



FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOLS
MODEL UNITED NATIONS

FLORIDA'S PREMIER
MODEL UN
ORGANIZATION

Best-practice strategies for Model United Nations committees

RESEARCHING & PREPARING FOR COMMITTEE

In Model United Nations, the most important part of the process is preparation. Preparation and research is the foundation a delegate's performance rests on, in order to be successful and make the most out of this experience you should be preparing for roughly an hour each week leading up to the conference. Think about it this way: if you're a performer, or an athlete, would you just show up for a performance/game without attending practice? Preparing ahead of time ensures you're performing at your highest capabilities.

Thorough, specific research is the key to successful preparation. Understanding your committee, topics, country policy, and potential legislation will help you feel more comfortable during the conference & assist in your speaking and writing! Research for Model UN falls into a few categories: position-specific research, committee specific research, and historical/contextual research. The goal of this pre-planning research is to make sure you're prepared with the full context of the situation- what the committee is about, your country's position on the topic, previous actions taken, the topic's global history. The goal is to know as much relevant information as possible so you have a landscape upon which to build your solutions & overall strategy.

Some specific research topics you may want to explore as preparation:

1. Country-specific research:
 - a. Previous policy (previous political leaders, legislation, programs, etc).
 - b. Speeches your country's current leader has made on the subject.
 - c. Legislation your country has passed/implemented on the subject.
 - d. The policy of your country's current leader.
 - e. What (if any) U.N. resolutions your country has passed previously on the subject.
2. Committee specific research:
 - a. General history of the topics.
 - b. General history of the committee itself.
 - c. What legislation your committee has previously passed on the subject.

STRATEGY & WEDGE ISSUES

When planning your solutions & resolution clauses, it is important to think strategically. Yes, a carbon tax in a committee focused on climate change might be a helpful solution, but when 20 other delegates propose it the committee quickly stagnates. Coming up with unique, creative solutions will make the committee experience far more enjoyable for everyone and help you stand out. When you pare down the broad, general topics within the committee to a more specific issue you can develop creative solutions for, it is called a Wedge Issue. These are usually more country specific, honing in on issues where your country is directly impacted or responding to the topic.

For example, in a General Assembly with the chosen topic being “Women’s Rights & Equality”, sample wedge issues could include education (primary and secondary), medical care, paid parental/neonatal leave, microloans for female small business owners, grants/training programs for women’s political campaigns, or equality contingencies on UN policies. All of these issues still fall under the general topic of the committee but take a specific stance on these issues. They also allow for more specific clause writing and solutioning, and give delegates the opportunity to further dive into the issues at hand.

It is also important to look at your country’s position on these issues, and if your position does something at the national level that has the potential to be implemented globally, go for it! A good wedge issue is more niche and not likely to be brought up by others in committee, but should still be relevant to the topic at hand and be easy to relate back to the topic. Delegates should look for topics they are very well researched on, and should be able to provide ample detail when defending their solutions. A properly thought out and well-researched wedge issue will make you stand out in committee to both the chair and other delegates. They present solutions that can be identified as specifically yours in committee, shaping debate & allowing you to highlight your control of the bloc/resolution. It also makes your solutions easily identifiable and known within your committee, and distinguishes you from the dozens of other delegates in a General Assembly.

Wedge issues are a great opportunity to show off your creativity and legislative skills. Choosing a wedge issue is strategic, especially in larger or more complex committees. You want to select a wedge issue that is unlikely to be replicated by others, or where your country has succeeded in the past. If you’re choosing a wedge issue that is more general, it’s important to have unique solutions and ideas to include in your resolution. When crafting a wedge issue, it is often helpful to look into different ‘types’: political, social, economic, environmental, etc. As you brainstorm, think about ways you can relate your wedge issue to the broader topic & what potential solutions to the issue you can develop.

STRATEGY IN COMMITTEE

When it comes to pursuing your solutions in committee, it is important to be consistent with your messaging and your ideas. The more often you speak (and speak consistently about your main issue/solution), delegates & the chair will associate you with that topic. This consistency shows thorough research, expertise on the topic, and knowledge of the global impacts. There are a few strategies for making speeches that delegates may find helpful, including:

1. Directing debate by making motions
 - a. By making a motion for moderated debate, the delegate is able to set the topic. This allows delegates to choose a topic relating to their wedge issue or other ideas they wish to discuss. By directing debate in this way, they signal to the chair that they are influential in committee, thoroughly researched, and able to manage diplomatic debate.
2. Making a Speaker's List speech
 - a. Making a speech on the Speaker's List enables delegates to set the stage for their future performance. These speeches should highlight your wedge issue, and specific things you wish to explore in committee. If there are multiple topics, this speech should indicate which topic the delegate wishes to discuss. Use this speech to set yourself apart as a delegate, and to see which delegations you may wish to work with in the future.
3. Making the first speech in a Moderated Caucus
 - a. Making the first speech in a mod allows the delegate to set the tone for the debate, and direct the speeches of other delegates. The first speech in the moderated caucus is the one delegates tend to respond to in the following speeches, and it allows the delegate to control the flow of the debate.
4. Making the last speech in a Moderated Caucus
 - a. Making the last speech in a mod gives delegates the opportunity to have the 'final word' on the subject at hand. If the topic of debate is likely to be contentious or directly about a resolution, having the final speech is a strategic way to respond to other delegates & wrap up the conversation.

BLOC BUILDING STRATEGICALLY

Beyond speechmaking, strategically choosing what other delegates to work with is an essential element of in-committee strategy. It is important to choose delegates who have similar strategies/ideas, whose ideas and legislation would work well alongside yours. Building your bloc for working papers is the best way to ensure a thorough, well written paper. Pay attention during other delegate's speeches, and listen for countries or ideas that would compliment yours. Send them notes complimenting their ideas, and broaching the subject of writing together. Bloc building begins before the unmoderated caucus, and lasts for the duration of committee. In the last speeches before the unmod, be sure to pick a location in the room where delegates who want to work with you should meet, and be sure to get there first!