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MODEL UNITED NATIONS

UNA-USA

Rules of Procedure Guide

A Plain Language Guide for every delegate, no matter if you are a first-timer or this is your tenth.

Everything you need to walk in with confidence and be ready to debate.

1. What Is Model UN?

Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulation of the United Nations. You represent a country (called your "delegation"), debate global issues with other delegates, and work toward writing a resolution which is nothing but a document with proposed solutions for the agenda (topic) at hand.

UNA-USA rules are the most commonly used format. This guide covers everything you need to know.

Golden Rule: Always speak in third person. Say "The delegation of Brazil believes...", never "I think..."

Key Terms to Know

Term	What it means
Committee	The room you debate in (e.g. UNW, DISEC, FIA). Each committee focuses on one topic.
Delegation	The Country you represent for the whole conference.
Chair / Executive Board	The people who run the meeting. Always address them as "Honourable Chair and Honourable Vice Chair."
Placard	A sign with your country's name and flag on it. Raise it to get recognized or to vote.
Draft Resolution	The final document your committee produces with recommended actions.
Working Paper	An informal resolution still being negotiated. It is not yet official. (Consult your chair if this will be applicable in your committee)
Author(s)	A country(s) that writes and fully supports a resolution.
Signatory(s)	A country(s) that want the resolution debated and endorse it.
Motion	A formal request to do something (change debate mode, take a vote, etc.).
Point	A request to raise an issue (personal privilege, order, information, parliamentary inquiry, right to reply).

2. How a Committee Session Flows?

Every session follows a predictable structure. Here's what happens from the moment you sit down to the final vote.

Step 1: Roll Call

The Chair reads every country's name out loud. When yours is called, respond with one of the following:

- "Present": You can vote yes, no, or abstain on resolutions.
- "Present and Voting": you must vote yes or no on every resolution (no abstaining). Only choose this if you are very confident.

Say: "The delegation of (Country) is present." Or "The delegation of (Country) is present and voting"

Step 2: Setting the Agenda

If there are multiple topics, delegates vote on which to discuss first. A delegate makes a motion, it is seconded, and the committee votes.

Say: "The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to set the agenda with Topic X as the first topic of discussion."

Step 3: General Speakers' List (Formal Debate)

This is the main, ongoing, non-exhaustable list of speakers. Delegates sign up to give a speech of a set length (90 seconds). After your speech, you must "yield" your remaining time.

- Yield to the executive board: remaining time is lost.
- Yield to another delegate: they use your remaining time to speak.
- Yield to point of information: Other delegates may ask you a few questions.

Say: "The delegation yields the floor back to the Executive Board."

Step 4: Moderated Caucus (Focused Debate)

A structured discussion on a specific subtopic. The chair recognizes speakers one by one. Speeches are very short (60 seconds). Great for making targeted arguments.

Say: "The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion for a 10-minute moderated caucus on (subtopic), 60 seconds per speaker."

Step 5: Unmoderated Caucus (Networking Time)

Open, informal time. Delegates walk around the room freely, lobby, negotiate, and work together. This is where alliances are built and resolutions take shape. Use it strategically.

Say: "The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion for a 10 minute unmoderated caucus."

Step 6: Voting Bloc

The final stage of debate. The room is locked; no one can enter or leave. The committee votes on resolutions (and amendments, if any). Voting is formal and typically silent.

Tip: Use unmoderated caucuses aggressively. Most Best Delegate awards are won through coalition building, not speeches alone.

3. How to Speak in Committee

All formal speeches follow the same basic structure. Practice this pattern until it feels natural.

Standard Speech Structure

1. Address the chair: "Honorable Chair, distinguished delegates..."
2. State your country's position on the topic.
3. Cite evidence, statistics, or real-world examples.
4. Propose solutions your country supports.
5. (Optional) Call on allies: "The delegation urges other nations to..."
6. Yield your time (if there is any left).

Say: *"Honorable Chair, distinguished delegates, the delegation of (Country) strongly believes that (position). Studies show that (evidence). We therefore propose (solution). The delegation yields the floor to the Chair."*

Points You Can Raise

During debate, you can raise a "Point" to address specific issues. Raise your placard and the Chair will recognize you.

Point	When to use it	Interrupts speaker?
Point of Personal Privilege	You can't hear, see, need to use the restroom, or are physically uncomfortable (e.g. microphone too quiet)	Yes, use sparingly
Point of Order	The Chair or a delegate has violated the rules of procedure (If the issue is minor, it is better to wait)	Yes, use sparingly
Point of Parliamentary Inquiry	You have a question about the rules (not about the topic)	No, wait for pause
Point of Information	You want to ask the current speaker a question (only if they yield to questions)	No, wait for yield
Point of Clarification	You want to clarify a statement to resolve confusion regarding unclear terminology or abbreviations used by the speaker. (e.g. they say IHL and you want to clarify what IHL stands for)	No, wait for yield

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Warning: Don't overuse Points of Order or Personal Privilege. Chairs notice when delegates use them for attention rather than genuine procedural issues.

4. Motions: How to Change What's Happening

A motion is a formal request to change the flow of debate. Any delegate can make a motion. The chair put it to vote.

To make a motion: raise your placard, wait to be recognized, then state your motion clearly.

Motion	What it does	Vote needed	What to say
Set the Agenda	Decide which topic to discuss first	Simple majority	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to set the agenda with Topic X first."</i>
Moderated Caucus	Structured debate on a specific subtopic; Chair picks speakers	Simple majority	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion for a 10 minute moderated caucus on (subtopic), 60 sec per speaker."</i>
Unmoderated Caucus	Open networking time; write working papers, lobby allies	Simple majority	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion for a 15 minute unmoderated caucus."</i>
Extend Debate Time	Add more time to a current caucus	Simple majority	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to extend by 5 minutes."</i>
Close Debate	End debate and move to voting on resolutions	2/3 majority	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to close debate."</i>
Table a Resolution	Postpone voting on a resolution	Simple majority	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to table resolution 1.1."</i>
Divide the Question	Vote on individual clauses separately	Simple majority	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to divide the question on clause 3."</i>

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Divide the Question	Vote on individual clauses separately	Simple majority	<i>" The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to divide the question on clause 3."</i>
Adjourn the Meeting	End the session	Simple majority	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to adjourn the meeting."</i>

Note: Most motions require a simple majority (more yes than no votes). Closing debate is the key exception; it requires a 2/3 majority because it ends discussion permanently.

5. Resolutions: Writing the Solution

A resolution is the formal document your committee produces. It has three main parts: a header, preambulatory clauses, and operative clauses.

5.1 Resolution Structure

Part	Purpose	Example starters
Header	Identifies the committee, topic, authors, and signatories.	<i>Committee: DISEC Topic: ... Authors: ... Signatories: ...</i>
Preambulatory Clauses	Provide context, why this issue matters. End each with a comma.	<i>Noting with concern, Deeply alarmed by, Recognizing that, Recalling...</i>
Operative Clauses	The actual proposed actions. Numbered. End each with a semicolon (the last one gets a full stop).	<i>Urges, Calls upon, Encourages, Requests, Decides, Affirms...</i>

5.2 Draft Resolutions

a formal document drafted by delegates during a committee session that outlines specific, actionable solutions to a chosen topic. It acts as a proposed plan or "draft" that is debated, amended, and eventually voted on, becoming a "resolution" only if passed

- After a vote, it becomes a resolution.

5.3 Amendments

An amendment changes the text of a draft resolution before the final vote. There are two kinds:

- Friendly amendment: all authors agree to the change. No vote needed; it's automatically added. It is generally used for minor corrections, such as grammatical or spelling mistakes.
- Unfriendly amendment: not all authors agree. The committee votes on whether to accept it (simple majority).

Say: *"The delegation moves to amend operative clause 3 by adding '...through the UN Environment Programme.'"*

6. Voting: How Decisions Are Made

Voting happens in two main places: on procedural matters (motions) and on substantive matters (resolutions and amendments).

6.1 Types of Votes

- Procedural votes: Motions like opening/closing debate, caucuses. Simple majority. Abstentions are not allowed.
- Substantive votes: Resolutions and amendments. Simple majority (or 2/3 for some). Abstentions allowed if you said only "Present" at roll call.

6.2 How to Vote

Vote	What it means	Effect
Yes / In favor	You support the resolution	Counts toward passage
No / Against	You oppose the resolution	Counts against passage
Abstain	You choose not to vote (only if you said "Present" at roll call)	Does not count for or against

6.3 Voting on Resolutions, Step by Step

7. Chair closes debate (requires 2/3 majority motion to close debate).
8. Room is locked, no one enters or leaves.
9. Chair reads the resolution number and title.

10. Chair calls for a vote. Delegates raise placards: For / Against / Abstain.
11. If passes: resolution is adopted. If fails: it is rejected.

Right to Reply: If another delegate personally attacks your country (not just disagrees with your position), you may request a Right to Reply from the Chair. This gives you a brief time to respond. Use it only when truly needed

7. First-Timer Tips

Before the Conference

- Read your country's position on the topic, know 2–3 key facts cold.
- Research 2–3 other countries that share your position. They are your potential allies.
- Prepare a 90-second opening speech and practice it out loud (you may read out the speech).

During Debate

- Speak early, the first few speeches set the tone and get noticed by chairs.
- Be specific in your speeches. Vague statements like "we must do more" are forgettable.
- During unmoderated caucuses, approach other delegates immediately. Don't wait to be approached.
- Listen to what others say, the best delegates respond to real arguments, not just recite their own.
- Get your name on the draft resolution as an author, not just a signatory.

Etiquette

- Always refer to countries, not delegates by name: "the delegation of Canada," not "Bob from Canada."
- Never speak without being recognized by the Chair.
- Chits ("notes") passed between delegates are a normal, encouraged part of MUN; use them.
- During voting bloc, put your phone away and stay fully attentive.

Remember: Chairs evaluate diplomacy, knowledge, and helpfulness to the committee, not just how loud or confident you sound. A delegate who helps two blocs find common ground is often more valuable than one who gives five great speeches.

8. Quick Reference Cheat Sheet

Tear out or screenshot this page for quick access during committee.

Essential Phrases

Situation	What to say
Roll call response	<i>"The delegation of (Country) is present."</i>
Opening a speech	<i>"Honorable Chair, distinguished delegates..."</i>
Yielding time	<i>"The delegation yields the floor back to the Chair."</i>
Requesting a moderated caucus	<i>"The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion for a (X)-minute moderated caucus on (subtopic), (Y)seconds per speaker."</i>
Requesting unmoderated caucus	<i>" The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion for a (X)-minute unmoderated caucus."</i>
Closing debate	<i>" The delegate of (country) would like to raise a motion to close debate on the speakers' list."</i>
Point of Parliamentary Inquiry	<i>"Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, could the Chair please clarify..."</i>
Point of Personal Privilege	<i>"Point of Personal Privilege, I need to use the restroom."</i>

9. Preambulatory & Operative Phrases

Use these phrases to begin clauses in your resolution. Preambulatory phrases open context-setting clauses; operative phrases open action clauses.

Preambulatory Phrases

PREAMBULATORY PHRASES				
Acknowledging	Highlighting	Considering	Affirming	Alarmed by
Approving	Aware of	Believing	Bearing in mind	Reaffirming
Realizing	Fully aware	Recalling	Further recalling	Declaring
Deeply concerned	Deeply regretting	Emphasizing	Fully believing	Guided by
Having considered	Keeping in mind	Noting	Recognising	Referring
Seeking	Reminding	Noting further	Taking into account	Seeking
Welcoming	Pointing out	Contemplating	Noting with regret	Reiterating

Operative Phrases

OPERATIVE PHRASES				
Accepts	Affirms	Asks	Approves	Authorizes
Calls for	Calls upon	Congratulates	Confirms	Declares Accordingly
Deplores	Designates	Encourages	Endorses	Expresses its satisfaction
Expresses its hope	Further recommends	Hopes	Invites	Proclaims
Proposes	Recommends	Regrets	Requests	Resolves
Seeks	Strongly Affirms	Strongly urges	Suggests	Supports
Trusts	Transmits	Urges	Empathizes	Notes with approval

Good luck, and remember, every expert delegate was a first timer once.