

MUN FAQs

For any specific questions, please email la.youthandgovernment@gmail.com

What is the United Nations?

The United Nations is an international body of 193 member states that convenes annually in a regular session at the UN headquarters in New York City. The United Nations also has headquarters in The Hague, Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi. The United Nations serves as a forum for nations to collaborate on projects of international interests and resolve disputes. Each year, the United Nations will organize committees, conferences, and meetings to discuss the pressing issues of our time. Many of these discussions will result in the passage of resolutions, which are action-based plans meant to address these issues on the international level. The United Nations oversees 15 specialized agencies, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), and World Trade Organization (WTO).

What can the United Nations do?

- The UN can create research agreements, commissions, diplomatic programs, intelligence sharing initiatives, and humanitarian aid projects.
- According to the Security Council's approval, the UN can deploy peacekeeping troops.
- Ideas for enforcement/action:
 - Oversight committees
 - Trade sanctions (Security Council only)
 - Educational programs
 - Grant and donation systems
 - Partnerships between governmental organizations in different countries
 - International Court of Justice
 - Opt-in treaties (like the Paris Climate Accords and Kyoto Protocol)

What can the United Nations not do?

- The UN cannot legislate on behalf of countries
 - Example: A resolution passed by the UN can't levy taxes in the United States. This would violate Congress's authority to do so and infringe on national autonomy. Even an "opt-in" resolution would bypass these governments' authorities. The United Nations is not a "world government," but rather a forum for diplomacy.
- The UN cannot create an army run exclusively by the UN
 - The UN may form an army based on the support of individual nations but may not create its own military system with generals, treaties, etc.
 - The Security Council has the power to make binding decisions that compel individual member states to contribute troops, supplies, etc. to a peacekeeping effort or military initiative.

- The UN currently operates an army with 100,000 soldiers from various countries, about the same as the active manpower of Canada.
- The UN cannot require members to contribute a percentage of their GDP beyond their current membership contributions
 - The GDP is a country's gross domestic product, the net sum of all goods and services rendered in a given year. The GDP is separate from a country's budget or discretionary spending.
 - However, the UN can ask that countries contribute a specific amount of money to a certain program. This request may be in the form of an opt-in resolution in which UN delegations will lobby their respective governments to take measures to secure such funding (legislation, meetings, etc.). If your resolution requires funding, researching the UN's current operational budget is the most feasible way.
 - As part of an opt-in resolution, you can ask member nations to contribute a certain amount to be considered a part of the program. This allows for countries to keep their autonomy.

What is the General Assembly?

The General Assembly is a forum that includes delegates from all 193 member states. According to the UN Peacekeeping website, it is "the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations."

Responsibilities of the General Assembly include:

- Managing peacekeeping efforts through financing
- Initiating studies and making recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields
- Making recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among countries

What is the Economic and Social Council?

Abbreviated as ECO/SOC, the Economic and Social Council is composed of representatives from 54 member states, who address topics like human rights in the digital sphere, sexual and reproductive health education, and international drug policy and decriminalization. Over 1,600 non-governmental organizations consult with ECO/SOC on policy and assist in implementation.

What is the Security Council?

The Security Council includes non-permanent delegates from 10 UN member states, as well as permanent delegates from 5 UN member states, which include the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom. The Security Council resolves international disputes related to

"threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, or acts of aggression." With an operational budget of \$6.7 billion, UN Peacekeeping enforces the resolutions passed by the Security Council.

Important things to consider about the Security Council:

- Each of the five permanent members has the power to veto any resolution that comes before the Security Council.
- Only the Security Council can enact and properly enforce trade sanctions.
- The Security Council can refer cases involving genocide, war crimes, or any other violation of international law to the International Court of Justice.

What are the topics?

Debate topics are chosen by State Board members before the conference. They are the “categories” of resolutions you will encounter in the conference. You can find detailed descriptions of debate topics [here](#). If you are in the General Assembly, you will only debate the topics under “General Assembly.” The same applies to the other two councils.

What is crisis?

A crisis is something that may or may not occur at any time during the conference. It could possibly be any large disaster which would affect all countries in the world, not just UN member countries. It would require the attention of all countries in GA, Eco/Soc and the Security Council, not just one of the bodies of the UN.

What are country profiles?

Country profiles are a form that all countries must submit. They require you to research basic information about your country (population, capital city, etc.), as well as **position statements**. Position statements are your country’s stance on the topics. Countries can be in either 1, 2, or 3 councils. Each **country** (not each individual delegate) must submit a single country profile. Researching your country and submitting your form should take around an hour. You can find the form [here](#).

How do I write a resolution?

1. Before the conference, start by researching the topics for your council and find ways your country is impacted by them.
2. The actual writing of resolutions will occur at the conference and should not be done before then.
3. Once the idea sharing period is over during the presentation of topics, approach countries with similar viewpoints and ideas as your country.
4. Collaborate to write a resolution (including background, implementation, funding, and penalties) that all of your countries would be happy with as a solution to the topic.

How should I prepare for technical questions?

Some delegates suggest drafting a “fact sheet” that will help you recall important information, statistics, and research related to your country’s viewpoint on each topic. Knowledgeable responses during technical questions make for a much more convincing argument. Practice answering questions about your country and debating from your country’s viewpoint during meetings in your school’s Y&G club.

What will debate look like?

For the **first part of conference**, you will **write and present** resolutions:

- Topic discussion, resolution writing, and resolution presentations are divided by topic (all resolutions in a given topic will be debated consecutively during the time allotted for the specific topic)
- The Presiding Officer in your chamber will give a brief overview of the topic.
- Delegates will ask questions on the topic (4 minutes)
- Delegates can give position statements regarding the topic (1 minute per country)
 - Only guaranteed time to speak
 - Position statements are optional but are a good way to figure out which countries will support/oppose your resolution and may create connections between countries to collaborate
 - Presenting your position statement is highly encouraged (they don’t have to be full length speeches and should be less formal)
 - Can cover types of resolutions your country would support/oppose and your country’s history with a given issue
- The Presiding Officer will then ask for countries to contribute possible ideas for the topic (10 minutes)
- Countries will then be able to group up and write resolutions on the topic at hand and submit them to the Presiding Officer (22 minutes)
- Every resolution submitted will then be presented (1 minute per resolution)
- Delegates will rank the resolution via a Google Form link based on the following criteria on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the best and 5 being the worst) → the lower the number the better (like golf)
 - Presentation
 - Feasibility
 - Originality
- Repeat for all resolutions on a given topic

For the **second part of conference**, you will **debate** resolutions:

- Based on the rankings from the first part of the conference, a select number of resolutions will advance for debate. Resolutions not selected for floor debate do not advance for a vote.

- For each resolution on the docket (list and order of resolutions to debate)
 - The sponsor will argue in favor of their resolution during their opening statement (3 minutes)
 - If you have remaining time, you can allocate (yield) that time for technical questions, closing statements, or the Chair. If you yield to the Chair, the time will be consumed.
 - The Chair will open time for technical questions (2 minutes)
 - Debate will last a total of **12 minutes** with time for opposition and proposition.
 - Debate begins and ends with oppositional debate.
 - Each speaker has a maximum of 2 minutes
 - You can ask the author to “yield to a series of questions with the right to speak thereafter.”
 - If speaking in favor of a resolution and there is time remaining, you may yield time to a fellow delegate, to the author’s closing statements, or to the chair.
 - If speaking in opposition of a resolution and there is time remaining, you may yield only time to a fellow delegate or to the chair.
 - The chair will recognize speakers, who must then state their name and delegation before making their point.
 - Amendments will be in order starting after the first speaker until the last round of proposition and opposition.
 - The sponsor will argue in favor of their resolution during their concluding statement (2 minutes + yielded time).
- Delegates representing a given country will have time to discuss how they want to vote in a country caucus (1 minute). There will be one vote per country per council.
- Presiding Officers will ask countries to indicate one of three voting options
 - Aye → “My country is for this resolution.”
 - Nay → “My country is against this resolution.”
 - Abstain → “My country refuses to comment on this resolution and will not contribute to either its passage or failure.”
- A simple majority of aye votes is needed to pass a resolution.

Who can give me feedback on my resolution?

- Club members
- Advisors
- State Board Members (check MUNual for contact information)
- If you ever need last-minute help or advice on a resolution, don’t hesitate to contact your Secretary-General Margaret Moe at la.youthandgovernment@gmail.com !

What is Pre-MUN?

- **All delegates** should attend Pre-MUN if possible.
- Pre-MUN is a pre-conference meeting with clubs from your region, State Board members, and conference staff.

- At the meeting, you will . . .
 - Declare your intent to run for a position (presiding officer/Secretary-General)
 - Practice debate with other schools
 - Listen to a presentation from State Board members detailing how conference will work
 - Ask any questions you have about the conference
 - Pre- MUN dates can be found on the Program Dates tab

What is a Presiding Officer?

- A Presiding Officer is a student elected by the previous year's conference to help organize the Model UN conference as part of the State Board.

Responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PO's) include:

- Choosing and researching debate topics for each council
- Chairing debate
- Coordinating with conference staff
- Serving as a liaison between conference planning and clubs/advisors

What is the Secretary-General?

The Secretary-General is the chief administrative officer of the United Nations. In the context of Model UN, the Secretary-General does the following:

- Prepare crisis topics and guide PO's through the topic drafting process
- Coordinating with conference staff
- Leading State Board operations (video production, delegate resources, chair training, etc.)

What is the Cultural Showcase?

- Each of the Security Council superpowers (United States, Russia, China, France, and United Kingdom) is required to complete a cultural showcase presentation.
- Guidelines can be found here: <http://www.layoutandgovernment.org/cultural-showcase.html>
- Cultural Showcase presentations may take the form of a video submitted a week in advance **OR**, a live performance at the conference (both are subject to review by advisors and the program director before being shown).

What is plenary, and how does a resolution get there?

- The highest ranked resolutions from the first part of the conference will be debated in front of the entire conference. The top-ranked resolutions from each council will make up the Plenary docket. The Presiding Officers and Secretary General will order the Plenary Docket.

Cultural Showcase Guidelines:

Video Submission Guidelines

- The video should be filmed horizontally as to best conform to the limits of Zoom.
- The video should be maximum of 5 minutes long
- Include clear audio quality
- Input captions if possible (highly encouraged)
- When submitting, first upload your video to Google Drive because video files cannot be transported over email without retaining quality. Then, you may share this link to submit. Be sure to grant viewing permissions.
- Share/submit the video through la.youthandgovernment@gmail.com
- Submission Deadline - Saturday, February 25th 10pm

In-person Performance

- Performance should be a maximum of 5 minutes long
- You must submit your performance plan and any media needed to la.youthandgovernment@gmail.com - Saturday, February 25th 10pm
- After registration, all cultural showcase performances must be screened in person by Y&G Alumni at 4:30pm, Thursday, March 2nd outside Sedona

Content Criteria

- The video or in-person performance introduces the chosen country.
- No offensive language, appropriations, or rhetoric is used.
- Content must be accurate and germane to your country.
- The video includes basic information about the country (population/cities/landscape/government, etc)

Video or Skit Ideas

- Cooking tutorial
- Musical performance or parody
- Skit
- A virtual tour of the country/travel agency advertisement
- Building the country out of LEGOs/from Minecraft
- Funny documentary/interview
- Timelapse of an art/project relevant to the country (mural/drawing/painting)