*The Resolution Process*

A resolution is a formal document that proposes a solution to a specific issue and, during the General Conference, each subcommittee will be responsible for writing one resolution per given issue. Often, resolutions are the product of negotiation, debate, and consensus. But that is not always the case: if a delegate finds that a proposed resolution is contrary to their country’s position, that delegate should act in a manner that best reflects their country’s interests. The resolutions adopted by each subcommittee will be submitted to the Main Committees and then the General Assembly for member states to vote on. If passed, the resolution will stand as a comprehensive solution for the entire United Nations community. Be mindful that a resolution does not solve a problem—it just provides an agreed upon framework for action to solve the problem. Therefore, passing a resolution is not the end but just the beginning of a process.

Because the resolution process sits at the heart of WHSMUN, it is paramount that every delegate understand and be proficient in using the proper formats for drafting, amending, and passing a resolution.

***Drafting a Resolution***

A resolution consists of three parts: heading, pre-ambulatory clauses, and operative clauses.

First, the resolution heading will contain five vital items: the committee name, the sponsor(s) (the authors of the resolution), the signatories (the countries who helped draft the resolution and/or countries that support the resolution, and/or countries who do not support the resolution but wish to see it debated), the topic, and the introductory line for all GA committees. The sponsor(s) and signatories are who submitted the resolution to the committee for consideration. This information will be presented in the following manner at the top of the resolution’s first page:

Heading Example:

Wisconsin High School Model United Nations

**Subcommittee 1.1**:

**Topic:** Strengthening UN coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies

**Sponsors**: Canada, United States, United Kingdom  
**Signatories:** Estonia, France, Israel, India, Mexico, and Poland

*The General Assembly,*

Second, pre-ambulatory clauses serve to explain and outline the problem or subject that the resolution will be addressing. It serves to recall past actions taken by the international community such as UN resolutions, treaties, or conventions related to the topic; regional, non-governmental, or national efforts aimed at resolving the issue; references to the UN Charter and other international frameworks and laws; statements made by the Secretary-General or relevant UN bodies or agencies; and, general background information that is directly applicable to the given topic. In other words, think of pre-ambulatory clauses as your cited evidence for why international action is required. A strong resolution will draw on UN documents, statistics, history, and will also be logically sequenced so each clause builds off and supports the other clauses.

Pre-ambulatory Clauses Example:

*The General Assembly,*

***Reminding*** all nations of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the inherent dignity, equality and inalienable rights of all global citizens,

***Reaffirming*** its Resolution 33/1996 of 25 July 1996, which encourages Governments to work with UN bodies aimed at improving the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance,

***Noting*** with satisfaction the past efforts of various relevant UN bodies and nongovernmental organizations,

***Stressing*** the fact that the United Nations faces significant financial obstacles and is in need of reform, particularly in the humanitarian realm,

(Examples taken from the United Nations Association of the United States of America)

Notice that each clause of the preamble begins with a bolded and italicized present participle phrase and ends with a comma (not a period). A list of sample phrases can be found on the WHSMUN website, [www.modelun.uwm.edu](http://www.modelun.uwm.edu). By the end of the preamble it should have provided sufficient justification for taking action and be clear as to as to why action is required.

As a general rule, your resolution can have as many pre-ambulatory clauses as you want as long as the number of pre-ambulatory clauses does not exceed the number of operative clauses contained in your resolution. Typically this usually ends up being about 3-5 pre-ambulatory clauses and 3-5 operative clauses, which helps move the debate on the resolution forward while in your Main Committees and the General Assembly.

Third, operative clauses state the proposed solution(s) to the specific issue, make recommendations, or express approval or disproval. In other words, this is the part of the resolution where you clearly articulate the actions your country and fellow sponsors want to see the United Nations take. Operative clauses are similar in format to pre-ambulatory clauses but differ in that they are all italicized, but not in bold, numbered and all begin with a present tense, active verb that emphasize the statement, and stress action. Furthermore, operative clauses end with a semicolon and the last clause ends with a period.

Operative Clauses Example:

1. *Encourages* all relevant agencies of the United Nations to collaborate more closely with countries at the grassroots level to enhance the carrying out of relief efforts;
2. *Urges* member states to comply with the goals of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to streamline efforts of humanitarian aid;
3. *Requests* that all nations develop rapid deployment forces to better enhance the coordination of relief efforts of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies;
4. *Calls* for the development of a United Nations Trust Fund that encourages voluntary donations from the private transnational sector to aid in funding the implementation of rapid deployment forces;
5. *Stresses* the continuing need for impartial and objective information on the political, economic and social situations and events of all countries;
6. *Calls* upon states to respond quickly and generously to consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance; and
7. *Requests* the expansion of preventive actions and assurance of post-conflict assistance through reconstruction and development.

(Examples taken and adapted from the United Nations Association of the United States of America)

Fourth, now putting it all together. As you have come to see, there are three sections to drafting a resolution and each section is further subdivided into other smaller sections. In drafting a resolution, therefore, you may want to employ the economic concept of specialization of labor: Some delegates may be better at crafting pre-ambulatory phrases for the pre-ambulatory clauses while other delegates may be better at crafting operative clauses. It may be best to divide the work in such a fashion, then piece it all together for a finished product that looks like the following:

Wisconsin High School Model United Nations

**Subcommittee 1.1**:

**Topic:** Strengthening UN coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies

**Sponsors**: Canada, United States, United Kingdom  
**Signatories:** Estonia, France, Israel, India, Mexico, and Poland

*The General Assembly,*

***Reminding*** all nations of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the inherent dignity, equality and inalienable rights of all global citizens,

***Reaffirming*** its Resolution 33/1996 of 25 July 1996, which encourages Governments to work with UN bodies aimed at improving the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance,

***Noting*** with satisfaction the past efforts of various relevant UN bodies and nongovernmental organizations,

***Stressing*** the fact that the United Nations faces significant financial obstacles and is in need of reform, particularly in the humanitarian realm,

1. *Encourages* all relevant agencies of the United Nations to collaborate more closely with countries at the grassroots level to enhance the carrying out of relief efforts;
2. *Urges* member states to comply with the goals of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to streamline efforts of humanitarian aid;
3. *Requests* that all nations develop rapid deployment forces to better enhance the coordination of relief efforts of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies;
4. *Calls* for the development of a United Nations Trust Fund that encourages voluntary donations from the private transnational sector to aid in funding the implementation of rapid deployment forces;
5. *Stresses* the continuing need for impartial and objective information on the political, economic and social situations and events of all countries;
6. *Calls* upon states to respond quickly and generously to consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance; and
7. *Requests* the expansion of preventive actions and assurance of post-conflict assistance through reconstruction and development.