



INDIANAPOLIS MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Rules and Procedures

Model UN can be confusing to a beginner, not only because of the complexity of the issues and the pace of debate, but because of the strangeness of the specialized vocabulary and formal procedures. At your first Model UN conference, you may not think that some of the delegates are speaking English, because of the specialized terms they are using!

This document contains a brief outline of the rules and procedures we use, ending with a glossary of specialized terms. Look it over, and soon you will be able to participate smoothly in the Model UN, discussing quorums, preambulatory clauses, division of the question, and unmoderated caucuses with the best of them.

Page	Topic
2	General Rules
4	Debate Rules
6	Resolutions
9	Appendix A: Sample Proceedings
12	Appendix B: Sample Resolution
13	Model UN Glossary

1: General Rules

1. Administrative

1.1 Secretariat and Chair. The Secretariat consists of the volunteer staff members of IMUN, and the Chair is the General Authority.

2. General Rules

2.1 Diplomatic Courtesy. Delegates must accord diplomatic courtesy to all other Delegates and Secretariat members at all times.

2.2 Speeches. No Delegation may address the Committee/Council without obtaining the permission of the Chair.

- Delegations are recognized to speak, so more than one Delegate from the same Delegation may speak when the Delegation is recognized.
- A speaker who wishes to make a motion may do so after their speech, but prior to yielding the floor.
- By making a motion the speaker yields the floor.
- Motions may not be made from Points of Order, or from any procedural speeches.

2.3 Recognition of Speakers. Delegations wishing to speak on an item before the body will indicate as such by raising their placards.

The exception to this rule occurs on any Point of Order or Information, at which time a Delegate should raise their placard and call out “Point of _____” to the Chair,

3. Voting

3.1 Voting Rights. Each member state shall have one vote in each Committee/Council on which it is represented.

3.2 Simple Majority. Decisions in the Committee/Council shall be made by a majority vote unless otherwise specified. If there is an equal division between yes and no votes, the motion fails.

Note: The Security Council requires an affirmative vote from 9 of the 15 members with no negative vote from any of the five permanent members. Members who cast a final abstention are not voting.

3.3 Adoption by Consensus. The adoption of amendments and draft resolutions by consensus can be requested by any delegation after Closure of Debate is passed. The Chair shall ask whether there is any objection, if any Delegation objects to consensus, voting shall occur as otherwise stated in these rules.

3.4 Method of Voting. The Committee/Council shall normally vote by a roll call. Delegations shall reply “Yes”, “No”, “Abstain”, “Pass” (abstain from the order of voting, or “Yes/No with rights”).

- Voting with rights allows the Delegation to explain its rationale.
- A member state may abstain from the order of voting once during a roll call; a second abstention from the order of voting will be recorded as an abstention.

3.5 Conduct During Voting. Immediately prior to a vote, the Chair shall describe to the Committee/Council the item to be voted on. Voting shall begin upon the Chair’s declaration “we are in voting procedure,” and end when the results of the vote are announced.

- Once in voting procedure, no Delegate shall interrupt the voting except on a Point of Order or Point of Information concerning the actual conduct of the vote.
- Adoption by Consensus is the only relevant motion prior to a vote.

2: Debate Rules

Model UN committees use formal rules of procedure to facilitate the flow of debate and to provide all delegates with an equal opportunity to be heard. These rules, also known as parliamentary procedure, require Delegates to:

- Speak only when recognized by the Committee Chair.
- Use specific language when addressing the Chair and Committee.

Appendix A of this handbook includes a sample flow of debate for a Model UN simulation.

Formal Debate

Formal debate requires Delegates to maintain decorum, or remain quiet and seated in the Committee room.

Setting the Agenda

The Chair will set the agenda.

Setting Speaking Time

Speaking time is established by the Chair and ranges from one to five minutes.

Speeches and Yields

Once the agenda is set, debate can begin by opening a speakers list: the running order in which Delegates will make speeches to the Committee. A Delegate will then make the motion by simply saying *“(Country name) moves to open a speakers list”*.

Delegates in favor of the motion will raise their placards. A simple majority is required for the motion to be accepted.

Delegates who want to be placed on the speakers list need to raise their country’s placard.

The Chair will recognize member states by calling their names, which are placed on the speakers list.

All speeches must be made within the established time set for speeches. If time remains after a Delegate’s speech they may yield their time in the following ways:

- **Yielding to questions/Points of information:** Speaker uses the remaining time to respond to questions and clarify points to other Delegates.
- **Yielding to another delegate:** The speaker uses the remaining time to let another Delegate stand before the Committee and address the issue.
- **Yielding to the chairperson:** The speaker gives up their remaining time.

Points and Motions

Points are raised by Delegates when they want to make a request to the Chair.

Motions are made by Delegates when they want the Committee to operate in a certain manner.

The following are common points and motions:

- **Point of Order:** Used to point out a misuse of the rules.
- **Point of Personal Privilege:** Used to inform the chairperson of personal discomfort which impairs the Delegate's ability to participate in the proceedings.
- **Point of Information:** Used to ask any question of the Chair or for clarification.
- **Motion to set speaking time:** Used to impose or repeal a limit on the length of debate.
- **Limits on Debate.** A motion to limit or extend the time allotted to each Delegation, or limits on the number of times each Delegation can speak on a proposal is in order at any time.
- **Motion to move for a caucus:** Used to suspend for a moderated or unmoderated caucus. Delegates should specify the purpose for and length of the caucus.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: This motion is most commonly made to end a Committee session for the purpose of lunch or a scheduled break. It requires an immediate vote and passes with a majority.

- **Motion to close debate:** Closing debate allows the Committee to move into voting procedure. Two Delegates speak against the closure of debate and two for closure. A super majority is required to pass this motion.

Informal Debate or Caucuses

Moderated Caucus: During a moderated caucus the Committee moves away from the speakers list and Delegates raise their placards to be recognized to speak immediately. Remarks are generally limited to 30 seconds or one minute.

Unmoderated Caucus: Unmoderated caucus allow the Committee to suspend rules of procedure in order to gather in groups to discuss specific issues, write working papers, draft resolution and amendments, and to discuss documents currently before the Committee.

3: Resolutions

Resolutions are the Committee's written suggestion for addressing their specific issue. See Appendix B for a sample.

They are drafted by Delegates and voted on by the Committee. A super majority is required for a working paper to pass in every Committee except for the Security Council which requires an affirmative vote from 9 of the 15 members with no negative vote from any of the permanent members. Security Council resolutions can compel states to take action. All other Committee resolutions can only make recommendations or suggestions for future action.

Resolutions begin as working papers. Working papers are informal documents used as a vehicle for an initial discussion of a topic.

The resolution-writing process follows three basic steps:

1. Once a working paper has been written in resolution form and been signed or sponsored by 20 percent of the Committee and approved for organization in content and flow by the Chair, it becomes a draft resolution and can be submitted to the floor. One draft resolution may be considered on the floor for discussion. (**Sponsors** are the primary authors of working papers and resolutions. **Signatories** are member states that want a working paper discussed; they may or may not agree with its content.)
2. At the draft resolution stage, amendments can be added if the sponsoring states approve; if the sponsors do approve, the amendment automatically becomes part of the draft resolution (**Friendly Amendments**). If one or all of the sponsors object to the amendment, a majority of the Committee may vote to attach the amendment (**Unfriendly Amendment**). A member state may only sponsor one draft resolution on the floor at any one time; however, a state may be a signatory on unlimited resolutions.
3. Any draft resolution that passes by a vote becomes a resolution.

Draft Resolutions

3.1 Definitions of Draft Resolutions. A draft resolution is a written proposal of at least one preambular and one operative clause.

3.2 Draft Resolutions. Draft resolutions may be submitted to the Chair at any time during IMUN.

Preambulatory Clauses

The preamble of a draft resolution states the reasons why the Committee is addressing the topic and highlights relevant past international actions. Each clause begins with a preambulatory phrase and ends with a comma. Preambulatory clauses can include:

- References to the UN Charter.
- Citations of past UN resolution or treaties on the topic.
- Statements made by the Secretary- General or a relevant UN body.
- Recognition of the effort of regional or non-government organizations in dealing with the issue.
- General statements on the topic, its significance and its impact.

The following are examples of preambulatory phrases:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Affirming | • Expressing its satisfaction | • Noting with deep concern |
| • Alarmed by | • Fulfilling | • Nothing with regret |
| • Approving | • Fully alarmed | • Noting with satisfaction |
| • Aware of | • Fully aware | • Noting with approval |
| • Bearing in mind | • Fully believing | • Observing |
| • Believing | • Further deploring | • Reaffirming |
| • Confident | • Further recalling | • Realizing |
| • Contemplating | • Guided by | • Recalling |
| • Convinced | • Having adopted | • Recognizing |
| • Declaring | • Having considered | • Referring |
| • Deeply Concerned | • Having considered further | • Seeking |
| • Deeply conscious | • Having devoted attention | • Taking into account |
| • Deeply convinced | • Having examined | • Taking into consideration |
| • Deeply regretting | • Having received | • Taking note |
| • Desiring | • Having studied | • Viewing with appreciation |
| • Emphasizing | • Keeping in mind | • Welcoming |

Operative Clauses

The operative clauses identify the actions or recommendations made in a resolution. Each operative clause begins with a verb (called an operative phrase) and ends with a semicolon.

Operative clauses should be organized in a logical progression, with each containing a single idea or proposal, and are always numbered. If a clause requires further explanation, bulleted lists can also be used which are set off by letters or roman numerals. After the last operative clause, the resolution ends in a period.

The following are examples of operative clauses:

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

Appendix A: Sample Proceedings

Formal Speaking List

Chair: All delegates please take your seats. The General Assembly is now in formal session. We will begin by roll call. (Chair lists countries)

Countries: Present and Voting

Chair: The Chair would look favorably upon a motion to open the speaker's list.

Country: Thank you honorable chair, _____ (Country) motions to open the speaker's list.

Chair: Thank you delegate _____ (Country). That motion is an order. All countries must vote in procedural matters. All those in favor of opening the speaker's list, please raise your placards.

(Countries in favor raise placards.)

Chair: All those opposed please raise placards. (Countries opposed raise placards)
This motion passes/fails.

Chair: The speaker's list is now open. All countries wishing to be placed on the speaker's list please raise your placards.

(List countries' names on board.)

Chair: The chair would look favorably upon a motion to set the speaking time. (Countries raise their placards to be recognized.) The Chair recognizes the delegate from _____ (Country).

Country: Thank you honorable chair, _____ (Country) motions to set the speaking time for _____ minutes/seconds.

Chair: Thank you delegate. That motion is an order. All of those in favor please raise your placards. (Count) All of those opposed. (Count). This motion clearly passes/fails.

(If it fails, start over, try to set a different speaking time. Repeat the process until it passes.)

Chair: Thank you delegates. The speaker's list is now open with the speaking time set at _____ seconds/minutes. If you wish to be placed on the speaker's list please send a note to the chair. _____ (First country on list) you have the floor for _____ seconds/minutes.

Country Delegate: Thank you honorable chair. (Country gives speech).

Motioning for a Moderated Caucus

[Used to discuss a specific part of the general topic. If human trafficking is the general topic, for example, then illegal immigration would be a specific sub-topic of the topic.]

Chair: The chair would look favorably upon a motion to move into a moderated caucus for the purpose of discussing _____ (topic). (Countries raise their placards to speak) The Chair recognizes the delegate from _____ (Country).

Country: Thank you honorable chair. _____ (Country) motions to move into a moderated caucus for the purpose of discussing _____ (topic) for _____ (total minutes) with a speaking time of _____ (minutes/seconds).

Chair: That motion is an order. (Repeat the motion) There has been a motion to move into a moderated caucus for the purpose of discussing _____ (topic). All those in favor. All those opposed.

Unmoderated Caucus

[Usually discusses resolutions. You just need a total time limit.]

Country: _____ (Country) motions to move into an unmoderated caucus for _____ minutes.

Resolution Presentations

[Resolution groups get to send up 1/3 of their resolutions' total supporters (round up to 3 if below that, otherwise round down) in order to read their resolutions to the committee and answer questions. Does not end until all resolutions have been presented.]

Chair: The chair would look favorably upon a motion to move into resolution presentations, with a presentation of time of (5-6 minutes). The Chair recognizes the delegate from _____ (Country).

Country: Thank you honorable chair. _____ (Country) motions to move into resolution presentations with a presentation time of (5-6 minutes).

Chair: That motion is an order. (Repeat the motion) There has been a motion to move into resolution presentations with a presentation time of _____ (minutes). All those in favor? All those opposed?

Chair: Delegates of resolution (1a, 1b, etc., the number being the topic and the letter the resolution), please send your representatives to present your resolution.

(Countries present their resolution.)

Chair: Resolution presentations have ended. The Chair would look favorably upon a motion to move into voting bloc. Are there any points or motions on the floor?

Voting Bloc

[Delegates vote on whether or not to pass resolutions. All delegates must vote yes or no, unless they did not say “present and voting” in roll call. Once voting bloc has started, delegates may not speak, pass notes, or leave the room until it has concluded. It is recommended that voting bloc directly follows resolution presentations.]

Chair: The Chair would look favorably upon a motion to move into voting bloc. Are there any points or motions on the floor?

Country: Thank you honorable chair. _____ (Country) motions to move into voting bloc.

Chair: That motion is an order. (Repeat the motion) There has been a motion to move into voting bloc. Before we can vote on this motion, we need two speakers for and two speakers against moving into voting bloc.

(Four delegates volunteer to give a brief summary of why or why not the committee is ready to vote, in the order against, for, against, for.)

Chair: Speeches have concluded. All those in favor of moving into voting bloc? All those opposed?

Chair: The committee is now in voting bloc. Delegates may not speak, pass notes, or leave the room until voting has concluded. All those in favor of passing resolution? All those opposed? (Resolutions require a simple majority to pass. Continue until all resolutions have been voted on.)

Chair: Voting has concluded. The chair would look favorably upon a motion to move out of voting bloc.

Country: Thank you honorable chair. _____ (Country) motions to move out of voting bloc.

Chair: That motion is an order. (Repeat the motion) There has been a motion to move out of voting bloc. All those in favor? All those opposed?

Concluding the Debate

Chair: The chair would look favorably upon a motion to close debate.

Country: Thank you honorable chair. _____ (Country) motions to close debate.

Chair: That motion is an order. (Repeat the motion) There has been a motion to close debate. All those in favor? All those opposed?

Appendix B: Sample Resolution

General Assembly Third Committee

Resolution GA/3/1.1

Sponsors: United States, Austria and Italy.

Signatories: Greece, Tajikistan, Japan, Canada, Mali, the Netherlands and Gabon.

Topic: "Strengthening UN coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies"

The General Assembly,

Reminding all nations of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which recognizes the inherent dignity, equality and inalienable rights of all global citizens, **[use commas to separate pre-ambulatory clauses]**

Reaffirming its Resolution 33/1996 of 25 July 1996, which encourages Governments to work with UN bodies aimed at improving the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance,

Noting with satisfaction the past efforts of various relevant UN bodies and nongovernmental organizations,

Stressing the fact that the United Nations faces significant financial obstacles and is in need of reform, particularly in the humanitarian realm,

1. Encourages all relevant agencies of the United Nations to collaborate more closely with countries at the grassroots level to enhance the carrying out of relief efforts; **[use semicolons to separate operative clauses]**
2. Urges member states to comply with the goals of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to streamline efforts of humanitarian aid;
3. Requests that all nations develop rapid deployment forces to better enhance the coordination of relief efforts of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies;
4. Calls for the development of a United Nations Trust Fund that encourages voluntary donations from the private transnational sector to aid in funding the implementation of rapid deployment forces;
5. Stresses the continuing need for impartial and objective information on the political, economic and social situations and events of all countries;
6. Calls upon states to respond quickly and generously to consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance; and
7. Requests the expansion of preventive actions and assurance of post-conflict assistance through reconstruction and development. **[end resolutions with a period]**

Model UN Glossary

Note that several of the terms below, including *Secretariat* and *Secretary-General*, have different meanings in Model UN than they do in the real UN; you should familiarize yourself with both meanings. Also, rules of procedure vary greatly from one Model UN conference to another. Though these are the most common definitions of the terms below, do not be surprised if you see them used in a slightly different manner at some other Model UN conferences.

Abstain - During a vote on a substantive matter, delegates may abstain rather than vote yes or no. This generally signals that a state does not support the resolution being voted on, but does not oppose it enough to vote no.

Adjourn - All UN or Model UN sessions end with a vote to adjourn. This means that the debate is suspended until the next meeting. This can be a short time (e.g., overnight) or a long time (until next year's conference).

Agenda - The order in which the issues before a committee will be discussed. The first duty of a committee following the roll call is usually to set the agenda.

Amendment - A change to a draft resolution on the floor. Can be of two types: a "friendly amendment" is supported by the original draft resolution's sponsors, and is passed automatically, while an "unfriendly amendment" is not supported by the original sponsors and must be voted on by the committee as a whole.

Background guide - A guide to a topic being discussed in a Model UN committee usually written by conference organizers and distributed to delegates before the conference. The starting point for any research before a Model UN conference.

Binding - Having legal force in UN member states. Security Council resolutions are binding, as are decisions of the International Court of Justice; resolutions of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council are not binding.

Bloc - A group of countries in a similar geographical region or with a similar opinion on a particular topic.

Caucus - A break in formal debate in which countries can more easily and informally discuss a topic. There are two types: moderated caucus and unmoderated caucus.

Chair - A member of the dais that moderates debate, keeps time, rules on points and motions, and enforces the rules of procedure. Also known as a Moderator.

Dais - The group of people, usually high school or college students, in charge of a Model UN committee. It generally consists of a Chair, a Director, and a Rapporteur.

Decorum - The order and respect for others that all delegates at a Model UN conference must exhibit. The Chair will call for decorum when he or she feels that the committee is not being respectful of a speaker, of the dais, or of their roles as ambassadors.

Delegate - A student acting as a representative of a member state or observer in a Model UN committee for a weekend.

Delegation - The entire group of people representing a member state or observer in all committees at a particular Model UN conference.

Director - A member of the dais that oversees the creation of working papers and draft resolutions, acts as an expert on the topic, makes sure delegates accurately reflect the policy of their countries, and ensures that decorum is maintained during caucuses.

Division of the Question - During voting bloc, delegates may motion to vote on certain clauses of a resolution separately, so that only the clauses that are passed become part of the final resolution. This is known as division of the question.

Draft resolution - A document that seeks to fix the problems addressed by a Model UN committee. If passed by the committee, the draft resolution will become into a resolution.

Gavel - The tool, shaped like a small wooden hammer, which the Chair uses to keep order within a Model UN committee. Many conferences give the gavel used in a committee to the delegate recognized by the dais as the best in that committee; therefore, the term is frequently used to refer to the award given to the best delegate, even in cases where no actual gavel is given.

Formal debate - The "standard" type of debate at a Model UN conference, in which delegates speak for a certain time in an order based on a speakers' list.

Member State - A country that has ratified the Charter of the United Nations and whose application to join has been accepted by the General Assembly and Security Council. Currently, there are 191 member states.

Moderated Caucus - A type of caucus in which delegates remain seated and the Chair calls on them one at a time to speak for a short period of time, enabling a freer exchange of opinions than would be possible in formal debate.

Moderator - See Chair.

Motion - A request made by a delegate that the committee as a whole do something. Some motions might be to go into a caucus, to adjourn, to introduce a draft resolution, or to move into voting bloc.

Observer - A state, national organization, regional organization, or non-governmental organization that is not a member of the UN but participates in its debates. Observers can vote on procedural matters but not substantive matters.

On the floor - At a Model UN conference, when a working paper or draft resolution is first written, it may not be discussed in debate. After it is approved by the Director and introduced by the committee, it is put "on the floor" and may be discussed.

Operative clause - The part of a resolution which describes how the UN will address a problem. It begins with an action verb (decides, establishes, recommends, etc.).

Page - A delegate in a Model UN committee who has volunteered to pass notes from one delegate to another, or from a delegate to the dais, for a short period of time.

Placard - A piece of cardstock with a country's name on it that a delegate raises in the air to signal to the Chair that he or she wishes to speak.

Point - A request raised by a delegate for information or an action relating to that delegate. Examples include a point of order, a point of inquiry, and a point of personal privilege.

Position paper - A summary of a country's position on a topic, written by a delegate before a Model UN conference.

Preambulatory Clause - The part of a resolution that describes previous actions taken on the topic and reasons why the resolution is necessary. It begins with a participle or adjective (noting, concerned, regretting, aware of, recalling, etc.).

Procedural - Having to do with the way a committee is run, as opposed to the topic being discussed. All delegates present must vote on procedural matters and may not abstain.

Quorum - The minimum number of delegates needed to be present for a committee to meet. In the General Assembly, a quorum consists of one third of the members to begin debate, and a majority of members to pass a resolution. In the Security Council, no quorum exists for the body to debate, but nine members must be present to pass a resolution.

Rapporteur - A member of the dais whose duties include keeping the speakers' list and taking the roll call.

Resolution - A document that has been passed by an organ of the UN that aims to address a particular problem or issue. The UN equivalent of a law.

Right of Reply - A right to speak in reply to a previous speaker's comment, invoked when a delegate feels personally insulted by another's speech. Generally requires a written note to the Chair to be invoked.

Roll Call - The first order of business in a Model UN committee, during which the Rapporteur reads aloud the names of each member state in the committee. When a delegate's country's name is called, he or she may respond "present" or "present and voting." A delegate responding "present and voting" may not abstain on a substantive vote.

Rules of Procedure - The rules by which a Model UN committee is run. See our Charts of Rules and Motions.

Second - To agree with a motion being proposed. Many motions must be seconded before they can be brought to a vote.

Secretariat - The senior staff of a Model UN conference.

Secretary-General - The leader of a Model UN conference.

Signatory - A country that wishes a draft resolution to be put on the floor and signs the draft resolution to accomplish this. A signatory need not support a resolution; it only wants it to be discussed. Usually, Model UN conferences require some minimum number of sponsors and signatories for a draft resolution to be approved.

Simple majority - 50% plus one of the number of delegates in a committee. The amount needed to pass most votes.

Speakers' List - A list that determines the order in which delegates will speak. Whenever a new topic is opened for discussion, the Chair will create a speakers' list by asking all delegates wishing to speak to raise their placards and calling on them one at a time. During debate, a delegate may indicate that he or she wishes to be added to the speakers' list by sending a note to the dais.

Sponsor - One of the writers of a draft resolution. A friendly amendment can only be created if all sponsors agree.

Substantive - Having to do with the topic being discussed. A substantive vote is a vote on a draft resolution or amendment already on the floor during voting bloc. Only member states (not observer states or non-governmental organizations) may vote on substantive issues.

Unmoderated Caucus - A type of caucus in which delegates leave their seats to mingle and speak freely. Enables the free sharing of ideas to an extent not possible in formal debate or even a moderated caucus. Frequently used to sort countries into blocs and to write working papers and draft resolutions.

Working Paper - A document in which the ideas of some delegates on how to resolve an issue are proposed. Frequently the precursor to a draft resolution.

Veto - The ability, held by China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States to prevent any draft resolution in the Security Council from passing by voting no.

Vote - A time at which delegates indicate whether they do or do not support a proposed action for the committee. There are two types: procedural and substantive.

Voting bloc - The period at the end of a committee session during which delegates vote on proposed amendments and draft resolutions. Nobody may enter or leave the room during voting bloc.