

Model UN

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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Model United Nations (MUN) is a school organization that simulates the philosophy and procedures of the United Nations while educating students about global issues and diplomacy. It is also an excellent opportunity for a teacher librarian to support an extracurricular activity that fosters inquiry, critical thinking, collaboration and communication.

To prepare for a Model United Nations event students must first understand the task of the assignment: playing the role of a UN Ambassador from a specific country and presenting the country's point of view about a global issue. This step involves providing the students with information about the four main purposes of the United Nations (<http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/index.shtml>), the rules of procedure of the United Nations (<http://www.unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un/how-to-participate/model-un-preparation/rules-of-procedure>), and appropriate actions while deliberating (http://www.unausa.org/images/content/GC_Model_UN/Model_UN_Prep/ROP_Chart.pdf). The advisor must then determine the type of UN membership to be simulated (General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council etc.) (<http://www.un.org/en/members/index.shtml>), create a resolution to be discussed (<http://www.unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un/how-to-participate/model-un-preparation/resolutions/sample-resolution>), select the countries to move and second the resolution, and then assign each student, or group of students, a country to represent.

The next step in preparing for a Model United Nations event is for the students to conduct research. First the students must research their country to learn about its people, government, economy, history and alliances (<http://www.unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un/how-to-participate/model-un-preparation/research/country-research>; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>). Next the student must research the resolution topic to determine their country's position, as well as the position of countries that support or refute them (<http://www.unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un/how-to-participate/model-un-preparation/research/topic-research>). During this research process, students are encouraged to contact Member States of the United Nations (<http://www.un.org/en/members/>), use primary documents, such as statistics and United Nation Documents (bibliographic records, voting records, speeches) (<http://unbisnet.un.org/>), as well as analyze information available at the UN News Centre (<http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/index.shtml>; <http://www.un.org/news/>) or newspapers from around the world (<http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/>). All of this information is then compiled by the students to create a speech that outlines their country's point of view about the global issue resolution.

The Model United Nations conference is the culminating activity. Throughout the day, the students follow the Model UN rules and procedures and use a variety of skills to represent the policies of their assigned country: critical thinking, public speaking, active listening, debating, note taking, and research. During the lobbying breakout sessions, the students also use their negotiation and diplomacy skills to persuade other countries to support their country's point of view and resolution. On some occasions, at the end of the conference, a student is awarded a Best Delegate Award and advances to another level of Model United Nations conferences.

Model United Nations (MUN) is also an excellent opportunity for a teacher librarian to support a literacy extracurricular activity. Students not only use their basic literacy skills (reading, writing), but also incorporate media literacy skills (locating information), information literacy skills (analyzing the information), network literacy skills (contacting experts, alliances), attention literacy skills (multitasking: listening, researching, writing messages) and global issues skills (researching and understanding points of views of global topics). Model United Nations - an inquiry-based extracurricular activity that fosters literacy, lifelong learning and global citizenship.