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North Devon  
Model United Nations conference  
**Process and timetable**



## Key points in preparing for and running the MUN

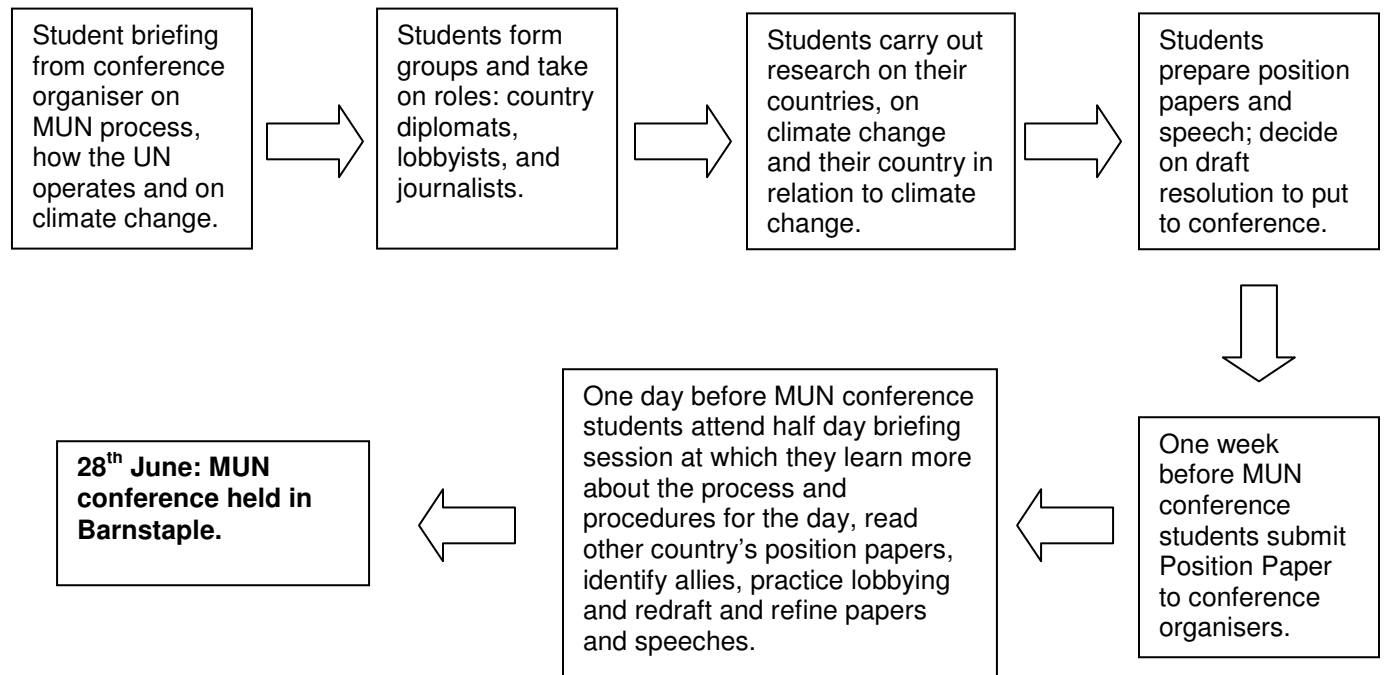
### The basic principles:

1. Participants in groups are assigned a Member State (country) of the UN. Some assume the role of that country's diplomats while others take on the role of researchers/lobbyists.
2. The 'delegates' research the selected topic thoroughly and learn about their country's position on the issue.
3. The 'delegations' come together and enact a UN meeting.

### Ideally a MUN event has three elements:

1. Preparation – involving whole class, year group or particular group of students over a number of weeks and a half or full days preparation before the conference.
2. The MUN conference – one day event for delegates and other participants.
3. Feedback and evaluation – one or two lessons for reflection and debriefing.

## The process for the North Devon MUN conference on climate change



## Preparation

A small-scale event, such as the North Devon MUN, can expect to have about 15 countries represented. The emphasis is on students taking on a role as representatives of a particular country or lobby groups and undertaking guided research. Students need to be encouraged to “get the feel” of their country through their research. Materials and links to help students are

listed on the **Global News website**: [www.globalnews.org.uk](http://www.globalnews.org.uk) (The North Devon MUN is being coordinated and funded through the Global News project.) The topic to be researched and discussed will be **climate change**, and specifically, how nations will attempt to tackle climate change beyond the Kyoto protocol agreement which runs until 2012.

Pupils should be divided into teams of between 6 and 8. Each team is responsible for developing an understanding of the country they have been assigned and researching the issue of climate change. They should select three of their members as a delegation for the MUN. Other members of the team should act as researchers/lobbyists, e.g. environmentalists, fossil fuel industry chiefs, scientists etc. One student should be selected as a journalist to work with a local newspaper journalist on reporting proceedings on the day of the conference.

A geographically, politically and economically wide range of countries is included in the conference: developed and developing countries, emerging economies and countries undergoing change; contrasting political and economic systems, market based economies and socialist economies; extreme and "middle of the road" countries. Schools are being encouraged to adopt countries which best suit particular links they have or which have been studied etc.

Additional preparation for the conference: make country flags, or find them on the internet; print out country name in large letters. Students might like to think about useful lobbying tools for the conference, e.g. small fliers, postcards, banners, props, wearing polar bear costumes etc.

### **Schools taking part and countries represented**

<b>School</b>	<b>Country 1</b>	<b>Country 2</b>	<b>Country 3</b>	<b>Country 4</b>
Braunton	UK	India	Austria	Jamaica
West Buckland	USA	Kenya	Bangladesh	China
Pilton	Ukraine	France		

### **Researching**

Students should explore the links on the MUN section of the Global News website for information on the MUN process, the United Nations, climate change and information on specific countries. See: [www.globalnews.org.uk/students\\_MUN.htm](http://www.globalnews.org.uk/students_MUN.htm) for student links and [www.globalnews.org.uk/teachers\\_MUN.htm](http://www.globalnews.org.uk/teachers_MUN.htm) for teachers.

Country delegates to the conference should research the geographical, economic, social, environmental and political contexts of their country. Lobbyists should research specifically related to their areas of interest; they should present this information to their country's delegates, e.g. scientists should contribute information on the science of climate change; environmentalists the environmental perspective; and the fossil fuel/energy industry a business perspective.

Students can also write to or e-mail the relevant Embassy or High Commission for the country they are representing and ask for the country's position on climate change. It is best to do this for precise questions that students cannot find from other sources. Most countries have Embassies or High Commissions in the UK and some have their own websites. See: [http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&c\\_id=1007029396086](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&c_id=1007029396086) It may even be worth inviting a High Commissioner or Embassy staff member to attend the MUN conference!

The aim of the conference is to end up with a resolution [or resolutions], achieved through debate and negotiation; consensus and conflict resolution, agreed by all delegates and which is/are acceptable both to their own country and to the wider world.

To achieve this, delegates need to:

- understand their country's position in relation to others
- understand their country's position in relation to the topic
- be familiar with the procedures of the MUN conference
- be able to present a short prepared statement (position paper) of their country's position;
- be able to respond spontaneously when challenged by another delegate;
- prepare amendments in line with their country's interests and in the light of the debate;
- negotiate for support with other delegations (outside the debating room);
- debate amendments; vote on them and on the Resolution.

### **Agreeing a resolution**

The MUN conference will seek to work towards one resolution that all countries can sign up to, reached through negotiation, consensus building and majority voting. For the North Devon MUN students will be presented with a choice of three draft resolutions as starting points to build on; they will be encouraged to add to, amend or insert clauses to resolutions based on their own research, or due to lobbying by 'pressure groups'. Having researched their country, students will adopt a resolution that they feel best reflects their country's position on climate change. At the conference each country will then present their draft resolution and the process of reaching a consensus on a final resolution will begin.

At the UN, the resolutions tend to be very wordy, lengthy and procedural; they contain 'preamble' paragraphs and 'operative' paragraphs for example. It is proposed that due to the lack of time available, the resolutions for the North Devon MUN focus on encouraging the development of the skills of debate, negotiation, compromise and consensus building rather than on technical accuracy.

## How MUN addresses the citizenship curriculum

The following table identifies how the MUN process meets the requirements of the citizenship curriculum:

<b>Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens</b>	
<i>the opportunities for individuals and voluntary groups to bring about social change locally, nationally, in Europe and internationally.</i>	Through role playing lobbyists from NGOs and voluntary groups, students learn about and experience the impact individuals and voluntary groups can make and how to influence actions.
<i>the importance of a free press, and the media's role in society, including the internet, in providing information and affecting opinion.</i>	The media as a source of information will be used during research; critical reading of a wide range of sources is vital to MUN preparation.
<i>the United Kingdom's relations in Europe, including the European Union and relations with the Commonwealth and the United Nations.</i>	Understanding the relations between countries and how the United Nations functions forms the basis of the MUN process.
<i>the wider issues and challenges of global interdependence and responsibility, including sustainable development and Local Agenda 21.</i>	The topic of climate change is an ideal topic for exploring issues of interdependence and sustainable development.
<b>Developing skills a of enquiry and communication</b>	
<i>Research a topical political, spiritual, moral, social or cultural issue, problem or event by analysing information from different sources, including ICT-based sources showing an awareness of the use and abuse of statistics.</i>	MUN events are designed to address topical issues of international significance, e.g. climate change. Most of the sources of information will be internet based. Statistics are an important source of evidence and students have to present them and answer any challenges.
<i>Express, justify and defend orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events.</i>	MUN participants have to research their issue and write a position paper. They have to be ready to answer questions and prepare questions for others.
<i>Contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in formal debates.</i>	MUN involves students determining the delegates' positions on the issue under debate – climate change. They take part in formal debate and informal negotiations, preparing and giving speeches and responding spontaneously.
<b>Developing skills of participation and responsible action</b>	
<i>Use their imaginations to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express, explain and critically evaluate views that are not their own.</i>	MUN requires participants to present views which are not necessarily their own. They take the role of delegates and may represent any country in the world.
<i>Negotiate, decide and take part responsibly in school and community based activities.</i>	Participating in MUN demands commitment and a sense of responsibility towards other participants.
<i>Reflect on the process of participating.</i>	MUN participants need time after the MUN conference to reflect on and evaluate the experience.

In addition, the MUN process addresses the KS3 Scheme of work, Unit 10: Debating a global issue. This calls for learning about global issues on which people hold different viewpoints; how to research different viewpoints; how to present different viewpoints and that conflicting viewpoints need to be discussed/debated.

## The MUN conference itself

### The roles

**The President:** The Chair of the plenary sessions of the meeting; someone with charisma and authority. In the UN the President is elected by the Government delegates from among their number but has to be neutral, like the Speaker of the House of Commons.

**The Secretary General:** The principal organiser should take on this role. The Secretary-General is in charge of all the coordinating roles and message-taking. He/she assists the President, taking notes and writing and rewriting resolutions etc.

**Committee Chairs:** a chair for each committee group together with a **secretary** to take notes and assist each chairperson with amendments to resolutions.

**Advisers:** teachers or 'expert' adults to help committees in their discussions and with drafting resolution amendments etc.

## Timetable for the North Devon MUN – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2006

The conference will take place in the Council Chambers at Barnstaple Civic Centre

**9.30:** Students take up position in alphabetical order in the horseshoe debating chamber and arrange their flags and country signs.

**9.45:** Welcome and admin arrangements from the Secretary-General

**9.50:** Introductions and short addresses by VIP guest[s] and/or President

### 10.00: First Plenary Session

Each country delegation will be asked to make a three minute speech about its country, its position on climate change and how it believes climate change is affecting it now and will do in the future; they read the draft resolution they have worked on and believe to be in the best national and international interest. The President will cut speeches that exceed three minutes. The President should ask if any delegation wishes to ask another delegation questions or seek factual clarification on any issue. The President may have to ask a few questions if the session tends to be going slowly; things may need stirring up a bit!

### 11.00: Break with refreshments; formation of 'negotiating blocs'

During the break students will be asked to form 'negotiating blocs' – team up with countries they feel they are most likely to reach agreement with on a resolution. This should be obvious from the first plenary session and from having previously read the position papers. Countries could decide to divide their delegates between blocs to try and undermine proceedings in other blocs or broker deals etc. Delegates are also free to move from one bloc to another if they feel that the negotiations are not working in their favour.

It is anticipated that there will be three groups, a 'rich bloc' e.g. USA, UK, France etc; an 'emerging economy bloc', e.g. India, China and Brazil etc; and a 'poor bloc', e.g. Bangladesh, Kenya etc. However, the key here is for students themselves to determine which bloc they want to join. Chairs for three committee groups will be organised; if only two 'blocs' emerge then the adults from one of the other committees can join the two.

### 11.20: Committee Groups

#### Negotiating blocs

The 'negotiating blocs' meet in committee to discuss and agree a 'bloc' resolution. The resolution will focus on and discuss four aspects:

1. Views about the significance of climate change and the **science** that supports it
2. Greenhouse gas **reduction targets**
3. **Forms of energy** to meet demand while reducing carbon emissions
4. **Mechanisms** for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Each committee will have adult support in the form of a chairperson – to keep proceedings dynamic and focused, and a secretary – to note down key points from the discussion and to help redraft a resolution. The aim will ultimately be to agree one resolution by negotiation and consensus (adding or removing text from resolutions or by adding in various clauses). Where this is not possible, the Chair may use the two thirds majority rule (by a vote) to help reach a single draft resolution by the end of the session (see procedure below).

A third adult might also be helpful: a ‘UN special adviser’. This person will have an important role in steering discussion, asking pertinent questions, responding to queries from delegates and suggesting solutions if progress appears to be slowing or stagnating.

At the end of the session the Chair and secretary should run through the various key points and options which have been raised, pointing out where compromises, additions and clauses have been added etc and ask the delegates if they all agree with a final resolution to put before the final plenary session.

### **Lobby Committees**

It is proposed that ‘lobby groups’ such as the fossil fuel/energy lobby, environmentalists and scientists meet during this session. Each committee will be chaired or coordinated by an adult/adults and will receive some ‘input’.

- A scientist from the Met Office will be attending to give a short presentation to the scientist group. Students will be asked to draw out the key issues from the presentation and decide which are the most important points for lobbying purposes. The scientists may be called on by country delegates as experts on the science of climate change and/or may use the later part of the committee meeting time to visit negotiating blocs as observers. The scientists will use the lunch time session to try and lobby and/or answer questions from country delegates.
- The White Rabbit Theatre group will be working with environmentalists helping them to develop exciting and imaginative lobbying techniques etc. This committee will be suitable for those who enjoy a bit of drama! It is planned that his committee will be taking part in a lunchtime ‘stunt’.
- A local business leader will be working with students representing the business lobby and helping students identify the various aspects that are important to businesses.

The lobbyists are not entitled to make any direct representations to the ‘negotiating bloc’ committees while the committee meetings are taking place, unless they are invited to do so by delegates from those committees. They can and should though lobby hard over lunch! They may also spend some of the session visiting the negotiating blocs as observers to identify who to lobby over lunch.

### **Journalism committee**

It is proposed that at least one student from each school be assigned the role of journalist for the day. These students will have the task of reporting on the day – writing reports and perhaps taking digital photos as well. A ‘real life’ journalist has been invited to facilitate this committee and help the students in developing a press release for circulating at lunchtime. The journalists will be encouraged to spend some of their time visiting other committees in an attempt to ‘find the story’.

#### **12.40: Lunch break**

It is planned to make lunchtime as lively and interactive as possible. Students will be encouraged to stay in role throughout the lunch session. It is planned that press releases from the journalists will be passed around and resolutions circulated. Lobbyists will be encouraged to lobby country delegates, pushing for the resolution[s] they feel is/are best from their perspective.

#### **1.40: Second Plenary session**

This will be a chance to listen to the resolutions that emerged from the negotiating bloc committees, respond to them and try to reach compromise between the different blocs.

The chair, secretary or a representative from each of the negotiating committees will be asked to report to the Plenary the resolution that emerged from the committee highlighting any contentious issues or areas of disagreement. Delegates will be invited to ask questions or make comments on each resolution (though the President needs to ensure that this is short and sharp!). Delegates will then have a short adjournment time (10 mins) to reflect on which direction things are moving and to consider whether with any last minute amendments they would be able to support a different resolution. This is also a final chance to negotiate informally with other countries on compromises, make deals etc.

Lobbyists will essentially be observers for this plenary session but may be called on by delegates during the adjournment for consultation; lobbyists should be looking out for such an opportunity!

Back in plenary the president will ask if any countries wish to propose final amendments to existing resolutions to strengthen support for particular resolutions. This will be followed by a straight vote on which resolution is the preferred one by each country. A two thirds majority will be needed to carry through a resolution. If a two thirds majority is not achieved, countries not supporting the resolution will be asked what changes or clauses would enable them to vote for the resolution. A series of negotiations, compromises and consensus building would then need to take place in order to attempt to reach an acceptable resolution to all.

Finally, countries will be asked to 'sign up' to the resolution. It should be emphasised that countries are not under any obligation to sign up; they may feel that as a nation they are unable to fully endorse it.

#### **2.45: Summing up by President and explanation about evaluation and follow up in schools**

#### **2.50: Evaluation by students**

Students will be asked to complete a simple evaluation form.

#### **3.00: MUN officially closes**

#### **3.10 Students leave**