

# Letter from the Editors

Greetings Members of the International Press!

We are pleased to welcome you to the SBSMUN2017. The Fourth Estate, a newsletter released on each day of the conference, has always been an integral part of our MUNs. Journalism, as an authoritative critique, is an invaluable link between the leaders and the public and the Fourth Estate aims to seek the truth and translate complex ideas and events into understandable terms.

While writing the articles, clicking the pictures and sketching the cartoons that will make up these newsletters, it will be your responsibility to uphold the core of the Fourth Estate. This is a mammoth task and so, for the first time, we have decided to compile an IP Handbook to help you get started on writing various types of articles. It can act as an introduction to journalism for first time reporters and as a review for the experienced ones. There are also sections catering to the art and photography departments and we urge you to read the same before the start of the conference.

While this guide covers a section of your research, please keep in mind that it's not meant to be exhaustive. Use it merely as a starting point to develop your own research. We also encourage you to go through the background guides for the committees in order to help you understand the agendas in greater depth. Keep in mind that content and style are both equal and interdependent parts of a good article. Finally, don't let a particular format restrict your own creativity. The formats are simply meant as guides to which you can bring your own personal style of reporting.

In this edition of the SBSMUN, we are introducing a new award for the IP: The Best Journalist Team. This will be awarded to a group consisting of one journalist, one cartoonist and one photographer who have collaborated together during the course of the conference. The three parts of the IP are expected to work together and assist each other to put up truly complete pieces.

Over to you, members of the International Press. Have the courage to venture beyond what is directly stated, and resist being influenced by biases. You can contact us, or the photography and art directors for any queries.

Good luck!

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## Journalists

### ACCURACY

This section aims to describe the acceptable practices of journalism used in the SBSMUN. Accuracy is at the heart of what we do, and takes precedence over speed.

- ***Sourcing***  
Accuracy entails honesty in sourcing. Journalists are expected to use sources unaltered and avoid naming sources in the plural when only one is available. Named sources are always better than unnamed ones, and anonymous sources are the weakest. Cross-check and corroborate information wherever possible, and be honest while citing them.
- ***Quotes***  
Quotes are sacred, and must never be altered except to delete a redundant word or phrase and that too only if the change doesn't alter the sense of the quote in any way. A quote should be representative of the speaker and elements such as sarcasm or revealing body language (such as a wink to hint that it wasn't meant seriously) must always be reported as well. Quotes should be accompanied with the relevant context and circumstances. If there is any doubt whether the quote can be run verbatim, the editors must be consulted. Also, mention who you are quoting and make sure the spelling is correct.
- ***Reflecting Reality***  
Often, it can be tempting for journalists to hype or sensationalise stories, skewing the reality of the situation and misleading the reader into assumptions that are wrong or potentially harmful. For instance, a "flood" of immigrants may be a small group of people in reality, or a "surge" in inflation may, in fact, be a modest rise. Stopping to consider the words being used leads to more precise and accurate reporting.
- ***"Take no side, tell all sides"***  
At SBSMUN, stories should reflect all sides of a conflict or dispute and a single stance must not be taken (exception- Op-Eds, see below). This objectivity doesn't always come down to giving equal space to all sides. For instance the perpetrator of an atrocity warrants less space than the victims. However, we must strive to be scrupulously fair and balanced. Allegations shouldn't be portrayed as fact, nor charges as a sign of guilt. Words must also be carefully considered- words like "rebut", "refute" or "failed to comment" hint at an editorial judgement and should best be avoided.
- ***Opinion and Analysis***  
We maintain a clear distinction between our factual news and our opinion pieces. Factual news reports or articles cannot show any bias or favour a particular side of a dispute. They may showcase the opinion of others through quotes or paraphrasing, however they cannot reflect the opinion of the journalist, or of the Fourth Estate. This also holds true

for analysis or feature articles, which offer in-depth explanations on particular issues without being biased or compromising the standards of fairness. Opinion articles, on the other hand, provide an insight into the journalist's stance on the matter. These will naturally be biased, however, they are vital for greater understanding of a single perspective on a certain issue.

- ***Discriminatory Language and Stereotypes***

We must avoid inappropriate references to gender, culture, religion, ethnicity, appearance, age, or sexual orientation. Journalists should be sensitive to unconscious stereotyping and dated assumptions and their language should be neutral and natural. Moreover, journalists shouldn't believe that their particular cultural values, religious beliefs, or social practices are the norm. Remove yourself from your mind and write as a third-person i.e. someone from the outside, where the reader probably will be too.

## **TYPES OF ARTICLES**

This section elaborates upon the various types of articles that can be a part of the newsletter, and their properties, characteristics, and styles. Re-read your pieces and re-read this guide to make sure the two align.

### **1. Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed)**

***Word Limit: 400-500 words***

#### ***Message***

Identify your reasons for writing an Op-Ed. Understanding the reasons for writing the Op-Ed will help you hone your message and identify the main points to be stressed upon in the text. An opinion piece must reflect your stance. Therefore, you must formulate a stance before writing. In order to achieve this, research the agenda you have been assigned and know it inside out.

#### ***The Ask***

Now consider the objective of your Op-Ed. Your piece should provoke discussion, controversy, and response. What do you want your target audience to do? Once you answer this question, the article will have a purpose. Remember, the language you use must align with this purpose.

#### ***Background Information***

While you might have researched your subject matter thoroughly, it is imperative to understand that the reader may not be well-versed with the focus of the article. Therefore, as a journalist, you must determine what background information is essential for the readers to

fully understand the issue, in order to enable them to follow your argument. Develop a brief paragraph or two which explains this necessary background information in a concise yet coherent manner.

### ***Substantiation***

Every statement made must be supported by factual information from reliable sources (links provided towards the end of the guide). Even though this is an opinion piece, unlike the general public a journalist must always have an informed opinion. The most efficient method of writing such an article is to analyse your research with a certain degree of subjectivity.

### ***Persuasive***

A good piece argues effectively for a particular point. Even though the reader may not ultimately agree with the author, the reader comes away from a good Op-Ed willing to seriously consider the author's perspective. Here, language is your ultimate weapon. However, always keep in mind that you are a journalist for the Model United Nations; your articles must be formal.

### ***Tone***

Is the opinion piece respectful? The focus is on persuading the reader rather than voicing indignation or condemnation. Rather than dismissing the other side, it acknowledges its value while disagreeing with it. It comes across as written by a thoughtful professional, well-versed in the subject being discussed. Thus, avoid using personal pronouns. Remember to be assertive, not aggressive.

### **Examples of Op-Eds:**

<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/22/opinion/rifle-marijuana-safety/>

<https://livableworld.org/reuters-op-ed-on-iran-by-jim-walsh/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/pages/opinion/index.html>

## **2. Feature Article**

***Word Limit: 200-350 words***

### ***Message***

A feature is a piece that lets the creative juices flow. It's open and explorative- any style, be it poetry, prose or free verse can be used. But, with such freedom, one must be careful. The

piece must align with the assigned committee. The writing can be relatively casual but as a journalist of the Fourth Estate, words should be chosen wisely. Usually, these pieces tend to be thought-provoking and question certain perspectives on events, decisions or actions. Use observations made during conferences, interviews taken, witty conversations or funny instances into creating a feature one can't resist reading till the very end.

### ***The Ask***

Feature articles are not very factual in nature and hence, they have a tendency to become vague at times. You *must* focus on sticking to the agenda. The reader must understand what the message being put forth. Hence, the theme and genre of this piece should be decided keeping the MUN in mind, if not the assigned committee or agenda.

### ***Background information***

A feature usually doesn't require an extensive or detailed background. However, when an instance or minor event is referred to or a delegate is quoted then the context is imperative. An observation needs a context because not all readers are present during the conference.

### ***Analysis***

This section is fluid and varies from piece to piece. The focus should be on accuracy and precision of writing.

### ***Persuasive***

The words must sell the piece to the reader. Keep your diction in line with the emotion you want to evoke in the reader's mind. If the piece is talking about a humorous instance, the vocabulary should resonate with humour. Use sarcasm, satire, metaphors, poetry and so on, to put your message forth .

### ***Tone***

The register must be formal and dignified. If you are writing about something you don't personally agree with, be constructive but not offensive. As in other forms, no slang or profane words should be used.

### **Examples of Feature Articles:**

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/featurehub>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/05/magazine/all-the-presidents-lawyers.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/05/magazine/hated-by-the-right-mocked-by-the-left->

[who-wants-to-be-liberal-anymore.html](http://who-wants-to-be-liberal-anymore.html)

### **3. Beat-Based Article**

*Word Limit: 300-450 words*

#### *Message*

Beat reporting is in-depth reporting on a particular event or issue over time. Beat reporters have an extensive familiarity with and passion for the topic. Good beat reports can help answer the “how” and “why” components of a news story.

#### *The Ask*

Beat reports are specialised and delve deep into the crux of a story. Beat reporters develop expertise in their fields due to their frequent contact with related sources. They earn their trust and so beat reports are generally regarded as accurate. Remember to not fall into the trap of reporting stories that are only of interest to the sources. Keep the outside world in mind and remember who you’re writing for.

#### *Background information*

Beat reporters build up an extensive base of knowledge on the topic, allowing them to provide commentary and insight in addition to reporting straight facts. Thus, beat articles are usually more detailed and analytic in nature as compared to simple reports. Learn everything you can by reading through the background guides or researching online.

#### *Analysis*

All statements made must be supported by factual evidence; in the form of sources, statistics, quotes, paraphrases etc. Be careful not to take a stance- beat reports must be neutral. Thus, although analysis is allowed, and in fact, encouraged, evaluation of claims isn’t.

#### *Persuasive*

The strength of this particular piece is its detailed knowledge about the topic. If background research is done accurately, the piece will appear persuasive on its own. Moreover, due to the reporter’s rapport with sources, a sense of trust is built up, lending credibility to the article.

#### *Tone*

Beat based articles are neutral and tend to avoid being emotional. They have facts, but these

are backed up by a further explanation or analysis. No slang, no profanity and no insensitive comments should be used. Use figures and specific details for emphasis.

**Examples of Beat-Based Articles:**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/01/AR2005110101644.html>

<http://www.sfgate.com/green/article/100-years-100-million-acres-of-land-saved-2469558.php>

**4. Report**

*Word Limit: 100-250 words*

Reports are completely factual in nature. The piece simply recounts the events of the conference. The reader must get a view of the proceedings and understand what has been accomplished by the delegates. Such pieces require attention to be completely focused on the conference proceedings. These pieces have to be informative, the reader must be kept up-to-date with the conference. This does not mean that each and every detail has to be reported verbatim or that a simple summary has to be narrated. Approach the Executive Board, the Organising Committee or delegates for information.

**Example of Report:**

[http://www.bbc.com/news/special\\_reports](http://www.bbc.com/news/special_reports)

## GRAMMAR

- The newsletter follows Oxford English and so should your writing.
- Re-read each line. Each word must have a purpose. Edit and re-edit.
- Capitalise the beginning of sentences, names, places and so on.
- Mention the full form of the abbreviation followed by the abbreviation in brackets. For example; Republic of Korea (RoK). The MUN and its committees are accepted abbreviations hence don't require this rule.
- Pay attention to punctuation. The Oxford comma is to be followed.
- Use different paragraphs for marking a change in thought, context or event.
- Focus on syntax and avoid long sentences. Try using and/or only once in a sentence. It makes the text easily comprehensible to the reader.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- All articles must be accompanied by a title, the name of the journalist, and the date
- All articles must be mailed to both editors (email ids under the Letter from the Editors)
- All articles should have the filename "*Committee Name-Type of Article-Journalist Name*"
- We will be giving the Pre-Con issue on Day 1, the Day 1 issue on Day 2 and the Day 2 issue on Day 3. The Day 3 issue will be uploaded on the SBSMUN website. All articles for a particular day must reach us before 6:30 pm on that particular day (for example, all articles for the Day 1 issue must reach us by 6:30 pm on Day 1)

## Cartoonists

NOTE: Cartoonists are expected to coordinate with the Journalists and Photographers if specific cartoons are needed for an article.

### **TIPS FOR DRAWING POLITICAL CARTOONS**

#### **1) Know the issue**

Research on the issue you have chosen in great depth. Read the background guides for the agendas and do a thorough internet search for information to base your cartoon on. Know the various people, countries and perspectives involved.

#### **2) Choose your stance**

After learning about the different perspectives, choose the one you want to showcase through your cartoon. Does it attack or defend? Support or counter? Think about how you'll portray your stance through your cartoon.

#### **3) Use symbolism**

Political cartoons often make use of symbols or images that represent larger or more complex ideas. Decide on what element of your cartoon will be used to symbolise your chosen idea prior to drawing in order to maintain a clear focus.

#### **4) Consider using exaggeration or analogies**

Exaggeration is commonly used while drawing caricatures of political figures, emphasising one of their prominent features. This adds a humorous touch to the cartoon and can help attract viewers. Another approach is to have a completely black and white cartoon, but have one particular element in one colour. Analogies are used to connect a particular idea with a more well-known one, in order to make the message more understandable to the public. For instance, an international dispute can be shown by two children arguing over a toy.

#### **5) Label elements**

You can include labels to make the message of the cartoon clearer. Although not often used in other types of cartoons, they are often used in political ones to increase the impact of the message. Try using labels on things that may otherwise be unclear, but don't overuse them.

#### **6) Add dialogue and captions**

In the end, add dialogue (if required) using speech bubbles or thought bubbles. Also, be

sure to give your cartoon an interesting, catchy caption.

## SUBMISSIONS

- All cartoons must be scanned and mailed to the Editors (email ids under the Letter from the Editors). The Directors of Art will help you with the same. If your cartoon is supposed to accompany a specific article, be sure to mention that.
- Scanned copies should have the filename “*Committee name-Accompanying article (if any)-Cartoonist Name*”
- All cartoons should have the signature or the initials of the artist in the corner
- We will be giving the Pre-Con issue on Day 1, the Day 1 issue on Day 2 and the Day 2 issue on Day 3. The Day 3 issue will be uploaded on the SBSMUN website. All cartoons for a particular day must reach us before 6:30 pm on that particular day (for example, all cartoons for the Day 1 issue must reach us by 6:30 pm on Day 1).

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## **Photographers**

NOTE: Photographers are expected to coordinate with the Journalists and Cartoonists if specific pictures are needed for an article.

### **TIPS**

**While clicking pictures, here are a few pointers you must keep in mind-**

#### **1) Understand your camera as much as you can!**

Know your camera's ISO limits; know when it starts to get grainy, and set a mental note for that. This way, you can increase your ISO to the highest value, while maintaining quality.

#### **2) Framing and composition**

The eye is always drawn to the brightest part of the frame first. Having bright lights or colors at the end of the photograph is discouraged. This is why photographers are encouraged to correctly expose for the subject of their photographs, rather than other elements.

Try finding patterns and shapes within your frame to make it more interesting without compromising on the subject. Shapes such as lines can become an interesting part of your photograph.

Keep your backgrounds as clean as possible so that the viewer does not get distracted from the subject(s). Avoid unnecessary clutter/ colors in the background.

#### **3) When you have the advantage of daylight, make the most of it!**

This means shooting wherever daylight is available- from windows to doorways. Not only does daylight look natural, it is significantly brighter than even the brightest flashes.

#### **4) Avoid overhead lighting.**

Overhead lighting casts these unflattering shadows that exaggerates wrinkles and eye bags.

#### **5) Get out of automatic mode to take control of the all-important shutter speed**

When shooting indoors, it is recommended to shoot on shutter priority mode (Tv for Canon, S for Nikon) with a shutter speed no slower than 1/60 to 1/200. Anything higher than 1/200 may gain interference from any artificial lighting source you may have.

1/60 to 1/200 is a nice range, because it affords you enough speed to capture a sharp image without motion blur, and it avoids capturing that nasty light frequency interference.

Shooting on aperture priority or manual mode indoors is incredibly helpful as well because you can then control the depth of field. Indoor photos usually have very busy backgrounds, so reducing your depth of field can produce a much more pleasing photo.

## 6) Be patient

Few people these days associated with the tag of photographer possess patience. It is the single most necessary trait of a good photographer. The advent of digital technology and the ability to take thousands of photographs on a SD Card rather than wait for the single most powerful photo because you only have 36 exposures on a reel, has diluted the quality and skill of many young photographers today.

Only with patience can a photographer study their subject, the light in a scene, capture the peak of an emotion/action and compose an interesting photograph.

## SUBMISSIONS

- All photographers will shoot in RAW+JPEG format.
- The entire shoot must be submitted to the Editors via the Directors of Photography. For this, all photographers will be must report to the IP Room at a specified time on the days of the conference. Here, the Photographers will first select 50 of their best photographs based upon guidelines given in the Guide and copy these images (RAW Images) into a folder called First Select. Then from these 50 images, they will select 20 best photographs and copy them to a folder within the First Select folder, called Second Select.

At the end, the entire shoot must be submitted in a folder named in the format -  
“Date\_Name\_CommitteesCovered”

*For example: 20170727\_DivaRanka\_UNSC-UNGA-OpeningCeremony*

Within this folder there will be a folder called First Select, having 50 photographs.

Within the folder called 'First Select' will be a folder called 'Second Select' containing 20 best photographs.

- Photographers will submit the post-processed versions (High Resolution JPEGs) of all photographs in the folder called 'Second Select'.
- The Directors of Photography will supervise the process and support the photographers wherever necessary, whether it is in selection of photographs or in post-processing. It is their job to ensure that all photographs are submitted according to the deadlines given, and that all memory cards are empty before the photographers leave the Conference on each day.

*Happy clicking!*

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**We hope this guide has been informative and helpful. However, you can approach any of us whenever you wish to. Lastly, enjoy this conference and learn as much as you can!**