



LAHS Model UN

# Position Paper Guide

Created by the LosAI Model UN Secretariat

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Most conferences you will attend require a pre-submitted position paper. A position paper (a.k.a. policy paper) is a specifically formatted research paper that outlines the background of the topic as well as your country's position and proposed plan. Your chairing team will grade the position paper and award the best papers in each committee a Research Award. Additionally, some conferences require a position paper in order to be considered for the Best Delegate or other conference awards. Most importantly, writing a well-researched position paper is the best way to be prepared for your topic on the day of the conference.

The following are basic guidelines on how to write a position paper. Always follow the guidelines provided by the conference first which will be posted on that conference's website as well as the LosAI Model UN website. Use this as an auxiliary resource.

## **General Formatting Guidelines**

- ❖ Use size 12 point Times New Roman, single or double spaced.
- ❖ Paper should be 2-4 pages depending on the conference. This does not include works cited.
- ❖ Each position paper should feature a heading in the upper left-hand corner of EVERY page with your committee, topic, and country—in that order. For example:

Committee: Security Council

Topic: Nuclear Power in Iran

Country: United States of America

Some conferences ask for your school as well (see conference published guidelines).

- ❖ Each paper should have four bold subheadings aligned with the left margin of the page: *Background, United Nations Involvement, Country Position and Involvement, Possible Solutions*. A possible fifth bold subheading required at the beginning of some conferences' papers is *Country Profile*. If a conference requires this section, it will be explained by the conference position paper guidelines.
- ❖ All papers need a works cited at the end

## **Writing the Paper**

Your position paper should have the following four main parts:

### ***Background-***

- ❖ Summarize the topic up to the current date; mention when and how the problem started, but focus primarily on the current issue.
- ❖ Explain the topic's relevance to the international community.
- ❖ Incorporate answers to who/what/where/when/why research questions.
- ❖ Include appropriate statistics or hard facts.
- ❖ Every sentence should include a valid, important piece of information. No fluff!

### ***UN Involvement-***

- ❖ This should be slightly longer than the previous section
- ❖ What has the United Nations done to alleviate the problem?
- ❖ Discuss UN organizations and resolutions that pertain to the topic.
- ❖ Avoid listing information! Explain the organizations involved, making sure to cover their functions, missions, and future plans. For resolutions, explain their effect on the issue.

### ***Country Policy and Involvement-***

- ❖ Explain the official position of your country and provide evidence.
- ❖ Summarize how your country has dealt with the problem internally and/or internationally.
- ❖ Name the organizations and resolutions to which your country supports or objects.
- ❖ If you cannot find enough information about your country's policy, extrapolate on the basis of their social and political views, allies' policies, and what the country would most benefit from supporting.

### ***Possible Solutions-***

- ❖ Create your own solutions to the problem. Don't copy verbatim the solutions you find in your research, but do build off of different solutions you come across and improve on them.
- ❖ Make sure that your solutions are strong, logical, feasible, and supported entirely by your country's position.
- ❖ Keep in mind that it is encouraged to organize your solution into steps.
- ❖ Remember basic obstacles, and explain how to solve them! Funding is the complication most commonly mentioned.
- ❖ When your problem is extensive (AIDS, nuclear non-proliferation, etc) focus your solution on one part of the problem that your country could reasonably tackle.
- ❖ Education is a feasible solution but it may never stand alone.
- ❖ Remember solutions are judged based on their potential effectiveness. Never propose a solution that you know will not be effective.

### ***Works Cited-***

- ❖ All position papers require a works cited
- ❖ A works cited needs to include every resource you use
- ❖ If you use wikipedia, don't cite it. Find the same facts from a different resource and cite that resource.
- ❖ Some conferences will only require a list of websites.
- ❖ Others will require a formal bibliography. For those, use [easybib.com](http://easybib.com).