

Writing A Winning Position Paper



A TWHS MUN Guide

Formatting and Writing Tips

- Position Papers should be 12pt font, Times New Roman, double spaced
- There are three parts to a Position Paper: the heading, the content, and the works cited.
- Works Cited is in MLA format (hanging indent and double space!)
- No personal pronouns (I, you, we, etc.)
- Generally try to avoid any sort of excessive repetition (of your delegation's name, the topic, etc.) Find new ways to phrase things to keep the reader engaged!
- No filler sentences; every line should have a purpose (explaining, defining, suggesting, etc.)
- Use Grammarly! (even if it's the free version)

1. Heading

- Committee: Arctic Council

Organization (or Country or Character): Nordic Council

Topic: Protection of Endangered Arctic Species and Ecosystems

School: The Woodlands High School

Sponsor: Ms. Courtney Leone

Name: Deborah Chu

2. Intro Paragraph(s)

1. **Hook (1st sentence):** Quote or Statistic that is eye-catching and relevant to your topic (a statistic is generally recommended). This will interest your audience and keep them reading!
2. **Topic Background:** What is your topic (explain) and why is it an issue? What are some of the topic's causes? What problems has it created and why is it an object of international concern? Give lots of data and statistics!
3. **End the Last Sentence Strong:** While keeping the tone formal, a sense of urgency should be conveyed. Perhaps use a relevant quote by a prominent UN figure or your delegation's leader to make an impact.

Topic: Protecting Endangered Species and Ecosystems in the Arctic (Introduction)

HOOK: According to the United Kingdom Met Office's Hadley Centre, it is predicted that by 2035 the ice of the Arctic will disappear, and with it its vibrant communities of flora and fauna.

THE PROBLEM: Species native only to this region such as polar bears, Arctic foxes, and narwhals have already been declared endangered, but as their habitat is disappearing many are rapidly moving towards extinction along with the rest of the 5,500 species present in the Arctic.

CAUSES: With the ice melting at an accelerated rate due to increased fossil fuel emissions expediting global warming, whole Arctic ecosystems are collapsing.

RESULTING PROBLEMS: Over the last four decades alone, 75% of Arctic ice has been lost as stated by the Ice911 Arctic research team, and in 2018, 95% of the oldest and thickest ice that reflects sunlight into the atmosphere and prevents the Earth from overheating vanished.

WHY IS IT AN INTERNATIONAL CONCERN: This positive feedback loop has raised international concern, as people recognize that if no immediate action is taken to preserve the Arctic, hundreds of endangered species and ecosystems will cease to exist, upsetting the international ecosystem that is deeply interconnected with the region.

IMPACTFUL CONCLUSION: As United Nations (UN) General Assembly President Joseph Deiss stated, the preservation of the Arctic "is key to ensuring the health, prosperity and security of present and future generations."

3. Past International Actions

1. List past UN actions regarding the topic and whether your delegation has supported or ratified them. Clarify if the actions have been successful or not, and give specific results using specific data. **BE SPECIFIC, this is what sets you apart!**

Do not just say that the UN has “tried to fix world hunger”.

Instead, name a specific initiative/program/legislation that they have implemented and explain what it is, how it is relevant to the topic, and its effects on the topic at hand. This will also help you to extend the length of your paper by a lot.

2. You can discuss past international action not done by the UN as well! Just remember to be very specific in naming the actions and their results.

Topic: Protecting Endangered Species and Ecosystems in the Arctic (Example of How to Discuss a Past Action)

NAME/EXPLAIN SPECIFIC ACTION AND IF YOUR DELEGATION SUPPORTS IT: Realizing the predicament of Arctic endangered species and ecosystems due to climate change, the United Nations has been swift to act and in 2015 passed the Paris Climate Agreement, which urges countries to limit global warming to 1.5-2 degrees Celsius (C) and provides measures by which to do so. This was an action all the members of both the Arctic Council and Nordic Council approved. By internationally reducing fossil fuel utilization, this treaty aids the preservation of Arctic biodiversity by reducing carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming and Arctic habitat destruction.

SPECIFIC DATA THAT FURTHER EXPLAINS ACTION: To explain this phenomenon, the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology conducted a study that determined for every ton of carbon dioxide emitted, three square meters of sea ice melts into the ocean. The average person emits around 4 tons of carbon dioxide a year (though in highly developed countries the number is much higher), so this implies if every person were to decrease their emission by 2 tons, 46.518 billion square meters of ice could be saved per year- perhaps enough to stabilize the Arctic and prevent the habitat from completely disappearing.

WHAT WAS THIS ACTION'S RESULTS/SUCCESSSES/FAILURES: The Paris Climate Agreement has been a success in that before its creation, global emissions were on course to raise temperatures by 3.5°C in 2100, but now the trajectory has flattened to 2.9 degrees C according to the Climate Action Tracker, a nonprofit science consortium. However, its shortcoming is that unless all countries make even more significant cuts in their expenditures of fossil fuels, global emissions will not reach the goal of 1.5 degrees C any time soon.

4. Your Delegation's Policy

1. **State your country/organization's stance on the topic**, as well as its history regarding the topic and how it has been affected by the issue at hand. Use specific examples!
2. **List past actions and steps your country/organization and its government has taken to address the problem.** Give specific initiatives/legislation/programs that have been enacted, and share the results of these actions as well. (Success or failure? Data?)

Topic: Protecting Endangered Species and Ecosystems in the Arctic (Delegation Policy)

- **DELEGATION POSITION:** In regards to endangered species and ecosystems in the Arctic, the Nordic Council believes that protection of these organisms should be among the world's highest priorities.

SPECIFIC ACTION: The member states (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, and their respective territories) have each already implemented policies to preserve endangered species, such as the Nature Diversity Act, which is a Norwegian instrument that creates protected areas such as nature reserves and national parks in order to safeguard the undisturbed areas of the Arctic environment in the country.

RESULTS OF ACTION: Through these efforts, national parks and nature reserves now envelop 65% of Svalbard (a Norwegian county), conserving an expansive amount of habitat for local endangered species such as the caribou.

5. Recommendations for Future UN Actions

1. **Start with introductory sentence** restating the topic and your delegation's name, and clarifying that your delegation has specific recommendations on how to fix the problems being discussed.
2. **Give multiple recommendations** on how your delegation believes the topic can be resolved. Draw these resolutions from your research-they can be existing actions that you want to expand on or your own ideas! Be specific when describing them (who, what, where, when, why, how?), and try to have around 3-5 propositions. The examples from my position paper on the next slide are actually rather vague- they could be improved by explaining the details involved in each of the ideas (the 5w's + how).
3. **Concluding sentence should be strong** because you are finishing off your whole paper! Emphasize how the combination of the implementation of your recommendations with global cooperation can bring change and create a better world. Have a global perspective, you want to create a sense of unity and peace with your final statement! Perhaps use a quote from a prominent UN figure or one of your delegation's leaders in order to create an impact.

Topic: Protecting Endangered Species and Ecosystems in the Arctic (Recommendations)

INTRO SENTENCE: When addressing the protection of endangered species and ecosystems that are present in the Arctic environment, the Nordic Council proposes the following actions.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS: First, protected areas must be created and enforced in all of the Arctic countries so that they may be havens for endangered animals. Next, fossil fuel emissions must continue to be reduced so that the process of global warming will decline. Emissions may be lowered by countries transitioning to alternative sources of energy besides fossil fuels, such as hydroelectricity. Finally, research needs to be conducted in order to find ways to prevent the Arctic ice from melting at a unsustainable rate; research has been done by the nonprofit group Ice911 regarding light and heat-reflecting silica beads that could be distributed among the region to prevent absorption of heat into the ice and the melting of the ice.

CONCLUDING SENTENCE WITH IMPACT: If these measures are taken by the global community, the world will be one step closer towards protecting the unique and diverse organisms and ecosystems that the Arctic sustains. As UN Secretary General António Guterres declared, "Making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century. It must be the top, top priority for everyone, everywhere."

Works Cited (MLA)

Works Cited

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<https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/5-ways-to-help-the-arctic-as-the-planet-warms>.

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<https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Wild-Places/Arctic#:~:text=The%20Arctic%20is%20a%20unique,in%20the%20summer%20to%20breed>.

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