

Name _____

Date _____



The United Nations

Today we're going to talk about the United Nations... in just a minute.

After World War II, leaders from around the globe wanted to make sure nothing like it ever happened again. So, in 1945, representatives from 50 countries gathered to create the charter for the United Nations, a new international organization dedicated to promoting peace and protecting human rights.

Helmed by the "Big Five" of Russia, China, France, the US, and the UK, the UN has since expanded to include 193 member countries and six branches that work to carry out the organization's goals of sustainable development and friendly international relations. This includes everything from funding infrastructure in developing areas to settling disputes between member countries. And though the UN doesn't have the legal power to force nations to comply with its decisions, its size and capital give it a lot of clout on the global stage.

Still, the UN has its share of detractors. Many have criticized the organization for not intervening earlier in deadly conflicts like the Rwandan Genocide. And remember the Big Five we talked about earlier? Well, some say they have too much influence and may use bodies like the Security Council to advance their own interests, rather than considering the diverse viewpoints of other member countries.

What issue would you like to see the UN address?