

# Overview

Within this packet, you'll find detailed lesson guides along with graphic organizers, maps, and texts to support your instruction of the Ukraine conflict in the classroom. You'll also find comprehensive SEL resources to help students of all ages cope with the emotional weight of the volatile situation.

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### Maps and Texts

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## Social Studies Lessons

### Lesson Guide: Elementary School Social Studies

#### Introduce

**Class Discussion:** Have students view the [map of Europe](#) and discuss the following questions:

- Where is Ukraine? Where is Russia?
- What do you notice about Ukraine and Russia?
- Where is Ukraine located in relation to Russia?

**Background Information:** Explain to students that in this lesson, they will learn about Russia and Ukraine's history, in order to understand the conflict that is currently ongoing. Tell students that Russia and Ukraine used to be part of the same country, known as the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union fell apart 30 years ago, and Russia and Ukraine became independent countries. In the early hours of Thursday, February 24, the Russian military invaded Ukraine in an act of war.

#### Explore

*Assign students both articles with the following instructions:*

For [Why is Russia invading Ukraine? Here's what we know:](#)

- As you read, highlight key details about events that led to the invasion. In a second color, highlight details about the effects of the invasion.

For ['The worst sunrise in my life': Ukrainians wake to attack:](#)

- As you read, highlight details that show how the events of the conflict in Ukraine have affected the citizens of Ukraine.

#### Check for Understanding

**Class Discussion:** After reading, discuss the following questions with your class:

- Who are the major leaders involved in the conflict, and what are their views?
  - Volodymyr Zelenskyy
  - Vladimir Putin
  - Joe Biden

- What are some of the events that led to the conflict?
- How are citizens being affected by the conflict?

## Formative Assessment

**Flowchart:** Instruct students to complete a flowchart to organize the historical and recent events that contributed to the recent attack on Ukraine. Students should choose 4 major events that they believe are most influential in the recent conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Each event should include important dates as well as details of the event.

## Reflection

**Free Write:** At the end of the lesson, give students 5-10 minutes to privately write their thoughts and feelings on the current events happening in Ukraine. Encourage students to consider if and how their thoughts and feelings have changed over the course of the lesson.

## Extension

**Speech Analysis:** Instruct students to read [Russia-Ukraine crisis: Zelenskyy's address](#) in full. After reading, students should fill out the speech analysis worksheet to analyze the speech. Then, in a whole class discussion students should respond to the following:

- What is the main idea of the speech?
- How does this speech help you better understand the conflict?
- What questions do you still have about the conflict?

# Lesson Guide: Middle School School Social Studies

## Introduce

**Class Brainstorm:** Have students view the [map of Europe](#). First, ask students the following regarding the map:

- Where is Ukraine in relation to Russia?
- What do you notice about Ukraine and Russia?
- What do you know about conflicts between bordering countries?

**Background Information:** Explain to students that in this lesson, they will learn about Russia and Ukraine's history, in order to understand the conflict that is currently ongoing. Tell students that Russia and Ukraine used to be part of the same country, known as the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union fell apart 30 years ago, and Russia and Ukraine became independent countries. In the early hours of Thursday, February 24, the Russian military invaded Ukraine in an act of war.

## Explore

*Assign students both articles with the following instructions:*

For [Why is Russia invading Ukraine? Here's what we know](#):

- As you read, highlight key details about events that led to the invasion. In a second color, highlight details about the effects of the invasion.

For ['The worst sunrise in my life': Ukrainians wake to attack](#):

- As you read, highlight details that show how the events of the conflict in Ukraine have affected the citizens of Ukraine.

## Check for Understanding

**Timeline:** Instruct students to create a timeline to organize the historical and recent events that contributed to the recent attack on Ukraine. The timeline should include important dates and a 1-2 sentence summary of each event. Whenever possible, students should note which important leaders were involved in the events, including:

- Volodymyr Zelenskyy
- Vladimir Putin
- Joe Biden

## Formative Assessment

**News Report:** In pairs or in small groups, students should develop a news report

explaining the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia. 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, February 24, 2022. Students may follow these steps to create their news report:

- Identify the historical context surrounding the relationship between the two countries
- Detail the major events that led to Thursday's invasion
- Include important leaders and their involvement in the conflict.
- Draft their report and decide whether or not to present in writing or in a spoken presentation.

## Reflection

**Free Write:** At the end of the lesson, give students 5-10 minutes to privately write their thoughts and feelings on the current events happening in Ukraine. Encourage students to consider if and how their thoughts and feelings have changed over the course of the lesson.

## Extension

**Speech Analysis:** Instruct students to read [Russia-Ukraine crisis: Zelenskyy's address in full](#). After reading, students should fill out the speech analysis worksheet to analyze the speech. Then, in a whole class discussion students should respond to the following:

- How does this speech further your understanding of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia?
- What questions do you still have about the conflict?

Encourage students to cite evidence from the article that helped them determine their response.

# Lesson Guide: High School Social Studies

## Introduce

**Class Brainstorm:** Have students view the [map of Europe](#). First, ask students the following regarding the map:

- What stands out to you about this map?
- Where is Ukraine in relation to Russia?
- What do you know about the current situation in Ukraine?

Then, ask students to brainstorm why there may be conflict between Ukraine and Russia considering historical, geographical (including resources), and political reasons. Students should also consider how the conflict between Ukraine and Russia could impact other countries and the global economy.

Explain to students that in this lesson they will learn about the factors that contributed to the conflict relating to recent current events between Ukraine and Russia. Tell students following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine has been a sovereign or independent nation since 1991. Since then, several pivotal moments between Ukraine and Russia have led to the conflict happening today.

## Explore

*Assign students both articles with the following instructions:*

For [Why is Russia invading Ukraine? Here's what we know](#):

- As you read, highlight key details about events that led to the invasion. In a second color, highlight details about the effects of the invasion.

For ['The worst sunrise in my life': Ukrainians wake to attack](#):

- As you read, highlight details that show how the events of the conflict in Ukraine have affected the citizens of Ukraine. Use a second color to highlight citizen responses to the conflict.

For [Russia-Ukraine crisis: Zelenskyy's address in full](#):

*Note: speech is available to teachers with access to Newsela ELA and Social Studies:*

- As you read, highlight the key points that Zelenskyy is making in his appeal to the Russian people. Use the annotation tool to make connections to what you've read about the conflict.

## Check for Understanding

**Timeline:** Instruct students to create a timeline to organize the historical and recent events that contributed to the recent attack on Ukraine. The timeline should include important dates and a 1-2 sentence summary of each event. Whenever possible, students should note which important leaders were involved in the events, including:

- Volodymyr Zelenskyy
- Vladimir Putin
- Joe Biden

**Class Discussion:** Students should review Zelenskyy's address. Then discuss the following:

- How does this speech further your understanding of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia?
- Select a quote from the speech you found important. Explain why the quote is important.
- What questions do you still have about the conflict?

## Formative Assessment

**News Report:** In pairs or in small groups, students should develop a news report explaining the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia. 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, February 24, 2022. Students may follow these steps to create their news report:

- Identify the historical context surrounding the relationship between the two countries
- Detail the major events that led to Thursday's invasion
- Include important leaders and their involvement in the conflict.
- Draft their report and decide whether or not to present in writing or in a spoken presentation.

## Reflection

**Free Write:** At the end of the lesson, give students 5-10 minutes to privately write their thoughts and feelings on the current events happening in Ukraine. Encourage students to consider if and how their thoughts and feelings have changed over the course of the lesson. Students can also write about how the current conflict is impacting their lives or their community.

# ELA Lessons

## Lesson Guide: Elementary ELA

### Before Reading

**Class Discussion:** Have students view the [map of Europe](#) and discuss the following questions:

- Where is Ukraine? Where is Russia?
- What do you notice about Ukraine and Russia?
- Where is Ukraine located in relation to Russia?

**Background Information:** Explain to students that in this lesson, they will learn about Russia and Ukraine's history, in order to understand the conflict that is currently going on. Tell students that Russia and Ukraine used to be part of the same country, known as the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union fell apart 30 years ago, and Russia and Ukraine became independent countries. In the early hours of Thursday, February 24, the Russian military invaded Ukraine in an act of war.

**Free Write, Part 1 (Optional):** Before reading, some students may benefit from an opportunity to write down their thoughts and feelings about what they have heard about the conflict in Ukraine. Students will have time at the end of the lesson to process the information they've learned.

### Assignment Reading Instructions

*Assign students one or both of the articles with the following instructions:*

For [Why is Russia invading Ukraine? Here's what we know:](#)

- As you read, highlight key details about events that led to the invasion. In a second color, highlight details about the effects of the invasion.

For ['The worst sunrise in my life': Ukrainians wake to attack:](#)

- As you read, highlight details that show how the events of the conflict in Ukraine have affected the citizens of Ukraine.

### After Reading

**Class Discussion:** After reading, present these questions to the class:

- Who are the major leaders involved in the conflict, and what are their views?
  - Volodymyr Zelenskyy
  - Vladimir Putin



- Joe Biden
- What are some of the events that led to the conflict?
- How are citizens being affected by the conflict?

**Flowchart:** Instruct students to complete a flowchart to organize the historical and recent events that contributed to the recent attack on Ukraine. Students should choose 4 major events that they believe are most influential in the recent conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Each event should include important dates as well as details of the event.

**Free Write, Part 2:** At the end of the lesson, give students 5-10 minutes to privately write their thoughts and feelings on the current events happening in Ukraine. Encourage students to consider if and how their thoughts and feelings have changed over the course of the lesson.

## Extension

**Speech Analysis:** Instruct students to read [Russia-Ukraine crisis: Zelenskyy's address](#) in full. After reading, students should complete the speech analysis graphic organizer. Then, in a whole-class discussion, students ask students to respond to the following:

- What is the main idea of the speech?
- How does this speech help you better understand the conflict?
- What questions do you still have about the conflict?

# Lesson Guide: Middle School ELA

## Before Reading

**Class Brainstorm:** Have students view the [map of Europe](#). First, ask students the following regarding the map:

- Where is Ukraine in relation to Russia?
- What do you notice about Ukraine and Russia?
- What do you know about conflicts between bordering countries?

**Background Information:** Explain to students that in this lesson, they will learn about Russia and Ukraine's history, in order to understand the conflict that is currently ongoing. Tell students that Russia and Ukraine used to be part of the same country, known as the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union fell apart 30 years ago, and Russia and Ukraine became independent countries. In the early hours of Thursday, February 24, the Russian military invaded Ukraine in an act of war.

**Free Write, Part 1 (Optional):** Before reading, some students may benefit from an opportunity to write down their thoughts and feelings about what they have heard about the conflict in Ukraine. Students will have time at the end of the lesson to process the information they've learned.

## Assignment Reading Instructions

*Assign students one or both articles with the following instructions:*

For [Why is Russia invading Ukraine? Here's what we know:](#)

- As you read, highlight key details about events that led to the invasion. In a second color, highlight details about the effects of the invasion.

For ['The worst sunrise in my life': Ukrainians wake to attack:](#)

- As you read, highlight details that show how the events of the conflict in Ukraine have affected the citizens of Ukraine.

## After Reading

**Timeline:** Instruct students to create a timeline to organize the historical and recent events that contributed to the recent attack on Ukraine. The timeline should include important dates and a 1-2 sentence summary of each event. Whenever possible, students should note which important leaders were involved in the events, including:

- Volodymyr Zelenskyy
- Vladimir Putin
- Joe Biden

**News Report:** In pairs or in small groups, have students develop a news report explaining the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia. 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, February 24, 2022. Students can follow these steps to create their news report:

- Identify the historical context surrounding the relationship between the two countries
- Detail the major events that led to Thursday's invasion
- Include important leaders and their involvement in the conflict.
- Draft their report and decide whether or not to present in writing or in a spoken presentation.

**Free Write, Part 2:** At the end of the lesson, give students 5-10 minutes to privately write their thoughts and feelings on the current events happening in Ukraine. Encourage students to consider if and how their thoughts and feelings have changed over the course of the lesson.

## Extension

**Speech Analysis:** Instruct students to read [Russia-Ukraine crisis: Zelenskyy's address](#) in full. After reading, students should fill out the speech analysis worksheet to analyze the speech. Then, in a whole class discussion students should respond to the following:

- How does this speech further your understanding of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia?
- What questions do you still have about the conflict?

Encourage students to cite evidence from the article that helped them determine their response.

# Lesson Guide: High School ELA

## Before Reading

**Class Brainstorm:** Have students view the [map of Europe](#). First, ask students the following regarding the map:

- What stands out to you about this map?
- Where is Ukraine in relation to Russia?
- What do you know about the current situation in Ukraine?

Then, ask students to brainstorm why there may be conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

Explain to students that in this lesson they will learn about the factors that contributed to the conflict relating to recent current events between Ukraine and Russia. Tell students following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine has been a sovereign or independent nation since 1991. Since then, several pivotal moments between Ukraine and Russia have led to the conflict happening today.

**Free Write, Part 1 (Optional):** Before reading, some students may benefit from an opportunity to write down their thoughts and feelings about what they have heard about the conflict in Ukraine. Students will have time at the end of the lesson to process the information they've learned.

## Assignment Reading Instructions

*Assign students any of the articles in the text set with the following instructions:*

For [Why is Russia invading Ukraine? Here's what we know](#):

- As you read, highlight key details about events that led to the invasion. In a second color, highlight details about the effects of the invasion.

For ['The worst sunrise in my life': Ukrainians wake to attack](#):

- As you read, highlight details that show how the events of the conflict in Ukraine have affected the citizens of Ukraine. Use a second color to highlight citizen responses to the conflict.

For [Russia-Ukraine crisis: Zelenskyy's address in full](#):

*Note: speech is available to teachers with access to Newsela ELA and Social Studies:*

- As you read, highlight the key points that Zelenskyy is making in his appeal to the Russian people. Use the annotation tool to make connections to what you've read about the conflict.

## After Reading

**Timeline:** Instruct students to create a timeline to organize the historical and recent events that contributed to the recent attack on Ukraine. The timeline should include important dates and a 1-2 sentence summary of each event. Whenever possible, students should note which important leaders were involved in the events, including:

- Volodymyr Zelenskyy
- Vladimir Putin
- Joe Biden

**Class Discussion:** Students should review Zelenskyy's address. Then discuss the following:

- How does this speech further your understanding of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia?
- Select a quote from the speech you found important. Explain why the quote is important.
- What questions do you still have about the conflict?

**News Report:** In pairs or in small groups, students should develop a news report explaining the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia. 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, February 24, 2022. Students may follow these steps to create their news report:

- Identify the historical context surrounding the relationship between the two countries.
- Detail the major events that led to Thursday's invasion.
- Include important leaders and their involvement in the conflict.
- Draft their report and decide whether or not to present in writing or in a spoken presentation.

**Free Write, Part 2:** At the end of the lesson, give students 5-10 minutes to privately write their thoughts and feelings on the current events happening in Ukraine. Encourage students to consider if and how their thoughts and feelings have changed over the course of the lesson. Students can also write about how the current conflict is impacting their lives or their community.

# SEL Resources

## Checking In with Strong Emotions

**Emotions Check In:** Students should understand that it is completely normal to feel strong emotions when there is a global conflict. One way to check in so by [tracking their emotions](#) throughout the day or illustrate what their current emotions with an opportunity to name these feelings by using statements like, “I am...”

**Follow Your Feelings:** As students read about this global conflict they may find themselves experiencing strong emotions. Invite students to track their responses and reflect on the resources and coping strategies they can use to help them work through emotions. Students may use this [organizer](#) as a way to get started.

CASEL Competency Alignment: Self-Awareness, Self-Management

SEE Learning Alignment: Personal Awareness, Personal Engagement

## Addressing Uncertainty

**Coping with Uncertainty:** Uncertain events, or more general uncertainty, can lead to a feeling of lost control. It can even provoke anxiety and distress. One way to help feel more settled is to focus on things in life that *can* be controlled. Prompt students to list 3-5 elements of their lives that they are in control of. If time permits, allow students to explain *why* they are in control of each element and *how* being in control of each element affects their emotions.

**CASEL Competency Alignment:** Self-Awareness, Self-Management

**SEE Learning Alignment:** Personal Awareness, Personal Engagement

## Addressing Fear

**Coping with Fear:** Discussing and reading about global conflicts can leave people feeling fearful about what is happening. An excellent way to help ease fearful feelings is to ground oneself. Allow students an opportunity to engage with each of the following grounding techniques if they feel comfortable.

- **Flower Breathing:** Take a deep breath. As you exhale, pretend you are holding a dandelion and trying to blow away its seeds. Repeat this process three times.
- **Windmill Breathing:** Similar to flower breathing, take a deep breath. As you exhale, pretend you are holding a windmill. Repeat this process three times.

- **Five Senses Identification:** Take a few moments to locate something you can see, something you can touch, something you can smell, something you can hear and, if applicable, something you can taste. Doing so can help you relax and focus your mind.
- **Fast Facts:** Take a deep breath. Say and complete the following in your mind: "My name is...", "My birthday is...", "Today's date is...". Taking the focus off of your current emotional status and reorienting your thinking can help improve your mood and relieve stress.

CASEL Competency Alignment: Self-Awareness, Self-Management

SEE Learning Alignment: Persona Awareness, Personal Engagement

## Addressing Peace

**Peaceful Words:** Give students a chance to write a poem or song about the importance of peace and harmony. Remind students that their poem is for them and does not need to be shared with the class, unless they decide to do so.

**Spreading Kindness:** Challenge students to spread kindness in their different communities to let others know they matter. Students can spread kindness by conducting small acts of kindness, like expressing gratitude through writing a thank you note, holding the door for someone, helping someone in need.

CASEL Competency Alignment: Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making

SEE Learning Alignment: Social Awareness, Systems Compassion, Systems Engagement

## Processing Events

There is no right way to feel after learning of or witnessing traumatic and distressing events. Carol Swartout Klein and Robert O'Neil put together a coloring book to help people of all ages heal and process events in a mindful way. Students can read about the coloring book and the artists who put it together [here](#).

Interested in other ways that students can process events that have recently happened or continue to happen? Below are a few suggestions as to how they can help themselves and others.

**Journal:** Journaling can help bring awareness to the current moment. Here are a few prompts students can use:

- What am I observing in the news?
- How are these events making me feel?
- How are these events affecting my family, friends and community?
- What are ways I can be proactive?

**Draw:** Drawing can help reduce anxiety and be used as a meditative exercise. Students can use a coloring book (like the one Carol Swartout Klein and Robert O'Neil created) any of the Newsela Mindful Coloring pages ([Car Mindful Coloring Pages](#), [Rose Mindful Coloring Pages](#), [Newsela Fun Mindful Coloring Pages](#)) or they can doodle on a clean sheet of paper. Either way will help students to relax.

**Listen to Music:** Music connects people all over the world. It brings people together and can help elicit positive emotions. As an exercise, have students create a playlist: songs for peace and harmony. Students should reflect on how they feel before and after listening to their playlists

**Discuss:** A great way to organize students' thoughts or gain different perspectives on a subject is to discuss the topic with educators, caregivers, family members and friends. Students can use [accountable sentence stems](#) to ensure they are having a productive discussion. Additionally, here are a few discussion prompts:

- Why are these events occurring?
- How are these events affecting my family, friends and community?
- How will these events affect the future?

**Break Time:** Sometimes, to practice mindfulness, it is important to remove yourself from conversations with others both online and in-person. News coverage of recent events shows up all over television stations, internet sites and social media applications. Challenge students to take some time to turn off their electronic devices and social media accounts. Explain to students that they'll be surprised to find out how much calmer their mind and body will feel when they disconnect from the world around you for a little bit.

CASEL Competency Alignment: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Building, Responsible Decision Making

SEE Learning Alignment: Personal Awareness, Personal Compassion, Personal Engagement, Systems Compassion, Social Engagement



## Coping with Trauma

It can be especially difficult to deal with emotions when the world is reacting strongly around you and with you. The following resources are ready and available to help you or those you know during this time.

**Speak with a Trusted Adult:** If students are having a difficult time navigating the emotions that have been brought on by recent events, you're not alone. We recommend reaching out to a trusted adult to talk about what you're going through. Explain that sharing your thoughts with someone they trust can help ease anxieties and help them understand their feelings in a more complete way.

**Be Gentle With Yourself:** Explain to students that when they are dealing with a moment that feels uncomfortable, scary or new, it can be easy to be hard on yourself. They might think that what they're feeling isn't right. Share with students that whatever they are experiencing emotionally is completely OK. Explaining the importance of being gentle with themselves and treat yourself with kindness. Students should let themselves experience what is to come and know that they're going to be OK.

[Crisis Text Line](#): If students or someone students know is having trouble coping with recent events, text the Crisis Text Line to talk with a counselor right now. Counselors are available 24/7. If they are in the U.S. or Canada, you can reach them by texting "HOME" to 741741. People in other countries can reach them by visiting their website and looking up their specific texting number.

CASEL Competency Alignment: Self-Awareness, Self Management

SEE Learning Alignment: Personal Awareness, Personal Compassion, Personal Engagement