topic from the unique viewpoint of that committee. More information on what that entails can be found in the background guide for this conference.

In committee dynamics can be tricky. Some key points to having a successful Model UN experience are to find delegates with similar viewpoints and work with those delegates throughout the conference. It is also important to speak early and often and not be afraid to take risks. We are a training conference; so we understand that many of our delegates are not well-versed in parliamentary procedure. Details of parliamentary procedure and how it works can be found later in this guide and in videos on our website, but the most important thing to know is that it is merely a system of rules used to facilitate debate. We want you to ask questions and focus on getting your ideas heard and out there rather than getting caught up in the minutia of parliamentary procedure.

So far, we have covered the basics of Model United Nations.

Throughout the rest of this guide, we will include details on parliamentary procedure, resolution writing, and other skills for success at VIGMUN. The most important thing to remember, though, is that the purpose of Model UN is to look at issues from new perspectives and to make delegates comfortable discussing important international issues within their communities, which is the focus of this conference as well.

Parliamentary Procedure:

Parliamentary procedure is the name of the rules and order used to regulate debate during a Model UN Conference. There are three forms of debate in parliamentary procedure: Formal debate, moderated caucuses, and unmoderated caucuses.

Who's Who in Parliamentary Procedure

- Chair:

Each committee will be run and moderated by a chair. The chair functions to control the flow of debate and call on you, the delegates, throughout committee sessions. The chair is the authority in the room who will set the rules and expectations in committee. The chair will occasionally call for points or motions at which time delegates can make any of the motions that will be discussed later.

- Vice Chair

Next, there will also be a vice chair who may, at the chair's discretion, run committee from time to time. The vice chair also does various tasks for the chair while on the dais, which is the table or group of desks at the front of the room where those who run committee sit.

- Other Staffers

Adi: Besides the chair and vice chair, there might be other staffers in the committee who will help with passing notes and typing up resolutions or directives.

Three types of debate:

- Formal debate:

During formal debate, the staff will call upon delegates via a speakers' list. During formal debate in the first committee session, delegates will have the chance to share their views on a topic and which topic they wish to see debated first. A delegate may motion to set the agenda, at which point to one of the topics listed in the background guide. Usually after this time, debate moves to moderated caucuses, but the speakers' list is the default in case no other motions pass. If a speakers' list elapses, then the committee enters into voting procedure. It is important not to let this happen if no resolutions have been introduced. At the end of your speaking time, you must yield to the chair or questions. If you yield to the chair, you may return to your seat and the chair will absorb any additional speaking time you had. If you yield to questions, the chair will call on a delegate who may ask you a question regarding your most recent speech you use the remainder of your time to answer that question. If you yield to another delegate, they will be allowed to speak for the remainder of your time.

- ***Moderated caucus:***

Delegates may motion for moderated caucuses where they debate a specific aspect on a topic and possible solutions with the entire committee. A moderated caucus lasts a specific amount of time, and it is important that delegates specify this during their motion. Delegates must also specify a speaking time for each speaker in the caucus divisible evenly by the length of the caucus itself. For instance, If I motion for a ten minute moderated caucus, I would also motion for a thirty second speaking time so that there may be enough time for an even number of twenty speakers. It is unnecessary to yield your time during a moderated caucus.

- ***Unmoderated Caucus:***

this is the most informal style of debate used. During this time delegates may leave their seats and negotiate draft resolutions, amendments, or other topics.

To be called on to speak during a moderated caucus or to make a point or motion, the delegate raises their placard and waits to be called on by the chair.

Points and Motions

“Motion to open the speaker’s list”: At the beginning of the session, after roll, a delegate may motion for a speaker’s list to start debate. The motion must include a set speaking time. No topic is required for a speaker’s list and it passes with a simple majority. If it passes, delegates raise their placards or send notes to the chair to be added to the list.

“Motion for a Moderated Caucus that is _ Long with a _ speaking time to discuss_”

A speaking time and duration is necessary when motioning for a moderated caucus. The speaking time must add evenly into the set duration so that each speaker has an even amount of speaking time. This passes with a simple majority.

“Motion for an unmoderated caucus for _ minutes”

Delegates may motion for an unmoderated caucus during committee where they are free to get up to and negotiate with other delegates and write draft resolutions. This motion requires a simple majority and a specified duration to pass.

“Motion for an extension of the current moderated or unmoderated caucus by _ minutes”

At the end of a moderated or unmoderated caucus, delegates may motion to extend the current state of committee. Extensions cannot be extended and are passed with simple majority.

“Motion to introduces resolutions on the floor”

At this time resolutions will be read aloud or passed out in print to committee so that delegates may familiarize themselves with the proposed draft resolutions on the floor. It passes with a simple majority.

“Motion to enter into voting procedure”

At this time the draft resolutions that have been introduced will be voted on. By default, they are voted on in the order in which they were introduced. Requires simple majority to enter. During this time note passing is paused and no one may leave or enter the committee room. Quick Note on voting procedure: there are three ways you can vote: yes, no, and abstain. In order to pass, a resolution only needs a majority of yes and no votes and abstentions function as non-votes.

“Point of Inquiry”

Essentially, the delegate has a question for the chair and the nature of this question can be rather broad.

“Point of Personal Privilege”

The delegate raises a point related to personal discomfort such as the room being too hot or not being able to hear the current speaker.

“Point of Information”

Pertinent when the delegate has a substantive question for another delegate and is usually used when a delegate yields to questions.

“Point of Order”

Used when a delegate seeks to address improper parliamentary procedure.

Resolution Writing

There are many parts to a **resolution**. In each committee, there needs to be 1/3 of total committee members either as signatories or sponsors on a resolution for a draft resolution to be introduced in committee. Sponsors are those delegates who have contributed clauses directly to the resolution. Signatories are those delegates who simply support the idea of the resolution being introduced and debated. Being a signatory does not mean you are in favor of a particular resolution.

Next on the resolution come **preambulatory clauses**. These are justifications for action. In this section, you can cite past UN action and international agreements, precedents, and other statements regarding the purpose of the action. There are specific words that indicate the beginning of preambulatory clauses, but a general rule of thumb is to keep the first word in the present participle such as “considering the past action” and “acknowledging the situation we face ourselves with”.

Next come the **operative clauses**, where the real meat of the resolution is. In this section you outline the policies of the resolution you are creating. Use them to explain and outline what your solution to the problem is, how it will be implemented, how it will be funded, and any additional information necessary for the implementation of your proposed policy. Operative clauses begin with a verb in the present, third person singular. “Creates an oversight committee to monitor...” “Encourages transparency through annual reports...”

Amendments

Friendly Amendments:

A friendly amendment is a change added to a draft resolution after it has been introduced but before it has been voted on by the committee that

all the sponsors have signed off on. It is automatically incorporated into the draft resolution during voting procedure.

Unfriendly Amendments:

A change to a draft resolution that does not have the support of all of the draft resolution's sponsors. It is introduced in the same period as a friendly amendment, but the authors of an unfriendly amendment must obtain the required number of signatories (1/3 of committee) for it to be introduced. Prior to voting on the draft resolution in question, the committee will vote on all unfriendly amendments. All amendments must be introduced before entering voting procedure or they will not be considered.

Below is an example of a draft resolution:

Resolution 1.1 United Nations Environmental Program

Sponsors: Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Tuvalu

Signatories: Spain, Nicaragua, Chile, Zimbabwe, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Argentina, the Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, France, Eritrea, Qatar, Hungary, Dominican Republic, Peru, United States, México, Greece, Portugal, Djibouti, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Philippines, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, Iran, Sweden, Germany, Egypt

- Acknowledging the decay of various ecosystems of the world and the threat it poses to those who depend on the earth for their livelihood,
 - Recognizing that environmental sustainability and upkeep is the responsibility of the world and not one singular nation
 - Recalling the actions of past international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol, the Montreal Protocol, and the Paris Climate Accords,
- I. Creates a subsidiary monitoring body of the United Nations Environmental Program to monitor member nation's commitment and execution of international climate treaties

- A. Names this body Environmental Overwatch
 - 1. Tasked with creating annual reports on the compliance of member nation's with international environmental laws
 - a) Each annual report submitted to UNEP
- B. After each annual report is submitted, UNEP may at their discretion, recommend to the UN Security Council appropriate punitive measures for countries who fail to meet international compliance protocol
 - 1. Such punitive actions to be recommended include but are not limited to
 - a) Economic sanctions
 - b) Increased responsibility for funding international climate change relief efforts
 - c) Commitment to taking a proportional number of climate refugees in the case of a climate emergency resulting from their failure to act on climate protocol
 - (1) Proportional to the severity of the violation as determined by the UN Security Council
- II. Defines a Climate Refugee as any person forcibly displaced from their home whether domestically or internationally by a natural disaster whose severity has been increased by climate change
- III. Acknowledges that climate change is the result of inaction of the international community
- IV. Establishes a subsidiary body of the UN High Commission on Refugees for the purpose of helping climate refugees
 - A. Funded by donations of UNEP Member Nations including funds dedicated from Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, and Canada
 - 1. Thanks these countries for their generous support in helping the plight of climate refugees
 - B. This body will have offices in New Zealand, México, and Italy

1. This is done because countries in the Pacific such as Tuvalu and the Maldives are most at risk to have climate refugees along with caribbean countries and nations such as Bangladesh and Indonesia

Note: A real resolution will be much longer in length because it will be the result of an entire day's debate and negotiations.