

## *Resolution Writing Guide*

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For a sample resolution, see the Delegate page of the MMUN website, <http://www.cas.umt.edu/mun/HSconference/toolsForDelegates.cfm>

### **I. Introduction and General Guidelines**

A resolution is the tangible product of a committee's deliberations. It is a committee's statement on an issue and generally includes suggestions or instructions to member states, UN bodies, and/or other international actors regarding the topic at hand. Resolutions are the goal of committee work and serve as statements of resolve to, as a body, progress in a specific manner.

Resolutions are the result of research, writing, discussion, negotiation, and debate. At the Montana Model UN Conference, delegates will strive to build consensus around resolutions to address world problems.

While the diversity of topics, and thus resolution content, will vary from committee to committee, the format of resolutions is always the same. Resolutions must be clear, concise, and relevant to the topic, within the jurisdiction of the committee, and in the format shown in the sample resolution on the MMUN website.

Three general content guidelines should be observed. First, many resolutions are written to be cure-alls and try to do more than member states and UN bodies can possibly accomplish. Thus, try to keep resolutions within the bounds of realistic action. Look at past UN resolutions to get a sense of what committees are likely to be able (or want) to do. Second, some committees have particular, well-defined limits. To determine what these are, read the UN Charter. For example, only the Security Council may send UN troops or condemn states, and no committee can command another (non-UN) body to do something. Third, be cautious in detailing certain aspects of action. For example, funding should only be in a resolution if it is a natural part of the solution to the problem. In this same vein, avoid creating extraneous panels, committees, or special agencies to examine United Nations topics. In all likelihood, there is already an actual United Nations committee charged with this purpose. Determining which agencies are available to cooperate with your committee should be part of your research.

## II. Resolution Key Terms

*Working paper:* Working papers are the first stage of the resolution writing process and are any sort of document that has not been submitted and approved the dais.

*Dais:* The Chair, Assistant Chair and Rapporteur who run the committee session.

*Sponsors:* Sponsors are the principal authors of a working paper. They not only agree with content and substance but control the working paper through the stages of becoming a resolution.

*Signatories:* Unlike sponsors, signatories can either agree or disagree with substance; they sign the document because they want to see it reach the floor.

*Draft Resolution:* A properly formatted working paper, with the requisite number of sponsors and signatories is submitted to the dais for approval and once approved becomes a *draft resolution*.

*Resolution:* After all amendments, both friendly and unfriendly, have been either incorporated or dismissed, the committee votes on the draft resolution. If the draft resolution fails, it disappears. If the draft resolution passes, it becomes a resolution of the body.

*Friendly amendments:* Friendly amendments are changes or revisions made to the draft resolution that are approved by all sponsors.

*Unfriendly amendments:* Unfriendly amendments are not supported by all sponsors and must be voted on by the committee.

*Preambulatory clauses:* These clauses are substantive, begin a resolution and cannot be amended. Preambulatory clauses provide an overview of the problem and remind member states of past actions taken on the issue.

*Operative clauses:* These clauses contain the real content and action of a resolution, begin with a verb, conclude a resolution, and can be amended.

## III. Stages of a Resolution

Before a resolution becomes an official document of the committee, it must go through three distinct stages. During each stage, all speeches and debate must refer to the resolution with the applicable term. Otherwise, delegates are considered out of order.

The first stage of a resolution is the *working paper* stage. A working paper is developed in the early sessions of a committee meeting. Working papers are a tool for discussion and debate, and can be used in forming group consensus. Some working papers may be one sentence, or a concept, others may be fully formed draft resolutions. Working papers are any sort of document which have not been submitted and approved by the dais. Before working papers can be submitted, they must be in proper format, and have the required number of sponsors and signatories.

As a general rule, to be approved by the Dais (***Dais***: The Chair, Assistant Chair, Rapporteur, and experts/runners who run the committee session), a resolution must be sponsored or signed by 25 percent of Member States present in the committee meeting. ***Sponsors*** are the principal authors of a working paper. They not only agree with content and substance, but sponsors control the working paper through the stages of becoming a resolution. Since sponsors have collaborated on a document, they cooperate and compromise with each other and generally will vote to pass the resolution through committee. On the other hand, ***signatories*** can either agree or disagree with substance, but sign the document because they want to see it reach the floor.

After a working paper has been properly formatted and has the requisite number of sponsors and signatories, it can be submitted to the Dais for approval. Once approved, it becomes a ***draft resolution***. The resolution is either copied, posted or read before the committee, and is subject to review by all delegates. In fact, the debate following the acceptance of a document as a draft resolution constitutes an important part of the negotiation and resolution formulation process (see *After Writing and Submitting Draft Resolutions* below for more details).

Once delegates have reviewed the document, the draft resolution may be amended. ***Amendments*** strengthen consensus by adding, deleting, or revising portions of a resolution's operative clauses. Please note that entire operative clauses cannot be deleted via an amendment, but can be divided out during voting procedure with a motion to divide the question. If changes to clauses are necessary through the use of amendments, they can be made with friendly and unfriendly amendments.

***Friendly amendments*** are changes or revisions made to the draft resolution that are approved by all sponsors. Once all sponsors have approved the changes, the chair must also approve the changes and they are immediately incorporated into resolution.

***Unfriendly amendments*** are not supported by all sponsors and must be voted on by the committee. Typically, the author of the amendment must gather the requisite number of sponsors or signatories to introduce amendment. After amendments are submitted, the committee votes on unfriendly amendments prior to voting on the final draft resolution.

***Resolution***: After all amendments, both friendly and unfriendly, have been either incorporated or dismissed, the committee votes on the draft resolution. If the draft resolution fails, it disappears. If the draft resolution passes, it becomes a resolution. Once approved by a committee, a resolution serves as a statement of agreements and suggestions or instructions to member states, UN bodies, and/or other international actors regarding the topic at hand.

#### **IV. Format and Style**

A resolution has two parts: the heading and the body. The heading is the administrative/organizational portion of a resolution and contains the name of the committee, the topic, and the names of the sponsoring countries, the countries that are signatories, and the committee code. The body of a resolution is written as a long sentence, and starts with the name of the committee, followed by a comma. The remainder of the body of a resolution is divided into two parts: preambulatory clauses and operative clauses.

## V. Preambulatory Clauses

Preambulatory clauses provide an overview of the problem and remind member states of past actions taken on the issue. In doing the latter, they may refer to the UN Charter (e.g., “Noting Article I of the United Nations Charter...”); United Nations treaties, resolutions, documents, and press releases, (e.g., “Remembering the Kyoto Protocol...”); statements by the Secretary General and other leaders of UN bodies and agencies (e.g., “Recalling Honorable Kofi Anan’s statement at the Millennium Conference...”); and/or the actions of member states and other international actors (e.g., “Recognizing Guatemala’s successful integration of the Multi-lateral Evaluation Mechanism”).

Preambulatory clauses are substantive and cannot be amended, so they should be chosen carefully.

Each clause starts with a one or two word preambulatory phrase, which is underlined, followed by the remainder of the clause, and a comma.

The following is a list of common preambulatory phrases that could be used to construct a resolution. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. Most participles qualify as preambulatory clauses.

Acknowledging	Deeply convinced	Having adopted
Affirming	Deeply disturbed	Having considered
Alarmed by	Deeply regretting	Having considered further
Approving	Desiring	Having devoted attention
Aware of	Emphasizing	Having examined
Believing	Expecting	Having heard
Bearing in mind	Expressing its satisfaction	Having received
Cognizant of	Fulfilling	Having studied
Confident	Fully alarmed	Hoping
Contemplating	Fully aware	Keeping in mind
Convinced	Fully believing	Noting with regret
Declaring	Further deploring	Noting with satisfaction
Deeply concerned	Further recalling	Noting with deep concern
Deeply conscious	Guided by	Noting further

## VI. Operative Clauses

Operative clauses contain the real content and action of a resolution. These clauses are meant to achieve the main policy goals of the signatories and are organized by logical progression. Each clause has only one idea, and sub-clauses are used to further detail the main action of the operatives. Operative clauses begin with an operative phrase, which is a verb and is underlined. The operative phrase is followed by the remainder of the clause, which is terminated by a semicolon, except for the last operative clause, which is terminated by a period. Each operative clause is numbered and indented, and may include lettered sub-clauses.

Operative clauses complete the resolution (they will be at the end of the document) and can be amended. Keep in mind that only numbered clauses may be divided in a motion to divide the question.

The following is a list of common operative clauses that could be used to construct a resolution, however it is not exhaustive.

Accepts	Designates	Recommends
Affirms	Draws attention	Regrets
Approves	Emphasizes	Reminds

Authorizes	Encourages	Requests
Calls	Endorses	Resolves
Calls upon	Expresses its appreciation	Solemnly affirms
Condemns	Expresses its hope	Strongly condemns
Congratulates	Further invites	Supports
Confirms	Further proclaims	Takes note of
Considers	Notes	Trusts
Declares	Accordingly Proclaims	Urges
Deplores	Reaffirms	

## VII. After Writing and Submitting Draft Resolutions

In addition to drafting resolutions, debating resolutions represents an important element in the Model United Nations process. For the sponsors of resolutions, bringing a resolution to the floor for debate provides the draft resolution with exposure, which can help in gaining support for the document later in the voting process. For example, allowing other delegates to provide input or express the concerns of their countries over parts of the document can help a bloc of sponsors negotiate friendly amendments that make a resolution more attractive to other countries and increase the probability that it will pass in voting.

A group of sponsors can formally bring their draft resolution to the floor once it receives approval from conference staff (at which point each delegate will receive a copy of the accepted resolution). Some suggested methods for spurring debate or promoting a draft resolution are to seek delegates who have not signed or sponsored your resolution and ask them to read it and raise any concerns that they would like to see addressed or ideas they have to improve the draft resolution; make a motion to suspend the meeting for a moderated caucus, where draft resolutions sponsors can describe the document's contents and have a Q&A regarding their draft resolution with other delegates; and delegates can use speeches as a method to reference, promote, and describe their draft resolutions during formal session. Delegates may also want to use these methods to inform others of friendly or unfriendly amendments to draft resolutions (be sure to cite the draft resolution's code in speeches and discussions with other delegates).

In addition to sponsoring draft resolutions, delegates should become familiar with other delegates' draft resolutions. Read them carefully, discuss them with the sponsors, suggest amendments, make speeches about clauses that you support or find problematic, and decide how to vote. During this process, you may ask or be asked to become a sponsor or signatory and to collaborate in building support for the resolution. Alternatively, you may meet others with whom you can offer unfriendly amendments that make the draft resolution more consistent with your country's position.