



ASSIGNMENT

The Country Profile

Four to five pages, double-spaced. The country a student will speak for.

College and high school.

What it is for

A student cannot represent a government until they can say what that government wants and why. This paper is where that happens, and it is deliberately due early, well before the session, because it is the raw material every later decision draws on: the speech, the amendments the student will accept, the coalitions worth trying.

It is also the assignment that most often drifts. The failure mode is a country report: accurate, well sourced, and silent on what the country *wants*. The three parts below are weighted to prevent that, and the weighting should be shown to students when the assignment is set.

Part I: Background

Describe the country. What is the structure of the state: federal or centralized, and how much power actually sits with regional or local government? What are the demographics of the population? Is the country made up of long-settled citizens, or does it have a large migrant population, and how recently did that change? What social tensions exist, and which of them reach national politics? What is the state of the economy: growing or stagnant, agricultural, industrial or services-based?

Popular foods and customs are allowed, briefly. **But this is not a tourist brochure.** The test for every sentence in this part is whether a negotiator would act differently for knowing it.

What a strong Part I does that a competent one does not

- It reaches the governing document by name, and ideally by article, rather than describing the system in general terms.
- It names the current governing coalition and what holds it together, because that is the constraint the student will feel in the room.
- It ties at least one structural fact to a bargaining position. A federal state whose regions hold a veto over one policy area cannot concede that area, and saying so is worth more than a page of accurate description.

Part II: International relations and objectives

Who are the neighbors, and how does the country get along with them? Are there standing tensions, or partnerships outside the body being simulated? What does the country want from membership, specifically?

Every country hopes to prosper, so that sentence is worth nothing. Push for the particular: agricultural subsidies, security guarantees, open borders for investment, access to a labor market, a seat at a table it would not otherwise reach, leverage against a larger neighbor. Name the mechanism, not the aspiration.

Part III: Conclusions

The student's own judgment. What can this country realistically achieve inside the body? Where is it heading? If the student were a citizen of it, what would they want the government to push for, and what would they expect it to have to give up?

This is the one part where the student's own voice is wanted. In the Alter Ego paper it is not, which is worth saying out loud when both are assigned, because students routinely carry the habit from one into the other.

Where the points usually go

- **Citations on a reference page and not in the body.** The most common deduction on both papers. A claim about the economy needs its source attached to it, where it sits.
 - **A long accurate section that never connects to the country's interests.** Correct and unweighted.
 - **No source better than an encyclopedia,** when the national statistics office, the constitution and the government's own program are all online and free.
 - **Underlength.** Measured on the body text, not on the page count a title block inflates.
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Using this outside a Model EU

Nothing in either assignment depends on the European Union. Both ask the same two questions of any simulated body: what is the entity you speak for, and what is the office you hold inside it. Change the forum and the questions survive.

- **Model United Nations.** The country profile becomes the state's foreign policy and its position on the committee's topic; the alter ego becomes the permanent mission and the instructions a delegate actually operates under.
- **Model Arab League.** The same pair, with the decision rule doing more work, since a majority decision binds only the states that vote for it.
- **Model Congress.** The profile becomes the district and the member's electoral coalition; the alter ego becomes the committee seat, the leadership relationship and the record of votes the

member has to defend.

- **A planning board or council.** The profile becomes the municipality and the application before it; the alter ego becomes the seat, what the ordinance permits it to weigh, and who the member answers to at the next election.

Free to print, adapt and hand to a colleague. If you improve on either of these, please say so through the site.

Rubric

Each part is scored out of 100 and weighted. The weighted total is rounded half up, and the four part scores are shown to the student alongside it, so the grade can be explained six weeks later without reconstructing it.

Lateness is taken as a flat deduction from the computed total, not from a part score, and taken once.