

## The United Nations (UN)

### Reading and Discussion

The **United Nations** is an international organization with 192 country members. These countries have joined together to strive for peace and security in the world. The UN was established officially on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945 to take the place of the **League of Nations** which was founded after World War I between 57 nations. It was meant to work on peace and to promote social and economic cooperation. However, it was considered a failure as it was unable to stop or prevent World War II.

Between April and June of 1945, 50 countries met at the United Nations **Conference for International Organization** in San Francisco to finalize the rules for international cooperation between the countries. In June 1945, the rules were signed by the 50 countries and later by Poland which could not attend the conference, but is recognized as a founding member. The rules that were ratified and signed by the 51 countries are seen as the Constitution of the UN, or the UN Charter. The Charter lists the goals, principles, and objectives of the UN and all member countries must abide by it. According to the Charter, the main goals of the UN are as follows:

- to keep peace by settling disputes or taking steps to stop aggression;
- to develop friendship between nations by respecting equal rights and freedoms;
- to bring about international cooperation to help people live better lives;
- to act as a centre to help nations achieve these aims.

The founding member countries that met in San Francisco wanted to ensure that they could prevent wars and try to expand the areas of development and cooperation between the member countries. However, no country member wanted to establish a world government, which is the reason that the UN does not pass laws, but only issues resolutions. Each country still has its own sovereignty. This means that member countries are forbidden to interfere or meddle with the local affairs of another country. The UN cannot impose taxes on the different member countries, but each country pays its share of the UN expenses.

The UN was founded to act as a permanent place where countries could talk about problems or issues and try to work out solutions for them. The UN relies mainly on public influence rather than legal power. Since the UN was founded, many countries have been accepted as members, and as there are so many different countries and members, six official languages have been adopted: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

The headquarters of the UN are in New York City, but it is considered to be on international territory. The European headquarters are located in Geneva, Switzerland. The UN has many offices all over the world. It also has its own flag, post office, and stamps. The spokesperson of the UN is called the Secretary General and is elected every five years. Though the 5 year term can be renewed indefinitely, no one has held that position for more than two 5 year terms. The UN is divided into six main working groups and has many commissions, committees, agencies, and other organizations to deal with special subjects and specific fields.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activities

### Activity A: Multiple Choice:

1. The United Nations replaced:
  - a. The League of Nations
  - b. The Community of Nations
  - c. The Charter of Nations
  - d. None of the above
  
2. The number of countries that are members of the United Nations is:
  - a. 50
  - b. **51**
  - c. 192
  - d. 292
  
3. The official languages of the UN are all except:
  - a. Arabic
  - b. Chinese
  - c. French
  - d. German

### Activity B: List three goals of the United Nations:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity C: True or False:

- \_\_\_\_ 1. The UN Charter represents the constitution of the UN
- \_\_\_\_ 2. The UN is divided into seven main working groups.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. The UN was established to act as a world government that is able to pass laws and impose taxes.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. The UN was founded to act as a permanent place where countries can talk about problems or issues and try to work out solutions for them.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. The UN was established officially on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

### Activity A

1. The United Nations replaced:
  - a. **The League of Nations**
  - b. The Community of Nations
  - c. The Charter of Nations
  - d. None of the above
  
2. The number of countries that are members of the United Nations is:
  - a. 50
  - b. 51
  - c. 192
  - d. 292
  
3. The official languages of the UN are all except:
  - a. Arabic
  - b. Chinese
  - c. French
  - d. **German**

### Activity B

- a) to keep peace by settling disputes or taking steps to stop aggression;
- b) to develop friendship between nations by respecting the equal rights and freedoms;
- c) to bring about international cooperation to help people live better lives;
- d) to act as a centre to help nations achieve these aims.

### Activity C

- T   1. The UN Charter represents the constitution of the UN
- F   2. The UN is divided into seven main working groups.
- F   3. The UN was established to act as a world government that is able to pass laws and impose taxes.
- T   4. The UN was founded to act as a permanent place where countries can talk about problems or issues and try to work out solutions for them.
- T   11. The UN was established officially on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945.