This chapter examines the nature of international organizations and their role in global politics. It first explains what an international organization is before discussing the rise of international organizations from a historical perspective, focusing on developments from the nineteenth century onwards. It then considers the major intergovernmental institutions that emerged in the twentieth century and which have made significant contributions in shaping the global order, including the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations. It also looks at non-governmental organizations and concludes with an analysis of ideas about social movements and global civil society, along with their relationship to the contemporary world of international organizations.