

HYLC 2016
Pre -
Conference
Preparation



Guide to Pre-Conference Preparation!

Dear delegates,

Once you have been allocated a country and committee assignment for HYLC 2016, your first step as a delegate is to research. You will be required to know basic information about three things in particular:

1. Your allocated country
2. Your assigned committee
3. Your agenda topics

This guide will help you navigate your way through research and help you get the most out of your pre-conference preparation!



Country Research

Going into any Model United Nations, you need to know about the country you are allocated in order to represent it accurately. You might not need to know every single detail about your country, but you do want to get a good understanding about your country's history, politics, foreign relations and domestic lifestyle.

Learning about your country begins with researching general information, such as what type of government it has, its economic structure or its religious and cultural norms. You should also consider looking at specific information on issues that are priorities or bigger concerns for your country, in the present day.

The following questions are a guide to helping you understand the basics of your allocated country:

- What sort of government does the country have?
- What types of ideologies (political, religious or other) might influence the country's government?
- Which domestic issues influence the country's foreign policy?
- What are some major events in the country's history and why are they important?
- How long has the country had independence?
- Which ethnicities, religions and languages can be found in the country?
- Where is the country located and how does its geography affect its political relationships?
- Which countries share a border with the country?
- Which countries are considered allies of the country?
- Which countries are considered enemies of the country?
- What are the characteristics of the country's economy?
- What is the country's gross domestic product (GDP)? How does this compare to other countries in the world?
- Who are its major trading partners?
- When did the country become a member of the UN?
- Who does the country most frequently align with?
- Does the country belong to any intergovernmental organizations outside of the UN system such as NATO or OPEC?
- Does the country belong to any regional organizations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) or the Organization of American States (OAS)?

- Does the country belong to any trade organizations or agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)?
- What country or bloc does it receive foreign aid from, and who does it give foreign aid to?

Thoroughly understanding your country will enable you to figure out and justify your country's stance on various issues that may arise during the conference, which you hadn't considered before. Not all the above information might be necessary, but it will help you understand the overall picture about the country and assist in your committee research and decision-making during the conference. In addition to reading and knowing country profiles, it is also a good idea to stay up to date on current events of your allocated country, in the lead up to the conference. Check out the national news and media sources from your country for recent developments.

Committee Research

Whether this is your first Model UN or you are veteran MUNner, it is important to understand the purpose and procedure of your committee. It is usually recommended to visit the Committee's official website to gain an understanding of the committee's history and its' mission. It would also be helpful to note any interesting facts, such as any sub committees that operate under your assigned committee or whether your committee reports to a larger UN body, as this will affect the type of solutions your committee is allowed to propose.

Questions that can help guide your research on your committee include:

- What does your committee do?
- Where does it fit into the UN structure?
- Where does it have control over in terms of funds?
- What other committees report to it?
- What authority does the committee have?

It may also be worth noting the committee's direct relationship to your allocated country. For example, does your country host the committee's meetings or is your country known to abide by the proposals approved by this committee?

Agenda Research

Once you have understood the basics of your country and its government, people and economy, you will now need to develop an understanding of the issues, which are going to be discussed in your committee.

Usually each committee will have two topics on the agenda (however, some might only have one). The first step to researching these topics is to understand what the problem being discussed is. What are the main aspects of the topic? What are the points of debate and why are those points contentious?

Your Executive Board Members will provide you with a Background Guide/ Study Guide on your topics. These will be very resourceful, as they will give you a lot of the basic information about the issue. They will also cover most of the aspects of the topic, which will be most important to understand.



After reading through the Background Guides, you will need to research the topic questions broadly. Yes, it is perfectly acceptable for the first point of call to be Wikipedia. While the sources on Wikipedia may be questionable, and you shouldn't look to cite them in your Position Paper or in debate, Wikipedia can be very effective in giving you a general summary of the issue. It is important that you follow this up with the official website of your committee, or other resources related to the topic. Read news articles, talk to teachers or lecturers who may know about the issue, read scholarly papers on the topic, and learn as much as you can about the issue.

Here are some guiding questions for researching your topics:

- What is the main problem?
- How does it affect your allocated country?
- What has your country done to combat the problem?
- What are the various "sides" in the debate?
- Which aspects of the issue are most important to your country?
- If your country is not involved with the issue, how can it become involved?
- How can your country shape the debate at the conference?
- What arguments will other countries make?
- How do positions of other countries affect your country's position?
- Is there evidence or statistics that might help you to support your country's position?

There's a range of information available on each of the agendas of HYL 2016, if you know where to look.

- As mentioned before, Wikipedia is good to understand the issue in detail, but remember to be critical. Wikipedia will also break the topic down into subtopics, to make it easier for you.
- News and media outlets are the best source for up-to-date developments on the issue.
- Google Alerts are very effective. You can get an email update if there is a new article related to your topic.
- The UN Global Issues page can also link you to some resources on prominent topics, as well as other UN agencies that might be working closely with those issues.
- You can also look at previous and current resolutions and voting records at the UN Documentation Centre.
- Visiting non-governmental organisation (NGO) websites that are relevant to your topic, can give you great insight into the realities of those issues. NGOs are an important part of the UN system, particularly because of the valuable research and information they can generate.

- Academic publications are more complex, but can provide in-depth information on many issues as more and more research is conducted.

In your committee research, it is important to remember to learn about the history of the topic, understand the current situation (and why it is relevant at this time), and also determine the future outlook of the issue.



Potential Solutions

An important role that you will have as a delegate is to propose ideas and possible solutions on your given topic. Once you have a basic understanding about the issue, you should start considering various solutions and their pros and cons.

It is worth looking at previous actions, such as government local programs, U.N. resolutions and other multilateral actions, and assesses their successes and failures. Looking at your country's past voting record at the United Nations and other committees is invaluable.

Another great resource are your country's division or chapter of your assigned committee. These regional divisions will have dealt with the same issue in the context of your nation and can give you an insight into the country's policy, even if the country may seem indifferent about the issue.

As mentioned before, non-governmental organisations and their websites will also be very useful in helping you understand proposed solutions. Many think tanks and NGOs will publish recommendations to given problems, which can help you narrow down your research.

The most important thing in analysing, and even creating solutions, is to compare those ideas with your country's policy, so you come up with a viable solution that the country can comfortably support. Likewise, it is also important to identify any concerning solutions that your country would not support, and understand the arguments of the country as well as assessing alternatives. Understanding your country's arguments is crucial so you can discuss and convince other delegates of your stance as well.

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Country Stance

This is the section where you should spend most of your research time on. Your end goal is to answer the question, "What does your country want done on the issue?"

Sometimes it's easy to find or determine what your allocated country's position on a topic is, but other times it's a bit more tricky. To formulate your position on the assigned topics, you should consult specific websites of national departments, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Department of State or the national equivalent. Search these platforms to find up-to-date statements of policy by someone in that agency, on the particular topic.

The most current statement, by the highest-ranking person, is the one you should use.

You should also look at your country's mission to the United Nations to find out if the country has made recent statements about the topic at the UN.



Good Luck with your prep!

The logo for HYLC 2016 features the letters 'HYLC' in a bold, blue, serif font. The 'H' and 'L' are partially enclosed by a laurel wreath on the left and right sides, respectively. Below the letters, the year '2016' is written in a blue, sans-serif font.

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