

UN Public Speaking

[UNA-USA Public Speaking Website](#)

Model UN Preparation

Public speaking is one of the most important skills you will use as a Model UN delegate. You will need to convey your member state's positions, help build consensus and formulate [resolutions](#). Usually, the length of time a delegate is allowed to speak is set by the conference organizers. Delegates can make a [motion](#) to increase or decrease the time allotted to each speaker. If another delegate seconds the motion, then the committee will vote on changing the speaker's time.

You will have numerous opportunities to speak in your committee during a Model UN simulation. The Chair will maintain a [speakers list](#) of delegates who would like to make formal speeches. During [caucusing](#) you will have an opportunity to speak informally to delegates in your committee, but it is still important to keep the principles of effective public speaking in mind.

Although speaking is an important part of any Model UN simulation, many delegates fear speaking in front of a large group. The best way to cope with these fears is to be well-prepared. You should [research](#) as much as possible about your country and the issue the committee will be debating. You should be comfortable explaining your country's position and have ideas on what you would like to include in the committee's resolution. If you come to the conference prepared, you will be eager to speak in committee and project confidence.

How to Make An Opening Speech

- First, you should **thank the presiding official** by saying "Thank you Mr./ Madame/ Honorable Chair/ President..."
- Then begin by **providing a brief history on the issue as it relates to your country**.
- Speak about **how the issue is currently affecting your country**.
- **Provide your country's position on the issue**. Include an explanation for your country's stance, such as economic or security concerns or political or religious ideology.
- You may choose to give an explanation of how your **country's position relates to the positions of other member states** such as the major powers or countries in your regional bloc.
- You should **discuss some of the past actions** taken by the UN, member states and NGOs to address the issue.
- Present **ideas for a resolution**, stressing your country's objectives for the resolution.
- Talk about the **role that NGOs or regional organizations have to play in addressing the issue**.
- Indicate to the committee members **whether your country is willing to negotiate**.

How to Make A Speech During Debate

- Again, you should **thank the presiding official** by saying "Thank you Mr./ Madame/ Honorable Chair/ President..."
- **Encourage collaboration** among member states by proposing ways that your country would be willing to work with other member states.
- By **referencing what other delegates have said**, you can show support for your allies or indicate which proposals your country does not favor.

- **Present ideas for draft resolutions.**
- **Explain why your country does or does not support other draft resolutions.**

Public Speaking Tips

- **Prepare:** Decide how you feel most comfortable delivering your speech. You may choose to use your position paper text as your opening speech or you may write out some key points. In time, you may feel comfortable speaking without any written notes at all. If you plan to use a word or phrase that is unfamiliar to you, make sure you learn its meaning and how to pronounce it properly.
- **Practice:** Rehearsing your speech is the best way to perfect your public speaking skills. Try practicing in front of a teacher, a parent, or fellow Model UNers from your class or club. When you listen to a speech, provide constructive feedback rather than criticism. When someone critiques your speech, accept the feedback graciously and use it as a tool to strengthen your public speaking.
- **Consider your audience:** Make your speech appropriate to the age and experience-level of the other delegates at the conference. Remember that the beginning of the speech should captivate your audience and make them want to hear more.
- **Eliminate unnecessary "filler" words:** Fillers are words and phrases such as "umm," "well," "sort of," and "like". These words take away from the message you are trying to convey. Some additional fillers to avoid are "so," "you know," "I think," "just," and "uh."
- **Use meaningful pauses:** Leaving a moment of silence between sentences can be a powerful public speaking tool. Pausing after an important point or before answering a question will help to hold the audience's attention. A pause can also give you time to formulate your next statement.
- **Breathe:** Try to breathe from your diaphragm – the organ below your lungs that controls your respiration. You are breathing properly if you can see your abdomen rising and falling with each breath. Try to inhale and exhale completely.
- **Pace yourself:** Don't talk too fast or too slow. Remember that most speakers have a tendency to talk too quickly.
- **Choose a powerful posture:** Be aware of your posture when you speak. Slouching, tilting your head and crossing your arms or legs will take away from your message. Stand up straight, relax your shoulders, plant your feet firmly and keep your knees unlocked to help you communicate confidence.
- **Project your presence:** Speaking in a low to medium volume can help to project authority, but make sure that you are speaking loud enough to be easily heard. Focus on speaking with enthusiasm and energy.
- **Gesture:** It is worthwhile to use your face, hands, arms and body to help you communicate as long as your motions do not distract the audience from your speech.
- **Connect with your audience:** Glance at your notes rather than reading them so that you can make eye contact with the other delegates. It is often helpful to speak directly to individual members of the audience.
- **Get to the point:** Speak concisely so that your audience does not lose your main arguments among less-important details. Try not to speak in circles. Instead, go straight to your most important point.
- **Be positive:** Rather than criticizing another point of view, critique it in a constructive way. Always provide alternatives and be sure to back up your arguments.

