

Moduli

CLIL

Content and Language Integrated Learning

- 1 A Look at the United Nations and at the UN Security Council



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A Look at the United Nations and at the UN Security Council

In this module you will learn about:

- The history, goals and structure of The United Nations
- The United Nations Security Council and some criticism concerning it
- A call for UN intervention from Egypt's president
- Terms, verbs and expressions related to the topic and to law in general

Warm-up

Answer the following questions.

1. When and why was the United Nations founded?

.....

2. Can you mention at least three of the UN main organs?

.....

3. What is the veto power?

.....

Hands on Activity

Group work. You have been asked to create a organization within your school. The main mission of this organization is to maintain a peaceful and collaborative atmosphere at school.

Write down the following elements in your notebook:

1. Specific problems you want to address (e.g. bullying, inclusion of foreign students, etc.)
2. Who will be involved (students, teachers, parents, school staff, external members)
3. How will your organization will be structured
4. Voting system
5. Main functions
6. Expected results

Reading

The United Nations

The United Nations (UN), which emerged in 1945 from the devastation of global conflict, **aims** to save future generations from the **scourge** of war.

Its mission is to maintain international peace and security and to promote friendly relations among countries.

The UN Charter **upholds** human rights and proposes that states should work together to **overcome** social, economic, humanitarian and cultural **challenges**.

The UN's predecessor, the League of Nations, was established after World War I.

It aimed to prevent another global conflict, but it **failed** to **halt** the **slide** towards war in the 1930s and was disbanded in 1946. The League of Nations **ceased** its activities after failing to prevent the Second World War.

Much of the league's structure and many of its aims were adopted by its successor.

In 1944 the US, Britain, the Soviet Union and China met in Washington and **agreed** on a blueprint for a proposed world organisation.

The **blueprint** formed the basis of talks in 1945 between representatives from 51 countries. Under the terms of the resulting charter the UN came into being on 24 October 1945.

The UN **comprises** 193 member states. Membership grew as colonies became independent and the Soviet Union disintegrated. The Vatican and Taiwan remain non-members. Most members have permanent missions at the UN's main **headquarters** in New York.

Potential members are recommended by the Security Council and are admitted by a two-thirds majority vote in the General Assembly.

Member nations contribute to the running costs of the UN. A country's contribution is **assessed** on its ability to pay. The US is the top contributor.

The Charter of the United Nations is the constitutional instrument of the UN. It sets forth the rights and obligations of member states, and establishes its principal organs and procedures. The Charter can be considered an international treaty. It codifies basic tenets of international relations – from the sovereign equality of states to the prohibition of the use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

The Charter establishes six principal organs of the United Nations: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. The United Nations Family, however, is much larger, **encompassing** 15 agencies and several programmes and bodies.

Under the Charter, the official languages of the United Nations are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.



GLOSSARY

aim: to direct one's efforts towards something

scourge: something that causes great suffering

uphold: to defend

overcome: to successfully deal with (something difficult)

challenge: a difficult task or problem

fail: to not succeed

halt: to stop

slide: the act of moving to a different state or condition

cease: to come or bring to an end

agree: to have the same opinion

blueprint: a design, plan

comprise: to consist of

headquarters: a place from which something is controlled or directed

assess: evaluate or estimate the nature, ability, or quality of

encompass: to include different types of things

- 1 Complete the following sentences. Your answers must be related to the concepts contained in the text.

1. The UN is an international organization established immediately after

2. The Charter sets forth the purposes of the UN such as:
3. The UN replaced the which was established by the peace treaties that ended World War I and which aimed at
4. In, when the UN was founded, there were members.
5. nations are now members of the organization.
6. The UN's main headquarters are in
7. Admission of potential members requires and
8. The UN principal organs and procedures are established by
9. The principal organs of the UN are:
10. The official languages include:

2 Find adjectives or terms that are associated with the following words. When you have finished, translate the word associations you have found. Use your dictionary if necessary.

1. conflict:
2. peace:
3. relations:
4. rights:
5. organization:
6. headquarters:
7. costs:
8. organs:
9. treaty:

3 Research activity. Along with the principal organs of the United Nations, there are many bodies which function as specialised agencies of the UN, including the following:

- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- International Labor Organization (ILO)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Find out where their headquarters are and what are their functions.

Interesting fact

United Nations Day is celebrated on 24 October each year. It is part of the United Nations Week which runs from 20 to 26 October.

24 October has been celebrated as United Nations Day since 1948. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly recommended that the day be observed by Member States as a public holiday.

This day is traditionally celebrated all over the world with meetings, discussions and exhibits about the aims and achievements of the organization.

Reading

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

The Security Council is one of the principal organs of the United Nations system and has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

This means that it is responsible for encouraging the peaceful **settlement** of **disputes**, for creating peacekeeping operations, for imposing sanctions and even for authorising the use of military force.

Currently, there are 15 member states in the UNSC. Five of these have the power of veto: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China. These countries represent the victors of World War Two and are the permanent members of the Council. They are also called the P5 and are the 'veto-wielding' members of the Council.

The other ten members are elected by the General Assembly for two-years terms.

Each member has one vote. There are two systems of voting in the Security Council. On procedural **matters** the affirmative vote of any nine members is necessary, but on substantive matters the nine affirmative votes **required** must include those of the five permanent members.

All five permanent members have exercised the right of veto at one time or another. If a permanent member does not fully agree with a proposed resolution, but does not wish to cast its veto, it may choose to abstain – thus allowing the resolution to be adopted if it obtains the required number of nine votes in favour.

While other organs of the United Nations can only make recommendations to governments, the UNSC is the only organ capable of **issuing** resolutions that are legally binding on all Member States.

In order to **fulfil** its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and when faced with a conflict, the first action of the Council is to recommend to the parties that they reach agreement through peaceful means. It may appoint special representatives, it may ask the Secretary-General to appoint special representatives, and may set some principles for the peaceful settlement of the conflict. When a dispute leads to fighting, the UNSC will try

to bring it to an end as soon as possible. It can do so by issuing **ceasefire** directives, economic sanctions, sending into the conflict UN peacekeeping forces or diplomats and eventually deciding on enforcement actions such as collective military action. The Council's other responsibilities include recommending the admission of new members and the appointment of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA). Together with the UNGA, it is responsible for electing the judges of the International Court of Justice.

Since its **establishment** in 1946, the Security Council has been faced with considerable criticism and since that time there have been many requests for a reform of the Council. A large part of the criticism is **due to** the structure of the Council that many believe is undemocratic. This is especially true because it gives considerable power and privileges to certain countries of the world. The main example is the veto power of the Permanent Five.

However, it is important to note that the permanent members are increasingly aware of the unpopularity of **casting** a veto and it is one of the reasons they tend to minimise its use.

Instead of casting a veto countries increasingly prefer to use the "pocket veto" (**namely** the **threat** of the use of veto).



GLOSSARY

settlement: an official agreement that finishes an argument

dispute: a disagreement

matter: a subject that is considered

require: to need

issue: to put forth or distribute usually officially

fulfil: to do what is required by (something)

ceasefire: an agreement to stop fighting a war for a period of time so that a permanent agreement can be made to end the war

establishment: founding, creation

due to: because of

cast: to vote

namely: that is to say

threat: the possibility that something bad or harmful could happen

1 In your own words, briefly describe:

1. What is the United Nations Security Council and what its primary responsibility is.

.....

.....

2. How is the UNSC structured and how does its voting system work.

.....

.....

.....

2 Find two correct verbs for each term.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. impose, call for, carry | a. peace |
| 2. make, display, give | b. a veto |
| 3. maintain, keep, declare | c. a sanction |
| 4. face, open, accept | d. criticism |
| 5. cast, use, do | e. a recommendation |

1	2	3	4	5

3 Group work. As you have seen, the UN Security Council is at the centre of a lively debate, particularly in relation to the veto system. In groups write down 1) reasons and problems related to the veto system and 2) two possible solutions to the veto system.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Interesting fact

So familiar was a Soviet veto in the early days of the UN that Andrei Gromyko, foreign minister between 1957 and 1985, became known as "Mr Nyet", Mr No.

During the first 10 years of the UN the Soviet Union used its veto 79 times. However, the Soviet Union came to use its veto less and less. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the veto has been used by Russia only twice.

The United States started using the power of veto in 1970 and since then is the most frequent user of this right.

Most of Britain's vetoes have been on draft resolutions also vetoed by the United States and France.

France used its veto power sparingly.

Between 1946 and 1971, the Chinese seat at the Security Council was occupied by the Republic of China (Taiwan), which used its veto once to block Mongolia's application for UN membership.

Listening



① Listen to this piece of news about Libya and complete the following passage.

Egypt's president is calling for the to intervene in Libya. He says that the Islamic state is a threat to world and he is also calling for immediate, urgent and effective
 His request comes as Egyptian warplanes bombed at least two ISIS inside Libya. Reports suggested that 60 militants have been killed.
 This happened in response to a posted online that showed the alleged beheadings of 21 Egyptian Christians.
 Ever since Libya has been in a state of disarray.
 The president called for to be made available to Libya's internationally recognised government.
 The UN Security Council is to hold an on Wednesday to discuss the crisis.

② As you have heard the president of Egypt is calling for the UN to intervene in Libya. Answer the following questions using the lexicon given.

1. Can the use of military force be considered 'humanitarian'?
2. Should military intervention be excluded in all circumstances?
3. What could be done to avoid it?

We think that

.....

We would like to point out that

.....

It is certain that

.....

What we mean is that

.....

On the other hand

.....

Rather than

.....

We would suggest that

.....

To conclude with

.....

.....

Revision time!

Group work. Divide the class into three groups. Each group has to prepare a short oral presentation about the following topics. Use the lexicon given.

1. The United Nations, history and structure
2. The Security Council, its goals and voting system
3. Criticism of UN military interventions

The topic of our presentation is ...

We will start with ...

As you probably know ...

It was created in ...

These include ...

It's primary responsibility is ...

A controversial aspect is ...

This is due to the fact that ...

Examples include ...

We think that ...

In conclusion ...

When finished each group should give his presentation in front of the classroom.

Online Resources

The website of the United Nations

<http://www.un.org/en/>

The Charter of the United Nations

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

Basic facts about the United Nations

<http://munkiconference.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/4/2/15422056/basic-facts-about-the-un.pdf>