

In Model United Nations, much of the work you do in conference will take place during **informal session**, otherwise known as caucuses. While formal session is useful for determining the climate of your committee room, informal sessions will be where you form your working groups, hash out the intricacies of topics, and complete most of your work on working papers.

Because formal session is so rigid and structured, informal session provides delegates with the opportunity to talk with other delegates one on one or in smaller groups to find allies and likeminded delegates. At a typical conference, committees will use formal session less and less as the conference goes on.

There are two types of caucuses that you will see at Model UN conferences—**moderated and unmoderated caucuses**.

Moderated caucuses are more similar to formal session in that they are timed, rapid-fire debate between all delegations within a committee. This type of caucus is more structured in that it has both a speaker's list and speaker's time as well as a subtopic that falls within the overall committee topic. These are not used very often in committee but do prove to be extremely useful when there exists controversy and conflict between many member states on a specific topic related to the overall topic. Some conferences do not have moderated caucuses.

Unmoderated caucuses are very informal and act as suspensions of all formal debate. Unmoderated caucuses are timed, usually lasting anywhere between half an hour to an hour, and serve as a way for delegates to leave their seats to talk with delegates all over the room.

Throughout the conference weekend, caucuses will serve different purposes.

Day 1 – On day 1, you will utilize caucuses to obtain information about other nations' policies and positions on the topic your committee is discussing. In order to effectively caucus you should be able to strongly defend your policy and aim to convince other delegates to support you.

Day 2 – On day 2 you will most likely find yourself in groups of likeminded individuals. Unmoderated caucus time is best spent discussing policy points, talking about your 3 Point Plan, and beginning to think about what content you will want in your working paper. It is essential to diplomatically discuss policies with other nations, working for a consensus rather than a competition of ideas.

End of Day 2/Day 3 – At this point you will use unmoderated caucus time to physically sit down with your working group around a computer and begin drafting and editing your working paper. After edits and sending back and forth to the dias staff, your paper will eventually become recognized as a [draft resolution](#).

Day 3/4 – When you are not working on the content of your paper, caucuses serve as a perfect time to discuss your paper and ideas with other working groups, getting a good understanding of the different ideas on the floor. In this time you will be able to gain support for your working paper while also seeing what ideas other working papers are covering. It is highly likely that your dias staff will require your group to merge papers with another group which you would do during unmoderated caucus time.

As you can see, the work that you will produce at the end of conference will mostly be completed during caucuses. While formal session is useful to address the committee as a

whole with regard to general ideas, merging papers, and discussing working papers on the floor, the actual policy making will take place during informal session.