The United Nations

In October 1945, right after World War II, fifty-one countries started an organization with a goal of keeping peace, developing friendly relationships among countries, and improving the quality of life for the world's poor people. This organization, called the United Nations (UN), has 193 member nations today.

In its peacekeeping role, the UN sends troops to bring stability and peace to troubled areas of the world. UN peacekeepers are troops or police sent from member countries. They wear their own country's uniform with a UN helmet or beret. One of the UN's peacekeeping missions is in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country in Africa where tribes and smaller militias have been fighting for years. UN peacekeepers are there to protect civilians and aid workers from physical violence. They are also helping the country's government restore the rule of law. The UN currently has 15 similar missions around the world.

In its role to improve the quality of life for the world's poor, two of the most well-known UN organizations are the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). UNICEF works in poor areas of the world to help prevent disease and child abuse. UNICEF also support the rights and education of children, especially girls, who do not receive equal treatment to boys in many parts of the world. The WFP works to end hunger around the world. Part of this involves bringing food when there is an emergency. The other part involves preventing hunger in poor parts of the world. The WFP does this by providing school meals to encourage families to keep their kids in school, helping farmers find good markets for selling their products, and paying people with food in exchange for their labor building improvements to their communities.

[redacted]

Your Report

Follow the directions and answer the questions below, then explain to your group what the United Nations is all about.

Read. Read the article through one time so you know what's there.

Mark It Up.

1) Circle the year the United Nations was founded and the number of countries involved today.
2) Underline the main purpose of the United Nations. (This could be the reason why it was started or its main goal.)
3) Box the two main roles of the United Nations.
4) Put [brackets] around one example for each role.

Take Notes. You will use these when you tell your group about the United Nations.

The United Nations was founded in _____.

_____ countries are involved today.

The reason the United Nations exists is to _____

_____

_____.

The United Nations has two roles:

1. _____
2. _____

A good example of something the United Nations does is _____

_____

_____

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a group of countries in Europe and North America that have signed a treaty agreeing to protect each other in case of attack. NATO was founded in April 1949 by twelve countries. Today, NATO has 28 member countries. NATO countries protect themselves by working together to help stabilize parts of the world that are in trouble.

One role of NATO countries is to help keep peace and security around the world, even in non-member countries. For example, NATO troops are in Afghanistan helping the government there to maintain control of the country and fight the threat of terrorism. In addition, NATO troops in both Afghanistan and Iraq are helping to train the militaries in those countries to be able to stand on their own. In another part of the world, "Operation Ocean Shield" uses naval ships from NATO countries to fight pirates and provide security to ships off the Horn of Africa.

NATO also uses its resources to help both member countries and non-member countries after a natural disaster. It does this because it believes the world will be more safe and secure if victims of natural disaster receive help quickly. For example, in 2010 Pakistan suffered major flooding and asked NATO for help. NATO agreed to deliver donations from countries and nongovernmental organizations. NATO airplanes delivered many supplies from member countries: generators, water pumps, and tents donated from Slovakia; food and medical supplies donated by Germany; field hospitals from Denmark; and blankets and tents from France, as well as baby food and high energy biscuits from nongovernmental organizations along with other aid donations.



Your Report

Follow the directions and answer the questions below, then explain to your group what the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is all about.

Read. Read the article through one time so you know what's there.

Mark It Up.

1) Circle the year NATO was founded and the number of countries involved today.
2) Underline the main purpose of NATO. (This could be the reason why it was started or its main goal.)
3) Box the two main roles of NATO.
4) Put [brackets] around one example for each role.

Take Notes. You will use these when you tell your group about the NATO.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was founded in _____.

_____ countries are involved today.

The reason NATO exists is to _____

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_____.

NATO has two roles:

1. _____
2. _____

A good example of something NATO does is _____

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_____

The European Union

The European Union (EU) is a partnership between countries in Europe that is designed to help them avoid conflict by making them dependent on each other. The EU began in 1951 with a treaty between six countries who agreed to operate their coal and steel industries together. This way, none of the six could manufacture its own weapons to use against the others in war. Later, the six countries began to adopt the same economic rules, such as paying farmers in all countries the same for their produce. They also allowed goods to be traded between the six countries without any taxes for moving products across borders. The idea was that countries that depended on each other would be less likely to go to war against each other. Today, the EU has 27 member countries.

One role of the EU is to create a single economy in which all of the members participate. All of the countries use the same unit of money, called the Euro. Goods trade freely between the member countries without being taxed.

Another role of the EU is to act as a single voice in the world for its member countries. The EU is run by a European government that is made up of representatives voted into office by citizens in the 27 countries. The government of the EU makes decisions about what the EU as a group will do about a wide variety of issues, such as terrorism. By acting as one unit, the members have more influence than they would if they each acted alone. For example, the EU might use its influence to negotiate peace between countries in conflict.

Finally, the EU plays a major role giving aid to countries around the world that have problems such as hunger, disease, and environmental contamination. For example, the EU keeps aid workers in the Caribbean to help people in those countries develop better ways to cope with natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. The EU is also actively distributing food to people in the poorest countries of Africa.



Your Report

Follow the directions and answer the questions below, then explain to your group what the European Union is all about.

Read. Read the article through one time so you know what's there.

Mark It Up.

1) Circle the year the European Union was founded and the number of countries involved today.
2) Underline the main purpose of the European Union. (This could be the reason why it was started or its main goal.)
3) Box the two main roles of the European Union.
4) Put [brackets] around one example for each role.

Take Notes. You will use these when you tell your group about the European Union.

The European Union was founded in _____.

_____ countries are involved today.

The reason the European Union exists is to _____

_____

_____.

The European Union has three roles:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A good example of something the European Union does is _____

_____

_____

The World Health Organization

The World Health Organization (WHO) is an organization within the United Nations that works to improve health around the entire world. It does this not only by providing health care in poor areas, but also by conducting research in order to wipe out disease and by helping countries develop their health care systems. The WHO was started by the United Nations on April 7, 1948. April 7 is now known as "World Health Day." The United Nations has 193 member countries today.

One important role of the WHO is to gather data about health around the world. It compiles statistics about things like the leading causes of death in different areas of the world and how often certain diseases occur. It even keeps track of smoking in different parts of the world. Tracking these kinds of data helps the WHO understand what needs to be done to help people. The WHO data also helps researchers in individual countries, where much of the medical research in the world takes place.

Another role of the WHO is to help keep people healthy around the world. The WHO sponsors many health programs. Some of these programs focus on wiping out specific diseases, such as dengue, a deadly flu-like virus transmitted by mosquitoes in tropical areas of the world. The WHO helps prevent this disease through programs that control the spread of mosquitoes and by conducting research. The WHO also makes sure as many children as possible in the world have been immunized against diseases such as whooping cough, measles, and tuberculosis. The WHO's aggressive Global Polio Eradication Initiative has wiped out polio from much of the world.

The WHO also plays a role responding to crises around the world. For example, the WHO has set up a rehydration center to help people dehydrated from drought in Yemen. Drought also leads to malnutrition, because food cannot grow without water. When there is a famine, the WHO treats medical complications that result from severe malnutrition and helps fight disease in communities weakened by lack of food.

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Your Report

Follow the directions and answer the questions below, then explain to your group what the World Health Organization is all about.

Read. Read the article through one time so you know what's there.

Mark It Up.

1) Circle the year the World Health Organization was founded and the number of countries involved today.
2) Underline the main purpose of the WHO. (This could be the reason why it was started or its main goal.)
3) Box the two main roles of the WHO.
4) Put [brackets] around one example for each role.

Take Notes. You will use these when you tell your group about the World Health Organization.

The World Health Organization was founded in _____.

_____ countries are involved today.

The reason the WHO exists is to _____

_____

_____.

The World Health Organization has three roles:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A good example of something the WHO does is _____

_____

_____

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies work to help people around the world. (Islamic countries usually have a red crescent instead of a red cross.) Currently 186 countries have societies. The first Red Cross society was formed in 1863 in Geneva, Switzerland, by five men who wanted to organize volunteers who could help wounded soldiers during wartime.

Today, the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies do much more than help wounded soldiers. One of the main roles of these societies is to respond to disasters. For example, the American Red Cross acted immediately to help victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The Red Cross set up emergency medical clinics and helped victims and families try to contact each other. In another example, in August 2011 there was a shipwreck near the island nation of Comoros off the east coast of Africa. The Comoros Red Crescent society offered first aid, helped identify the remains of people killed, and supported the families of survivors and their families.

Each country has its own society, so another role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies is to run programs in their local communities. For example, the Red Crescent in the capitol of Kyrgyzstan runs a school for street children with help from the Netherlands Red Cross. In Thailand, where drug offenders often spend decades in prison, the Thai Red Cross Society helps prisoners stay healthy while in jail and learn to adjust to life once they are released. In Australia, young volunteers from the Australian Red Cross go out to parties and dance clubs to educate other young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Finally, people from the Red Cross and Red Crescent play a very important role in visiting prisoners of war and civilians who are imprisoned during times of conflict. The Red Cross and Red Crescent checks to see whether the prisoners are being treated humanely as required by an international treaty called the Geneva Convention. The Red Cross and Red Crescent also helps them communicate with their families, if possible.

[redacted]



Your Report

Follow the directions and answer the questions below, then explain to your group what the Red Cross and Red Crescent are all about.

Read. Read the article through one time so you know what's there.

Mark It Up.

1) Circle the year the Red Cross was founded and the number of countries involved today.
2) Underline the main purpose of the Red Cross/Red Crescent. (This could be the reason why it was started or its main goal.)
3) Box the two main roles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.
4) Put [brackets] around one example for each role.

Take Notes. You will use these when you tell your group about the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

The Red Cross/Red Crescent was founded in _____.

_____ countries are involved today.

The reason the Red Cross/Crescent exists is to _____

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_____.

The Red Cross/Red Crescent has three roles:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A good example of something the Red Cross/Crescent does is ____

_____

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The World Bank

The World Bank is an organization that helps poor and middle-income countries get the money they need to build improvements that will help reduce poverty. The World Bank was founded in 1944. Today, it is owned by 187 member countries. There are two main organizations within the World Bank, each with its own role.

One role of the World Bank is to improve the living conditions in countries with moderate financial resources. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) is the part of the World Bank that does this. The IBRD helps middle-income countries figure out what their needs are and what strategies will work best. Then, the IBRD helps these countries get loans or other kinds of financial aid to build programs that will help. For example, the government of Mexico needed to increase energy efficiency in Mexico, but it could not succeed unless its poorest people participated. The IBRD helped Mexico start a program that gives out free fluorescent bulbs and gives people discounts for replacing their old appliances. In Costa Rica, the IBRD helped with special financing that lets the country get money to deal with natural disasters without taking money away from other important projects.

Another role of the World Bank is to improve conditions in the poorest countries in the world. The International Development Association (IDA) is the part of the World Bank that does this. The IDA helps poor countries by giving them grants of money or loans with no interest. The countries use this money to improve their citizens' living conditions and to improve economic growth in the country. For example, in 2008 there was a dramatic increase in food prices in Ethiopia. The IDA helped Ethiopia buy fertilizer for the 2009 growing season. This helped the farmers produce more food the next year, which lowered prices. In Vietnam, the IDA has helped people have access to clean water by providing money to develop new water sources and to reconstruct old water distribution systems.

Your Report

Follow the directions and answer the questions below, then explain to your group what the World Bank is all about.

Read. Read the article through one time so you know what's there.

Mark It Up.

1) Circle the year the World Bank was founded and the number of countries involved today.
2) Underline the main purpose of the World Bank. (This could be the reason why it was started or its main goal.)
3) Box the two main roles of the World Bank.
4) Put [brackets] around one example for each role.

Take Notes. You will use these when you tell your group about the World Bank.

The World Bank was founded in _____.

_____ countries are involved today.

The reason the World Bank exists is to _____

_____

_____.

The World Bank has two roles:

1. _____
2. _____

A good example of something the World Bank does is _____

_____

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