



Level: CEFR A2 /
ADFELPS 4 and above

Military English

Lesson: United Nations Blue Helmets – Reading

TEACHER'S COPY

Overview:

This lesson presents vocabulary related to the Blue Helmets in the United Nations (UN).

In this lesson, you will:

- ✓ read and find the main ideas in a text
- ✓ read for detail
- ✓ learn the meaning of new words
- ✓ use new words in a conversation

Teacher's notes are indicated by this: **TN** →

Prepare for Reading

1) Look at the pictures below and discuss these questions with your partner.

- a. What jobs do the **Blue Helmets** do?
- b. Have any personnel from your country worked as a UN Blue Helmet?
Did they enjoy it? If you don't know any, would you like to be one? Why?

TN → Draw students (Ss) attention to the pictures to help them to answer the questions. If Ss don't know anything, encourage guessing based on the pictures.

Blue Helmet (n) –
a soldier of a UN
Peacekeeping force.

Why blue? The
helmets are the same
colour as the UN flag
and are easy to see.



image: UN

Reading

2) Read the text quickly. Which paragraph of the text on this page answers each of the questions below?

Write the questions at the top of each paragraph.

TN → It's important for Ss not to spend too much time reading and looking for the meaning of new words. They should be able to do this task only with a general understanding of the text (gist). Set a time limit based on your Ss level, so they know how much time to spend on this. For feedback (FB), ask Ss to check in pairs, then ask the whole class for the answers (ans).

- What other jobs do UN Peacekeepers do?
- Where do the Blue Helmets come from?
- What do Blue Helmets do to keep the peace?

A. Where do the Blue Helmets come from?

All military personnel who work under the **Blue Helmet** are members of their own national armies. They are **seconded** to work under the command and control of the United Nations.

The UN has more than 97,000 UN military personnel from more than 120 countries. They bring different cultures and experience to the job, but they all have the same goal – peace. At present, most troops come from African and Asian countries. For example:

Country	Experts	Police	Staff Officer	Troops
Nepal	40	226	112	5,753
Ghana	0	26	84	2,197
Cambodia	7	0	19	584
Thailand	13	1	5	273
Timor-Leste	2	0	0	0
Indonesia	14	140	37	2,478
Malaysia	14	24	14	824

True as at 30/09/2024

B. What do Blue Helmets do to keep the peace?

Some of the tasks of the Blue Helmets:


- **Protect** civilians and UN personnel.
- **Monitor** a **disputed border**.
- Monitor peace activities in **post-conflict** areas.
- Provide **security** across a **conflict zone** and during elections.
- Assist **in-country** military personnel with training and support.
- Assist **ex-combatants** with **peace agreements**.

C. What other jobs do UN Peacekeepers do?

The most common sort of UN peacekeeper is the **infantry soldier**. However, the UN also needs personnel with special skills, for example engineers to help build new roads in South Sudan, helicopter **crews** and medical personnel.

3) Read the text again, and complete the spaces with numbers or letters.

TN → This is a good time to remind Ss about finding key words to find information. Ss should look for a word that will not repeat elsewhere in the text that does not have a lot of synonyms. Nouns (especially proper nouns) are particularly good for this. For instance, in question 'a' S could look for "Indonesia". They should scan for this word and then read the rest of the sentence to see if they are in the right place and can find the information. The scannable key words are underlined on your copy only. The ans are also underlined on your copy only.

FACT SHEET 	a. Number of Blue Helmet police from <u>Indonesia</u> : <u>140</u>
	b. Number of Blue Helmet troops from <u>Ghana</u> : <u>2,197</u>
	c. The biggest number of Blue Helmets have this job: <u>infantry soldier</u>
	d. Number of <u>Staff Officers</u> from <u>Malaysia</u> : <u>14</u>

Learning Military Vocabulary

4) The words in **bold** are important military words that you should learn. Match the military words on the left to their definitions on the right. Look at the example.

TN → Ask Ss to look at the example. Explain: 1. match the words in bold on the left with the definition on the right; 2. the tables are separate so the ans for table one are only in table one. Give Ss 10 mins. It's important to monitor. Go around the class and randomly check Ss' ans. If they're incorrect, just say they're incorrect and let them work out the mistake. Give Ss more time if necessary. Then ask them to check with a partner. After this, ask individual Ss to give ans to the whole class, one S per ans.

Table 1



personnel who work under the Blue Helmet	d	a. (adj) when two or more countries disagree on the 'line' dividing their countries
they are seconded TN → Make sure students are saying /sek'ondid/ and not /'sekəndid/	g	b. (adj) the time after a war
Staff Officer	e	c. (v) to watch an activity to make sure people are following the rules or to see what is happening
protect civilians <i>protection (n)</i>	f	d. (n) part of a UN peacekeeper's uniform; we often use this to talk about a peacekeeper  <i>image: UN</i>
monitor borders	c	e. (n) this officer helps their boss plan military operations and make decisions.
a disputed border	a	f. (v) to defend or keep safe
in post-conflict areas	b	g. (v) when the military of a country sends personnel to work in a different unit or country for a short time

Table 2

provide security	k	h. (n) people who were fighting in a war, but not anymore	
across a conflict zone	m	i. (n) when groups or countries agree to stop fighting; this is usually an official paper (document).	
in-country military personnel	n	j. (n) groups of soldiers who work together in vehicles such as aircraft, ships, tanks	
assist ex-combatants	h	k. (n) protection of people, organizations, or nations from danger	
assist with peace agreements	i	l. (n) a soldier who fights on foot and uses guns and other weapons e.g. assault rifles, grenades	
infantry soldier	l	m. (n) an area where fighting is happening	
helicopter crews	j	n. (adj) inside a country	

5)  Now let's practise saying the words. Listen and repeat.

TN → This stage acts like concept checking questions (CCQs) but is a little more fun. Put students into small groups and get each group to make their own buzzer sound. This could be clapping or hitting the table or stamping their feet. Tell students to make a team name with their group and write these on the board. Tell students that you are going to give them a clue, and the first team to use their "buzzer", hear their name called, and answer correctly gets a point. – UN Peacekeepers wear these (blue helmet) – I shoot a gun and go by foot (infantry soldier) – When we get one of these, the war stops (peace agreement) – I used to fight, but not anymore (ex-combatants) – This is when I go and work in another country (seconded) – It's the team that works together to make a vehicle operate (crew). This person gives advice and information to the commanders. (staff officers) If we have a fight about where my country is and where your country starts, we have a _____. (disputed border) This is where the fighting is (conflict zone) If you don't do homework, you need ____ (protection!). Then play the recording and ask for the whole class to repeat. Play a second time and ask individual Ss to repeat. Correct inaccurate pronunciation, especially incorrect syllable stress. Ask Ss why some syllables in the items in **bold** above are underlined (it's the stressed syllable in words with more and one syllable).

6) Complete the sentences below with words from exercise four.

TN → Give Ss 5min to do this. Monitor and helps Ss who have the wrong ans (but don't give them the ans, just ask them to correct it). For FB, ask Ss to check ans in pairs, then ask individual Ss for the ans.

- Personnel from a country can be **seconded** to different UN Peacekeeping Operations.
- In many missions, the most important thing is to **protect** civilians.
- Over 70,000 UN **blue helmets** are deployed in many parts of the world. **TN →** Make sure they remember to pronounce the 's' in helmets!
- A **peace agreement** is important to end the fighting and bring peace to a region.
- Security** at a military base is very important to keep all the personnel inside it safe.
- The peace talks included many people who were still fighting but also **ex-combatants** who once fought in the war.
- The ship's **crews** work on different areas of the ship, such as in the galley, the engine room or cleaning equipment.

Practice

7) Are you ready to put on the Blue Helmet?

- Think of the things that a blue helmet does. Can you do these things? What can you do to get better at these things?
- Write them down below, in a few words.

I feel ready to serve in UN peacekeeping operations.

TN → Go over the instructions as a class. Model the activity on the whiteboard for you. This will help students to understand the activity, and also see that you are writing in notes rather than full sentences. For instance, under “things I can already do” you could write “speak English” and under “Things I want to get better at” you could write “border control”. Giving real examples for you will help students be more honest with the exercise and get more out of it. Allow 10 mins for Ss to brainstorm ideas into both lists. Encourage students to consider the vocab from today’s lesson, but also their own ideas. Help with vocabulary and write useful words that come up on the board.

Things I can already do	Things I want to get better at


TN → Go over the instructions for the next activity. Draw Ss attention to your “Things I want to get better at” list. Find a student who has this skill and ask them questions about how they got good at it. Draw Ss’ attention to the useful language box and drill the language.

8) Show your list to your partner and discuss. Do they have skills you do not? How did they get them? Do they have any ideas about how you can get better?

LANGUAGE BOX	Asking questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you get good at _____? • Can you give me some ideas about _____? • Where did you learn to _____? 	If you don’t understand your partner, you can say this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you say that again? • What do you mean?
	Making suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think you should _____. • It might be a good idea to _____. 	

TN → Open class feedback. Ask if any Ss would like to share some good advice they got today. Draw Ss’ attention to the “Thinking Homework”. Explain that having learning goals is a great way to keep getting better and encourage Ss to think about any learning goals they might have after today’s lesson for homework. There is no need to follow up with students on this.

9) Thinking homework. Do you have any new learning goals after today?

-  Watch this video about the Blue Helmets and mark the words below that you hear or read in the video. Type on YouTube [Who Are United Nations Peacekeepers?](#) or scan the QR code. →

☐ Staff Officer ☒ conflict ☐ security ☒ engineer
☒ peacekeeper ☐ peace agreement ☐ monitor



TN → This is an optional activity. Either give it as homework or watch it in class. If in class, play it where all Ss can see, or ask them to scan the QR code and watch it on their devices. Ask Ss to read the Qs before they watch it, then tick the ans as they watch. If this is set as homework, make sure to check their work in the next lesson.

- For more [practise](#) with the words you've learned here, scan the QR code for a set of flashcards. You can do some more study on the vocab in this lesson on your own with these. →

TN → The QR code takes Ss to a Quizlet flashcard set. It's a very useful tool for self-study (e.g. revise the vocab in this lesson). Ss can test their knowledge with flashcards or computer-generated activities. Ss will have to create a Quizlet account, which is free.

Encourage them to install the Quizlet app, as most of the Military English lessons have a Quizlet set. Encourage Ss to take responsibility for their own learning and regularly engage with either Quizlet, or their own preferred vocabulary review activities.



- This lesson links with: Lesson – A day in the life of a UN Peacekeeping Officer – Reading
Lesson - Women in Blue Berets - Peacekeeping in South Sudan – Listening