

SPECIAL REPORT by UNICEF

THE CRISIS IN YEMEN

SINCE March 2015, Yemen, a country in the Middle East, has been gripped by a complex civil war. It has resulted in a huge humanitarian crisis. It is thought that more than 11 million children are in need of help and a million children have had to leave their homes. Recently, violence in the port of Hodeidah, in western Yemen, has meant that vital supplies, including safe drinking water and food, cannot always reach families.

THE SITUATION FOR CHILDREN

Children in Yemen face a number of challenges due to the ongoing violence.

One of the main issues they face is malnutrition [lack of food and proper nutrients]. There are 1.8 million children who do not have enough to eat, and nearly 400,000 children are fighting for their lives because of it.

Another challenge is access to education: there are two million children who are unable to attend school. In total, 66% of schools have been damaged by heavy violence and many teachers have not been paid for up to two years.

Children who are not in school are more likely to be married as a child, recruited by armed groups and forced into child labour.

Children are also at risk of a number of deadly diseases, including cholera, due to a lack of clean water. It is thought that children under five represent over a quarter of the 1.2 million suspected cholera cases in Yemen.



A doctor measures the arm of a little girl to check for signs of malnutrition



Students draw in class

UNICEF'S ROLE IN YEMEN

Despite the difficult environment, children in Yemen are being supported through invaluable work by UNICEF. The organisation is supporting some of the two million out-of-school children by providing catch-up classes and learning supplies for schools.

Following a recent pause in fighting, UNICEF vaccinated more than 306,000 people, including 164,000 children. This is incredibly important, due to the potential for outbreaks of measles, cholera and diphtheria.

HANIN AND ASMA'S STORY

Sisters Hanin and Asma live in Sana'a and do not feel safe going to school any more, due to the fighting around them. Talking about her experience, Hanin said: "We were moving to school safely, but now bombings might surprise you while you are on the way."

While both girls are still attending school, they do not get to do many of the other activities they used to enjoy, like going to the park, playing games outside or going on family trips.

After living through three years of violence, Asma has said: "I wish for this war to immediately end in order for us to lead a normal life in peace and stability. We want to live our childhood."

WHAT IS UNICEF CALLING FOR?

UNICEF has called on all parties involved in the conflict to come together to stop the fighting and agree on a peace deal. The conflict must end to ensure that all children can be protected from violence.

WHY IS THERE FIGHTING IN YEMEN?

 by First News

Fighting began when a group called the Houthi decided to fight the new president. They took control of the capital and forced the president to flee. It got worse in 2015 when other countries got involved. Saudi Arabia and several other countries – backed by the US, UK and France – began air strikes on the Houthi to try to restore the government. Saudi Arabia is worried that Iran (one of its main rivals) – which has religious connections to the Houthi – might try to gain influence in the country. Iran denies being involved.

GLOSSARY

Civil war – a war fought by different groups of people in the same country

Humanitarian – describing a situation that involves great human suffering and that requires aid to help with people's basic needs (food, water, shelter, medicines, supplies, etc)

UNICEF – The United Nations Children's Fund. (It was originally called the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund because it was started after the Second World War to look after children in desperate need of help.)

SPECIAL REPORT



■ Look at the article 'The crisis in Yemen'

1. What is happening in Yemen?
2. Why is the violence in the port of Hodeidah making the situation worse?
3. What **word** describes bad health caused by a lack of good food?
4. This article has a lot of **statistics** (number facts describing a situation) in it. Find three facts that explain how children are being affected by the war in each of these areas:

Fact showing how children are affected:	
FOOD	
EDUCATION	
HEALTH	

5. Not being able to go to school is bad enough, but why is it particularly risky for children in Yemen?
6. This war may seem a long way away to you. Look at the section 'Why is there fighting in Yemen?' How is the UK involved?
7. Find two ways in which UNICEF has been helping children in Yemen.

1	
2	

8. Look at what Asma is quoted saying. Which of the options below is a fair summary of her feelings?

Her life has been ruined by the war.	
She feels angry that the war has stopped her going to school.	
She wants the war to end so that she can have a normal childhood.	
She is very scared and wants the war to end.	

9. This is a civil war. Why do other countries get involved and do you think it's right that other countries get involved?
10. Do you think this article is written appropriately for children in Years 5 and 6? Is there anything that you would like to have explained further? Is there anything you would like changed?



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Extension Activities



Activity A: THE MIDDLE EAST

Located between Africa and Europe to the west and Asia to the east, the Middle East has a huge influence on the rest of the world. Christianity, Islam and Judaism have their origins here. The area's vast reserves of oil make a few countries extremely wealthy and powerful – and even control how much your parents or carers pay for petrol. There have been many long-running conflicts in the region, as people fight for power, control, religion and oil.

Find out more. Can you label these Middle Eastern countries on the map?

Qatar Lebanon Oman Egypt Iran Syria UAE Iraq
Israel Yemen Jordan Kuwait Saudi Arabia



Choose **five** countries and conduct some research to find out an interesting fact about each one.

Teacher Answers

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS: News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news 'stories' are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE: The teacher answers are intended to provide a quick reference guide. Suggestions are given for the 'Expected response' or starting point that pupils could give. The 'Development' then gives more in-depth ideas that students can work towards as they develop their reading comprehension skills.

For a list of the reading skills used, please email schools@firstnews.co.uk.

1. What is happening in Yemen?

READING SKILL – Summarise information from more than one paragraph

(NC 2e)

Expected response

- There is a complex civil war.

Development

- There has been a civil war in the country for over three years, which has caused a terrible humanitarian crisis.

2. Why is the violence in the port of Hodeidah making the situation worse?

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence

(NC 2c & 8)

Expected response

- Food and water aren't getting through to families.

Development

- Hodeidah is a port, so goods will arrive here on ships. Because of the fighting, supplies such as food and clean water are not reaching families.

3. What word describes bad health caused by a lack of good food?

READING SKILL – Understand vocabulary in context

(NC 2a)

Expected response

- malnutrition

4. This article has a lot of statistics (number facts describing a situation) in it. Find three facts that explain how children are being affected by the war in each of these areas:

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a) E

Expected response

Any of:

	Fact showing how children are affected:
FOOD	1.8 million children do not have enough to eat. Nearly 400,000 children are dangerously ill because of lack of food.
EDUCATION	2 million children are unable to attend school. 66% of schools have been damaged by the war.
HEALTH	There are 1.2 million suspected cholera cases in Yemen – a quarter of them are thought to be under-fives.

5. Not being able to go to school is bad enough, but why is it particularly risky for children in Yemen?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response

- They are more likely to be married as a child, to be forced into armed groups or into child labour.

6. This war may seem a long way away to you. Look at the section ‘Why is there fighting in Yemen?’ How is the UK involved?

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence

(NC 2c & 8)

Expected response

- The UK is supporting Saudi Arabia.

Development

- The UK is supporting Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Arabia is fighting the Houthi to try to restore the government.

7. Find two ways in which UNICEF has been helping children in Yemen.

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response

1. It has given learning supplies to schools and is providing catch-up classes to some of the children who can't go to school.
2. It is vaccinating children against deadly diseases.

8. Look at what Asma is quoted saying. Which of the options below is a fair summary of her feelings?

READING SKILL – Summarise information from more than one paragraph

(NC 2e)

- She wants the war to end so that she can have a normal childhood.

9. This is a civil war. Why do other countries get involved and do you think it's right that other countries get involved?

READING SKILL – Develop opinions and provide justifications for viewpoints

(NC 6, 7 & 8)

Expected response

- Some countries get involved because they are worried about what's going on, but I don't think it's right. Also, they might want to help people, like UNICEF.

Development

- Some countries, like Saudi Arabia, get involved because they want to help the government and they are worried about who will end up in power. But it can make a situation worse.
- Some countries might get involved in charity work – through an organisation like UNICEF – and this is very helpful to people affected by the war.

10. Do you think this article is written appropriately for children in Years 5 and 6? Is there anything that you would like to have explained further? Is there anything you would like changed?

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories

(NC 6, 7 & 8)

Children's own responses