Explanation of Position Papers

Basically what a position paper is is a way of organizing and analyzing research so that you are prepared for debate. They are required by the organizations that run the conferences, and are read by your chair who then counts it toward your overall score. A position paper has a specific set-up that varies a little bit from conference to conference, but in general it starts with a paragraph on your country and its involvement in your council, and then addresses each topic individually. Each topic section should be about 500 words or less.

And the important stuff, what is in a position paper?

Basically you want to address three questions in a topic section:

- What your involvement has been in the past? What agreements have you signed, what related bodies are you a part of? What have you done in your own country or your country’s policy to address the problem?
- What is your stance on the current state of the issue? What are your opinions?
- How should the problem be solved according to your own country’s position? What would you like to see done?

And a few pointers on position papers-

- They are really short for the scope of the issues you will be discussing. It can be hard to get in everything you want to, but it is important to abide by the word restriction.
- Always read the instructions that are distributed by the conference authorities. They send out “delegate handbooks” that have a brief on each topic and questions that the chairs want you to answer in your papers. Make sure you get those answered.
- Hard facts and quotes go a long way in showing that you’ve done your research. Use them to back up your statements whenever possible.
- Position Papers are a demonstration of your research, not necessarily your writing ability, so focus less on making it eloquent, and focus more on having hard facts clearly presented.