



1A



# THE UNITED NATIONS

## Skills Practice: Scanning

In an exam, it's not just your language which is being tested. It also tests your ability to find and understand information as quickly as possible. For this reason, you won't have time to read the whole text carefully and understand everything in detail.

Scanning is the skill of searching for a single piece of information; looking for names, numbers or specific words. It is one of the essential reading skills that you will need. It will save you a lot of time!

The good news is, you already know how to do this. Think about the way you usually read a bus timetable or the departures board at an airport. You don't start at the beginning and read every word. You just go directly to the information you need and ignore everything else. That's scanning!



suggested time  
**6 minutes**

# TASK

SCAN the article and answer the questions below.

DO NOT read the article in detail! Give yourself a strict time limit of **2 minutes** for each exercise.

**Exercise A:** Find the highlighted names listed 1 – 5 in the text and answer the questions.

- Example** Which organisation was replaced after World War II? LEAGUE OF NATIONS
- 1) Where is The International Court of Justice is located? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) What are Linda Fasulo's two professions? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) What is the name of the Secretary-General? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) Which country joined the UN on 14 July 2011? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) When did UNCTAD hold its first major meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise B:** Find the following numbers in the text and match them to the corresponding information.

- Example** 51 → G77 member countries
- 1) 193 → principal organs of the UN
  - 2) five → official languages of the UN
  - 3) four → principal organs located in New York City
  - 4) six → **founding member states of the UN**
  - 5) 133 → UN member states

**Exercise C:** The words listed 1 – 5 appear in the text only once. Which line can you find them?

- Example** cooperation → line # 3
- 1) operations → line # \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) safeguarding → line # \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) poverty → line # \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) recommendation → line # \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) negotiating → line # \_\_\_\_\_

# The Structure and Membership of the UN

## BACKGROUND

1 The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organization that aims to maintain  
2 international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve  
3 international **cooperation**, and be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations. It is the  
4 largest, most familiar, most internationally represented and most powerful  
5 intergovernmental organization in the world.

6 The UN was established after World War II with the aim of preventing future wars,  
7 replacing the ineffective League of Nations. On 25 April 1945, 50 governments met in San  
8 Francisco for a conference and started drafting the UN Charter, which was adopted on 25  
9 June 1945 and took effect on 24 October 1945, when the UN began operations. Pursuant to  
10 the Charter, the organization's objectives include maintaining international peace and  
11 security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable  
12 development, and upholding international law. **At its founding, the UN had 51 member**  
13 **states**; this number grew to 193 in 2011, representing almost all of the world's sovereign  
14 states.

## STRUCTURE

15 The UN system is based on five principal organs: the General Assembly, the Security  
16 Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the International Court of Justice and  
17 the UN Secretariat. Four of the five principal organs are located at the main UN  
18 Headquarters in New York City. The International Court of Justice is located in The Hague,  
19 while other major agencies are based in the UN offices at Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi.  
20 Other UN institutions are located throughout the world.

21 The six official languages of the UN, used in intergovernmental meetings and documents,  
22 are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. On the basis of the Convention  
23 on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the UN and its agencies are  
24 immune from the laws of the countries where they operate, safeguarding the UN's  
25 impartiality with regard to the host and member countries.

26 Below these organs sit, in the words of journalist and author Linda Fasulo, "an amazing  
27 collection of entities and organizations, some of which are actually older than the UN itself  
28 and operate with almost complete independence from it". These include specialized  
29 agencies, research, and training institutions, programs and funds, and other UN entities,  
30 such as the World Bank Group (a family of five international organizations that make  
31 leveraged loans to developing countries), the World Health Organization (a specialized  
32 agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health), UNESCO (a  
33 specialised agency aimed at building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable  
34 development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture,  
35 communication and information), and UNICEF (an agency responsible for providing  
36 humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide).

37 Additionally, non-governmental organizations may be granted consultative status with  
38 ECOSOC and other agencies to participate in the UN's work. The UN's chief administrative  
39 officer is the Secretary-General, currently Portuguese diplomat António Guterres, who  
40 began his five year-term on 1 January 2017. The organization is financed by assessed and  
41 voluntary contributions from its member states.

## MEMBERSHIP

42 With the addition of South Sudan on 14 July 2011, there are 193 UN member states,  
43 including all undisputed independent states apart from Vatican City. The UN Charter  
44 outlines the rules for membership:

- 45 1. *Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states that*  
46 *accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the*  
47 *Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.*
- 48 2. *The admission of any such state to membership in the United Nations will be*  
49 *effected by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the*  
50 *Security Council. Chapter II, Article 4.*

50 In addition, there are two non-member observer states of the United Nations General  
51 Assembly: the Holy See (which holds sovereignty over Vatican City) and the State of  
52 Palestine. The Cook Islands and Niue, both states in free association with New Zealand, are  
53 full members of several UN specialized agencies and have had their "full treaty-making  
54 capacity" recognized by the Secretariat.

55 The Group of 77 (G77) at the UN is a loose coalition of developing nations, designed to  
56 promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint  
57 negotiating capacity in the UN. Seventy-seven nations founded the organization, but by  
58 November 2013 the organization had since expanded to 133 member countries. The group  
59 was founded 15 June 1964 by the "Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Countries" issued  
60 at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The group held its  
61 first major meeting in Algiers in 1967, where it adopted the Charter of Algiers and  
62 established the basis for permanent institutional structures. With the adoption of the New  
63 International Economic Order by developing countries in the 1970s, the work of the G77  
64 spread throughout the UN system.