

CENTURY OF CHANGE

You are going to read a newspaper article about developments of global importance in the last century. For questions 1-8, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

The 20th century was a time of remarkable change. In less than one hundred years, the population of our planet went from around 2 billion people to close to 6 - that's right; almost treble the number of people live in the world today as did ten or so decades ago. And not only have our numbers exploded, but our lives have become more intertwined than ever before. For most of human history, the different communities which existed lived in their own very small worlds - worlds inside of a bigger world they knew little about. The only world that mattered was the one you could see in your immediate surroundings. Compare that situation with today, when even the poorest parts of sub-Saharan Africa can boast 43 television sets per thousand people. The world view is no longer limited to the horizon; it stretches across the planet. The global village is here. Now, let's see how it came about.

The lessons of two world wars in quick succession signaled the dawning of a new age. Statesmen and women saw that the way forward lay in bringing the world closer together. World War Three was to be avoided at all costs, they said. It was believed that by making nations more interdependent the risk of conflict would be lessened as it would be in nobody's interest to go to war then.

That desire to see the nations of the world united gave birth to the U.N. - the United Nations. The idea of the U.N. was to share power, responsibility and decision making for world affairs equally between all the members of the new global village, so it is the nearest thing we have ever had to a world government. The U.N. brings together officials from 185 member states. Their task is to preserve world peace and prevent conflict, but the dream never quite became a reality as this body has very little 'real' power - it just does a lot of talking.

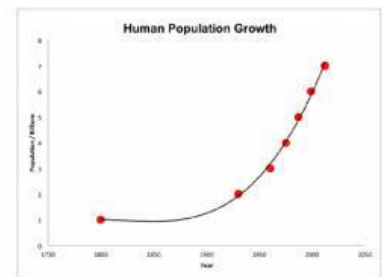


Not long after the United Nations was founded, Europe started to play with the idea of uniting its own continent. After all, it was internal conflict there that had been the main cause of both world wars. Then, in 1957, the idea **took shape**; it started as the European Coal and Steel Community with six member states. Today, we know it as the E.U. or the European Union - 27 countries, called member states, united in one large free trade area and committed to supporting each other in order to make Europe a safer, more secure and more prosperous place. 15 of those members have since gone a step further and created a single currency. The system is hardly perfect, but at least the members are working together and not trying to destroy each other anymore.

But, for all the political movement that took place in the last century, there was a revolution more powerful, and yet more simple, that changed the world as we know it forever - and that was the dawn of the information age. First the television brought people from opposite sides of the globe into contact; then the internet made the world our living room. Technology was the most powerful tool for uniting people in the last century, and the first to create a truly global community.

Now we can communicate with people from different 'tribes' in an instant; debate with them; learn from them; understand them; just chat with them if that's all we want. But for all the change, have we made the world any better? There's still a huge gap between the richest and the poorest nations; there's still misunderstanding and conflict. We may be closer; we may live in a global village; maybe we're getting there, but there's still a lot more to do.

For each questions choose the answer - A, B, C or D.



1. The number of people living in the world

- A. has almost trebled since a decade ago.
- B. has more than trebled in just under 100 years.
- C. has risen to more than 6 million.
- D. rose tremendously during the twentieth century.

2. What does the writer mean by saying communities used to live in worlds inside or bigger world?

- A. in the past people knew little about faraway places.
- B. in the past people only cared about themselves.
- C. most people didn't travel very much in the past.
- D. most people cared about what was happening in the bigger world.

3. What changed after the experience of two world wars?

- A. Politicians felt determined to prevent another world war.
- B. Information technology brought the world closer together.
- C. Nobody was interested in conflict anymore.
- D. Nations wanted to become more independent.

4. What is suggested about the United Nations?

- A. It keeps the world peaceful and conflict-free.
- B. It will become a global government.
- C. It doesn't have a lot of meaningful influence.
- D. It is controlled by a few big powers.

5. What does the phrase "look shape" (in bold in red) mean in the context of paragraph 4?

- A. succeeded
- B. developed
- C. concluded
- D. changed

6. The E.U. is now comprised of

- A. 6 member states.
- B. 15 member states.
- C. 27 member states.
- D. 15 member and 27 associate states.

7. The arrival of new technology and the information age

- A. seemed unimportant compared to the political changes taking place.
- B. had a strong impact on the opposite side of the globe.
- C. brought people together in a way that politicians could not.
- D. saw people use the internet a lot in their living rooms.

8. What does the writer's tone in the final paragraph suggest?

- A. He is satisfied with what has been achieved.
- B. He is critical and pessimistic about the future.
- C. He is confused and upset.
- D. He is realistic about the situation.

