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LEVEL 2 (GRADES 8 AND UP)

Dark Days in Afghanistan

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SAMPLE EDITION
2021/2022: ISSUE 1



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NATIONAL

A NEW GOVERNOR GENERAL



On July 26, Mary Jeannie May Simon was installed as Canada's 30th Governor General. Canadians celebrated her appointment as the Queen's representative in Canada for many reasons. A big one? She is the first Indigenous person to hold the post. Ms. Simon is an Inuk who...

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INTERNATIONAL

AN OLYMPICS LIKE NO OTHER



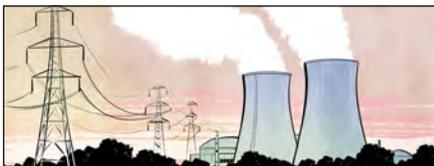
What a roller coaster ride! The Summer Olympics held in Tokyo between July 23 and August 8 were thrilling from start to finish. The first nail-biter was whether the international event would take place at all. The Games of the XXXII Olympiad had already been...

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WHAT IN THE WORLD?

Level 2, 2021/2022: Issue 1

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HAY'SXW'QA!

LesPlan is grateful to the Lkwungen Peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose unceded land we now live, and do our work.

We welcome your comments and appreciate your suggestions. Please contact us at any time.

MISSION STATEMENT

LesPlan Educational Services Ltd. aims to help teachers develop students' engagement in, understanding of, and ability to critically assess current issues and events by providing quality, up-to-date, affordable, ready-to-use resources appropriate for use across the curriculum.



I have had many parents comment to me about how great they think *What in the World?* is, and they look forward to each month's issue coming home... This is a great resource for a small country school to explore the global issues that affect us all.

K. Camelon, Grade 7/8 teacher

Admaston, ON



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INTERNATIONAL

AFGHANISTAN FALLS TO THE TALIBAN

BEFORE READING

1. Divide the class into two groups. Write the following on the board:

- Afghanistan
- Taliban

2. Assign one topic to each group and have students brainstorm what they know about their topic.

Note: Before beginning this activity, be aware of the backgrounds of your students, as the topic may be personal for some of them. Remind students that their ideas should be presented in a factual, objective manner when sharing.

Afghanistan: It's a country in Asia; foreign countries including the U.S., the UK, and Canada have pulled troops out of the country; Kabul is the capital city; etc.

Taliban: An Islamist group in Afghanistan; it wants to secure Afghanistan from outside influence; it has taken over control of most of the country following the removal of foreign troops; etc.

3. Next, have students view the following news report to get a sense of what is happening currently in the streets of Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, following the Taliban takeover of the country:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NtgMK-dGQc>

Show the video twice; once without sound and another with sound. During the first viewing, have students note what images stand out to them. (*For example: Life looks quite normal; there are sellers on the street; people are riding bikes; traffic looks normal; some women in the streets are wearing head scarves; some men in trucks are carrying automatic weapons, waving to the camera; some women are hiding their faces; some are wearing masks; crowds are waving Afghan flags in the street; etc.*) During the second viewing, have students listen for additional details that may or may not agree with what they are seeing. (*For example: More shops are open; more people in the streets; fewer women; women are not always wearing full burkas; there is fear that the Taliban will put strict restrictions on women in the coming days; strong presence of highly armed Taliban fighters patrolling the streets; still large panicked crowds at the airport; senior Taliban leaders have been meeting with Afghan politicians; some Afghans are waving the Afghan flag in the streets to protest the Taliban; the Taliban fired shots in the air to disperse protesting Afghans; etc.*)

4. Finally, invite students to set a purpose for reading the article, referring to the resource page **Setting A Purpose Before Reading** as needed.



AFGHANISTAN FALLS TO THE TALIBAN



Fear and frenzy gripped the people of Afghanistan in August after the country abruptly fell to the Taliban, a **militant group of Islamist insurgents**. After a two-week-long campaign that saw the group easily capture large regions of the beleaguered Asian nation, the Taliban completed its takeover by seizing the capital, Kabul, on August 15.

“There was a big panic in the people who were out on the streets,” said Ali Latifi, a Kabul resident. “You could see literally hundreds and hundreds of people suddenly running in different directions.”

Shortly after the Taliban victory, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled the country. Afghan citizens, too, descended on Kabul’s airport. Some clung to planes on the tarmac that were carrying departing American troops and workers. They were hoping against hope to escape their own country.

A 20-YEAR WAR

The Taliban takeover marked the troubling conclusion of a two-decades-old war between the United States and the Afghan insurgents. It’s the longest war the U.S. has ever fought.

The conflict was triggered by the events of September 11, 2001 – a day now known simply as 9/11. On that morning, **al-Qaeda** terrorists flew hijacked passenger jets into New York’s World Trade Center and the **Pentagon** building in Washington, killing nearly 3000 people.

In response, one month later, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan. The **NATO** alliance, which includes Canada, also joined the fight. Western countries were aiming to overthrow the Taliban, who controlled the country.

Why? The U.S. claimed the Taliban had allowed al-Qaeda to live and train in Afghanistan, and that the group was hiding Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaeda leader and the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks.

ABOUT AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is a land of both mountains and plains. The country experiences cold winters and hot summers, and is often threatened by earthquakes and floods.

At 652,225 square kilometres, the nation is about as large as Manitoba. Most of the 40 million people belong to one of four main ethnic groups: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek. About 99 percent of the population is Muslim.

Afghanistan is one of the world’s least developed countries. In 2020, it ranked 169 out of 189 nations.

A DEADLY, COSTLY CONFLICT

Early in the war, the alliance succeeded in removing the Taliban from power, and in 2004, a new U.S.-backed government took over. But the insurgents, who knew the hills, valleys, and people of their nation very well, melted away and proved hard to defeat. Using **guerilla** tactics, they

DEFINITIONS

AL-QAEDA: a radical Sunni Muslim terrorist group dedicated to eliminating a Western presence in Arab countries

GUERRILLA: irregular warfare

INSURGENT: a person who fights against an established government or authority

ISLAMIST: an advocate or supporter of Islamic fundamentalism

MILITANT: using extreme and sometimes violent methods to achieve political or social change

NATO [NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION]: an international organization of 28 European and two North American countries who have agreed to support one another if attacked

PENTAGON: the headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense



stubbornly fought and resisted. Over the years, they gained territory in some places and lost it in others.

So the U.S. kept sending more troops to try to gain control. The number of American soldiers peaked at 110,000 in 2011 – the same year an elite U.S. Navy SEAL team killed Mr. bin Laden in neighbouring Pakistan. Yet still the war dragged on, partly because the U.S. government wasn't only trying to defeat the Taliban – it was determined to establish a democracy in Afghanistan, and help the country rebuild. The U.S. also wanted to train the Afghan army so it could defend the country on its own.

DID YOU KNOW?

Between 2001 and 2014, Canada sent 40,000 troops to fight in Afghanistan alongside its NATO allies and to help rebuild the country. A total of 165 Canadians died during the war.

However, many Americans began to lose patience with the conflict. The war and reconstruction efforts were expensive, costing at least one trillion dollars. And the toll on human life was terrible. Over 2400 U.S. soldiers died during the long conflict. Many other coalition troops, and tens of thousands of Afghans, were also killed. Millions more were displaced.

A DEAL IS STRUCK

So in 2020, then-U.S. President Donald Trump began talks with the Taliban. He committed to withdraw U.S. troops by May 1, 2021.

When U.S. President Joe Biden was elected last November, he continued down the path his predecessor had started. At first, he set a symbolic

September 11 deadline for withdrawal, but later moved the date up to August 31.

“It’s time to end America’s longest war,” he said, announcing the plan in April, when some 2500 U.S. troops remained in Afghanistan. “We cannot continue the cycle of extending or expanding our military presence in Afghanistan hoping to create the ideal conditions for our withdrawal, and expecting a different result.”

THE TALIBAN’S LIGHTNING RISE

That was all the Taliban needed to hear. As U.S. troops began leaving, the insurgents quickly mobilized. By early May, the group had established many checkpoints and outposts along the country’s main roads, flaunting their power. This display weakened Afghans’ faith in their own government and sapped the Afghan army’s morale.

But no one anticipated how quickly the Taliban would regain control. In early August, city after city fell, but observers still believed it would be a month or longer before Kabul would be in Taliban hands. Instead, it took the group just ten days to take total control and capture the capital.

A DESPERATE SITUATION

In late August, the U.S. dispatched some 5000 troops back to Afghanistan to help evacuate U.S. and allied personnel, including thousands of soldiers, citizens, embassy employees and their families, and “particularly vulnerable Afghan nationals” like interpreters and other support staff who had helped western nations during the war. Canada also sent

WHO ARE THE TALIBAN?

The Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in the early 1990s during a **civil war** that was taking place in the country. By 1998, 90 percent of all Afghan territory was under Taliban control.

The group follows a strict form of Islam. During Taliban rule, a system of Islamic law called Sharia was imposed. TV, music, and cinema were banned. Men were forced to grow beards. Women were denied education, had to restrict their activities, were ordered to wear **burkas**, and were told to blindly obey men. Those who objected risked harsh penalties – including death.

two military planes to help with the evacuation effort.

Meanwhile, a potential disaster looms for those left in Afghanistan. According to the United Nations, since the end of May, about 250,000 people have fled their homes. Women in particular are terrified they’ll face harsh treatment from the Taliban and will lose all the gains they made over the last 20 years. Since the takeover, said one woman, “Girls were not able to go to their universities; girls were asked to go to their home and male relatives [had to] fill in... their positions [at work].”

The situation, said another Afghan woman to the *New York Times*, is heartbreaking.

“To the world, [Kabul is] just a city that collapses, but to me, it’s not just a city. There are thousands of souls that collapse, there are millions of dreams that collapse – our history, our culture, our art, our beauty, our life.” ★

DEFINITIONS

BURKA: a loose piece of clothing that covers the head and body completely except for a space for the eyes

CIVIL WAR: a war between two or more groups inside one country



INTERNATIONAL

AFGHANISTAN FALLS TO THE TALIBAN

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. List at least four important background facts about Afghanistan.

2. Who are the **Taliban**?

3. When did the Taliban first appear in Afghanistan? When did this group take power for the first time?

4. Describe life in Afghanistan after the Taliban first took power.

5. Describe the events of **9/11**.

6. How did the United States and its allies respond to the 9/11 attacks?

7. Why did U.S. troops remain in Afghanistan for 20 years?

8. Why did the U.S. decide to remove its troops from Afghanistan?

9. What did the Taliban do after U.S. soldiers started to leave?



AFGHANISTAN FALLS TO THE TALIBAN

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. There is global concern for the welfare of the people of Afghanistan. Women in particular are terrified they'll face harsh treatment from the Taliban and will lose all the gains they made over the last 20 years.

Since the takeover, said one woman, *"Girls were not able to go to their universities; girls were asked to go to their home and male relatives [had to] fill in... their positions [at work]."*

As you see it, how will day-to-day life change for Afghan women with the Taliban in power? Give examples to support your response.

2. NATO is an international organization of 30 countries, including the U.S. and Canada, that have agreed to support each other if attacked. The U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, which was supported by NATO, was intended to overthrow the Taliban, whom the U.S. suspected of supporting al-Qaeda, the group responsible for the events of 9/11.

As you see it, what is the importance of NATO and other global alliances? Explain.

3. The article quotes an Afghan woman who said, *"To the world, [Kabul is] just a city that collapses, but to me, it's not just a city. There are thousands of souls that collapse, there are millions of dreams that collapse – our history, our culture, our art, our beauty, our life."*

How do you see these aspects of life in Afghanistan 'collapsing' under Taliban rule? Give reasons to support your response.



INTERNATIONAL

AFGHANISTAN FALLS TO THE TALIBAN

QUESTIONS FOR ONLINE EXPLORATION

Note: The links below are listed at www.lesplan.com/en/links for easy access.

1. There has been harsh criticism of President Biden and the U.S. government for poorly planning the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. Critics point to the fact that Mr. Biden's administration has now been forced to dispatch 5000 troops back to Afghanistan to help safely evacuate U.S. and allied personnel.

View any of the following links to learn more about why President Biden stands behind his decision and how critics are reacting:

<https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=xuZ-R1aYpOo>

https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=W_G7OhAp4J4

<https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=u7ECiCgi9-A>

Do you agree with President Biden or his critics? Explain.

2. Learn more about how the Taliban were able to gain control of Afghanistan so quickly:

<https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=zuXCtJycdIo>

<https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=EBRyWXLNclw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lCnZBDGbO8>

As you see it, what challenges will the Taliban face as the new government of Afghanistan? Give examples to support your response.

3. According to the United Nations, since the end of May, about 250,000 Afghans have fled their homes. Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has spoken about her concerns for the women and girls in Afghanistan under Taliban rule: <https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=wRopNHZDBto>

How does she hope that foreign countries involved in peace talks with the Taliban will act to support the people of Afghanistan? Do you agree with her ideas? Explain.

4. Afghan Canadians are speaking out and imploring the Canadian government to do more to support the people of Afghanistan. Learn more about what they want Canada to do and how the government is reacting to their pleas:

<https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=ojxlyDorLis>

<https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=t5BDYn8CWOQ>

<https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=ZGJd5L554OI>

As you see it, what should Canada's role in supporting Afghanistan be? Give examples to support your response.

MAP ASSIGNMENT AFGHANISTAN

Complete this map assignment to better understand the article *Dark Days in Afghanistan*.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Obtain the required resources and read all the instructions before starting.
2. Colour your map **after** all labelling is completed.
3. Print in pencil only first, then go over the printing in black ink.
4. Work carefully and neatly.

Resources Required: pencil, black pen, pencil crayons, ruler, eraser and an atlas.

Part A Locate and label Afghanistan in CAPITAL letters and shade this country yellow.

Part B Locate and label the capital of Afghanistan and underline this city name.

Part C Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

India (brown)	Pakistan (purple)
Iran (green)	Iraq (yellow)
Tajikistan (pink)	Kyrgyzstan (green)
Turkmenistan (brown)	Uzbekistan (orange)

Part D Locate and label the capital of each country and underline each city name.

Part E Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Nepal (orange)	China (red)
Kazakhstan (yellow)	Russia (purple)
Georgia (pink)	Armenia (orange)
Azerbaijan (red)	Turkey (brown)
Syria (purple)	Kuwait (pink)
Oman (brown)	United Arab Emirates [UAE] (orange)
Yemen (green)	Saudi Arabia (red)

Part F Locate and label the following and shade all ocean water dark blue:

Indian Ocean	Arabian Sea
Persian Gulf	Black Sea

Part G Locate and label the following bodies of fresh water and shade them light blue:

Caspian Sea	Aral Sea
-------------	----------

Part H Shade all remaining territory grey.

Part I Complete your map with a frame, title and compass bearing. ★



Islamic Republic
of Afghanistan



Islamic Emirate of
Afghanistan (Taliban)





SETTING A PURPOSE BEFORE READING

There are a number of reasons we read: for enjoyment; to find something out; to critically evaluate information; or to learn how to perform a task.

Setting a purpose for reading – knowing WHY we are reading – helps us to focus on important information and to better understand and remember what we read. It also helps us decide HOW we will read the text.

We don't read all texts for the same purposes or in the same way. For example, we read an instruction manual for a new Blu-ray player for a different reason than we read a book or a website. How we will read it – the strategies we use – will also differ. We are more likely to skim to find the information we need in a manual. Once we find what we need, we might read the instructions carefully to figure out what to do. Then, we stop reading, put the manual down, and carry out the steps. We may have to reread if we get confused or forget what to do.

This is a very different approach than the one we would use to read a book. When we read a book, we usually read cover-to-cover. We read carefully so we don't miss any details because we want to understand the whole story. Sometimes we make connections or create images in our minds as we read to help us better understand what we are reading. Depending on its length, we may put the book down before we finish reading it but we will start reading where we left off.

Good readers are flexible and responsive. This means that they match their reading strategies to their purpose for reading.

What types of text do you read? Why do you read them? What strategies do you use to read each of these texts? The following chart provides a summary of the main purposes for reading and what each entails.

Purpose for Reading	What does it look like
For enjoyment	Usually student-selected. Allows students to choose a variety of genres and forms. Allows students to pursue what interests them while developing reading skills.
To experience something new	Students make connections between their personal experiences and those of people around the world.
To learn more about themselves and others	Students reflect on what they've read and express opinions and perspectives. Students develop a sense of their personal values and make sense of the world around them.
To gain information	Students use the features of informational texts to gather, analyse and apply what they've learned.
To understand issues	Students develop a sense of perspective. Students pose questions, acknowledge other points of view, critique the opinions presented and support opinions with evidence.
To appreciate writing	Students respond to text in ways other than written answers to apply what they've learned in new contexts.
To appreciate use of media to communicate	Students respond to a variety of media formats (e.g., infographics, political cartoons, videos, etc.) and react to how the format supports the meaning of the message.

* Chart adapted from: A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4-6, p. 11.

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Currents4Kids/Infos-Jeunes: Grades 3 and up.

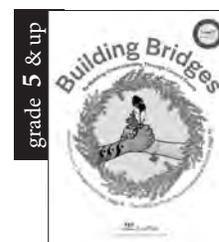
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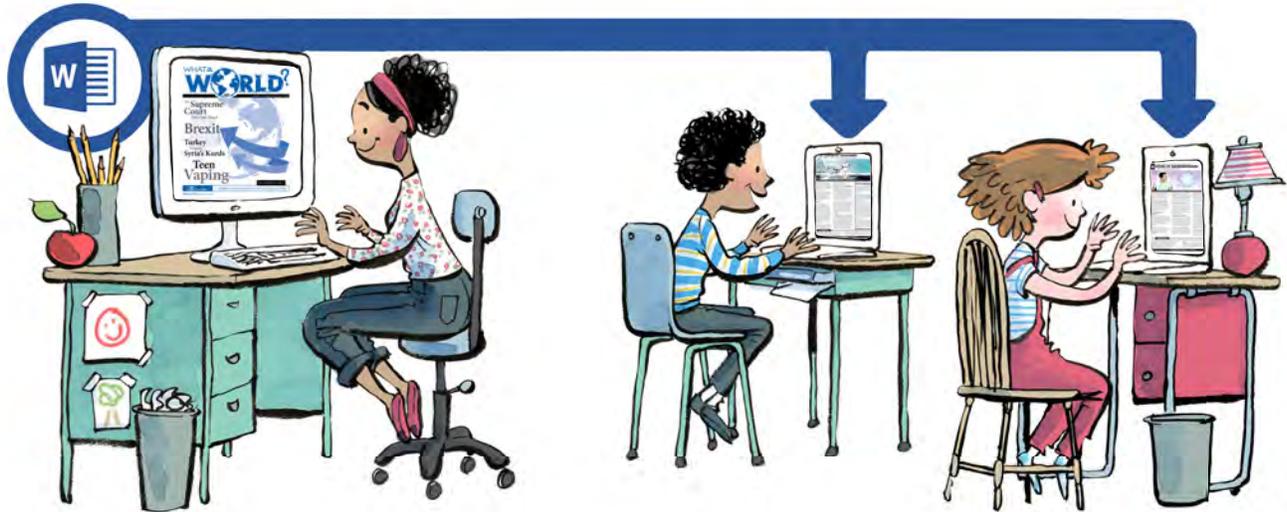
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There are **three** ways to access data from a Word file that is password protected:

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- 3) To remove the password from a protected Word file, use **Save As** to make a new copy of the file. You can then change the **Security** settings and remove the password.

Google Docs and LibreOffice

- You can easily upload the Word file to **Google Docs** and share it with students or other teachers.
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- **LibreOffice** is a free alternate to **Microsoft Office** and offers the same functionality. It's easy to install and use. See: www.libreoffice.org

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D. Faerber, Pembroke, ON

WHAT IN THE WORLD?
LEVEL 1 (GRADES 5 AND UP)

The Neskantaga
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on **Strike**

Insurrection
in the **U.S.**

We Have a Vaccine!

2020/2021: ISSUE 5

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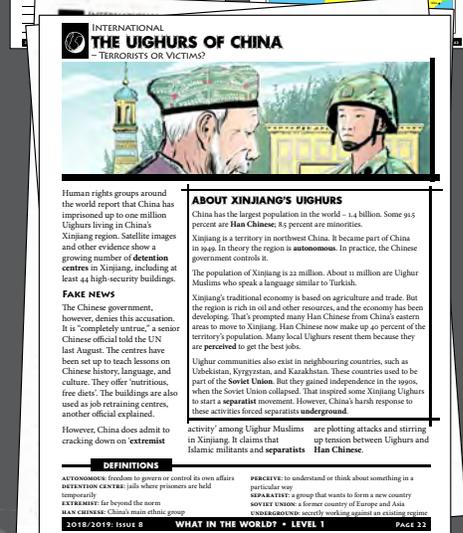
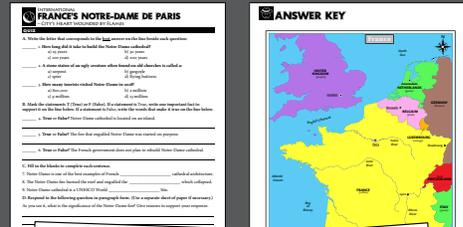
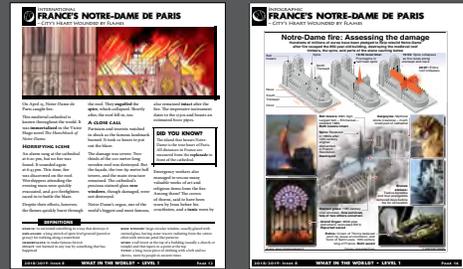
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