

TEXT SET TOPIC: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Grade Level Recommendation: Grades 3–5

Key Focus Areas for Design:

Counternarratives **Current Events** Identity Language **Perspectives** Social Justice

Topic: This text set is about Russia's invasion of Ukraine (resources dated February 2022–April 2022).

Context/Rationale/Reflections: This text set is meant for students to understand the current conflict and related historical context. Considerations include:

- How to display content for elementary students, without sharing overt trauma.
- The importance of humanizing the conflict, avoiding a “good guy/bad guy” narrative, while still appropriately depicting this as an act of aggression (e.g., using the word “invasion” rather than “conflict”; showing Russian citizens protesting the war).

Important teacher notes for this text set

- **Dates:** Because this text set focuses on a current event, dates are included. Please closely review any notes to ensure the resource does not get outdated in terms of accuracy.
- **Age level:** There are many more resources targeting high school or middle school students on this content. Some resources were included to consider for building teacher background knowledge and/or for modifying to use with younger students.
- **Family connections:** Family involvement and communication are recommended before engaging with this text set. Consider whether any students and their families have direct or historical background experience with war or cultural conflict both in current day or past generations.
- Need support thinking through how to present and engage with these resources? Here are a few suggestions:
 - [How to Talk With Students About the Russia-Ukraine War: 5 Tips](#) (EdWeek)
 - [Helping Your Students Cope with a Violent World](#) (Edutopia)
 - [Resource list](#) from Colorin' Colorado



Resources to build teacher background knowledge:

[The long history between Russia and Ukraine](#): This video outlines five key moments of historical context that contribute to Russia's invasion of Ukraine today.

[Why is Russia invading Ukraine?](#): This article explains some background information including Putin's goals, the impact on the US, and the start of the conflict (dated February 24, 2022).



A note for multilingual students:



Text Sets are meant to support knowledge building! Support opportunities for student [translanguaging](#) while using this text set by encouraging students to write, discuss, and present in their home language(s), English, or a combination while they are learning.

Text/ Resource	Author/ Creator	Brief Description/Notes	Why use this resource?	Considerations for using this resource
Russia and Former Soviet Countries MAP	The Choices Program from Brown University	This map shows Ukraine and other former Soviet countries, as well as the land that is present day Russia.	This map helps build historical context in showing the boundaries of present day Russia and other countries, as well as the former USSR. Students can use this map to consider what defines the boundaries of a country (and how/why boundaries can be redefined over time).	Give students a copy of the map (and show a world map on a globe, poster, or projection/screen). Discuss the concept of “borders”—who decides on a country’s borders? How do borders change?
Let’s Break it Down: What’s Going on With Russia and Ukraine? (2/23/22) SLIDESHOW	NY Times Kids	This short slide deck, including a map, explains the past relationship between Russia and the U.S., the history of Russia and Ukraine, and the importance of the conflict. <i>*Note: the last slide is not current enough to use, as it was written before Russia invaded.</i>	This resource gives a concise summary of the historical context and current conditions. The language is very accessible for student reading.	Project slides directly or adapt to share as a printable resource.
Global Protests continue amid Ukraine invasion VIDEO	Newsela (free online account needed)	This video shows the global response to Russia’s invasion, including protests around the world and Russian citizens protesting despite dangers of arrest.	This video helps show the universal objection to Russia’s invasion. It also helps to demonstrate that the act of aggression by Russia’s government does not represent all citizens of the country.	Play video directly, pausing for reactions/questions. Show locations on a map or globe when highlighting worldwide reactions. Discuss the difference between everyday citizens and government officials.

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War in Ukraine (3/4/22) ARTICLE	Time for Kids	This article summarizes key events, including Ukraine’s interest in joining NATO, the worldwide response, and an organization working to support Ukraine (World Central Kitchen).	This article gives an accessible summary of key events and expands the content covered so far to highlight a service organization working to support refugees at border crossings.	Play video directly, pausing for reactions/questions.
NewsDepth (3/10/22) VIDEO (through 6:44)	PBS Learning Media	This video explains the term “refugee” and focuses on showing the plight of refugees (women and children), as well as on humanitarian efforts to support their needs.	Including this resource humanizes the conflict and shows the impact on real people (both refugees and those working to help/support).	Use of this video could easily allow for connections to a class community project. Students can come up with ideas for a fundraiser or project on their own as an extension.
A Symbol of Peace (4/18/22) For link info, see last column. ARTICLE	Time for Kids	This article explains the symbol of the sunflower and how it is being used to show a desire for peace and solidarity with Ukraine around the world.	This article moves towards a message of peace/support that students might be able to connect to and gives a visual/symbol they can use or share.	Note: for access to this article, click on the English or Spanish link below, enter the grade level (3–4), and search “Ukraine.” No direct url is available. https://www.timeforkids.com/ or https://time.com/tfk-spanish/ Resource is available in English and Spanish. Students can read in their preferred language.

Now What? Ideas for connecting to reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Apply: Students can write about what they learned in the form of a newspaper article, produce an informative video or news segment, or promote their community project using facts they've learned in this text set.

Connect: Students can interview a family or community member with experience working with, supporting, or experiencing life as a refugee, or those working to provide support and financial assistance to those in Ukraine right now. Students can plan questions, conduct the interview, and summarize lessons learned.

Extend: This text set also sets conditions for discussions about refugees across the world and when others do (or don't) help and support them. Consider connections to other issues of immigration, displacement, or refugees as a follow up. How has the U.S. treated refugees historically? How does race or country of origin play into refugee treatment?