

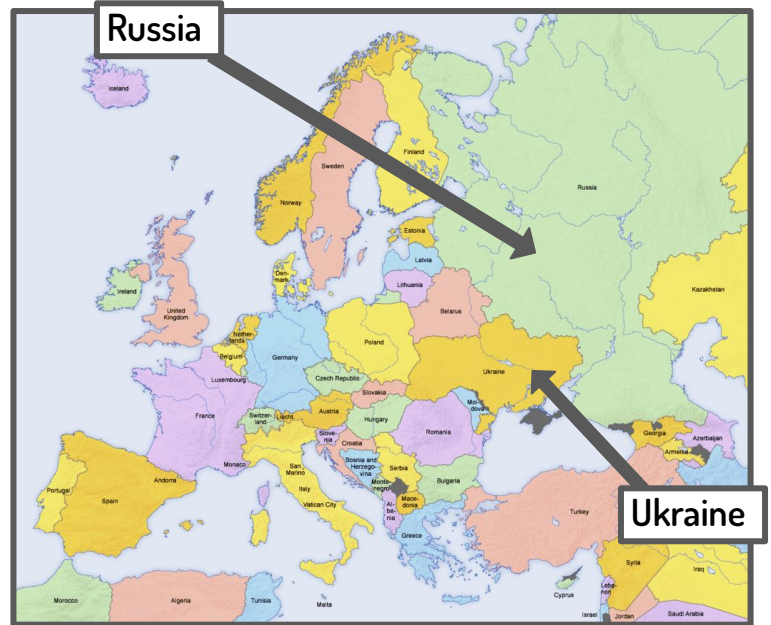
Teachers Fact Sheet



Russia invades Ukraine

Note: When discussing this with students, be aware that it is a sensitive topic – students may well have relatives living in the region, or family members who are in the military and this will cause a lot of anxiety.

- Ukraine is a slavic country in Eastern Europe. It borders several other countries with its longest border being Russia.
- Ukraine has had a difficult history but has been stable for some time.
- President Vladimir Putin, Russia's leader, is concerned that Ukraine will join NATO, leaving Russia next to a country allied with his enemies.
- Ukraine also has many mineral resources and there is potentially a lot of wealth.
- President Putin has been building up military strength around the borders of Ukraine for a long time. He has many military units, including in Moldova and Belarus.



San Jose (map), Hayden120 (retouch), CC BY-SA 3.0 <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>, via Wikimedia Commons

Citizenship Concepts



Teachers Fact Sheet



Background to the Russo-Ukrainian War

Credit to Owen Williams @mrbwteach

- **1991** - USSR dissolved - an event described by Putin in 2014 as a 'geopolitical catastrophe' - and Ukraine becomes independent
- **2000** - Putin becomes President of Russia
- **2004** - Yanukovych wins rigged elections but mass protests - called the 'Orange Revolution' - force him to hold a fresh vote. This was won by Yushchenko with support from Tymoshenko
- **2010** - Yanukovych wins the Presidency again. After feuding with Tymoshenko, Yushchenko's government is weakened.
- **2014** - After Yanukovych withdraws his support for joining the EU, the 'Euromaidan' protests force him from power again.
- **2014** - Putin then annexed the Crimean peninsula to secure the port of Sevastopol for Russia.
- **2014-present** Separatists in the 'Donbass' region around Luhansk and Donetsk declared independence and fought the Ukrainian army - c.10,000 killed.
- **2019** - Zelensky elected as Ukrainian President.
- **2022** - Russia invades Ukraine



Sanctions

- All financial assets held by 100 of Putin's allies and all major Russian banks in the US, UK and EU will be seized
- Aeroflot, the Russian national airline will be banned from landing in the UK
- Exports to Russia of high tech goods will end
- Western purchases of Russian gas and oil are likely to be curtailed too

Criticism

"Putin will stand condemned in the eyes of the world. He will never be able to cleanse the blood of Ukraine from his hands"
- UK PM Boris Johnson

"Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring catastrophic loss of life and human suffering"
- US President Joe Biden

"This is Putin's war and he will pay a bitter price for this serious error"
- German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

Could the invasion of Ukraine start a world war? Credit to The Day 2022

Yes: History teaches us that world wars usually spiral from small incidents. And with Nato and Russian forces packed so tightly, there is ample opportunity for tensions to boil over.

No: The Ukrainian war is unlikely to last very long. Vladimir Putin wants to extract concessions and get out quickly. There will be little time for an international incident that could spark a wider war.

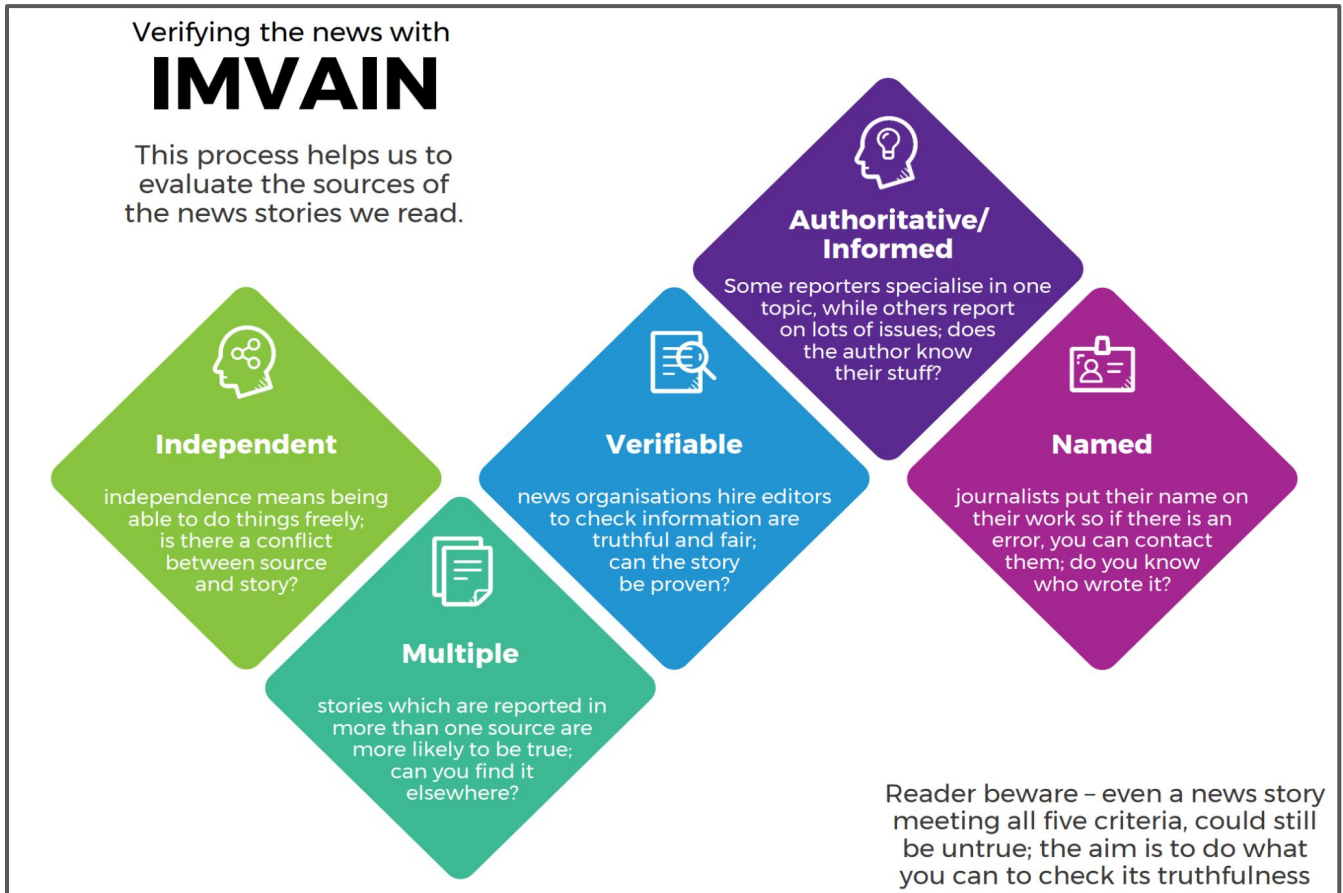
Or... Russia has proved it is willing to defy US power. China will be watching with interest. Even if this crisis does not spark a world war, it has made conflict.

Many young people may feel anxious about the things they see on the news and on social media. The BBC has some excellent advice that you can share with your students: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13865002>

A note about Teaching controversial and sensitive issues - When teaching citizenship, you will naturally cover topics that are classified as controversial. Controversial issues are those about which individuals and groups disagree and hold strong opinions, issues that can divide society and arouse strong feelings and/or deal with fundamental questions of value and belief - for example, war, immigration, abortion, gay rights. While some teachers may feel anxious about introducing them, such social and political issues are central to effective citizenship teaching. Learning to manage differences of opinion in an appropriate and reasoned way in a democratic society is one of the main aims of citizenship education. You will need to prepare for this and make sure your students understand that views on topics will differ as the issues are controversial. Where possible, ensure that a range of views are heard and be ready to challenge those who try to dominate the discussion. In addition, you need to be aware of views that step over the line which may become offensive to others, lay ground rules clearly, so you establish a safe learning environment for discussion. Advice on teaching sensitive and controversial issues can be found here: [How to teach sensitive and controversial issues](#)

Possible teaching activities

Tracking an unfolding story – Media literacy is key when following events as they happen. Part of this conflict will include a disinformation campaign from Russia. Use the IMVAIN or REVIEW methods to consider where and how a person can track a story from a variety of different sources. You might want to watch this to remind students that there are always different perspectives. [Cannes Lion Award-Winning "Three Little Pigs advert"](#)



Possible teaching activities

Impact of Sanctions – Discussion activity – What are sanctions? What might be the positive effects? How could stopping financial and business transactions impact Russian civilians?

How other countries respond – (1) consider what different governments might be thinking (fears, opportunities, direct impacts) and (2) what they could do / should do; and (3) the reasons for / against each action. Possible countries to focus on might be Poland, UK, USA, China; students could research these countries as they are being well covered in the press. Possible actions:

- focus on providing humanitarian aid in Ukraine
- offer speedy settlement for displaced Ukrainians in their own country
- send in troops / aircraft to support defence of Ukraine
- support Ukraine with resources / money
- attack Russia with armed forces in revenge
- implement limited sanctions
- stop all trade with Russia
- criticise Russia but do nothing else
- campaign to stop Russian involvement in international sports events
- support Russia's right to intervene in Ukraine.

Humanitarian Crises – The international response to people in warzones. One way to mitigate the negativity of a conflict so high up in the news is to **focus on the helpers** – how others are responding to the imminent influx of refugees to countries such as Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Moldova? How are injured people dealt with when hospitals might be out of action or inaccessible? How can we help from the UK?

The UN refugee agency has a useful guide for teachers: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/618bc1d64>

Other situations are happening in the region, and this story about humanitarian activists on the Polish/Belarus border offers hope and a view into how ordinary people are trying to keep refugees supported. [Poland-Belarus border: "We don't want people to die in the freezing forest" | MSF UK](#)

Glossary

Sanctions	An official order, such as the stopping of trade, that is taken against a country in order to make it obey international law.
Boycott	Withdraw from commercial or social relations with (a country, organization, or person) as a punishment or protest. E.g. Sebastian Vettel says he will not race at the Russian Grand Prix in September 2022 in protest at the invasion, and UEFA will now not stage the Champions League final in St. Petersburg.
Sovereignty	The power or authority to rule a country "Ukraine is a sovereign nation."
Refugee	A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster and who has an asylum application.
Annexation	Possession taken of a piece of land or a country, usually by force or without permission.
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is an intergovernmental military alliance between 28 European countries and 2 North American countries. They combine as a defence force, not to attack and take control of other sovereign nations. However, they will take crisis management action, using both political and military tools.
Intervention	The action of becoming intentionally involved in a difficult situation, in order to improve it or prevent it from getting worse.
United Nations	An international organisation that was established in 1945 and aims to solve world problems in a peaceful way.

Links to useful resources

[Rules of war: Why they matter? | ICRC](#)

<https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/peaceeducation/2022/02/22/what-can-peace-education-do-on-the-eve-of-war/>

As the situation unfolds, we will continue to collate information here on our padlet: <https://padlet.com/staff116/pcybby0io7636x23>

Get involved – Join the ACT community here <https://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/membership>