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VIENNA INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

United Nations vs. Model United Nations

Although Model United Nations aims to simulate committees of the United Nations accurately, there are important differences between the institutions that delegates should be aware of in order to prevent common misconceptions.

These differences often exist for one of these reasons

- 1 Model U.N. conferences work on a much shorter time frame,
- 2 Model U.N. participants are students, not experienced diplomats, and
- 3 Model U.N. organizers rarely have access to in-depth information on real U.N. practices and resources.

	UNITED NATIONS	MODEL UNITED NATIONS
Period of Time	Sessions usually last several months	Conferences last one to five days
Conference Attendees	Attendees are primarily diplomats	Attendees are primarily students from elementary school, middle school, high school, or college.
Seating Arrangements	Most U.N. sessions seat delegates in alphabetical (English) order.	Delegates either sit in alphabetical order or based on individual conference rules.
Resolutions	Delegates may prepare draft resolutions either individually or in groups, which are circulated and subsequently merged to form a consensus. A draft resolution typically does not go to the floor until it is ready to be adopted by consensus. It is considered desirable for a draft resolution to pass by consensus, with no notion of voting no. Accordingly, more than 70 percent of all U.N. resolutions now pass by consensus.	Depending on the conference, several resolutions may reach the floor for discussion. It is typically after discussion has taken place in formal debate, that delegates merge resolutions, if at all. (Due to the short time frame of a Model U.N. conference, it is often difficult for students to come to a consensus.)
Caucusing	95 percent of the U.N.'s time is spent in "behind-the-scenes" caucusing, after official meetings, during lunch or in the hallways. It is very rare, however, for the U.N. to suspend formal meetings to caucus.	Delegates may move for suspension of the meeting to caucus. At this time, the official session breaks and the delegates meet informally in different blocs to discuss and draft resolutions. Additionally, many students meet after hours to discuss committee work.
Speakers' Lists	Formal U.N. meetings typically work on a speakers' list, with each country speaking once, possibly with an additional right of reply. Once every country speaks, the meeting breaks and behind-the-scenes work begins. Bloc groups and smaller bodies like the Security Council practice "informal consultation", in which all delegates speak freely, bound by the norms of diplomatic currency.	Many Model U.N. conferences have speakers' lists, with delegations allowed to speak multiple times. Other conferences use a less formal means of debate, with delegates raising their placards for their chairperson to recognize them to speak. Some conferences also combine this with "informal consultation" for smaller bodies.
Rules of Procedure	There are brief, formal rules of procedure for U.N. bodies. Some common rules are unwritten, and chairs occasionally make rulings without precedent, which stand if uncontested.	Conferences base their rules both on written U.N. rules and outside sources. The rules are often changed to help streamline a one to five-day conference. Also, particular rules have different uses in Model U.N. than in the actual U.N., like "right of reply."
Bloc Spokespeople	Typically, regional and diplomatic blocs elect a spokesperson to represent their consensus before the committee.	Bloc spokespersons are rarely used, as there is seldom time to form cohesive blocs or select consensus leaders.