

Position Paper Guide

A position paper is a document outlining a country's policy on a topic. It is written by delegates and submitted in advance to the committee chairs, who read it before the conference begins.

Position papers are useful for delegates and chairs alike. For delegates, it is a good tool for organizing research and crafting a logical policy on a topic; for chairs, it provides a unique overview of all the ideas which are to be discussed during committee sessions. Seeing that this is the first time a chair will read your work, it is essential that it would be done well – first impressions are important.

Research

The first step in creating a good position paper is gathering information. This research is divided into two parts – researching the issue and researching the country. Both knowing the issue and understanding your country's interests are crucial for crafting a policy on it. A good place to start would be with the Study Guides; they generally frame the topic and provide questions delegates should consider while preparing for the conference.

Moreover, since every claim you make in the Position Paper has to be cited from a source, it is important to use as many sources as possible and to save vital links/book page numbers.

The Aim of a Position Paper

The aim of a position paper is to provide details about your country's abilities and connection to the topic, as well as providing your main ideas for solving the issue at hand. While this resembles a Policy Statement in a number of ways, there are points in which they differ. Whereas a Policy Statement focuses on the solutions you propose, a Position Paper focuses more on the information about your country relevant to the topic. Moreover, it is not designed as a speech, and, therefore, has no phrases which are aimed at rhetorical goals; instead, it is a form of academic (informative) writing.

Writing a Position Paper

Attached to the end of this document is an example of a Position Paper. It is color-coded to match the colors given in the guide below.

A good position paper is structured the following way:

1. **Part A:** Provide a short **introduction to the issue**, specifically to the parts of it which **concern your country**. *One paragraph*
2. **Part B:** This part focuses on your country's relevance to the topic, both in the past and the present. You should list **actions** your country has taken to address the topic and/or **experiences** it had had with it. *Two paragraphs*

3. **Part C:** The solutions you offer for tackling the issues you raised in the beginning. These solutions should have two parts – *what* you wish to achieve and *how* you wish to achieve it. *One paragraph*

The length of the entire document should be around one or two pages long.

Things to Remember:

- You must cite your sources (as seen below)
- At the top left-hand corner of your position paper, write your committee name (in full), your country, your topic and your name.
- Avoid irrelevant information, both about the topic and your country.

Disarmament and International Security Committee

Country: The United States of America

Topic: Prisoners of War

Delegate: Shani Weissbuch

The issue of Prisoners of War and the way they should be treated has been thoroughly discussed in the past century. Following the atrocities of the Second World War, the need for a global policy on the humane treatment of Prisoners of War was understood by the leading nations of the world and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 were drafted to tackle this issue¹. While these treaties are widely accepted internationally, there remain entities which refuse to ratify them. These entities range from countries to other forms of belligerents, such as terror organizations. The United States is deeply concerned by the large number of entities not bound to these treaties and the vast number of their violations all over the world.

The United States knows all too well how important solving this issue is. We experienced first-hand the horrors POWs have had to suffer through in our Civil War². The tens of thousands that died in prisoner camps on both sides were a sight no American wished to witness again, and the United States quickly signed the original Geneva Conventions in 1882³. The United States has, ever since, been a great advocator of humane treatments of POWs by all belligerents.

The need for all belligerents to follow these agreements was accentuated by the Second World War - the differences in treatment of POWs were extreme: while only 0.15% died in American camps⁴, nearly 40% of the Americans captured by the empire of Japan perished under inhumane conditions⁵. The situation where one side adheres to the protocols and the second readily ignores them is intolerable. This absurd situation still exists today, since terror organizations are not bound under the restriction of any international treaty and they willingly use vicious methods - torture

¹ III Geneva Convention, Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 12 August 1949

http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.32_GC-III-EN.pdf

² "POWs in American History: A Synopsis." *National Parks Service*, U.S. Department of the Interior, www.nps.gov/and/learn/historyculture/pow_synopsis.htm.

³ "New American Nation." *Encyclopedia of the New American Nation*, www.americanforeignrelations.com/E-N/Humanitarian-Intervention-and-Relief-The-civil-war-and-the-origins-of-the-american-red-cross.html.

⁴ "Prisoner of War." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Mar. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prisoner_of_war#Treatment_of_POWs_by_the_Axis.

⁵ Spitzer, Kirk. "WWII: American POWs Still Waiting for an Apology." *Time*, Time, 12 Sept. 2014, time.com/3334677/pow-world-war-two-usa-japan/.

included - on captured personnel⁶. The United States faces these issues constantly during the war on terror⁷, and this is a problem we must all address.

The United States would like to propose a solution which will aim to significantly decrease the number of entities not obligated to international treaties on the treatment of POWs. We must acknowledge that not only is there no incentive for any non-signatory to sign these treaties, this situation allows them to act as they will knowing there won't be any form of retaliation against them, since the opposing side has ratified them. The international community must amend these agreements and end this injustice - they must include every possible belligerent, including terror organizations, and must allow nations to forcefully act against any breacher of these laws.

⁶ e.g: "Escape from ISIS: Former Prisoners Tell of Life in Terror Army's Dungeons." *Fox News*, FOX News Network, www.foxnews.com/world/2016/05/17/escape-from-isis-former-prisoners-tell-life-in-terror-armys-gulags.html.

⁷ <http://time.com/3334677/pow-world-war-two-usa-japan/>