SIMULATION DESIGN

Model United Nations: Two Days

The one-day session, then a second day on a merged text with the conflicts left in.

College and high school.

The one-day session below runs unchanged as day one. A colleague can run the short version, find that it works, and extend it later without rebuilding it.

The teaching problem

Students arrive believing Model UN is about speeches. It is about text and blocs. A delegate who gives a beautiful speech and is not on a working paper has accomplished nothing, and that is the single hardest thing to teach from the front of a room.

The session

A single committee, each student a member state, on the regulation of lethal autonomous weapons systems. The topic is chosen because it is genuinely live at the United Nations, because it splits the permanent members from the non-aligned rather than along any familiar classroom line, and because it has a humanitarian lobby that can be seated in the room.

The three roles that carry the design

- **Four to six sponsor states, who must produce text.** Without an obligation to write something, the room talks for a hundred minutes and writes nothing.
- **Two states that structurally cannot sign**, one with a domestic autonomous weapons industry and one under an existing arms embargo, so that agreement is not available for free.
- **One or two non-governmental observers**, with the right to speak but not to vote. It teaches the difference between having a voice and having power faster than any lecture.

The element that does the teaching

The obligation to produce text. Everything else in the design can be swapped, including the topic. Name the sponsors in advance, tell them a draft with three clauses is due by the end of the second caucus, and the room reorganizes itself around the people holding the pen. That is the accurate lesson about how the institution works.

Speaking turns

Every delegation speaks in the opening, in at least one moderated caucus, and in the explanation of vote. Sponsors additionally present text. **The observers speak twice by rule**, once in each

caucus, because otherwise the room silences them.

What to name as artificial

Real committees take days and produce documents through a process no class period can hold. Say so, and say that the compression falls on the drafting, which is why blocs get twenty minutes and three clauses rather than an afternoon.

The running order

0–10	Opening. The agenda, the three floor rules, the ninety-second limit, and the two moments at which motions are in order.
10–30	Opening statements, in a fixed order, ninety seconds each.
30–50	First moderated caucus. Sponsors identified; the two states that cannot sign say why, on the record.
50–70	**Unmoderated caucus.** Twenty minutes, standing, blocs forming and sponsors drafting three clauses.
70–85	Working paper presented and contested, clause by clause.
85–92	**The vote**, with a brief explanation of vote required from every delegation.
92–100	**Debrief.**

What the second day adds

Day one stops at the end of the working papers, with no vote. Between the days each bloc submits a one-page draft resolution, and you merge them overnight into a single working text **with the conflicts left visibly unresolved**.

Day two opens on that merged text: amendments from the floor, a speakers list, and a vote on each contested clause before a vote on the whole.

Two students work as a press corps and publish a one-page bulletin between the days, which is the cheapest way to make day one's positions public and therefore binding.

The trap in this format

Procedural theater. Students who have done Model UN before will burn the room on motions and points of order to display fluency. Cap it: motions are in order only at the two moments named on the agenda, and anything else is ruled out of order without discussion.

Before you publish the agenda

1. Can you say in one sentence what the session is for, without using the word coverage?
2. Does the question genuinely divide the room, and can the body actually decide it?
3. Is every role down for at least two scheduled turns?
4. Have the demanding roles been spread deliberately rather than claimed?
5. Does someone know they are chairing, and have they been briefed?
6. Have the real questions gone out, with a line saying they are the real ones?
7. Is anything artificial about the setup named in the student document?
8. Is there a ten-minute break in the middle for students to find allies, and is the room arranged so they can stand up and move?
9. Is the closing act something the room can watch fail?
10. Is the debrief in the running order, with time of its own?

The three floor rules to read aloud, and a minute-by-minute template, are in Running Order, Floor Rules, and the Day-Of Check on the Class-Based Simulations page. The topics below are defaults. Replace them with whatever is live when you run the session; what should not be replaced is the one structural element in each design that does the teaching.