## How to Structure a Resolution

A United Nations’ resolution should be looked at as being one long sentence with commas and semi-colons separating the various clauses and statements. A period should only appear at the end of the resolution. Resolutions are clear, concise and purposeful. Each clause in the resolution has a reason for being there, and presents the character of the nations that sponsor it. The ideas and actions flow smoothly from the preamble to the operative clauses, so that it reads like one long, long sentence that makes sense. There are **three** main parts to a resolution:

1. **The Heading**

The heading includes the forum that the resolution is being debated in, the issue and the country (s) sponsoring it.

1. **The Preamble**

The purpose of the preamble is to show that there is a problem that needs to be solved. The preamble of a resolution explains the issue and what (if anything), has been done in the past to try to solve it. You should remember that this is written from the point of view or bias of your country, or of the countries that sponsor the resolution i.e. Syria would not “deplore deaths caused by Palestinian suicide bombers” – the USA would.

The pre-ambulatory clauses can include:

* References to the U.N. Charter;
* Citations of past U.N. resolutions or treaties that been ratified under the topic of discussion;
* Statements made by the Secretary-General or a relevant U.N. body or agency;
* Recognition of the work or efforts of regional organizations in dealing with the issue; and
* General statements on the topic, its significance, and its effects.

1. **Operative Clauses**

Operative clauses are set out to achieve the country's main policy goals on the topic – what actions you want to see undertaken to solve, or partly solve, the issue. Each operative clause begins with a number, ends with a semicolon and the final clause ends with a period. Operative clauses should be organized in a logical progression, and each clause should contain a single idea or proposal requiring action. See an example of a resolution in this Chapter and a whole lot more in **Appendix VI**.

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| **The Structure of a Resolution** |
| **The heading:**  Includes the topic of the resolution, the organ or agency in which it is being introduced and the sponsoring nations of the resolution.  **The preamble:**  Explains the purpose of the resolution and states the main reasons for the suggestions that follow.  The preamble might also be used to mention earlier UN resolutions or actions on the same issue or topic, or refer delegates to appropriate sections within the Charter.  Remember, the preamble should contain the background to the problem, the arguments and the reasoning behind the calls for action contained in the operative clauses.  Each sentence finishes with a comma.  **The operative clauses:** (also called the “activating” or “actuating” clauses),  Lists the recommendations being made for action on the issue or topic.  It is important to note that operative clauses consist only of expressions of will or calls for action from member nations, the UN organs or agencies.  Each operative clause finishes with a semi colon except the last; which finishes with a period. |

## 7.3 Amendments – what are they?

During the forum, you (assuming you are not the main submitter or sponsor) and other delegates will try to improve, alter, or water-down the resolution (depending on your country’s position), through changes known as amendments. Amendments are the “written” give and take of delegates trying to get the resolution into an acceptable form that meets all their individual country’s positions, while at the same time trying to solve the issue. Real UN resolutions seldom if ever, solve an issue in one or even multiple sessions. It is often a slow step by step process. Most conferences have two forms of amendments:

* **Friendly amendment***.* A friendly amendment is a change to the resolution that all the sponsors feel is appropriate – maybe something they forgot.
* **Unfriendly amendment.** An unfriendly amendment is an amendment that the sponsors of the resolution do not support. Not good if you are on the receiving end.

## 7.4 Tips on Writing Resolutions

* + Resolutions don’t have to solve the whole problem. A resolution, 10 pages long with 59 operative clauses that tries to do it all, will not get you any sponsors, nor will it get you onto the forum “floor”.
  + Be realistic. Often, a major achievement is getting a resolution passed that simply gets two opposing sides, who are ready to slit each others throats, to sit down and talk.
  + Learn from existing resolutions. Look at UN resolutions on your issue and examine how they are structured. Check out ones from previous MUN conferences and the examples in **Appendix VI**. Look, but don’t be tempted to plagiarise!
  + Know your issue, know your country’s position on the issue and try to come up with creative, but reasonable operative clauses, that are acceptable to as many delegates as possible.
  + If you have worked through Chapter 7, *Improving your Negotiating Skills,* you will know about trying to separate national interests from negotiating positions. Effective diplomats must learn how to expand the number of solutions to a problem rather than reduce them, by narrowly sticking to their country’s **negotiating** position. Note: this does not mean you abandon your country’s position! Read Chapter 7 if you want to know more.

## 7.5 What words are used in resolutions?

There are certain words and phrases that are commonly used to initiate preamble and operative clauses in resolutions. Keep the following list handy at conferences.

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| **Lines in the Preamble typically start with the following words:** | | | |
| Acknowledging...  Affirming…  Alarmed...  Anxious...  Approving...  Aware …  Bearing in mind ...  Being convinced ...  Believing ...  Cognizant ...  Concerned ... Condemning…  Confident ...  Conscious ...  Considering ...  Contemplating ...  Convinced ...  Declaring ...  Deploring…  Deeply disturbed…  Desiring … | Desiring …  Determined …  Distressed…  Disturbed…  Emphasizing ...  Encouraged ...  Endorsing ...  Examining…  Expecting ...  Expressing ...  ...appreciation...  ...deep appreciation...  Fulfilling ...  Fully …  ...aware ...  ...believing...  ...bearing in mind…  Grieved…  Guided by  Having…  ...adopted... | ...approved...  ...considered...  ... decided…  …examined…  …heard…  …received…  …recognized…  …regard for …  …resolved…  …reviewed…  …studied…  Further…  ...received...  ...reviewed...  Hearing…  Keeping in mind...  Mindful…  Noting...  ...further...  ...with approval...  ...with concern... | ...with deep concern…  ...with grave concern…  ...with regret...  ...with satisfaction...  Observing...  Reaffirming...  Realizing...  Recalling...  Recognizing...  Referring...  Regretting...  Reiterating...  Seeking...  Shocked…  Stressing...  Taking into account…  Taking into consideration…  Taking note…  Underlining…  Urging…  Welcoming… |

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| **Lines in the operative clauses typically start with the following words:** | | | |
| Accepts...  Adopts...  Affirms...  Appeals...  Appreciates...  Approves...  Authorizes...  Calls upon...  Commends...  Concurs...  Condemns...  Confirms...  Congratulates...  Considers...  …it desirable…  Decides...  ...accordingly...  Declares... | Demands…  Deplores...  Designates...  Directs...  Draws attention to..  Emphasizes...  Encourages...  Endorses...  Expresses...  ...its appreciation...  ...its conviction...  ...its regret...  ...its sympathy...  ...its thanks...  ...the belief...  ...the hope...  Further...  …concurs… | …invites  ...proclaims...  ...reminds...  ...recommends...  ...requests...  ...resolves...  Instructs...  Invites...  Notes...  ...with appreciation  ...with approval...  ...with interest...  ...with satisfaction...  Proclaims…  Reaffirms...  ...its belief...  Recognizes...  Recommends... | Regrets...  Reiterates…  Rejects…  Reminds…  Renews…  … its appeal  Repeats...  Requests…  Resolves…  Suggests...  Strongly...  Supports...  Takes note of...  Transmits...  Urges...  Welcomes... |

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| **Extraordinary Enhancements (to be combined with perambulatories or operatives)** | | | |
| According...  Again…  Also…  Anew…  Deeply…  Firmly…  Further…  Furthermore…  Gravely… | Its…  …appeal…  …appreciation…  …approval…  …belief…  …call…  …concern…  …conviction…  …hopes… | Its…  …interest…  …regret…  …requests…  …satisfaction…  …sympathy…  …thanks…  …the belief…  Keenly… | Nevertheless…  Profoundly…  Solemnly…  Strongly…  With (deep)…  …appreciation…  …concern…  Urgently… |

Now that you know everything there is to know about writing a resolution, let’s look at an example. Note how it reads like one long sentence.

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| **Sample Resolution** |
| **Committee:** The Security Council  **Question of:** The Situation in Angola  **Main submitters**: Canada, Portugal, France, Russian Federation  **Co**-sponsors: Ethiopia, South Africa, Argentina, Czech Republic  THE SECURITY COUNCIL,  ***Recognizing*** that UNITA still has military capability including military equipment, and millions of dollars in diamond revenues,  ***Aware*** that these assets are used primarily to engage in military activities against the central government,  ***Realizing*** that the only way to end this ongoing civil war is to restrain  UNITA by cutting its economic funding,   1. ***Stresses*** the obligation of all Member States to comply fully with the measures imposed against UNITA; 2. ***Requests*** that sanctions be implemented against any state or organization which sells and supplies arms and any other form of military assistance to UNITA 3. ***Requests*** that sanctions be implemented against the sale or supply of petroleum products to UNITA; 4. ***Requests*** that sanctions be implemented against the provision of funds or financial resources to UNITA; 5. ***Requests*** that sanctions be implemented against representation abroad, and travel by UNITA and adult members of the immediate families of the UNITA leadership; 6. ***Requests*** the Secretary-General to appoint a Panel of Experts, to collect information on sanctions violations and to recommend measures both to end those violations and to improve the application of sanctions, specifically addressing the sources of revenue, funding and petroleum supplies of UNITA, and also addressing the sources of military support for UNITA; 7. ***Calls upon*** all States, relevant United Nations bodies and concerned parties, including non-governmental organizations and enterprises, to cooperate in a full and timely manner with the expert panels to facilitate the implementation of their mandate; 8. ***Requests*** the Chairman of Sanctions Committee to submit to the Council within six months an interim report of the expert panels regarding their progress and preliminary findings and recommendations and to submit to the Council within six months of the formation of the expert panels their final report with recommendations; 9. ***Decides*** to remain actively seized of the matter. |