

Writing Position Papers

Position papers typically follow the same format for most conferences. Position papers for MADMUN must be in Google Doc format and that document must be shared with your committee's chairs (see MADMUN website for chair contact information: <https://madmun.us>) Position papers are due by Saturday, December 3, 11:59 pm to the google form on your committee page.

Formatting Requirements:

- Double Spaced
- 12pt Font
- Times New Roman
- Bibliography
- Minimum 1.5 pages per topic
- Please make sure that your chairs can access the document

Position papers must be turned in on time to be eligible for the Position Paper Award. All position papers will be checked for plagiarism; if the paper is found to be plagiarized then the delegate will be disqualified from earning an award and their advisor will be notified.

Start off by making sure your header is correct. For MADMUN, your header should look like this:

Country
School (Monona Grove High School)
Committee Name
Topic

Then, follow this example format for position papers. Remember, this format is only a recommendation and is not required. If you find a different outline or template works better for you, feel free to use it instead!

Paragraph 1: Background Information about the Topic

What exactly is this topic about? What are the most important aspects of the topic which affect your country?

Paragraph 2: Past International/UN Action

What has already been done about this topic? Was your country involved in any major decision?

Paragraph 3: Country Policy

What does your country believe should be done about this problem? What influences your country's position? Is there anything especially significant to share about your country's specific relation to the topic?

Paragraph 4: Possible Solutions

What ideas did you come up with that present reasonable, realistic solutions? Why do these solutions make sense? What makes them better from other solutions?

In general, paragraphs 3 and 4 are more important than the first two paragraphs and you should focus the most time on the last two. For more help on writing position papers, read the example position papers listed below.

Question of Independence for Non-Self-Governing Territories

The UN has helped decolonize over 80 countries. However, there are still 17 Non- Self Governing Territories that still need to be decolonized (UN.org). Ten of the seventeen are held by the UK, three are held by the US, one by New Zealand, two by France, and one, the Western Sahara, is currently in the process of decolonization as Spain has severed its ties with the colony in 1976. (UN.org). A large amount of the current colonies come from the imperialism that happened in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This makes it difficult for the colonized areas to govern themselves as the countries that are in charge of the territories have been in control for a long time. Another difficulty is the population of the colonies, eleven of them are under 100,000 people. The UN Charter “binds administering Powers to recognize that the interests of dependent Territories are paramount, to agree to promote social, economic, political and educational progress in the Territories, to assist in developing appropriate forms of self-government and to take into account the political aspirations and stages of development and advancement of each Territory” (UN.org). The wording of this has allowed countries to maintain their colonies from imperial time. The US has adhered to this rule by decolonizing five territories that are now countries and 26 areas of other countries (worldstatesmen.org). The five territories that are now countries are Liberia, the Philippines, Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

The US currently has three non-self-governing territories being the US Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. The US, on February 23rd, 2016, held a panel to revisit their view on the non-self-governing territories. This panel reaffirmed that, under the Constitution, only Congress has the power to make federal changes to the territories (UNdocs.org 2016). In the Virgin Islands, there is conflict on whether they want to remain a territory of the US or not, as the President of the Senate does while the Representative from the Virgin Islands to the US Congress calls for the right to vote (Gilbert 2016). While there is indecision in the territories, the US would like to maintain the status quo. The same is true for Guam as there is argument both ways. However, for Guam, economists say it would be economic suicide for Guam to split from the US (Fifield 2016). In 2010, there was a referendum in American Samoa on whether or not to stay in the US and the majority ruled that American Samoa would like to stay within the US (Gary 2013). In

light of the arguments for and against the independence of these nations, the US would like to maintain the status quo as the US sees it as the most beneficial course of action for the territories.

The topic of Non-Self-Governing Territories is one that needs to be treated with care. Three of the five P5 countries hold fifteen of the seventeen territories (UN.org 2017). This means that any decisive action that will be taken must go through them and the US would wish to stress the importance of national sovereignty in this situation. Therefore, the US proposes a non-confrontational democratic solution to the problem. The people vote. While this may seem off-policy, there was a referendum in American Samoa where they wished that their situation stay the same. For the US, this would just reaffirm for the rest of the international community that the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the US are, overall, pleased to remain with the US. This plan may cause problems with creating new governments for territories that wish for independence but, the UN and the former administering power should help the newly founded nation thrive. In addition to a referendum for immediate independence, it may be time to set up a UN-monitored program with the purpose to wean territories off of their current administering power. However, the US is cognizant of the fact that many territories are too small to become their own independent nations. This is finally the time that the UN can end an institution that has been overshadowing the organization for decades.