

Position Papers

Once you have completed your preliminary research, you are ready to write your position paper. Unless otherwise indicated in the respective committee background guide, HMUN requires delegates to write one single-spaced page paper for each topic area. These papers should be submitted online no later than January 14. Each position paper has three basic parts: your country's national interests, your country's national policies, and your opinion on potential resolution components.

National interests are what a country would like to see happen in the world (e.g. Cameroon, a lesser developed country troubled by terrorism, wants to reduce the incidence of terrorism to stabilize its government). These interests are not subject to compromise, but instead generally idealized goals or methods of solving specific problems.

National policies are the country's attempts to secure its interests (e.g. Cameroon, in an effort to combat terrorism, has sought to enter into new extradition treaties). These policy positions are usually open to negotiation.

Your opinions on potential resolution components are your responses to the "Proposed Solutions" and "Questions A Resolution Must Answer" sections of the Background Guide. Although these sections provide flexibility, you need to keep in mind the interests of your nation. Possible resolutions must be consistent with your country's national interests and current national policies (e.g. Cameroon feels that any resolution on the prevention of terrorism must assign to the injured state the right to try the terrorists. In addition, Cameroon would not be averse to the establishment of an international information network on terrorism. Cameroon, however, will not support any resolution that allows terrorist acts to be protected from extradition under the political offense exception doctrine).

Writing position papers benefits you in many ways. The staff and delegates read the position papers and summarize them in order to gauge what the committee will be like and to see which delegates have done a good job preparing for the conference. You also have a chance to find out who is likely to support your ideas. Most importantly, writing a position paper makes you think about the information you have researched and helps you to express ideas concisely and clearly, making you better prepared for the conference.

How to Write a Position Paper

The structuring of the position papers is intended to elicit responses from the delegates that provide a clear picture of a nation's stance on a particular topic area. By providing an outline of a position paper, we hope that delegates will be able to illustrate clear knowledge of their country's policies and interests instead of simply reiterating parts of the Background Guide. However, all delegates should also read the section on position papers in their Background Guides and heed their director's specific instructions.

A position paper should include three sections, outlined below:

A. Background of the Topic

In your country's opinion, what are the main elements of the problem?
What are the roots of those elements?

B. Position taken by your delegation

What are your national interests in the situation?
What are your nation's policies on the topic?
What steps would you like to see taken to deal with the problem?

C. Proposed Solutions

What does your nation believe needs to be done to solve the problem?
What do you predict will be the main opposition to your proposals?

Position papers should roughly adhere to the following form, with the Country, the Committee, and the Topic included at the top. Please limit each topic area to one single-spaced typed page. A sample position paper may be found on page 26.