

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

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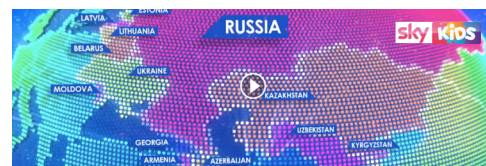
These questions are designed for **teacher-led discussion sessions** to help young people understand what is happening and ensure they have the facts, not misinformation. Read the special reports in **First News** and watch **Sky Kids FYI: For Your Info** episode 161.

The information provided here supports teachers with the facts needed for each area of discussion.



These questions will guide your students through the news and support them to:

- Find the facts
- Understand the history
- Think things through
- Address worries
- Ask questions



FINDING THE FACTS

1. What has happened?

● Who is Vladimir Putin?

Russia's president. He's been leading the country – as either prime minister or president – since 1999. During this time, he has put many of his political opponents in jail.

● When did Vladimir Putin instruct the Russian army to invade Ukraine?

24 February 2022

● When did the lead-up to the war begin?

Last year, 2021

● What did Putin instruct the Russian army to do at this stage?

To position tens of thousands of soldiers along its border with Ukraine

● In what other country did the Russian army position soldiers?

Belarus

2. Where is Ukraine?

● Whereabouts in Europe is Ukraine?

Ukraine is in eastern Europe. It sits between Russia and the central European countries of Romania, Slovakia and Poland. To the north is Belarus.

● Look at the map and find all the countries that are on its borders.

Russia, Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Belarus

● How far away is Ukraine from where you live?

(You might need to do some research on Google Maps to work this out!)

Discuss your circumstances

● Do you have any connections with people who live in Ukraine, or any of the countries that border Ukraine?

Discuss the responses students want to share or connections that you have.

Sensitivity is important, even if you are unaware of any specific personal circumstances. No pupil should feel under pressure to discuss their own circumstances. Referring to the invasion as Putin's war will support Russian families in the UK.



UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY

1. What was the Soviet Union?

● What was it also known as?

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – USSR

● When did it exist?

From 1917 to 1991

● How many states made up this huge country? Can you name any?

Former Soviet states include Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Kazakhstan. (These are mentioned in the First News article.)

The 15 states were:

- Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova
- Baltic republics: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania
- Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan
- Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan



● Which was the biggest power inside the Soviet Union?

Russia

● What happened to each of the states after the Soviet Union collapsed?

They became independent countries. They all have different links and ties with Russia. For example, in Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko has ruled the country since 1994 and maintains close links with Russia. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania made links with western countries and joined NATO and the EU in 2004.

2. What is NATO? How has it changed since it was first formed?

NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is an international military alliance that guarantees the freedom of its member countries.

It was formed by the USA, Canada and western European nations (such as the UK, France and Norway) on 4 April 1949, a few years after the end of the Second World War. Other countries have joined over the decades.

Original NATO countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the UK and the USA.

Subsequent countries joining: Greece and Turkey (1952), Germany (1955), Spain (1982), Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (1999), Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004), Albania and Croatia (2009), Montenegro (2017), North Macedonia (2020).

NATO's Article 5 states that "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack on them all".

3. What was the Cold War?

The Cold War was another global conflict that began after the Second World War. It saw the Soviet Union and many eastern European countries like Poland and Hungary pitted against NATO, which included the USA, Canada, UK and other western European countries, like France and West Germany.

This wasn't a normal war because the main countries didn't fight each other. However, there was always tension because both sides feared the other would try to invade them or, worse, launch a nuclear weapon against them.

4. What happened to Ukraine after the Cold War? Why was 2014 a significant year for the country?

- Some Ukrainians wanted to be closer to the European Union and to join NATO.
- There are many Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine who prefer to be close to Russia, not the West.
- An uprising in early 2014 forced the pro-Russian president of Ukraine to quit.
- Putin sent in Russian soldiers to take control of Crimea.
- Crimea remains under Russian control today.
- Russia sent its troops to support pro-Russian rebel fighters in their war against Ukrainian government forces in the eastern part of Ukraine.
- This conflict, which began in 2014, is ongoing.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

1. Why was Russia unhappy when former Soviet states started joining NATO?

● In 2004, former Soviet states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined NATO. Russia was not happy because it meant that an organisation it thought of as an enemy now had troops on its western border. Russia was also upset because back in 1990 and 1991, at the end of the Cold War, many Western leaders had told the Russians they would not look to grow NATO eastward. The decision to allow former Soviet states to join NATO was deemed to contradict this assurance.

2. What are world leaders doing to try to resolve the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine?

● There have been talks between Russia and Ukraine to try to stop the conflict. The UK, EU, USA and other countries are also bringing in sanctions to penalise Russia for waging war on Ukraine. These sanctions are in the form of economic restrictions to make it difficult for Russian companies and banks to carry out their normal business. The sanctions make Russia's money, the rouble, worth less and this puts pressure on Russia's economy.

● Furthermore, European Union leaders have agreed to send millions of pounds-worth of weapons and other aid to Ukraine. This is the first time the EU has ever done this.

3. Why is the supply of fossil fuels an issue for world leaders?

● The supply of fossil fuels is an issue for world leaders because many countries (including the UK) rely on Russia for lots of their oil and gas supplies. This means that millions of pounds are still being sent to Russia in exchange for fossil fuels. This makes the economic restrictions less effective because money is still going into the country and could be spent on Russia's military.

4. How are people in Russia being affected by the war?

● It has been reported that Russian citizens are already feeling the effects of sanctions, with prices rising in shops and some things being harder to find. It has also been reported that the European part of Russia's biggest bank, Sberbank, is in trouble because so many people decided to take their money out.

5. The government in Russia runs much of the media (newspapers, TV, radio and websites). How does this influence what people living in Russia think about what is happening in Ukraine at the moment?

● This influences what people living in Russia think about what is happening in Ukraine at the moment because the Russian government will want to present its actions in a favourable light. This means that media reports are likely to be very biased so it is difficult to get reliable news in Russia. However, even this hasn't stopped many people in Russia from protesting against the war. Protests have taken place in more than 50 Russian cities and towns, with police arresting hundreds of protesters.

6. How have people around the world been supporting the Ukrainian people?

● People have been marching and demonstrating against the war. Look at the photo of people in Madrid, Spain, on page 6.

● Iconic buildings have been lit up in the colour of the Ukrainian flag. Look at the photo of the Sydney Opera House, Australia, and Empire State Building, USA, on page 6.

● Humanitarian aid is being put in place. Look at the photo of the essential donations being collected in Poland on page 6. Charities are starting campaigns to raise money for aid programmes. Find out more about the **DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal** at www.dec.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal

ADDRESSING WORRIES ABOUT WAR

1. When faced with worrying news, such as the news about the conflict in Ukraine, why is it important to double check the information about what's happening?

● It is important to double check the information about what's happening with sites you can trust because major news events can be sensationalised and sometimes the information being shared might be misleading or inaccurate. By checking the facts, you can manage your reaction to the news because you can ensure that you are not worrying about something that isn't true.

2. Why is it important to share your worries and concerns with a trusted adult?

● It is a good idea to share your worries and concerns with a trusted adult because it enables you to ask questions. Understanding what is going on and being able to discuss your feelings can help you to process everything and cope better.

● Alternatively, you can share your feelings safely and anonymously on the Childline message boards, or speak to a counsellor on 0800 1111 or [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk).

3. If you are feeling really worried, how might doing something positive help?

● If you are feeling really worried then doing something positive can help because it takes the focus away from your negative feelings. Even something simple like supporting a friend who's upset, or sharing something positive online can help you to feel more in control and more optimistic.

4. Dr Anna Colton says that giving anxiety attention is "like watering a plant". What do you think she means by this, and what should you do instead if you feel anxious because of world events?

● Watering a plant makes it grow, so this means that giving anxiety attention makes it grow and everything seems worse. Therefore, it is not a good idea to be constantly checking the news and receiving notifications and news alerts. Instead, you should take a break from the news or videos so that you don't feel overwhelmed. You could distract yourself by talking to friends and family, playing games or engaging in a hobby.

UKRAINE: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Please send students' questions (with their first name only) to *First News*.

Email newsdesk@firstnews.co.uk

Or submit individual questions at first.news/ukrainequestions

THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE IS CHANGING RAPIDLY, BUT YOU CAN KEEP TRACK OF EVENTS WITH *FIRST NEWS*' DAILY UPDATE AT [FIRSTNEWS.CO.UK/UKRAINE](https://firstnews.co.uk/ukraine)