

Three Classroom Activities for Teaching About – and Teaching Against – Russia’s War Against Ukraine

If educators around the world wish to engage their students in studying about – and working to stop – Vladimir Putin’s illegal invasion of Ukraine, they’ll need teaching materials that specifically deal with the issues involved in this conflict.

This third edition of my “Emergency Bulletins” for language teachers contains three activities on the Russia-Ukraine conflict to introduce in your classrooms.

(1) TEN CLASSROOM RESEARCH TASKS

<> this activity provides 10 tasks designed to be done by individuals, pairs or groups that engage students in researching topics ranging from resistance in Russia and support for Ukraine to doing surveys and documenting war crimes.

(2) TEN LETTERS TO READ, DISCUSS AND WRITE

<> this activity provides 10 different letters for students to read, discuss, then use as a basis to write their own letters. The letters are addressed to a variety of people and groups, from Vladimir Putin, Volodymyr Zelensky and NATO to Russian soldiers, humanitarian NGOs and governments.

(3) TEN DIFFERENT OPINIONS ABOUT RUSSIA’S WAR ON UKRAINE

<> this activity provides 10 different opinions about the crisis in Ukraine for students to read, discuss and debate. The opinions concern topics from imposing further sanctions, using civil disobedience and assisting refugees to imposing no-fly zones, volunteering to fight for Ukraine and working against the war in our schools and communities.

Please feel free to:

- experiment with these activities – in full or in part - in your classroom
- modify, improve or tailor these for your own teaching situation
- share these with other teachers and schools in your network of contacts

Our most important goal as teachers, in my mind, is to educate our students about this brutal war on Ukraine, raise their awareness of the humanitarian crisis it has caused, have them think critically about the complexities of this conflict and mobilize their energies to help end the war, bring peace to Ukraine and assist the innocent victims of Russia’s cruel attacks.

Do get in touch with any questions or comments and let me know how things go with your teaching about – and against – Russia’s war on Ukraine.

Kip Cates <kipcates24@gmail.com>
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FOR REFERENCE

- Bulletin #3: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16aughWsHgTIWJIWvCUz3PNTnWlbGRQg3/view?usp=sharing>
- Bulletin #2: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lqSByLhHjUyuqVoMBWGGwN28isQQUp2W/view?usp=sharing>
- Bulletin #1: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ppjedWviu7PYBN3wBCG3Cy1xM4NitvYb/view?usp=sharing>
- 14 Things We Can Do: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k8UO5bJmOPiQ6tZrYOdJf142W6WIRFLb/view>

10 Classroom Tasks - The Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Below are 10 tasks that can help us to understand – and oppose – Russia’s war on Ukraine. Here’s what to do:

- First, form teams of individuals, pairs or groups.
- Next, have each team choose one of the following tasks.
- Work with your team to complete your task.
- Use newspapers, TV news, online information & videos
- When everyone’s ready, have each team do a report, make a poster or give a class presentation. Good luck!

Task 1 Mapping the Conflict

- To understand and stop this brutal conflict, we have to know where it’s taking place. Work together to prepare maps of Russia, of Ukraine, of the locations of Russian forces, of Ukrainian refugees and other topics
- When your group has finished its work, make a report, a poster or a presentation to the class.

Team members:

Task 2 Death and Destruction

- Your task is to document the death, destruction and misery caused by Russia’s brutal war on Ukraine. What buildings were destroyed? How many people killed? injured? Ukrainian refugees? dead children?
- Make a list of the death, destruction and misery you find, then give a report or presentation to the class.

Team members:

Task 3 Actions to Stop the War

- Your team’s task is to carry out research to find out what’s being done around the world by governments, organizations and individuals to stop this conflict, end the fighting and re-establish peace in Ukraine.
- Make a list of all the actions that you find, then prepare a report, poster or presentation for the class.

Team members:

Task 4 Documenting War Crimes

- Your task is to document all the war crimes of this conflict. Study what a “war crime” is. Then, document the war crimes you find (invading a peaceful country, bombing schools and hospitals, killing civilians...)
- Record the war crimes that you find and the laws being broken, then do a report, poster or presentation.

Team members:

Task 5 Our Support for Ukraine

- Your team’s task is to focus on our own nation and document how individuals, groups and organizations in our country are protesting Russia’s attacks, calling for peace and providing support for people in Ukraine.
- Make a list of all the examples that you find, then make a report, poster or presentation to the class.

Team members:

Task 6 Overseas Support for Ukraine

- Your task is to document the many ways that individuals, groups, organizations and governments in other countries around the world are protesting Russia’s attack, calling for peace and supporting Ukraine.
- Make a list of all the examples that you find, then make a report, poster or presentation to the class.

Team members:

Task 7 Resistance in Russia

- Russia is using censorship, propaganda and force to make people support its invasion. But, many Russians have stood up to say “Stop!” Document as many examples as possible of Russian resistance to the war.
- List up the Russian people, groups and actions you find, then do a report, poster or presentation in class.

Team members:

Task 8 Nations Supporting Russia

- Your team’s task is to find out which nations are actively – or passively – supporting Russia’s illegal war on Ukraine, research their reasons why, then prepare ideas on how we can convince them to stop.
- Prepare a list of these nations, their reasons and your ideas, then make class a report, poster or presentation.

Team members:

Task 9 Public Opinion

- Your task is to document people’s opinions on Russia’s war on Ukraine. (1) Survey the ideas of people in your class, school or city. (2) Research opinion polls on what people around the world think.
- Prepare the results of your local survey and global research, then do a class report, poster or presentation.

Team members:

Task 10 What Can We Do?

- Your team’s task is to research all the different ways that ordinary people like us can take action to protest Russia’s illegal war, support Ukraine, work for peace, help refugees and assist the people of Ukraine.
- Prepare a list of the actions we can take, then give a report, make a poster or do a presentation to the class.

Team members:

The Ukraine Crisis - 10 Letters to Read, Discuss and Write

- WHAT TO DO:**
- Put students into groups.
 - Give each member of the group one of the 10 letters below.
 - Have each member read their letter aloud and add their comments.
 - Next, discuss the letter in your group.
 - After all the letters have been read and discussed, pass out the master list of all 10 letters below.
 - Have each student choose the 3 letters that were most impressive for them and explain why to their group.
 - Finally, have students write their own letters and find a way to send them (eg by post / email / an embassy)

A Letter to Vladimir Putin

Dear Mr. Putin, I'm writing to you from ___ to demand that you stop your brutal invasion of Ukraine. Your illegal war is causing misery, death and destruction. Stop your attacks. Bring your troops home. If not, I will boycott all Russian goods and work to ensure that you are arrested and tried as a war criminal.

A Letter to Volodymyr Zelensky

Dear Mr. Zelensky, I'm writing to you from ___ to salute you for the heroic efforts of you and your citizens to oppose the brutal Russian invasion of your country. Like many people around the world, I stand with you in this fight and am doing my best to protest Russia's war and to support the people of Ukraine.

A Letter to Soldiers Fighting for Ukraine

Dear soldiers in Ukraine, I'm writing to you from ___ to express my support for your valiant fight against Russia's invasion. I really respect you for standing up to protect your country and salute the international volunteers fighting with you. Please stay safe. People around the world are supporting you.

A Letter to the Russian People

Dear Russian people, I'm writing to you from ___ to express my sadness at your situation. You are also victims of your president's illegal war on Ukraine. I feel terrible about the pain you're suffering from the harsh sanctions that his actions have brought. Please do what you can to protest and to help us end this war.

A Letter to Russian Soldiers

Dear Russian soldiers, I'm writing to you from ___ to beg you to stop your brutal attacks on Ukraine and its people. Please put down your weapons, stop killing people and go home. Please disobey your orders, refuse to fight or switch sides to help the Ukrainians. Follow your conscience. Don't support this evil war.

A Letter to Ukrainian Children

Dear Ukrainian children, I'm writing to you from ___ to offer my care, concern and support. It breaks my heart to think about the trauma you've suffered from Russia's attacks and from having to leave your homes as refugees. Please remember that the world's people are with you and that we're working to stop this war.

A Letter to Nations Helping Refugees

Dear ____, I'm writing to you from ___ to thank you for the generous assistance your country is giving to Ukraine and its people in the face of Russia's invasion. Vladimir Putin's brutal war has led to a humanitarian disaster. Your pressure on Russia and help for Ukrainian refugees are greatly appreciated.

A Letter to Nations Supporting Russia

Dear ____, I'm writing to you from ___ to beg you to stop supporting Russia and its illegal invasion of Ukraine. Vladimir Putin's war is causing untold misery, death and destruction. How can you possibly support his evil actions? Please end your support or I will boycott all goods manufactured by your nation.

A Letter to Humanitarian NGOs

Dear ____, I'm writing to you from ___ to thank you for the invaluable work your organization is doing to protest the Russian invasion of Ukraine and assist the victims of Vladimir Putin's evil war. My family, friends and I are now collecting money for you and other NGOs. Thank you so much for your great work!

A Letter to My Country's Government

Dear ____, I'm writing to you from ___ to thank you for protesting Russia's invasion and supporting people in Ukraine. However, I'd like to ask you to do more. Our nation's help is urgently needed to end this war, stop the death and destruction, bring back peace and assist Ukrainian refugees. Please take action!

10 Opinions: Comparing Ideas about Russia's War on Ukraine

Here are 10 people with 10 different opinions about Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

- (1) Which opinions did you agree with? Which opinions do you disagree with? Why?
- (2) What do you think about the other ideas listed? Share your comments with your partner or group.
- (3) What's your opinion about Russia's invasion? Explain to your group or write your thoughts.
- (4) **Survey task:** Form pairs or groups, then go out and interview 10~20 people (family, friends, neighbors...) on what they think and feel about Ukraine. Report to the class on what you find.



I'm so angry about Russia's invasion! Our best response is to punish them harshly. We need to impose more sanctions, boycott Russian products and isolate Russia totally. The more pain they feel, the faster this war will end.



Our biggest task in this conflict is to take care of Ukrainian refugees. These poor people have suffered military attacks, have covered in bomb shelters and have been driven from their homes by Russian troops. They urgently need our help!



This cruel war has been started by one man: Vladimir Putin. He's the Hitler of our age. Until he's gone, this conflict will just go on and on. Someone has to take him out. He must be arrested, poisoned, assassinated or overthrown!



Fighting violence with violence is stupid. Russian soldiers are brainwashed boys following the orders of evil men. Killing them helps no-one. We need to follow Gandhi. Ukrainians should start a non-violent campaign of civil disobedience.



We can't just stand by and let Russia invade Ukraine, kill civilians, destroy cities and create a refugee crisis. The Ukrainian army can stop them, but it needs more arms. What we should do is send them as many weapons as we can.



Vladimir Putin is a dictator. He doesn't give a damn about sanctions, protests or refugees. All he understands is force. NATO and other nations should enforce a no-fly zone, move naval fleets to Odessa and maybe bomb a Russian army base.



If Ukraine is to prevent Russia from destroying their country, they'll need help. That's why I'm flying to Poland to join the international volunteers who will fight alongside Ukrainian soldiers. Words aren't enough. We have to act!



The only ones who can stop this war are the people of Russia. They have to overcome their fear, stand up and call for an end to this unjust war. I know this isn't easy. But many Russians are already acting. More people need to join them.



This war will only end when people like us take action. My classmates and I are joining protests outside the Russian embassy, sending support letters to Ukraine, boycotting Russian products and raising funds to help the refugees.



The key to ending this war is China! They're the only country that Putin will listen to. If we can convince China to join the international community, condemn this evil war and impose harsh sanctions, then Putin would be forced to back down!