

An Effort to Maintain Peace: The United Nations

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SRA Corrective Reading Series

Grade 6

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The United Nations was established at the end of World War II by the allied countries in hopes of preserving peace throughout the world. Each of the allies—the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union (now Russia), the Republic of China (now the Peoples' Republic of China), and France—played a major role in the establishment of the group. People thought that world peace would be more likely if nations worked together in a **spirit** of cooperation and **trust**. By becoming a member nation, a country agrees to accept the obligations of the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations Charter has four main goals: one, to maintain international peace and security; two, to develop friendly relations among nations; three, to cooperate in solving international problems and in respecting the rights of humans; and four, to be a **center** for bringing together the nations of the world. These lofty founding ideals of the United Nations charter are still at the forefront of the organization's mission, even though the efforts of the United Nations have not always been a success.

The United Nations replaced an earlier organization, the League of Nations. The League of Nations was established after World War I as a diplomatic **force** for preserving peace after the worst war in world history. However, since the League of Nations was not successful in preventing World War II, leader nations—particularly the United States—thought it obsolete. At the beginning, there were 51 member nations in the United Nations, but now that number has risen to 191 countries.

The United Nations is divided up into administrative bodies such as the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the International Court of Justice. Headquartered in New York City, the United Nations is not a world government, and it does not create or pass laws. The United Nations simply gives countries a chance to **resolve** problems and differences that affect the global community. Since the emphasis is on global concerns, the official languages of the United Nations are: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. The working languages at the United Nations are English and French. So, if you are multilingual, you might want to apply for a job at the United Nations!

Successful Efforts

The United Nations, in conjunction with other agencies, has worked tirelessly to help people who have been affected by famine, or displaced by war and natural disasters. They have provided humanitarian assistance in the form of clean drinking water, food, medical care, and shelter. The United Nations feeds over 100 million people a year in

over 80 countries throughout the world. Additionally, the U.N.'s High Commissioner for Refugees has projects in 116 countries. Due to the efforts of the United Nations' vaccination and immunization programs in the developing world, small pox has been virtually eliminated, and polio is expected to be eliminated as a health issue in the next several years.

Obviously, this kind of humanitarian work takes **dedication** on the part of people implementing the programs. Unfortunately, there have been times when the work of the United Nations put the aid workers at risk. For example, three United Nations workers who were involved in a humanitarian effort to help refugees in Indonesia were killed in an attack on September 6, 2000.

Unsuccessful Efforts

There have been several times in the recent past when the United Nations attempted to intervene in a humanitarian way, but because of internal strife or harsh conditions, the humanitarian efforts went awry. For instance, United Nations peacekeepers, along with United States forces, attempted to deliver food supplies to starving people in Somalia. Warlords diverted the food, and when the forces tried to rectify the situation, the Battle of Mogadishu occurred, causing a great outcry from the world.

Comprehension

- 1 The United Nations was chartered—
 - a by the losers of World War II.
 - b by the victors of World War II.
 - c by the victors of World War I.

[anno: b]
- 2 One of the countries that helped establish the United Nations changed its name from the Soviet Union to—
 - a Russia.
 - b the People's Republic of China.
 - c the Republic of China.

[anno: a]
- 3 Which one of the following is not a goal of the United Nations, as stated in the article?
 - a to maintain international peace and security
 - b to cooperate in solving problems
 - c to work toward the goal of everyone speaking the same language worldwide

[anno: c]

- 4 The United Nations replaced an earlier organization called—
- a the United States.
 - b the League of Nations.
 - c the League of States.

[anno: b]

- 5 Which one of the following is not an administrative body of the United Nations?
- a International Court of Justice
 - b General Assembly
 - c Congress

[anno: c]

- 6 There are currently 191 member nations in the United Nations. When the organization began, there were—
- a 5 member nations.
 - b 100 member nations.
 - c 51 member nations.

[anno: c]

- 7 The working languages of the United Nations are—
- a Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.
 - b Arabic, Chinese, English, and French.
 - c English and French.

[anno: c]

- 8 One of the humanitarian missions not mentioned in the article is—
- a feeding the hungry.
 - b giving aid to children through immunizations.
 - c making grants available to people.

[anno: c]

- 9 As discussed in the article, what are the risks sometimes taken by aid workers?
- a They might have to drink unsafe water.
 - b They might catch a disease like polio.
 - c They might be attacked, as the workers in Indonesia were in 2000.

[anno: c]

- 10 What were the United Nations peacekeepers and U.S. forces trying to do in Somalia?
- a trying to prevent civil war
 - b trying to prevent people from drinking unsafe water
 - c trying to deliver food to starving people

[anno: c]

Learn About Words

A Often, you can tell the meaning of a word from the other words and ideas in the story.

In the paragraph, find the word that best fits the meaning below. Write the word.

- 1 part (1) [anno: role]
- 2 acting jointly (1) [anno: cooperate]
- 3 high, tall (2) [anno: lofty]
- 4 keeping (3) [anno: preserving]
- 5 to secure the approval of (4) [anno: pass]
- 6 knowing several languages (4) [anno: multilingual]
- 7 cooperation (5) [anno: conjunction]
- 8 almost entirely (5) [anno: virtually]
- 9 devotion (6) [anno: dedication]
- 10 conflict (7) [anno: strife]

B A word may have more than one meaning. The word's meaning depends on the way it is used.

Look back at the paragraph to see how the word in **boldface** is used. Decide which of the three meanings below fits best. Write the letter to the correct answer.

- 11 trust (1)
 - a financial credit
 - b a property interest
 - c confident hope

[anno: c]

- 12 spirit (1)
 - a ghost
 - b mood
 - c life-giving force

[anno: b]

- 13 center (2)
 - a middle point
 - b politically moderate
 - c focus

[anno: a]

- 14 force (3)
 - a an influence
 - b capacity to persuade or convince
 - c strength or energy

[anno: b]

- 15 resolve (4)
a solve
b to make or pass a formal resolution
c determination

[anno: a]

- 16 dedication (6)
a to inscribe
b to set apart for a definite purpose
c loyal

[anno: c]

- 17 instance (7)
a example
b instigation

[anno: a]

C Homonyms are words that sound alike but have entirely different meanings.
Match each of these words with its definition.

Column I

- 18 ade
19 aid
20 aide
21 affect
22 effect
23 block
24 bloc
25 chord
26 cord
27 cored

Column II

- to change [anno: affect]
divested of its central core [anno: cored]
beverage [anno: ade]
harmony [anno: chord]
an alliance [anno: bloc]
to assist [anno: aid]
an assistant [anno: aide]
tight rope [anno: cord]
result [anno: effect]
square [anno: block]

D Synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meaning.
For each word in Column I, find a synonym in Column II and write it.

Column I

- 28 abbreviate
29 absurd
30 ordinary
31 character
32 scavenge
33 attorney
34 mull
35 quip

Column II

- commonplace [anno: ordinary]
reputation [anno: character]
search [anno: scavenge]
lawyer [anno: attorney]
senseless [anno: absurd]
think [anno: mull]
shorten [anno: abbreviate]
joke [anno: quip]