

Public Speaking

Public speaking is a highly valuable skill you have the opportunity to develop through Model United Nations. Knowing how to prepare and deliver well-organized and thoughtful speeches will help you in school, your future career, and the rest of your life.

At an MUN conference, you will have many opportunities to give speeches. As the representative of your assigned country, you will be expected to speak about your country's policy on the committee topics and your proposed solutions.

There are two main opportunities to make speeches in Model UN:

Speakers List: When the committee begins, the Chair will create a list of delegates who wish to give speeches. These speeches are typically about the how each country feels about the topic, and range from 1-2 minutes long. The first time you speak on the speakers list is referred to as your opening speech. You should prepare this speech before the conference. After your first speech, you can send a note to the Chair to request to be put on the Speakers List again.

Moderated Caucus: Whereas the speakers list is about the topic in general, a moderated caucus is about a specific part of the topic. A moderated caucus has no Speakers List; delegates must raise their placards and wait for the Chair to call on them to speak. Each delegate typically gets 30 seconds to 1 minute to speak, and have to focus on the topic of the caucus.

Public Speaking Structure

One of the easiest way to organize your speeches in Model UN, especially for opening speeches, is to use the following three-part formula:

Hook: An engaging way to grab your audience's attention

Point: Your country policy on the topic

Call to Action: Your possible solutions to the topic

Yield: A delegate surrendering the time remaining after finishing a speech from the Speaker's List.

Decorum: A word used by Chairs to encourage delegates to behave diplomatically.

1. Hook

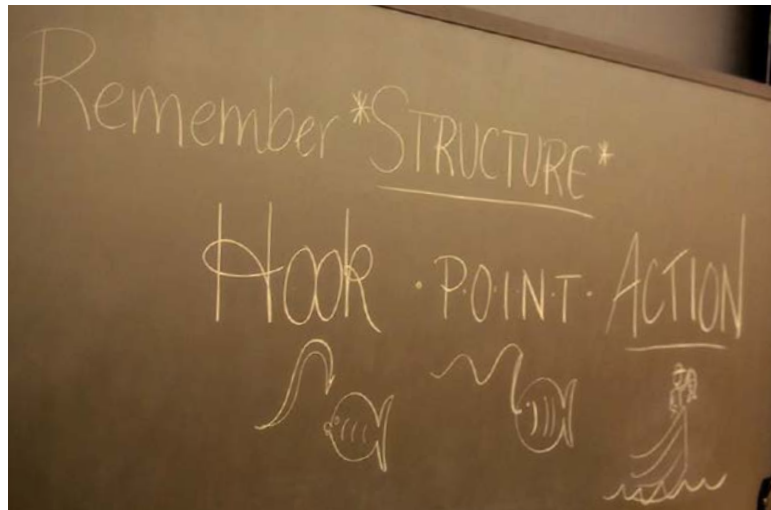
The beginning of a speech should grab your audience's attention. It should give your audience a reason to listen to you – otherwise they won't. An attention-grabbing introduction is often called a "hook." There are many different types of hooks, but here are a few common ones that work well in Model UN.

Question: Asking the audience a question is often an easy way to get their attention.

Example: "Do you think it is possible for us to live in a world without poverty? The people of my country think so. We believe we can achieve the end of poverty."

Quote: A quote engages the audience when they recognize the figure you're quoting.

Example: "Fifty years ago, United States President John F. Kennedy said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.' Today, ask not what the world can do for you, but what you can do for the world."



Statistic: A statistic can grab an audience's attention if it is surprising or interesting.

Example: "Over 1 billion people around the world live on less than US\$1.25 a day. Over 1 billion people live in extreme poverty."

Story: A story is the oldest form of communication and if told well, can certainly grab an audience's attention. But speeches in MUN are typically very short, so keep the story brief!

Example: "Several years ago, in rural Pakistan, a girl was walking to school when a gunshot rang out – and she was shot in the head. The Taliban does not want any girls to go to school. But that girl survived, and today she fights for girls' right to education around the world. That girl's name was Malala."

2. Point

The point is the purpose of your speech. It is the reason why you're speaking. Once you have your audience's attention, you should deliver your point. In opening speeches in MUN, the "point" is to state your country policy on the topic. Then offer 2-3 reasons explaining why your country had adopted this policy.

Example: “The Republic of Korea believes that education is a human right. All people should have access to education. Education is a pathway out of poverty for millions in developing countries, like Korea was just a few decades ago. Education is the driver of change and development in this world, and education is critical for the human race to continue to thrive and grow.

3. Call to Action

Good speeches end with a “call to action,” which is when you tell your audience to go and do something. Your call to action is your specific solution to the problem.

Example: “To provide universal access to education, Korea proposes the creation of an international fund called ‘Education For All’ that will support 3 programs in developing countries: building more schools, training new teachers, and preventing girls from dropping out of school. We call upon the international community to create and donate to this fund, so we can guarantee education as a right globally.”

How to participate in caucuses

In Model UN, a “caucus” means a suspension of the traditional Rules of Procedure, which govern what delegates can or cannot do during a conference. There are two types of caucuses, and both serve very different functions. However, throughout a conference delegates will move between the Speakers List, moderated caucuses, and unmoderated caucuses, so it’s important to be ready for all three main phases of debate.

Moderated Caucuses: In Moderated Caucuses, you continue to deliver speeches but in a different format. Moderated Caucuses are used to narrow debate to specific parts of the topic- for example, if you’re discussing “Climate Change” as your main topic, you may have a moderated caucus to discuss “Agricultural Impacts of Climate Change”. During a moderated caucus, the next speaker is chosen by the Chair when delegates raise their placards to be called upon. To start a speech in a moderated caucus, you can dive into your argument using Hook, Point, Action, but you can also start by responding to another delegate, by saying “In response to the comments of the delegate of Germany”, for example. Moderated caucuses are more conversational, so feel free to use the more flexible format to more directly debate with other delegates, or to try to convince the committee of your specific solutions.

Unmoderated Caucuses: During an Unmoderated Caucus, delegates are free to move around the room and will form into groups to write resolutions. Rather than a focus on debate, unmoderated caucuses are about negotiating resolutions and working together with your group. Groups will form because of common interests or common solutions to the topic, and will try to write the strongest resolution in the committee and lobby other delegates to join and support their group. It’s important to find a group to work with that will allow you to contribute your ideas to the resolution and where everybody can work together fairly to write a great resolution, rather than a group where people may be bullies or trying to dominate all the conversation for themselves. Also, if any delegates are sitting alone during unmoderated caucus, invite them to work with your group! They may have great ideas, and it’s a great way to win more support for your resolution.