

Oregon Model United Nations

NEW RULES OF DEBATE

The purpose of rules of debate is to maintain order and to provide the maximum opportunity for all delegates to participate. All committee chairs will be trained thoroughly in the rules of debate. They are expected to use these rules, and maintain the discipline of the committee throughout the conference. All delegates are expected to follow the rules of debate as if they were members of the United Nations. Successful and meaningful experiences at Oregon Model United Nations begin with the recognition that these are formal proceedings, and we are trying to emulate the work of real ambassadors in the United Nations.

I. For these rules, you need to raise your placard, and be recognized by the committee chair.

“I rise to make a speech”

This is when you want to speak during general or substantive debate.

“I rise to make a comment”

This is if you want to make a comment DIRECTLY about a speech made by another ambassador. You cannot comment on a comment. Instead, simply make a speech.

“I rise to submit a resolution”

This is when you want to introduce a resolution in general debate. Remember, you can introduce a resolution ONLY in general debate.

“I rise to submit an amendment”

This is when you want to amend a resolution in substantive debate. Amendments should be hand written. They will be given to the clerk in the committee. The clerk will read the amendment out loud to the committee. The chair will ask if the amendment is “friendly” to the primary sponsor of the resolution. If the amendment is friendly, it will be automatically added to the resolution. If the amendment is not friendly, then debate will occur on that amendment immediately.

Debate on the amendment will continue until a motion is made to close debate (see below).

“I rise to ask question”

If you wish to ask a question, please make sure to always direct your question at the committee chair. The committee shall determine who will respond to the question.

“I make a motion to close debate”

This is if you wish to end debate (either substantive or general debate). This motion requires a “second” from another delegate, and the entire committee must vote to end debate. If a simple majority chooses to end debate, then debate is closed.

“I make a motion to caucus”

If you wish to meet briefly and informally with other delegates, you make this motion. The purpose of a caucus is to craft resolutions, amendments to resolution, decide how to vote, meet as a bloc to clarify positions in debate, or any other important business during committee sessions. It is not a break to socialize or leave the committee.

“Point of Personal Privilege”

If you need to leave the committee sessions for personal reasons, you make this motion. Remember, a roll call is made at the beginning of each session. You are required to attend all committee sessions. Therefore, personal privilege should only be used for brief departures from committee. The main purpose of this privilege would be to use the OPI computers to publish a resolution of your committee. You must leave your placard so that your absence is noted. Also, the chair has the power to determine whether or not you are excused. Excessive requests for personal privilege may be reported to advisors, and may result in disciplinary measures.

II. These motions do not require raising a placard. In other words, you can interrupt the chair or the speaker at any time to make these motions.

“Point of Order”

This is when someone (the chair or another delegate) is out of order. When a delegate says, “point of order,” the business of the committee stops. You are then expected to explain what is out of order, and the chair then will bring the committee back to order.

“Point of Information”

This is when you are confused about what is going on. Simply call out “point of information” and ask your question to the chair. The chair is expected at that point to clarify what is going on procedurally. This is not an opportunity to make comments about inaccurate information, only to ask questions about procedure. You should make a comment or speech for that purpose.

Debate Procedure in Committee

1. Calling the committee to order

A. The chair of the committee calls the meeting to order. After that occurs, there can no longer be any discussion by committee members unless your placard is raised and the chair recognizes you.

B. At this point, the committee chair will take roll. When your nation’s name is called, you respond by saying **“present and voting.”** Some nations are not allowed to vote, so they simply will say, **“present.”** A quorum (at least one-third of the committee members) must be present in order to begin the committee session.

C. The next order of business is the election of a Rapporteur. This person presents to the General Assembly a summary of the debate. They will be provided a committee report for this purpose from the committee chair. The committee first nominates delegates to be a Rapporteur. Then a vote is taken by secret ballot. To win requires a majority vote.

2. Debate about an agenda topic (General Debate)

A. After the clerk takes roll, and the Rapporteur has been elected, the chair of the committee will open debate on the first

agenda topic of your committee. Committee chairs begin by creating a Speakers List. They will say, "Who would like to speak on this agenda topic?"

B. If you wish to speak your thoughts, opinions or beliefs, or provide background information on the agenda topic, you raise your hand the chair recognizes you. You will speak in the order that the committee chair recognized you. When you speak, you must first say, "I rise to make a speech."

C. If you wish to make a comment on a speech, you raise your hand and the chair recognizes you. Comments are allowed only on the previous speech and at the discretion of the chair. The committee chair must recognize you. You then say, "I rise to make a comment on the speech made by the delegate from _____."

D. If you have a question that you want to ask a delegate in your committee, you raise your hand and the chair recognizes you. You then rise "to ask a question to the delegate from _____."

3. How to Introduce your Resolution

A. Resolutions can **only** be introduced during General Debate on the agenda topic that relates to your resolution. However, they can be introduced at any time during the General Debate. Resolutions are typically introduced near the end of General Debate when most of the opinions have been discussed, questions answered, etc.

B. If you wish to introduce a resolution during General Debate, you raise your hand and the chair recognizes you. You then rise "to submit a resolution."

C. You read the title of the resolution, and hand the resolution over to a committee chair who records the title of the resolution on the committee report.

D. The clerk will hold onto all of the resolutions.

4. Holding a caucus

A. If you want to have an informal meeting with other delegates in the committee to draft a resolution, then you must

request it from the chair. General debate is the time when you can meet with other delegates for this purpose. If you want this to occur, follow the procedure for making a motion to caucus. It must be approved by a majority of the members of the committee.

5. How to end General Debate

A. If you wish to end General Debate on an agenda topic, you raise your hand and the chair recognizes you. You then rise and "make a motion to end debate."

B. At this time, the chair may decide, at their discretion, to have two delegates speak in favor of the motion, and two against the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. A chair does this when it looks like the delegates are in conflict about whether or not to end debate.

C. The motion to close debate must be agreed upon by a simple majority of the committee members.

D. After General Debate is closed, you move into what is called Substantive Debate, a debate on the proposed resolutions.

Substantive Debate

1. Debate on resolutions (Substantive Debate)

A. Again, the chair calls the committee to order. At this point, no delegates may speak unless they raise their hand, and the chair recognizes them.

B. After the committee has been called to order, the committee reads the titles of the resolutions that were introduced during General Debate in the order that they were introduced.

C. All of the same rules for speaking apply in Substantive Debate as they did during General Debate. However, the debate is no longer a general debate on the agenda topic, but a discussion about the proposed resolutions.

2. How to make amendments (changes) to a resolution

Note: Amendments are the most important function of substantive debate. The goal of the committee is to take several different resolutions and combine them into one resolution that expresses the solution of the committee as a whole on an unresolved global issue. Therefore, most of what

will occur during substantive debate will be combining operative clauses through the amendment process into a final, single resolution.

A. If you want to change the language or add an operative clause to a resolution, you must prepare an amendment in writing on a piece of paper. You cannot amend perambulatory clauses.

B. You raise your hand and the chair recognizes you. You then rise and make a motion to amend.

C. You will pass the amendment to the chair who will read it aloud.

D. The chair asks the writer of the resolution if the amendment is "friendly," if the writer will accept the amendment without debate or voting.

E. If the amendment is friendly, the co-chair adds the amendment, in writing, to the resolution automatically.

F. If the amendment is unfriendly, the chair must open debate on the amendment. All rules of debate apply.

G. Debate on the amendment ends when a delegate makes a motion to end debate on the amendment. This must be seconded, and voted on by the committee. If the motion passes, then debate continues on the resolution as a whole.

3. Making a motion to caucus during Substantive Debate

A. If you wish to meet with other delegates to draft amendments to a resolution, or to determine how to vote on a resolution, make a motion to caucus. Remember, you cannot caucus during this time to draft entirely new resolutions. That can only occur in General Debate.

3. Voting

A. In the United Nations, all voting takes place at once on all amendments and all resolutions for each agenda item. Passing an amendment or resolution requires a simple majority.

B. Voting on resolutions goes in the order that they were introduced.

C. First, a committee chair will read the amendments to the current resolution and the committee will vote upon them in the order in which they were presented. Remember, friendly amendments have already been automatically added to the resolution.

D. Second, a committee chair will read the new resolution as amended and the committee will vote on the resolution.

5. Selection of Speakers and Selection of Resolution for the General Assembly

A. The committee must decide which ONE resolution for each agenda item will be submitted to the Secretariat to be submitted to the General Assembly. The Rapporteur takes this information to the Secretariat. The resolution is turned in at the OPI for the Secretariat's review.

B. The committee chair will take nominations from the delegates in the committee for who should accompany the Rapporteur to the General Assembly in order to speak in favor and in opposition to the resolution.

C. The procedure for nominating delegates for the Speakers List in the General Assembly and the decision for which resolution should be submitted follows the same as the procedure for the election of the Rapporteur.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat will meet several times during the course of the conference in order to determine whether a resolution is suitable for debate in the General Assembly.

If the Secretariat determines that a committee's resolution needs to be revised then they will send a spokesperson to the committee to make suggestions for amendment.

It will then be the responsibility of the committee to open substantive debate on the resolution and make amendments, or abandon the resolution in order to continue with business related to another agenda topic.

The General Assembly

All rules of debate for resolutions and procedures listed above apply to the General Assembly. However, at the beginning of General Debate, the General Assembly will first hear from the Rapporteur and the

elected speakers of the committee before debate is opened on the resolution.

The General Assembly will be receiving resolutions from several committees that are debating the same agenda topics. Therefore, the goal of the General Assembly is the same as an individual committee. For example, Committee 1A, 1B, and 1C all will be submitting resolutions dealing with their respective committee's solution to Terrorism. Taking this into consideration, the General Assembly must take these separate resolutions and draft an amended final resolution that represents the will of the entire General Assembly. In essence, this is a resolution that seeks to solve an unresolved global problem that represents the will of the global community.