

10 Steps to Prepare for Your First MUN Conference

Many of you ask us, “**How should I prepare for a MUN if it’s my first time?**”

Your first Model United Nations conference can seem overwhelming. There are lots of things to read, research, and understand, and you may not know much about the UN yet.

The good news? **MUN isn’t as complicated as it seems once you get the hang of it.**

These 10 steps will give you everything you need to **survive — and thrive — at your first Model United Nations conference.**

1. Understand What MUN Is

Before you start researching and preparing, you need to understand how MUN works.

- Each delegate represents a country in a UN committee and discusses an important global issue. Information about the issue is provided by the conference in a **Study Guide**.
- Delegates debate ideas and propose practical solutions together with other delegates in the committee.
- Delegates combine their ideas with others to create a document called a **Draft Resolution**.
- Multiple Draft Resolutions can be created by different groupings, or **blocks**, of countries.
- The committee then votes on the Draft Resolutions. A resolution requires a majority vote to pass.

2. Learn the Basics About Your Country

Before reading the Study Guide or Background Guide provided by the conference, it’s best to learn a little about the country you will be representing.

This helps you avoid approaching your country with preconceived ideas and encourages you to keep an open mind about its policies and positions.

Things you should look up about your country:

Land – Find your country on a map. Look at its size, terrain, and neighbouring countries.

Politics – Understand whether your country is a democracy, a pseudo-democracy, or an authoritarian state. If it is a democracy, find out which political party is currently in power.

Data – Look at the population, main languages, demographic breakdown, and economic situation, usually through indicators such as **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.

News – Check recent news to understand what your country has been doing and what issues it is currently dealing with.

This research will help you come up with valuable ideas when you read the Study Guide.

3. Read the Study Guide

The Study Guide, sometimes called a **Background Guide** or **Issue Summary**, provides the basic information about the topic your MUN committee will be discussing.

By the time you finish reading it, you should have a basic understanding of the topic and what you are expected to debate.

The Study Guide should ideally give you:

1. General background about the topic
2. Current issues relating to the topic
3. Relevant numbers and data
4. Information about your UN committee
5. Block positions, where applicable
6. Guiding questions, where applicable
7. Further reading and sources, where applicable

Study Guides are also important because they help you understand where the Chairs want the debate to go.

Now that you understand the topic, it's time to fill in the gaps about your country.

4. Learn About Your Committee

This should be covered in your Study Guide. If it isn't, now is the time to learn about your committee.

A quick look at the committee's official information or a reliable reference source should give you some useful context.

You want to have a basic idea of:

- The objectives of the committee
- Its current activities
- Past actions and decisions of the committee

Knowing your committee's **mandate** will help you understand what your committee can and cannot do.

This will be especially useful when it comes time to develop practical solutions and write your Draft Resolution.

5. Research Your Country's Position

To understand your country's position, you will need to look at current and past policies to get an idea of what your country would realistically support or implement.

For example, if you are representing Spain, you could look into questions such as:

- Has Spain provided aid during natural disasters?
- Does Spain contribute to global health or humanitarian efforts?
- What international organisations does Spain work with?
- What policies has Spain supported in similar situations?

The answers to these questions will help you understand where your country stands, even when there is nothing directly written about your country's connection to the specific topic.

The reason you should search broadly is that you will not always find exactly what you are looking for by simply searching "[country] + [topic]."

There are several reasons for this:

- Many countries do not publish all their information in English.
- Politicians and governments may avoid making definitive public commitments.
- Your country may not have a direct connection to the specific issue.

This is why you should broaden your search terms and build a richer overview of your country.

If you still cannot find much information, look at neighbouring countries or countries with similar political, economic, or regional circumstances. See how they approach the issue.

Sometimes, a well-informed inference is all you will have — and that can still be enough.

6. Find the Opening Speech Speaker Time

Now it's time to prepare your first speech.

Most conferences require a **mandatory Opening Speech** from every delegate. At conferences without formal opening speeches, your first speech will serve a similar purpose.

An opening speech is usually around **60 seconds**.

To be sure, check the **Rules of Procedure (ROP)** of the conference you are attending. In some conferences, the Chairs may decide the speaking time.

It is usually between **60–90 seconds**, although it can be as short as 30 seconds or as long as 120 seconds.

If you cannot find a clear answer, it is a good idea to contact the conference and ask how much time you will have for your opening speech.

7. Write Your Opening Speech

Your first speech should give a general impression of your country's position on the topic and introduce some ideas for solving the problems being discussed.

Your speech should include:

- Relevant facts
- Your country's position
- Practical policy solutions
- Solutions that align with your country's interests

Remember: your goal is not simply to speak. Your opening speech should establish your country's position and give other delegates an idea of what you want to achieve during the committee.

8. Learn the Rules of Procedure

For your first MUN, it is important to have a general understanding of the **Rules of Procedure (ROP)**.

The best way to learn the ROP is through practice. You do not need to master every rule before your first conference, but you should understand the basic flow of debate and how to make and pass motions.

The 3 Modes of MUN Debate — Simplified

General Speakers' List (GSL) – The default speech platform. Delegates can speak about the topic and may yield their remaining time, depending on the conference's rules.

Moderated Caucus – A faster-paced discussion focused on a specific subtopic chosen by the committee and approved through a vote.

Unmoderated Caucus – Lobbying and collaboration time. Delegates can leave their seats, communicate one-on-one or in groups, form blocs, and work on resolutions.

This basic understanding should be enough to get you started. You can learn the more detailed aspects of the Rules of Procedure through practice.

9. Learn How to Write a Resolution

A **Draft Resolution** is a compilation of the practical policy ideas developed by delegates, usually within a particular bloc.

It generally consists of **Preambulatory Clauses** and **Operative Clauses** and must follow a specific format to be considered valid.

Draft Resolution Clauses — Simplified

Preambulatory Clauses – Explain the background, context, and reasons behind the actions being proposed.

Operative Clauses – Explain what the committee plans to do. These clauses contain the actual solutions and should be clear, concise, practical, and written in appropriate formal language.

Understanding how to write a resolution will help you turn your debate ideas into concrete solutions.

10. Have an Open Mind

With everything prepared and ready to go, sometimes the most important step is **flexibility**.

Model UN is dynamic, and the committee can sometimes go in a completely different direction from what you originally expected.

The key is to be a good sport and remember that **you cannot succeed at MUN alone**.

Working with other people means that unexpected information, speeches, negotiations, and developments can take the debate in many different directions.

If this is your first MUN, remember that preparation gives you a huge advantage. Once you have done your research and understood the basics, you can focus on actually enjoying the experience.

MUN is a lot of fun, and being prepared allows you to participate with confidence and make the most of the conference.

So go out there, enjoy your first MUN to the fullest, explore the socials, meet new people, and most importantly — **have fun!**

Once your first conference is over, you'll realise that these 10 steps only scratch the surface of Model United Nations.

There is always more to learn, improve, and experience.

Welcome to the world of MUN.