

2022 Jr. Model United Nations -Student Diplomat Program
Final Conference April Asynchronous Activities

Clarifying Questions Activity

Understanding how to ask and answer clarifying questions is one of the most important skills that student delegates need to practice before attending the Jr. Model United Nations Final Conferences! Ahead of the Final Conferences, delegates will receive a “final committee resolution” that is made up of three different corresponding preambulatory and operative clauses from the resolutions that delegates submitted. During the Final Conferences, delegates will be given the opportunity to ask the sponsors (authors) of each operative clause clarifying questions. The sponsors (authors) of



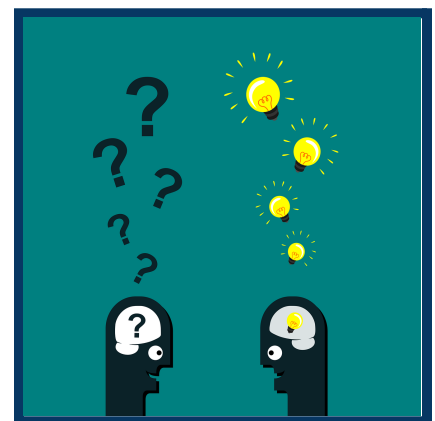
of the clauses will therefore have to be prepared to answer clarifying questions about the actions and solutions proposed in their operative clauses. Take a look at the sections below for more information on clarifying questions and activities that help delegates practice asking and answering clarifying questions!

What is a clarifying question?

Clarifying questions “clear up” any areas of a clause that someone may have a question or confusion about and provide a chance for the writer to explain in their own words and provide useful feedback to the audience. Clarifying questions help delegates understand what to focus on during the unmoderated caucus and amendment phases of the conference. They also allow delegates to build consensus on amendments to the clause and eventually help them agree when it comes time to vote. Usually, the best clarifying questions are not “yes” or “no” questions.

Examples of good clarifying questions are:

- What resources were used to inform these proposed actions?
- Did I hear you say...?
- Did I understand you correctly when you said...?
- What is another way we might...?
- Why do you think this is the best solution to the problem?
- How did you decide...?
- How did you determine...?
- How did you conclude...?
- What do you think would happen if...?
- What is the connection between...and...?



*Note that clarifying questions are not a time for delegates to share their opinions or thoughts on the content of the clause. Instead, delegates may express their opinions and thoughts to the rest of the committee group during the moderated caucus session that takes place after the clarifying questions session.

Practice asking a clarifying question!

Activity 1:

First, let's practice asking clarifying questions with an easy activity (you will need a partner for this activity)! Start by making a simple statement about a topic that both you and your partner are familiar with (but not the Model UN topic just yet!). Examples could be a class you are both taking at school, sports, music, fashion, politics, etc. Your partner then must ask you at least three clarifying questions about the statement that you made to understand your thoughts in more detail or to clear up any confusion they may have about what you are trying to communicate. Then switch roles so you can both practice asking the clarifying questions!

Example:

- Student 1 - "Basketball is more entertaining to watch than baseball."
- Student 2 - "How did you determine that basketball is more entertaining to watch?", "Is this your personal opinion, or did you find a source that states more people like to watch basketball?", "Are you saying that baseball isn't interesting to watch at all, or just less interesting than basketball?"

Activity 2:

Now, start to brainstorm some clarifying questions that you might ask the sponsors of each operative clause in your committee's final resolution! Bring this list of clarifying questions with you to the Final Conference and challenge yourself to ask at least one question during the program. Remember to use the clarifying questions session during the Final Conference as a time to learn more about the details of the actions or solutions your fellow delegates are proposing so you can make more informed and detailed amendments to the clause later on.

(Ask your Faculty Adviser where you can find your committee's final resolution)

Practice answering a clarifying question!

For students who had an operative clause chosen to be included in their committee's final resolution, make sure you also practice *answering* clarifying questions about your clause!

Remember these helpful tips as you prepare to answer clarifying questions about your clause:

- Practice your public speaking
- Be a good listener too - try to really understand what your fellow delegates are asking you about your clause
- Be prepared to cite your research and resources and use facts to back up your clause
- Practice "diplomatically responding" to a question you might not have the answer to
 - An example of this kind of response might be, "I am not quite sure of the answer to your question, but I will be sure to do some research and get back to you in the future."