



What is Model Diplomacy?

Model Diplomacy is a free foreign policy simulation of the National Security Council (NSC) and UN Security Council (UNSC) that presents both historical and hypothetical foreign policy scenarios based on real issues, with content informed by Council on Foreign Relations experts.

What Will Students Learn?

Students who participate in a Model Diplomacy simulation gain essential knowledge, build important skills, and broaden their perspectives surrounding global issues.

Model Diplomacy uses a variety of pedagogical tools to create an effective, meaningful, and memorable learning experience for students. It is a project-based learning activity. Project-based learning (PBL) leads to better learning outcomes, improves skills, and is more fun than traditional instructional methods. In Model Diplomacy, students also practice what many call the four Cs of

twenty-first-century education: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Students come away from Model Diplomacy with an appreciation for the complexity of policy questions and an understanding of how policymakers make decisions. They also come away armed with research and communications skills and experience overcoming differences and reaching a collaborative conclusion. You can read more about the pedagogy and learning behind Model Diplomacy in the Teacher Resources section on the site.



Photo Credit: Goodfocus

What Does a Simulation Look Like?

Whether historical or hypothetical, whether a simulation of the National Security Council or UN Security Council, every case is divided into four sections.



Photo Credit: Pete Souza/White House

1. NSC OR UNSC GUIDE

Section one is designed to explain the body that students will be simulating, including its history, how it works, who its major players are, and more. There is also a video interview with experts who have served on the body, and links to resources for learning more.



Photo Credit: Jianan Yu/Reuters

2. CASE NOTES

Section two contains the actual case study. The introduction to section two has a clear decision point: the question that students will debate during the role-play. This is followed by detailed background material and a discussion of the role that the United States (in an NSC case) or the United Nations (in a UNSC case) plays.



Photo Credit: Ivan Villegas Photography

3. ROLE-PLAY

Section three walks students through how to prepare for and conduct the role-play. First, students have access to an individual role sheet that includes suggested research questions and resources for a student's assigned role. This is followed by guidelines for a position memo (for NSC cases) or for draft clauses (for the UNSC). Finally, there is a dashboard for students to use during the role-play that walks them through the discussion procedure.



Photo Credit: Ivan Villegas Photography

4. WRAP-UP

Reflection is critical to any learning process, and section four walks students through it. All cases include a framework for reflecting on the role-play while still sitting around the table in person, as well as guidelines for a written reflection. In historical cases, there is also a section describing how policymakers responded to the case's decision point in real life.

What Students Do in a Simulation

PREPARATION

Section 1: Council Guide



Learn about the history and function of the council



Watch a video about the council



Peruse additional readings



Take a quiz*

Section 2: Case Study



Read the case notes



Watch the case video



Understand the decision point



Peruse additional readings



Take a quiz*

ACTIVE LEARNING

Section 3: Role-play



Read role details



Conduct guided research



Write a position memo



Participate in in-person role-play

Section 4: Wrap-up



Discuss and reflect on role-play



Write a policy review memo

**optional*

How Can You Customize It?

Model Diplomacy is flexible enough to meet a variety of needs. If you are busy (and who isn't?) you can make a few essential decisions while choosing and building your case and the website will do the rest. If you like to tinker and customize, we're there for you too with tools and suggestions to help you mold Model Diplomacy to your needs.



Photo Credit: Don Pollard

CHOOSE A CASE

The case library will help you learn about all the cases as you pick the one that makes the most sense for you.

BASIC VS. ADVANCED

Nearly all Model Diplomacy cases come in basic and advanced versions. The primary difference is that basic cases are shorter: both the council guide (section one) and the case (section two) are 2,000 to 2,500 words each instead of 7,000 to 8,000 words. Basic cases are also designed to present the case in a more narrative fashion, skipping over some of the more theoretical elements of the problem.

NSC VS. UNSC

While all cases are available in NSC versions, which focus on U.S. foreign policy, some are also available in UNSC versions, which look at problems from a global perspective.

ASSIGNING ROLES

The way you assign roles, and in particular whether you, as the instructor, play a role, can markedly change the way the simulation runs. We'll walk you through it in our instructor guide.

Once you've made these decisions, you could just set a date for the role-play and ask students to prepare and complete their written assessments on their own. The website will walk them through the preparation and provide the framework for the role-play. But we also provide tools to customize further.

How Can I Learn More?

You can preview any case to get a sense of how a simulation is run. If you create a free account, you can view the full case and get access to detailed instructor resources that walk you through every aspect of running a successful Model Diplomacy simulation.

What if I Have Questions?

Feel free to reach out! We are accessible by email at modeldiplomacy@cfr.org.