**UNITED NATIONS Reading:**

The League of Nations (based in Geneva, Switzerland) was founded in 1920 and was the centerpiece of the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s 14 Points which were the basis of the Treaty of Versailles that ended WWI. Throughout its 26 year history the League had 63 member countries, with 31 of those being full time members. Due to a bad relationship between President Wilson and the U.S. Senate as well as **isolationists**, the **U.S. never joined the League** which caused it to be very weak.

The League began to fall apart as a second World War became obvious. Germany’s and Soviet Unions withdrawal from the League guaranteed its failure. The League of Nations survived during WWII, but did nothing. The League officially ceased to exist in 1946, when it voluntarily voted itself out of existence in order for the United Nations Organization to replace it.

The Atlantic Charter, signed by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill called for 'wider and permanent system of general security'. This laid the basis for the United Nations (U.N.). The term United Nations was suggested by President Roosevelt. From the outset, it was understood that any organization meant to replace the League of Nations would have to be stronger, and more heavily supported and have a broader command. To make it simple, all sides knew that **U.S. involvement was a must**. The drafting of what would be the United Nation Charter started way before the war was over. The main objective of the charter was to integrate the parts of the League that worked, and to eliminate those that didn’t. It was eventually decided that the major components of the League would be kept and modified: the council was redesigned as the **Security Council** which had the most powerful authorization and rules to help it secure world peace.

In 1945, the Yalta Conference was attended by Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt. Here the issue of voting on the **Security Council** was solved. There were 11 members on the **Security Council,** though there would be **5 permanent members**, (**United States, France, Soviet Union, Great Britain and China**) and each would have a **VETO (a vote that blocks a decision)** **with one vote**, that would **stop** **any council action**. The veto power existed between both **capitalist and communist powers**. The Security Council was the reason the United States decided to join the United Nations. At the end of the conference, the allied leaders called for a conference of United Nations to draft the charter for the new organization. The purpose of the U. N. was member countries would seek to **settle their disagreements peacefully**, and the countries were committed to try to **stop wars from occurring and to end those that did break out**.

With the end of the war, the time for the United Nations had come. With the widespread destruction in Europe, those countries that had been hesitant to join the League of Nations of WWI saw the need for an international peace keeping organization. Delegates from 50 countries came to San Francisco for the United Nations Conference on International Organization. Over the period of two months, the charter of the U.N. took its final shape. On June 26, 1945 after the U.N. charter had been signed by representatives from all 50 nations President Harry Truman delivered a speech to the assembly. He said,

“*The charter of the United Nations which you have just signed is a*

*solid structure upon which we can build a better world. History will*

*honor you for it. Between the victory in Europe and the final victory in*

*Japan, in this most destructive of all wars, you have won a victory*

*against war itself*.”