

How to Write a Position Paper

1. Topic background

Here, you need to establish that you are aware of what your topic is. The topic background typically defines any key terms and buzz words related to the issue at hand and provides a brief summary of the history of the issue and potential consequences of ignoring the issue.

For example, a topic background on the issue of human trafficking might provide the official definition of human trafficking (“the illegal abuse of individuals through coercion, deception, and other recruitment and harboring for sexual and labor exploitation”), general statistics from reliable sources that broadly encompass the issue (“According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), since 2012, 20.9 million victims presently suffer from this modern-day slavery”), and explore broader implications (“This crime not only impedes human rights but also poses global health risks and influences development”).

2. Past International Actions

This portion of the essay addresses efforts the UN has previously made and endeavors your country specifically has taken on to combat the issue at hand. Consider what UN programs, events, resolutions, and agreements your country has participated in. Take note of the other participants in these efforts, too—they could serve as important allies in committee.

As you write about these previous actions, start brainstorming your own ideas. How effective were these endeavors? What went right, and what could you improve upon?

3. Country policy

And now, the moment we’ve all been waiting for: your country’s own policy. This section ought to summarize your country’s own unique stance on the issue and what they believe the international community should do to resolve the issue. Here, delegates must remember that this area consists of their *country’s* policy, rather than their own opinion on an issue. If your country does not completely condemn human trafficking, for example, because of their own stakes in the practice, then your policy must reflect that, in spite of your disagreement. Finding speeches from your country’s leaders, scoping out their government’s website, and evaluating their actions in the UN are some ways to develop an understanding of your country’s policy.

4. Possible solutions

Using the information you’ve gathered in previous sections of the paper, brainstorm your own solutions to the issue based on your country’s perspective. Could you create a new program, or further develop another one? Could you provide aid to an area, and at what cost? Will you involve NGOs or peacekeepers? How can you collaborate with other countries?