

# Facilitating Virtual Diplomacy Simulations

U.S. Department of State

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National Museum  
*of American Diplomacy*

# **Facilitating Simulations**

# Three Key Components

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- The simulation introduction.
- The skills of diplomacy.
- Guiding the process.



# **The Simulation Introduction**

The program mechanics

# What is a Simulation?

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- A collaborative learning experience.
- Participants assume assigned roles, each with distinct perspectives or points of view.
- Participants interact with others in a specific situation or moment in time.
- Participants representing multiple perspectives come together to negotiate a hypothetical or real-world scenario.



# Simulation Goals

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- Understand the role of the State Department in the U.S. Government.
- Experience the complexity of foreign relations.
- Appreciate the nuances of doing diplomacy.
- Learn about the work of diplomats.
- Consider what makes an issue a global issue.



# Ensure Students Understand Scenario

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- Distribute materials ahead of time.
- Discuss the global issue that is the focus of the scenario.
- Create stakeholder groups to include students with diverse skills.
- Meet with each stakeholder group to review their position.



# Explain the Structure - Moves are Held in Breakout Rooms

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- **Formal Meeting Room:** Main meeting in Zoom.
- **Stakeholder Meeting Room:** Team chat room.
- **Negotiating Meeting Rooms:** Representatives from each stakeholder group in assigned chat rooms.



# Agenda Example

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- 15 minutes: Formal Meeting Room: Introduction
- 10 minutes: Stakeholder Meeting Rooms
- 10 minutes: Formal Meeting Room: Opening Statements
- 20 minutes: Negotiating Rooms discussions
- 5 minutes: Brief formal meeting
- 10 minutes: Stakeholder meeting
- 15 minutes: Second formal session
- 10 minutes: Debrief discussion

**Total Time: 95 minutes**



# **The Skills of Diplomacy**

How Students Work Together

# What is Diplomacy?

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Diplomacy is the art and practice of building relationships and conducting international relations.

Diplomacy includes negotiating alliances, treaties and agreements, and includes the tact and skill of working with people.



Diplomacy is not debate.

Diplomacy is advocating your  
interests and finding common  
ground.



# The Skills of Diplomacy

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**Composure:** Professionally present your position and calmly deal with difficult partners.

**Awareness:** Respect the different cultures and customs represented at the table.

**Analysis:** Study the situation, research and think critically about what is going on.

**Communication:** Articulate your position, and listen openly to the other country's positions. Listen for where interests overlap.

**Management:** Use the skills and strengths of your team members. Know what tools and resources you have at your disposal. Example: staff, money.

**Innovation:** Observe current conditions and practices and offer creative improvements, solutions and methods to better carry out the mission.

**Leadership:** Take action and make decisions using what information is available. Keep the big picture in mind.

**Collaboration:** Incorporate the ideas of others and find common ground.

**Advocacy:** Uphold and advance U.S. interests in all aspects of diplomatic work.



# Negotiation Tips

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- **Know your strengths and weaknesses:** Be clear on what you bring to the table. Know and implement incentives and disincentives (the carrot and the stick).
- **Know your friends and your adversaries:** Use your relationships to help you.
- **Know all the options:** Weigh different perspectives.
- **Know all the angles:** Think strategically.
- **Know when to concede:** Look for common ground. It's OK to give something up.
- **Know your timeframe:** Be sensitive to the point when the situation turns into a crisis.



# Recap!

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- **Clearly Determine Your Position And Agree On Your Strategy.**
- **Realistically Evaluate Possible Actions Before You Propose Them.**
- **Analyze Other Groups' Positions.**
- **Incentives and Disincentives (“Carrots and Sticks”)**
- **Build Alliances.**



# **Guiding the Process**

# Facilitator will Guide Stakeholder Groups

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- **Prioritize possible actions** according to your position, needs, and wants.
- **Select a spokesperson** who will deliver a 1-minute opening statement explaining your position.
- **Negotiate with other groups** to find solutions to the problem.
- **Prepare to form alliances** among groups to create progress.



# Facilitator will Guide Stakeholder Groups to Determine:

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**Action:** What is your priority action?

**Resources:** What do you need to accomplish this action? Money?  
Human resources? Supplies?

**Partners:** What other stakeholder needs to help you?

**Timeline:** When can/should this action commence?



# Facilitating Tips

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- Using the skills of diplomacy is at the heart of this program.
- Students must use diplomacy skills within their stakeholder groups *as well as* with the groups around the table.
- Once opening statements begin, draft a program agenda for yourself.
- Actively listen, take notes during simulation.
- Your role is to drive the students to specificity; groups may challenge each other on ideology, but press for an agreed upon plan of action.



# More Facilitating Tips!

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- If comments are confusing, interrupt and ask them to clarify.
- Point out if the conversation collapses into a debate.  
Challenge them to *create* or *seek* a solution. FIND COMMON GROUND!
- The the action items the students come up can be their own.
- No two groups enact a simulation the same.
- The more you facilitate, the easier it becomes.

