

# AVOIDING ARMAGEDDON

Our Future. Our Choice.

## The International Role of the United Nations

**Grades:** 9-12

### **Background:**

This lesson will explore the role of the United Nations' international peacekeeping and peacemaking abilities. The United Nations was designed to "maintain international peace and security" and "to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest" (United Nations Charter). In this lesson students will evaluate what the UN can and should do, under its charter, to reduce the threats from terrorists and rogue nations and promote stable economic and political environments throughout the world.

### **Teaching Strategies — Activities:**

- Hand out the "United Nations Scavenger Hunt." Using the Internet, have students complete this Scavenger Hunt (Divide class into pairs). Discuss the results of the Scavenger Hunt with the class. What role does the United Nations play in the attempt to maintain peace and security in the world?

### **UNITED NATIONS SCAVENGER HUNT**

Read: The United Nations: An Introduction as a starting point (<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/unintro/unintro.asp>). Then also use the following to complete the questions below (<http://www.un.org/aboutun/index.html>).

1. Take the "On-line" Tour of the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Complete the "Tour Quiz" (how did you score?)
2. What is the purpose of the United Nations?
3. What does the United Nations do to promote peace?
4. What does the United Nations do for development?
5. What does the United Nations do for human rights, justice and international law?
6. Who works at the United Nations?
7. What are the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration?
8. How does the United Nations work?
9. Name and describe the Principal Organs of the United Nations.
10. How many member countries are in the United Nations? What are the two newest ones? How many members were there when the Charter was signed?
11. How many countries are members of the Security Council? Who has veto power?
12. What are the official languages of the United Nations?
13. Why are the United Nations headquarters located in New York City? Is that area part of the United States? Explain.
14. What is UNICEF? What are their goals?
15. What is the UNDP? What are their goals?

16. What are the goals of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations?
17. What are the goals of the UN Department of Political Affairs in regards to “Preventive action and peacemaking”?
18. How does the United Nations hope to have “Peace and Security through Disarmament”?
19. How has the United Nations system responded to the threat of terrorism?
20. What is the United Nations doing to keep terrorists from acquiring mass destruction weapons?

**Extensions:**

- Introduce and discuss the tools of foreign policy used by the international community such as diplomacy, trade relations, foreign aid, boycotts and sanctions and the use of military force. Discuss the differences between bilateral policies and multilateral policies, national security and collective security.
- If possible, view Episode Three — “The New Face of Terror: Upping the Ante” and Episode Four “Confronting Terrorism: Turning the Tide” from the “Avoiding Armageddon” series as a class.
  - Discuss national and global security that can and might be threatened by weapons of mass destruction.
  - As the film notes, often terrorists can find haven in “failed” nations states where economic, political, military and health crises have led to instability. Discuss the role of the United Nations in such regions and the collaborative international efforts to reduce terrorism, resolve conflicts and assist “failed” nations.

**Resources:**

*United Nations*

The United Nations: An Introduction for Students

<http://un.op.org/background/un.php>

About the United Nations

<http://www.un.org/aboutun/index.html>

The UN in Brief

<http://www.un.org/Overview/brief.html>

Image and Reality—Questions and Answers about the UN

<http://www.un.org/geninfo/ir/index.html>

UN Treaty Collection

<http://untreaty.un.org/>

History of the United Nations

<http://www.un.org/aboutun/history.htm>

United Nations Peacekeeping

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml>

Disarmament Department  
<http://disarmament.un.org>

Permanent Missions to the United Nations  
<http://www.un.int/index-en/webs.html>

Security Council  
<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>

United States Mission to the United Nations  
<http://www.un.int/usa/>

UN Fighting Terrorism  
<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1373/menu.htm>

Press Release: Strengthened Means to Keep Terrorists From Acquiring Mass Destruction Weapons  
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/qadis3240.doc.htm>

UN Foundation  
[www.unfoundation.org](http://www.unfoundation.org)

*Weapons of Mass Destruction*  
Weapons of Mass Destruction  
<http://disarmament.un.org/wmd/>

Federation of American Scientists Special Weapons Primer: Chemical Warfare Agents  
<http://www.fas.org/nuke/intro/cw/agent.htm>

Federation of American Scientists Special Weapons Primer: Nuclear Weapons  
<http://www.fas.org/nuke/intro/nuke/index.html>

Federation of American Scientists Special Weapons Primer: Biological Warfare Agents  
(Partial List)  
<http://www.fas.org/nuke/intro/bw/agent.htm>

Nuclear Threat Initiative  
[www.nti.org](http://www.nti.org)

**About the Author:**

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