

Introduction to the UN

Grade: 8

Subject: Social Studies

Time: 50 Minutes

Critical Issues - Lesson Plan

Unit: Power and Authority	Specific Topic: United Nations
URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/teachers/citizenship_11_14/subject_areas/united_nations/newsid_1689000/1689547.stm	
<p>Lesson Description: The lesson begins with a reading on the United Nations and the Nobel Peace Prize. After a brief discussion of the article, students are asked to write letters to the United Nations Secretary General expressing their global concerns, the world they would like to see in the twenty-first century, and the role they see themselves playing in such world.</p>	
<p>Curriculum Outcomes: Grade 8 Outcome - PA8.2: Examine the role of power and authority in the application of diverse decision making processes in a variety of contexts.</p>	
<p>Assessment: A rubric for the quality of the letter.</p>	<p>Materials: - Computer - Projector</p>

Procedure:**Before:**

- Read the story: [UN Wins Nobel Peace Prize](#)
- Introduce the UN and find out what the students already know:
 - What does the UN do?
 - Where are its headquarters?
 - When was it formed?
- The UN was set up to work towards a more peaceful world in the aftermath of WW2.
 - Ask students: What should the UN do to improve our world?

During:

- Students draft formal letters to Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, which include personal opinions on:
 - The students' global concerns and worries
 - The kind of world they would like to see in the new millennium
 - The role they think they can play in creating such a world

After:

- Students read out their letters to the rest of the class. The class comments on the opinions expressed and on the formal language usage.
- When the drafts are complete, students can write up their letters for display purposes - a possible address to use would be:

Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary General
United Nations, S-378
New York, NY 10017

Background Knowledge for Teachers:

- The UN originally had 51 member states; now it has 191 members. The Vatican is not a member and Taiwan is not recognized as an independent state.
- The UN logo shows the world held in the "olive branches of peace"
- Kofi Annan of Ghana is the seventh UN Secretary General
- Came into existence on October 24 1945 (now UN Day)
- The UN's purpose is to work for peace and development, based on justice, human dignity, and the well-being of all people
- They meet in the General Assembly, which is the closest thing to a world parliament
- Each country has a single vote
- The Assembly's decisions become resolutions (not laws) that carry the weight of world governmental opinion
- The UN Headquarters is in New York City, but the land and buildings are international territory.

Extension Resource: For further information on Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and additional resources, see [SCIC's Global Citizenship Education Modules](#).