

Position Paper Masterdoc

“Research is Gavel”

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What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a paper that condenses your research and knowledge regarding your country into a succinct, informative report. A good position paper requires good research and leads to great committee performance. It shows your chairs how knowledgeable you are about the committee’s topic and how much effort you’ve put in to solve the issue at hand. An effective position paper is detailed, specific, and proposes creative resolutions to your committee’s topic. If done properly, it may be one of your best resources in committee. *Most conferences give out research awards to exceptional position papers*, so make sure to put a lot of effort into yours. To FHSMUN, research awards are gavels!

Topic Background

The topic background is a quick summary of the issue at hand. Assume that your readers are completely new to the subject; provide them with key details to comprehensively understand the topic. Your committee’s topic guide, written by your chairs and distributed prior to the conference, is a great initial source of information for this section. However, be sure to use *multiple, reputable* sources to have a deeper understanding of the topic.

Include:

- ☐ What are the main issues, or sub-issues?
- ☐ What are some of the main causes of these issues?
- ☐ Which countries or regions are most impacted by these issues?
- ☐ What are some historical events that have directly caused or worsened these issues?
- ☐ What factors have prevented these issues from being solved?

Tips:

- Do not write this section in a biased manner. It is *completely* objective.
- Don’t write about every detail. Only include main, larger-scale issues that have international impacts
- Find mainly quantitative statistics to describe the scale of the issue

Past UN Action

This section is for actions that the UN has previously taken to resolve the issue. These may include:

- ☐ Summits or gatherings attended by the international community
- ☐ Treaties/guidelines signed or created by UN nations
- ☐ Humanitarian aid from UN Peacekeepers
- ☐ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relating to the topic

- ☐ Funding by international committees

Other general things to include:

- ☐ What are some failures or successes of these actions?
- ☐ What caused these failures or successes?

Tips:

- This section is often confused with Country Policy. Remember that it should only include past UN action, and not steps that your country has personally taken to resolve the issue.
- Do not just list UN resolutions. Instead, highlight the impacts of important ones and discuss the causes and effects of their successes and failures.

Country Policy

This section should clarify your country's stance on the topic. It should include steps that your country has participated in to resolve or exacerbate the issue. By reading this, your chairs should be able to clearly identify where your country stands regarding the topic, and thereby, what countries you would likely ally with.

Include:

- ☐ Policies/laws your country has passed that are related to the issue
- ☐ Funding/donations made by your country to mitigate/contribute to the issue
- ☐ Any actions your country has taken to resolve or worsen the specific issue
 - ☐ Fundraisers, campaigns, treaties, signing UN resolutions, etc.
- ☐ International organizations related to your country and this topic
 - ☐ What does this organization do? What have you done in the organization?
Ex: IPCC, ASEAN

Tips:

- Don't just *list* actions your country has taken; analyze their impact and purpose as well!
- *Stick to your country's policy!* Even during committee, your speeches should represent your country's beliefs and policies.
- When researching organizations and associations your country is a part of, take note of the other member states (in your own notes, not your paper)! If they have similar views on the topic, they might be a valuable ally during committee.
- Find anything your country has done in relation to the topic, even if the action wasn't taken towards solving the topic's specific issue (Ex: if the topic is women's rights in Afghanistan, you can research your own country's stance on women's rights if they haven't taken specific action on *Afghanistan* women's rights)
- Research your country's location, population, infrastructure, government, and currency. Oftentimes, you will need to know statistics or other details about your country to contextualize their actions, or even to use during committee sessions to make allies. This information will also help you decide whether certain resolutions are feasible or not for your country.

Proposed Solutions

This section should be the meat of your paper, as it is the chair's first glance into your original ideas. Here, while *adhering to country policy*, present the resolutions that your delegation hopes to implement in committee.

Include:

- ☐ [RECOMMENDED] An acronym for your resolution (EX: The **REST** resolution, for **R**egulation of Plutonium/Uranium mines, **E**ncouragement of NPT signatories, **S**atellite-detection of nuclear weapons/dangerous material, and **T**racking nuclear weapon transport) in the beginning of the section.
- ☐ The overarching purpose/goal of your resolution (what does your resolution aim to do?)
- ☐ 3-5+ *creative* and *specific* facets of your resolution, each including
 - ☐ Your specific aim/purpose for this part of your resolution (ex: We must implement...**in order to...**)
 - ☐ *SPECIFIC* details of what your delegation plans to put in place
 - ☐ Use numbers, etc.

Tips:

- Find *successful* aspects of resolutions, or any relevant actions, already affirmed by your country that you would like to continue to implement/enhance. You can draw ideas from these actions/laws in your opening speech and committee resolution, too.
 - At the same time, to take your resolution to a higher level, make sure your resolution is *innovative* and *creative*!
- Make sure your resolution is **FEASIBLE**:
 - Make sure the solution can be done with your country or committee's current resources, given the context of your countries' situation. For example, if you are a small, developing country currently going through a war, do not create a goal of donating 50 billion dollars towards a cause.
 - Maintain national sovereignty. Remember that the UN cannot force other countries to change their governmental policies. They can only *strongly encourage* them, but even so, it may be unlikely that a country adheres to your suggestions. Therefore, aim for change through international/non-governmental aspects.

Questions to Consider:

- Some conferences have a list of "Questions-to-Consider" at the end of the topic guide. Unless specified otherwise, you're typically required to answer 2 of these questions.
- These questions are questions that inquire about how you will respond to **specific** facets of the topic given, and should be responded to concisely at the end of your paper.

Tips

- Even if the conference doesn't *require* you to answer these questions, use them to guide your research. They list out the general ideas that the chairs think are important for committee
- Answer the "questions-to-consider" in a similar format to the other components of your paper—create a new section for them
- Your responses should align with policies and characteristics of your country that you outlined in other parts of your paper

Specialized Committee Papers:

- All guidelines for writing a GA paper hold true, unless you are not representing a country. For example, in the FDA committee during bootcamp, delegates played the role of states. Therefore, their Country Policy and Proposed Resolution sections would be written from the POV of their state, rather than a country.

Crisis Committee Papers:

- In crisis committees, the research process is slightly different from that of GA:
 - For *historical* committees with real events: research like you typically would! However, keep in mind the timeline of your committee (for certain aspects of your paper, if an article is dated after your committee takes place, it may not be usable for research as it is too futuristic)
 - For *existing fictional story* committees: research like you typically would, but keep in mind to only research from that specific story/movie and not real life events (unless applicable)
 - For *made-up fictional* committees: use the topic guide as your research - most of the time, you won't have to do any additional research regarding the topic, past actions, and character background.
- **Past Action:** While a crisis paper's topic background is relatively similar to that of a GA, past action will *not* mean past *UN action* in this section. Past action is relatively broad, as long as it pertains to the topic. If your committee is a body (for example, the SNCC), research the past actions of that body. Leave character bias out of this section!
- **Character Policy:** Here, introduce yourself as the character you've been given. If your character is/was a real person, do additional research to find any actions your character has implemented and their general personality/policy.
- **Proposed Solutions:** This part is relatively similar to the proposed solutions section of a GA paper. You must write it with your character's POV and policies in mind. There are a few additional things to consider before writing this section:
 - Your resolution should be your *front room* plans, not your crisis arc or any personal plans you may have. It should be used to solve the main issue with other delegates.
 - SOME CONFERENCES ARE EXEMPT FROM THIS RULE. SOME, SUCH AS FREMUNC, REQUIRE BACKROOM PLANS AS WELL.

- Make sure your resolutions are feasible within the timeline and scope of your committee (for example, if your committee took place during the Trojan War, do not write a resolution involving machine guns).
 - Additionally, if you are doing a historical crisis committee, do *not* use the same solution that was historically put in place. Keep in mind that the timeline of the committee takes place before the solution was put in place, and your chairs want you to be more creative and innovative with your resolution rather than following what was actually done. It shouldn't be cliché!

Bibliography

This section concludes your paper and properly cites all of the sources used. This part is *essential*, as you do not want to be flagged for plagiarizing or using AI tools to write your paper.

- To cite your sources, make a list of all your sources in MLA format at the bottom of your paper (title this section “Bibliography” or “Works Cited”)
 - ☐ This is just like any English essay or research paper! If you are not sure how to cite in MLA format, you can use [this website](#) to help you.
- If you quote an article or a person in a sentence word-for-word (sometimes done to place emphasis) with quotations, at the end of your sentence, place an in text citation like this: (Author, Year).

Tips

- In order to make sure that you don't forget to cite any sources, bookmark or copy-and-paste the articles you read while going through them.
- **Use multiple reputable sources!** This goes for all position papers (except for crisis committees, unless it's an existing issue/topic). Do *not* use heavily biased or opinionated sources or unofficial websites. If you have questions about the reputability of a website, please ask us!
 - **Example Resources:**
 - [CIA World Factbook](#)
 - [UN Member States on Record](#)
 - [IMUNA](#)
 - Reputable and UNBIASED news outlets (search up which news outlets count as biased), such as *Wall Street Journal*
 - (ONLY if you have a subscription) *Economist* articles, MIT's *Technology Review* (for certain topics), etc.

Formatting

- ★ Organize your position paper into sections—chairs will find long blocks of text tedious to read. Instead, create a couple of paragraphs per section, indenting the start of each one.
- ★ Check out the example below to structure your heading. Your paper should be 12pt font in Times New Roman. Spacing and page-number limits depend on the conference (CHECK THEIR POSITION PAPER RULES/RUBRICS!), but if you can, use single spacing!
 - If you have more than 1 topic, repeat the same format below after topic A.

- **ORGANIZATION:** Separate sections by Roman Numerals! (I. Topic Background, II. Past UN Action, etc.)

Name
Assignment/Delegation
Committee
Topic

Need-To-Know Tips and Tricks:

★ **DOUBLE CHECK THE CONFERENCE/COMMITTEE'S POSITION PAPER POLICY**

- This masterdoc is a *general* outline for your paper and its contents, but some conferences may have adjustments to the format, page limits, etc. Check the rubric to ensure that you're creating a correctly-formatted paper!

★ **Please check your grammar!** Think of this like an essay. Try not to have any run-on sentences, punctuation errors, etc.

★ **NEVER PLAGIARIZE.** This goes without saying, but you must *never* write any element of your paper by copying another source or person word-for-word. Plagiarism also includes usage of AI to write your paper. *If you are caught plagiarizing, or using AI to write your paper, consequences include (at the bare minimum) ineligibility for any awards.* Instead, some things you must always do include paraphrasing sentences in your own words, as well as citing *all* your sources.

★ **Come to prep sessions for feedback/help!** Oftentimes, you may have a question that is not covered by this masterdoc, or you're just not sure if your position paper fits all requirements. Minji, Anushka, and other officers present can give you personal feedback and help on anything you're unsure about, or if you just want advice on your paper.

★ **Always turn in your position paper ON TIME.** Your committees *have deadlines* by which you must turn in your paper (most of the time, they have a research award deadline and a committee award deadline at a later date). Failure to turn in your position paper by a deadline may result in ineligibility for awards.

- To avoid procrastination, try to submit your paper by the research award deadline at the latest.

Examples

Here are some great examples of position papers if you need extra help or inspiration! However, when writing your own paper, **do not** copy any of the listed examples.

GA:

[IAEA](#)

[DISEC](#)

[CSTD](#)

Specialized:

[Morocco Arab League](#)

[Colombia v. Peru, 1950](#)

Crisis:

[The Civil Rights Movement](#)

[Rwandan Genocide](#)