

Your Guide to a Position Paper

Still confused about how to write your position paper? Don't worry, we've got you covered! This document will guide you through what a position paper is, how to write it, and how it will be graded during ASFMUN 2018.

What is a position paper?

A position paper is a brief essay in which you detailedly describe your country's position on the topic. In your position paper, you will also talk about the topic, what the UN has done about the topic, what your country has done about the topic, and a solution to the topic that your country would support. Your position paper is the basis for the rest of your conference performance, as it contains a synthesis of everything you need to know.

Topic Background

In the topic background, you write about what the topic is. Pretty simple! After all, the background guide has given you the lowdown on what the topic is and what it encompasses. However, to go above and beyond in the understanding of the topic, there are a few points and questions you must answer in your writing:

- **What is the definition of the topic?**
 - So, what exactly *is* the topic of discussion?
- **Where does the topic take place?**
 - Is it strictly national? Is it international? Is it global? And within each of those categories, where exactly does it happen/matter?
- **Who is involved?**
 - These can be countries, organizations, and/or people.
- **How many people does it affect?**
 - Where, and in what ways?
- **When did this topic become an issue?**
 - Was the topic always relevant throughout the history of mankind? If not, when did it start being an issue at hand?

Your information for this section can come from many sources, including news sources, UN pages, online dictionaries, academic resources, scholarly articles, or any trustworthy source with the answers to the prompts.

Past International Action

In this section, you'll write about what the UN, and the UN only, has done about the topic in the past. Do not confuse it with country policy; here, you should only write about what the UN has done. You'll get a chance to write about your country in the next section. Think about what the UN can do about it, and then look into the actual UN archives and sites to get the specific knowledge. Some prompts to let you write this section as best as you possibly can:

- **What has the UN tried to do on this topic?**
 - Has it called meetings, has it declared emergencies, has it passed resolutions, has it made any statements at all?
- **What are the most important resolutions, reports, programs and treaties on this topic?**
 - The UN performs its actions through resolutions. Has it passed any on the topic?
 - Have any reports been issued on the topic?
 - Have any programs been implemented for the solution of the topic?
 - Are there any treaties or covenants that have been passed and UN-approved on the subject?
- **What are the two or more sides to the topic?**
 - Are there sides to the topic? If so, what are they? Who may be for, who may be against, who may be indecisive?

For this, your best bet when researching are sites and resources affiliated with the UN. These include (but are not limited to) the UN homepage, your committee's website, and the UN Online Library. Within these sources, you might have to do a little digging to find the documents, but the vast majority is available and complete in PDF format.

Country Policy

You've talked about the UN's actions, but what about your nation's position? After all, that's what you'll be representing! In this section, you will be writing about how the issue affects your country and what your country has done about it. This is probably the most important part of your position paper, as whatever you write here is the position you'll be taking during the conference and the information that you need to know. Here's how you can achieve it through answering questions:

- **How has this topic impacted your country?**



- Has it impacted it at all? Why or why not? How deeply has it impacted your country? Is it something in your country's top priorities?
- **What has your country tried to do about this topic?**
 - Has your country taken any action? If so, what has it done? If not, what would it support doing?
- **What have your political leaders said about this topic?**
 - Has the executive chief of your nation said anything about it (official statements or interviews)?

For this, you can use the CIA World Factbook, your country's government's website, the UN Online Library, and the UN sites. It's the most important part of your position paper, but it's probably the hardest to research. However, if you look in the right places, there's a lot you can find.

Possible Solutions

Here's where we get to another essential component for your conference performance. During the conference, it will be your mission to present a resolution that benefits your country and addresses the broader issue and all of its subtopics. You should write an abstract of your solution— you'll be Think about these questions:

- **What is a possible solution that your country would support?**
 - Consider an existing solution that could be expanded with more support or funding as a starting point.
- **How would this solution be implemented and funded?**
 - Remember, you can't force anyone to do anything (sovereignty). Someone's also going to have to pay for it.

To write this, there's just one key: think outside the box. Make sure to comply under the principles of the UN, but come up with a creative solution that benefits your country and the world.

Overall Recommendations for the Position Paper

- Remember its purpose is to help you understand what position you will be uphold. There's no use in jotting complex sentences if you're not understanding the content.
- Use credible sources, such as UN sites and universities. NGOs and government websites are also credible, but may be biased. Less credible sources include news sites and Wikipedia.

- Google PowerSearch is your best friend: *site:un.org + [topic]* will help you find credible and relevant sources.
- Stay away from quotes. They're okay when you're referencing a person's words, but for the most part, the dais will care about *your* ideas, not someone else's.
- Be brief! Get to the point and be concise to convey your stance with clarity.
- Remember not to use words like I, me, we. You should always refer to yourself as your country.

Requirements for Position Paper

I. Formatting

- A. Header containing the following:
 1. Country.
 2. Committee.
 3. Topic.
 4. School.
 5. Name(s) of the delegate(s).
 6. A small flag of your country (optional).
- B. Times New Roman 12px.
 1. You can use Arial, but it looks less professional.
- C. 1.15 or single-spaced.
- D. Around 1-2 pages long, with page numbers.
 1. You can go above, but remember that brevity is key.
- E. Citations/references in the last page in MLA format.

II. Content

- A. Topic Background.
- B. Past International Action.
- C. Country Policy.
- D. Possible Solutions.

Still confused as to what it should look like?

Check the "Documents" section for a sample position paper. Just keep in mind, yours doesn't have to be as long as that one.

Rubric for Position Papers

Criterion	Needs Major Improvement (1-2)	Needs Some Improvement (3-4)	Meets Standard (5-6)	Outstanding (7-8)
Background Guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows no grasp of the necessary concepts presented by the guide. Shows no sign of having even read it; no basis on the guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to address some of the concepts presented by the guide. Has little basis on the guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses most of the concepts presented by the guide. Supports itself on the guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoroughly addresses all of the concepts presented by the guide. Uses the guide as a support but has original ideas and approaches.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has no relevant information. Did no research beyond the guide. Sources are not credible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has outside facts and examples. Did little research beyond the guide. Sources are not very credible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has relevant facts and examples. Did research beyond the guide. Sources are mostly credible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has relevant and thorough information. Did thorough and extensive research beyond the guide. Sources are completely credible.
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor control of English grammar, vocabulary, and usage. Poor language and sentences. Confusing paper and difficult read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below-average control of English grammar, vocabulary, and usage. Average language and sentences. Slightly confusing paper and read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactorily uses English grammar, vocabulary, and usage. Simple but satisfactory language and sentences. Understandable points and the paper is an easy read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full control and understanding of English grammar, vocabulary, and usage. Sophisticated language and varied sentence structures. Points are clear and the paper is a pleasant read.
Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not address policy past a vague statement/does not do it at all. Pitches an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses policies without going into too much detail. Pitches a solution without much 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailedly describes policies with specific outlines. Restates the evidence to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goes into depth when describing policies, using elaborate details and logistics. Uses the evidence and

	unlikely and unrealistic solution/does not do it at all.	basis on evidence.	pitch a solution.	events proposed throughout the paper to pitch a pertinent and realistic solution.
Reference to the Real World	·Few/no references to international treaties, events, and information.	·Some references to international treaties, events, and information.	·Numerous references to international treaties, events, and information.	·Numerous and relevant references to international treaties, events, and information.
Formatting	·No header. ·Illegible or inappropriate font and spacing. ·No page numbers. ·No citations.	·Header. ·Legible font. ·Readable spacing. ·Page numbers. ·Incomplete citations.	·Proper header. ·Appropriate font. ·Appropriate spacing. ·Page numbers. ·Citations.	·Complete header. ·Flag of country. ·Required font. ·Required spacing. ·Page numbers. ·Citations in MLA.
Content	·1/4 or 0/4 sections.	·2/4 sections.	·3/4 sections.	·4/4 sections (Topic Background, Past International Action, Country Policy, Possible Solutions).

If you'd like to read an example position paper, please check the **Position Paper** document attached in the website.

If you'd like to know more or have any questions, email asfmun1@gmail.com with the subject line "Position Paper Concerns".