

MCQ Question · mcqquestion.com

# United Nations: Founding, Charter and Purposes

Free · Share

# United Nations: Founding, Charter and Purposes

India signed the UN Charter in 1945, two years before it became independent. That founding role still shapes India's place at the UN. This lesson tells the story of how the UN was born, what its Charter says, and why 50 and 51 are both correct numbers.

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
1 Jan 1942

"United Nations" first used, in a wartime declaration.

02
26 Jun 1945

Charter signed at San Francisco.

03
24 Oct 1945

Charter in force; now UN Day.

04
51

Original member states.

**Charter**The UN's founding treaty. It has a preamble and 111 articles.
**Sovereign equality**Every member state is equal in law, big or small.

**Chapter VII**Charter chapter on force and sanctions against threats to peace.
**Original member**A state that signed or joined at the founding in 1945.

# Part 1: How the UN Was Born

Must Know

## From a wartime alliance to a world body

- The name “United Nations” came from US President Franklin Roosevelt. It was first used on 1 January 1942.
- On that day, 26 Allied governments signed a declaration to fight the Axis powers together. India signed on 2 January 1942, still under British rule.
- From August to October 1944, the US, UK, USSR and China met at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington. They drew up the first plan for a world body.
- That plan listed the four aims later placed in Article 1. It also gave five permanent seats to the US, USSR, UK, France and China.
- Two issues stayed open: how the Security Council would vote, and the Soviet wish to seat all its republics. (Source: Wikipedia: Dumbarton Oaks Conference)
- The voting question was settled later at Yalta and San Francisco.

## San Francisco, 1945

- The San Francisco Conference ran from 25 April to 26 June 1945.
- Fifty nations attended. The US, UK, USSR and China had invited them.
- The Charter was signed on 26 June 1945. India was one of the 50 signatories, though it was still a British colony.

- Poland could not attend. It signed on 15 October 1945. That made 51 original member states.
- The Charter came into force on 24 October 1945. The five permanent members and a majority of the others had ratified it.
- That date is now marked every year as UN Day. (Source: Wikipedia: United Nations)

**Remember:** 1942 Declaration → 1944 Dumbarton Oaks → San Francisco 25 Apr–26 Jun 1945 → in force 24 Oct 1945 (UN Day). 50 signed at SF, Poland later: 51 original members.

> **Quick check 1.** The UN Charter was signed by 51 states at San Francisco. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## Part 2: What the Charter Says

Good to Know

### Structure and aim

- The Charter has a preamble and 111 articles, split into 19 chapters.
- The preamble opens with the words “We the Peoples of the United Nations”.
- Its stated aim is “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”.
- The official languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. (Source: Wikipedia: Charter of the United Nations)

### Article 1: four purposes

- Keep international peace and security.

- Build friendly relations among nations, based on equal rights and self-determination.
- Achieve cooperation on economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.
- Act as a centre where nations' actions are brought into harmony.

## Article 2: seven principles

- The first and most cited is the sovereign equality of all members.
- Members must honour their Charter duties in good faith.
- Disputes must be settled peacefully.
- No member may use force against another's territory or independence.
- Members must help the UN, and must not help a state the UN is acting against.
- The UN may not interfere in a state's domestic affairs, except under Chapter VII.
- The UN also ensures that non-members act on these principles where needed for peace.

## Other key articles

- Chapter VII lets the Security Council order sanctions (Article 41) or force (Article 42).
- Article 51 keeps every state's inherent right of self-defence.
- Articles 108 and 109 cover amendment. A two-thirds vote of the General Assembly is needed. So is ratification by two-thirds of members, including all five permanent members.
- That is why Security Council reform is so hard. Any one of the five can block it.

**Quick check 2.** Any amendment to the UN Charter needs the consent of all five permanent members. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## Part 3: Lessons from a Failed Predecessor

Great to Know

### The League of Nations

- The League began on 10 January 1920, after World War I. It sat in Geneva.
- The US Senate refused to ratify it. The March 1920 vote fell short of the two-thirds needed.
- Japan and Germany left in 1933, and Italy in 1937. The Soviet Union was expelled in 1939.
- It could not stop Japan in Manchuria or Italy in Abyssinia.

- It was dissolved on 18 April 1946. (Source: Wikipedia: League of Nations)

## What the founders changed

- They brought all the major powers in as members.
- They gave the five biggest powers permanent Security Council seats, with a veto.
- The International Court of Justice took over from the League's court.
- This fits a post-war pattern. New bodies were built to fix the failures of the last one.

## A Rockefeller gift

- The UN headquarters sits in New York. John D. Rockefeller Jr. gave $8.5 million in December 1946 to buy the East River site.
- The site is 17 to 18 acres.
- Construction started in 1948 and finished in 1952. (Source: Wikipedia: UN Headquarters)
- For the full map of UN bodies, see IntlRel0009 — The United Nations: Principal Organs and Related Bodies.

Exam Edge

# Previous Year Questions

The place of signing has been asked in the NDA exam.

> **Think it through: Why is "50" right for San Francisco and "51" right for original members?**
>
> Poland was invited but could not attend. It signed in October 1945. It still counts as an original member.

# India and the Founding

Great to Know

## A signatory before independence

- India signed the 1942 Declaration and the 1945 Charter while under British rule.
- That made it a founding member before it became a free country.
- This history backs India’s claim to a bigger role in the UN today.
- See IntlRel0032 — India and the United Nations and IntlRel0027 — UN General Assembly and Security Council.

## Quick Q&A

Who coined the name “United Nations”?

US President Franklin Roosevelt.

When did the Charter come into force?

24 October 1945.

How many articles does the Charter have?

111.

How many original member states?

51.

Which body did the UN replace?

The League of Nations.

## Practice: The UN: Founding, Charter and Purposes

8 verified questions from this topic.

More International Relations Practice

## Related Topics

All International Relations Articles

WorldHist0001 — The United Nations: Founding, Charter, and the Veto

IntlRel0032 — India and the United Nations

IntlRel0027 — UN General Assembly and Security Council

IntlRel0029 — UN Secretary-General and the Secretariat

IntlRel0009 — The United Nations: Principal Organs and Related Bodies

WorldHist0024 — World War I: Causes, Course, and the Treaty of Versailles

## Practice MCQs

**1. The United Nations Charter was signed following the San Francisco Conference, held over what dates in 1945?**

**A.** 1 January to 30 October 1945

**B.** 25 April to 26 June 1945

**C.** 24 October to 15 December 1945

**D.** 6 August to 2 September 1945

See answer ↓

**2. The UN Charter was signed by 51 original member states in 1945 at which conference?**

**A.** The Hague Conference

**B.** The San Francisco Conference

**C.** The London Conference

**D.** The Berlin Conference

See answer ↓

**3. India was one of the 50 original signatories of the UN Charter in 1945. What was notable about India's status at the time?**

**A.** India was already fully independent

**B.** India was still under British rule

**C.** India was a UN Trust Territory

**D.** India had not yet been partitioned from Pakistan

See answer ↓

**4. The UN Charter came into force on 24 October 1945, once enough countries had ratified it. This date is now marked annually as what?**

**A.** World Peace Day

**B.** Human Rights Day

**C.** UN Day

**D.** Charter Day

See answer ↓

**5. Article 1 of the UN Charter lists the organisation's four core purposes.**

**Which of the following is one of them?**

**A.** Managing international air traffic control

**B.** Issuing a global reserve currency

**C.** Regulating international trade tariffs

**D.** Maintaining international peace and security

See answer ↓

**6. The UN was designed to succeed the League of Nations.**

**Which factor is most cited as a reason the League failed to prevent the Second World War?**

**A.** The United States never joined it

**B.** It had too many member states

**C.** It was headquartered outside Europe

**D.** It lacked a permanent secretariat

See answer ↓

**7. The United Nations was founded in 1945, replacing an earlier body that had failed to prevent the Second World War. What was that earlier body called?**

**A.** The Congress of Nations

**B.** The League of Nations

**C.** The World Council

**D.** The International Assembly

See answer ↓

**8. Which article of the UN Charter recognises the inherent right of self-defence?**

**A.** Article 51

**B.** Article 2(4)

**C.** Article 39

**D.** Article 42

See answer ↓

# Answer Key

1. **B.** The San Francisco Conference ran from 25 April to 26 June 1945. Fifty nations attended, at the invitation of the US, UK, USSR, and China. ↑ Q1
2. **B.** Delegates gathered in San Francisco for months of negotiation before finalising the Charter. ↑ Q2
3. **B.** India signed the UN Charter in 1945 while still under British rule, two years before independence. It remains a founding member of the UN. ↑ Q3
4. **C.** The Charter's entry into force on 24 October 1945 is marked every year as UN Day. That date is considered the UN's official founding date. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** Article 1's four purposes include maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international cooperation on shared problems, and harmonising nations' actions. ↑ Q5
6. **A.** The League of Nations, founded in 1920, was weakened by the absence of the United States and the later withdrawal of other major powers. The UN's founders built it differently, including all major powers from the start. ↑ Q6
7. **B.** The UN replaced the League of Nations, an earlier body that had failed to prevent the Second World War. ↑ Q7
8. **A.** The answer is **Article 51**. It says nothing in the Charter impairs the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member. Measures taken must be reported immediately to the Security Council. Why the others fail: Article 2(4) bars the threat or use of force. Article 42 lets the Security Council act by air, sea or land forces. Article 39 is not the self-defence article. Memory hook: 51 is for self-defence. ↑ Q8

## Quick-check answers

1. **False.** ↑ 1
2. **True.** ↑ 2

**Curated by Arsalan Zuberi · mcqquestion.com**

Scan to read online

https://mcqquestion.com/articles/united-nations-founding-charter-purposes/