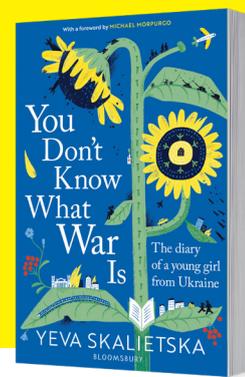


# You Don't Know What War Is

YEVA SKALIETSKA

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PACK



## Introduction

**Suitable for:** Readers in Key Stage 3 and above (11+)

**Based on:** The experiences of a young girl who has been forced to flee her country after an invasion

**Ideal for:** Independent and confident readers

**Includes:** 4x lessons that help children to understand the current conflict and its causes and consequences

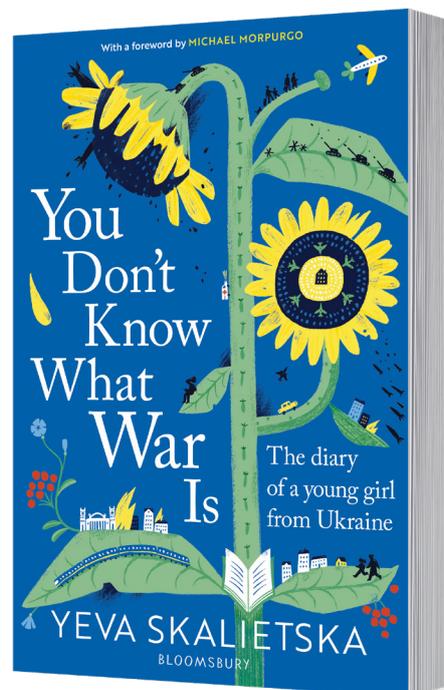
**Themes:** War; Conflict; Fear; Family; Friendship; Freedom; Hope

## About You Don't Know What War Is: The Diary of a Young Girl from Ukraine

*Everyone knows the word 'war'. But very few understand what it truly means. When you find you have to face it, you feel totally lost, walled in by fright and despair. Until you've been there, you don't know what war is.*

This is the gripping, urgent and moving diary of young Ukrainian refugee Yeva Skalietska. It follows twelve days in Ukraine that changed 12-year-old Yeva's life forever. She was woken in the early hours to the terrifying sounds of shelling. Russia had invaded Ukraine, and her beloved Kharkiv home was no longer the safe haven it should have been. It was while she and her granny were forced to seek shelter in a damp, cramped basement that Yeva decided to write down her story. And it is a story that the world needs to hear.

**You Don't Know What War Is is a powerful insight into what conflict is like through the eyes of a child and an essential read for adults and older children alike.**



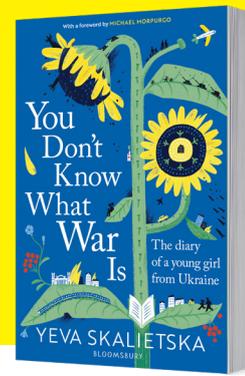
## About the author - Yeva Skalietska

Yeva captured the nation's heart when she was featured on Channel 4 News with her granny as they fled Ukraine for Dublin. In *You Don't Know What War Is*, Yeva records what is happening hour-by-hour as she seeks safety and travels from Kharkiv to Dublin. Each eye-opening diary entry is supplemented by personal photographs, excerpts of messages between Yeva and her friends and daily headlines from around the world, while three beautifully detailed maps (by Kharkiv-native Olga Shtonda) help the reader track Yeva and her granny's journey through Europe.

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## National Curriculum Objectives - Key Stage 3 and 4

### English: Reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material independently through:
  - reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, including in particular whole books, short stories, poems and plays with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, forms and authors.
- understand increasingly challenging texts through:
  - learning new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understanding it with the help of context and dictionaries
  - making inferences and referring to evidence in the text

### English: Writing

Pupils should be taught to:

- write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through:
  - writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including:
    - well-structured formal expository and narrative essays
    - stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing
    - notes and polished scripts for talks and presentations
    - a range of other narrative and non-narrative texts, including arguments, and personal and formal letters summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail

### Geography

Locational knowledge

- extend their locational knowledge and deepen their spatial awareness of the world's countries using maps of the world to focus on Africa, Russia, Asia (including China and India), and the Middle East, focusing on their environmental regions, including polar and hot deserts, key physical and human characteristics, countries and major cities

### History

- know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind
- gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.

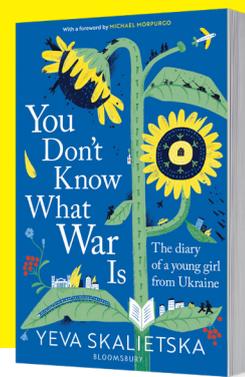
### PSHE

- know about discrimination, how to respond when being discriminated against and responsibilities towards those who are experiencing discrimination

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## Lesson objectives and outcomes

### Lesson One: Comparing Countries (UK/Ireland and Ukraine)

Objectives:

- To locate Ukraine and the other countries on the continent of Europe.
- To compare and contrast the countries of the United Kingdom/Ireland and Ukraine.

Outcomes: A class discussion about the country of Ukraine and the creation of a flag map of the continent of Europe; the organisation of research into a fact file; and the comparison of daily life.

### Lesson Two: The Current Conflict (Causes and Consequences)

Objectives:

- To explore the current situation in Ukraine and its historical origins and causes.
- To understand the consequences of the current conflict and how they are affecting countries.

Outcomes: A conversation about the causes of the conflict linked to a historical understanding; the production of a timeline to show major events; and the brainstorm of the impact of imposed sanctions.

### Lesson Three: You Don't Know What War Is

Objectives:

- To define 'war', recognise different types of warfare and debate the issue of nuclear warfare.
- To identify the effects of war, including the disruption of daily lives and displacement of people.

Outcomes: A collaborative definition of the word 'war' and the writing of a balanced argument about nuclear warfare; a personal reflection in a diary style about living under restrictions; and an understanding of the effects of war on the people.

### Lesson Four: How Can We Help

Objectives:

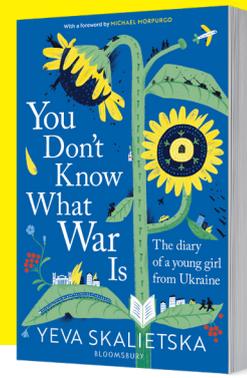
- To consider how we can help the Ukrainian people on local and national levels.
- To monitor the Ukrainian crisis and consider international responses.

Outcomes: An introduction and analysis of the challenges faced by Ukrainians and suggestions of how students can help locally; the creation of a presentation to observe the crisis through a national and international lens; and the continual monitoring of the crisis to understand developments as they happen.

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## Lesson One: Comparing Countries (My country and Ukraine)

### Questions:

- Where is my country? Where is Ukraine?
- What do we know about Ukraine? How can we find out more?
- What are the similarities and differences between daily life in my country and Ukraine?

**Task 1:** To give learners geographical context about the country of Ukraine, begin by showing the flag of Ukraine



Blue stands for blue skies over a vast land

Yellow stands for the grain growing in huge wheatfields beneath

Ask learners where they have seen it before and if they know which country it belongs to. Point out that it consists of equally sized horizontal bands of blue and yellow colours which symbolise the blue skies over the vast land, while yellow stands for the grain growing in the huge wheatfields beneath, representing Ukraine and the Ukrainians as they are: independent, brave, and vibrant.

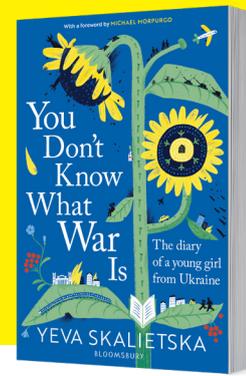
Discuss how it is also a symbol of freedom and democracy, and Ukrainians display and wear their national colours with visible pride. Next, show a world map on the board using online mapping technology such as Google Maps. Find the continent of Europe. Can learners identify the location of Ukraine? How would they describe it using compass directions? Explain that Ukraine is located in eastern Europe, is the second-largest country on the European continent after Russia, and its capital is Kyiv. Using a map of Europe, colour the country of Ukraine in its flag and label its capital city. Then do the same for the United Kingdom with the Union Flag or each of the nation's flags and Ireland, and all the other countries of the European continent.



# You Don't Know What War Is

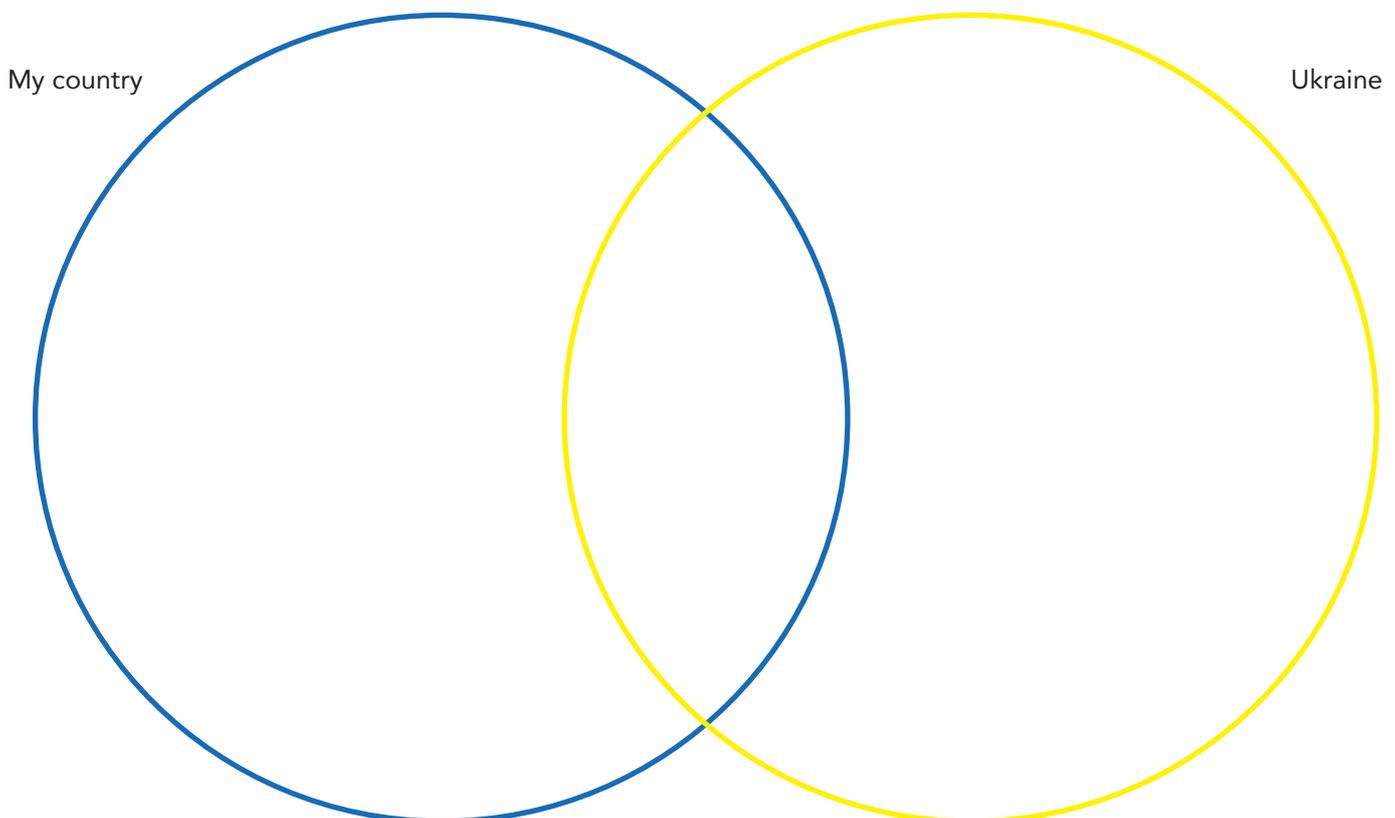
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**Task 2:** After the initial discussion about the location of the countries of Ukraine and those on the rest of the European continent in Task 1, show again an enlarged map of Ukraine with key towns and cities including Kyiv, Kharkiv (where Yeva called home), Dnipro, Odesa, Donetsk, Lviv, Mariupol, Luhansk, and Chernobyl; the Donbas region and the Crimean Peninsula; and the seven bordering countries of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Belarus, and Russia, all labelled. Talk about these in greater detail. Allocate learners into small groups to discover more about Ukraine by providing them with a range of non-fiction books and the internet to conduct further research on the country. Ask them to gather together what they find out in the format of a fact file and to present it in their own way, such as in a written or collage style, a presentation on a digital device, or through a podcast or video recording. Encourage them to think about including demographics such as the country's population, official language, currency and size, as well as in-depth information to give a good overview of the country about its history and geography (physical and human); politics, government, education, and economy systems; weather, climate, nature and landscape; and food, sport and culture.

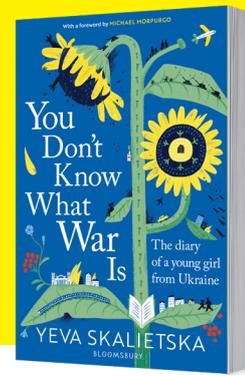
**Task 3:** Using a Venn diagram, ask learners to compare and contrast the daily life of children in the (their own country) and Ukraine, using what they have learned so far in Task 1 and Task 2. How are they similar? How are they different? Model how to map their findings onto the diagram, showing them that in the intersection, they write the common qualities shared between children in both countries. Whereas, in the single sections, they should write descriptions that are unique to children in each country. What observations do they make?



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## Lesson Two: The Current Conflict (Causes and Consequences)

### Questions:

- Where is Ukraine located in relation to Russia? Why is this important to know?
- Who else is also involved in the conflict?
- What are some of the initial consequences?

**Task 1:** Start by asking learners what they have heard or what they might know about the invasion in Ukraine by Russia. Record their answers on the board, and discuss how they are feeling about these events happening. Recap the locations of Ukraine and Russia on the map of Europe. Explain to them that in this task, they will learn about Russia and Ukraine's history, in order to understand the conflict that is currently ongoing, and its causes and consequences. Tell learners that Russia and Ukraine used to be part of the same country or empire, known as the Soviet Union. Share a map of the countries that made up the Soviet Union. Talk about its formation and how it was one of the biggest and most powerful nations in the world, occupying nearly one-sixth of Earth's land surface, making it the world's largest country by area. Explain that following the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia and Ukraine became independent countries. But since then, several pivotal moments have led to the conflict happening today. As a class, make a list of these moments considering the historical, geographical (including resources), and political reasons. These could feature rising tensions between the two countries including the legacy of the Cold War, previous governmental actions, and the prospect of joining military alliances such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) that would be a direct threat to Russia. Consider also how Belarus has supported the Russian invasion of Ukraine by staging part of the invasion from its territory, giving Russia the shortest possible land route to Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

**Task 2:** Create a timeline to organise the historical and recent events that contributed to the invasion of Ukraine. It should include important dates such as the 24th February when it started and a short summary of the effects of each event. Whenever possible, students should note which leaders and countries were involved such as Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Vladimir Putin, Joe Biden and Boris Johnson.

Challenge: In pairs or in small groups, learners could instead develop a news report explaining the current conflict. The news report should briefly explain major events that led to the recent attack and a brief description of what happened in the early hours of Thursday 24th February 2022, as well as identifying the historical context surrounding the relationship between the two countries; detailing what led to the invasion; and mentioning important leaders and their involvement in the conflict. Learners should draft their report and present it in either writing or in a spoken presentation.

**Task 3:** Explain to learners that a consequence of the conflict is that sanctions have been placed on Russia and its citizens by countries across the world as a result of their invasion of Ukraine. Define that 'sanctions' are punishments or penalties applied to a country by another when they are seen to be doing something wrong, and that they can also be set against companies or even individual people from that country. Sanctions are imposed in an attempt to change a country's government's behaviour and short of declaring war, they are one of the toughest measures a country can take. Brainstorm the impact of other countries' sanctions on Russia and its civilians such as those of finance and trade, omission from sports and world events, and their impact on civilians in Ukraine and in countries across the world. Talk about Europe's dependence on oil and gas, some of which comes from Russia, and how sanctions are affecting the prices and supply and demand which is creating an energy crisis.



# You Don't Know What War Is

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## Lesson Three: You Don't Know What War Is

### Questions:

- What is war?
- How are people affected when war happens?
- Where do people go when there is a war in their country? Can they just leave?

*'Everyone knows the word **'war'**. But very few understand what it truly means. When you find you have to face it, you feel totally lost... Until you've been there, you don't know what **war** is.'*

As Yeva reminds us with this quote in the prologue, the word 'war' is often used loosely in the news and media, but what is the actual definition of it? Come together as a class to ask learners to generate different definitions for this term. Using their suggestions, explain that 'war' is often defined as 'a situation or a period of organised fighting or conflict between countries or groups of people, often involving the use of weapons, in which a nation (or multiple nations) enforces its rights by using force over another nation or nations'. Discuss how there are two main types of war. International wars are fought between countries or groups of countries. Whereas, intranational wars are fought between groups within a country and are known as civil wars, rebellions, or revolutions. On the 28th February, Yeva recalls a newspaper headline 'Putin issues nuclear threat'. Take this opportunity to explain what a nuclear war is and the countries known to have nuclear weapons and their estimated numbers. Write a balanced argument containing arguments for and against the use of nuclear weapons, ending with your opinion. **Challenge:** Talk about rules of engagement for war, and whether Vladimir Putin's actions constitute war crimes.

**Task 2:** In the book, Yeva describes in detail how her daily life has been impacted due to the invasion. She mentions that people are unable to withdraw money from ATM machines on page 37, 'talk that the water and electricity in the city will have to be cut tomorrow' on page 41, tanks firing just two hundred metres away from her school on page 50, and people 'starting to panic buy, emptying the shops of food' on page 89. Ask learners to imagine that their lives had been disrupted in the same way that Yeva's life has, what would they not be able to do? Encourage them to close their eyes and reflect on the lives of children who can't do the normal things they can do, e.g. go to school, visit the shops, see their friends, etc. Yeva also talks about there being a curfew initially from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., with it being lengthened from 6 p.m to 6 a.m and again from 3 p.m. to 6 a.m. Can children consider what it would be like to live under a curfew? Write a short reflection in a diary style about how this must have felt.

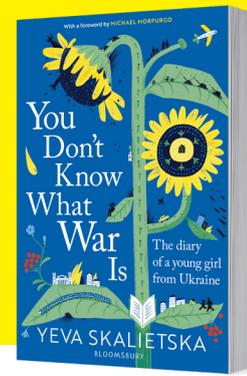
**Task 3:** Highlight how the current crisis in Ukraine has led to the largest exodus since World War II, with over 5.3 million refugees escaping to countries across Europe such as Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. Explain that refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict, persecution or climate change, and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country. They often have to travel miles and miles by foot, cars, buses or trains, with little more than the clothes on their back, leaving behind homes, possessions, jobs, and loved ones, like Yeva and many Ukrainians have. Build empathy by asking learners to consider the question 'If you were a refugee, what would



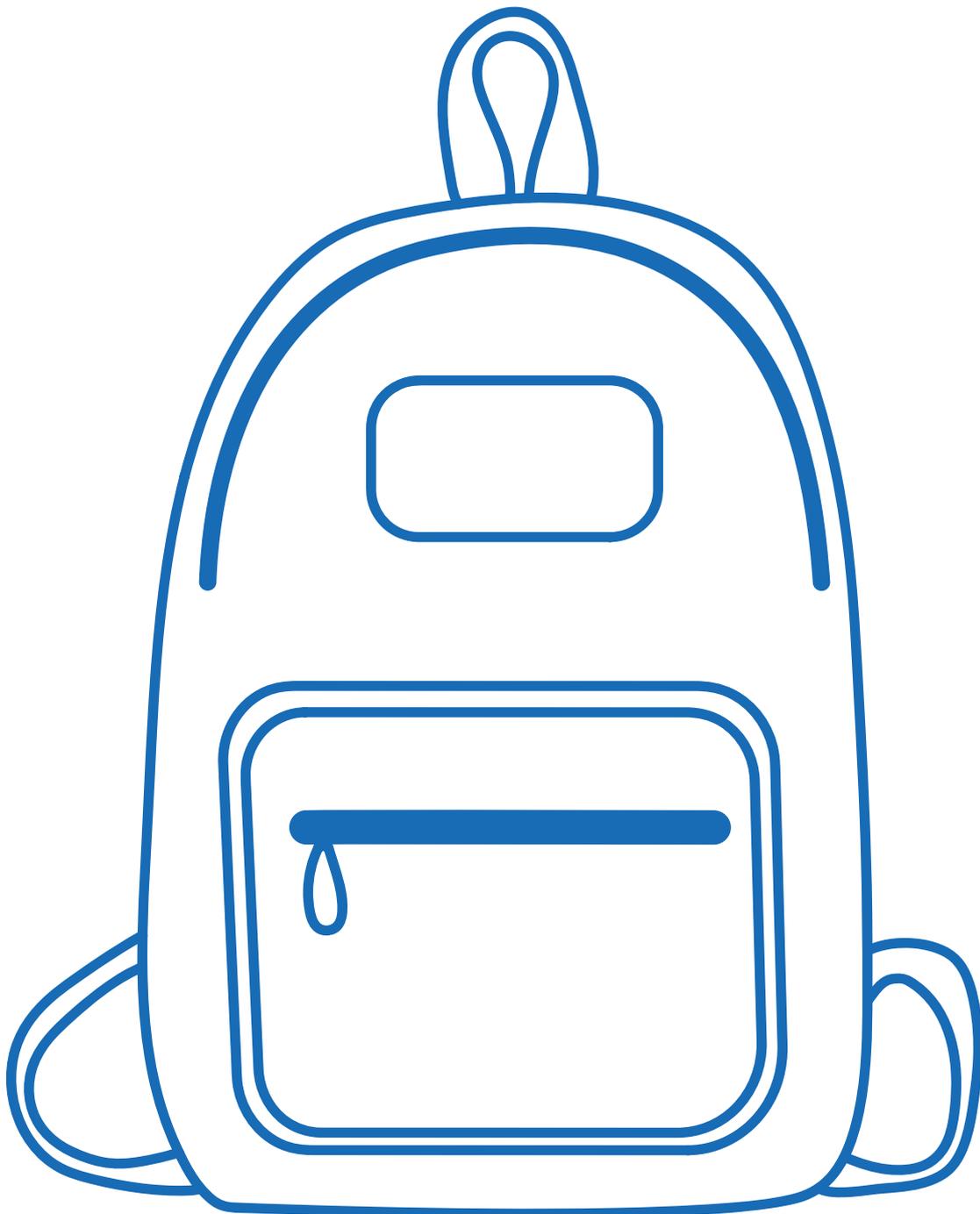
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you take?’ Using a template of a backpack, learners could sketch out the things they would take with them and provide some reasoning to justify why they would choose to take particular items such as clothing and other essentials. **Challenge:** Widen the discussion by exploring the impact of other recent conflicts, including the experiences of refugees in other countries and continents.



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## Lesson Four: How Can We Help

### Questions:

- What challenges do the Ukrainian people face? How can we help?
- What are countries and international organisations doing in response? Could they do more?
- Will these events affect the future?

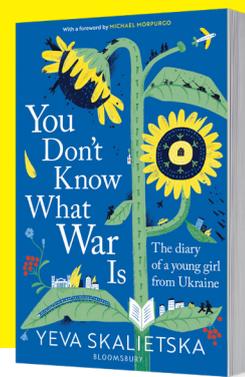
**Task 1:** To start, recap some of the challenges faced by refugees when leaving the country which were mentioned in Task 3 of Lesson Three: You Don't Know What War Is. Reiterate how leaving everything behind and beginning another in a different country with different laws, different education and health systems, different languages and different cultural expectations requires a period of adjustment. Explain that there are many significant challenges that will be faced by the Ukrainian people because of the current conflict (read My Friends' Stories found at the back of the book for more information about how other children are feeling and the challenges they are facing). For those who stayed behind, they will continue to live in the country and have to adapt to radical lifestyle changes, separation from family members, and the ongoing threat to their lives and their loved ones. For those who have left the country, there will be language and communication barriers to overcome, affordable housing and employment to find, as well as the impact of disrupted education on schooling, racism and discrimination and mental health issues due to trauma to deal with. Ask learners to think about how in their communities they could help Ukrainian refugees entering the UK. Draw a table with three headings 'Home', 'School', 'Wider Community'. In each column, list ways in which you can help such as donating to charities supporting Ukrainian refugees, taking action by volunteering and offering hands-on help, hosting refugees in your home, providing dual language Ukrainian resources for children in school to access the curriculum and extra support to parents.

Home	School	Wider Community

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**Task 2:** Following on from Task 1, open up the discussion to consider national and international responses. Talk about the ways in which countries across the world have widely condemned the invasion and are united in their support for Ukraine. For example: by welcoming refugees and providing for those seeking shelter, offering strong political, financial and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, and imposing hard-hitting sanctions against Russia and those complicit in the war. Create a presentation about what countries across the world are doing to help internationally, and what they could do including pledging additional humanitarian aid, suspending entry requirements for visas, and protecting all refugees especially women, children and Black people from racism, discrimination and human trafficking.

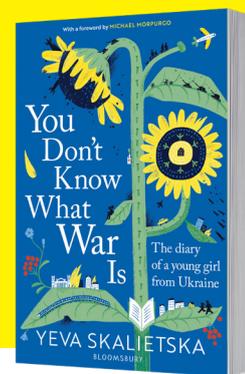
**Task 3:** Describe to learners how the current conflict is rapidly changing with new developments happening from one day to the next and that another way of helping is to stay informed of the situation. Discuss that over the coming weeks and months, they will be following the Ukrainian crisis in the news and taking note of how the crisis evolves. Talk with learners about the different types of platforms in which we can access the news such as television, radio, newspapers, online, etc. Review with learners how to assess these media sources for reliability. Encourage them to refer to UK, Ukrainian, European, US and Russian news sources to see a range of reporting. As time elapses over the following months, make time each week to discuss and debrief. Consider how the crisis has evolved. Have conditions improved or worsened? What steps has the international community taken? Do learners believe that a resolution to the conflict will happen soon?

**Challenge:** Talk to learners more about which news sources they found to be reliable or unreliable? Why? Do learners know about press freedom in Russia and government influence over media outlets?

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## Further ideas and activities

- Read more books that explore the country of Ukraine, its people, the current conflict and war such as *Maya and Her Friends* by Larysa Denysenko and Masha Foya, and *The Day War Came* by Nicola Davies and Rebecca Cobb.
- Watch news reports on programmes such as Newsround, which explain the Ukrainian crisis in accessible language, help children to understand the people behind the photographs, offer clear explanations of unfamiliar vocabulary, and demystify terminology they hear being spoken.
- Examine photographs and images to explore the impacts conflict has on people through a visual representation.
- Learn about the importance of Ukrainian exports to the global economy, why it's been so difficult for grain shipments to resume, and why Ukrainian farmers are still having a difficult time.
- If children are having a hard time in contextualising the situation, compare it to playground conflict and classroom rules. Support your explanations by making reference to your school's code of conduct, behaviour, and conflict resolution systems.