Articles and Questions

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1) a PDF file

*and*

2) a Word file

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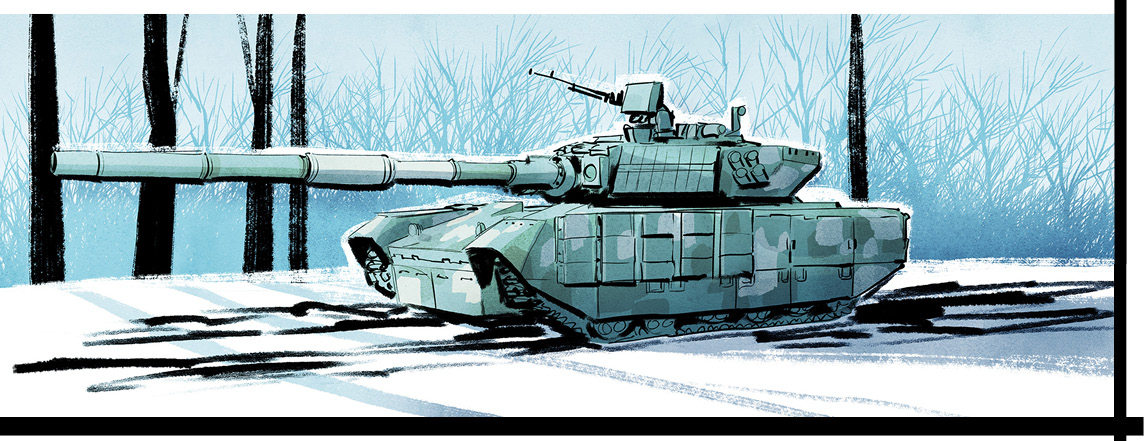
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<https://support.google.com/docs/answer/187189?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform=Desktop>

**Russia Versus Ukraine**



February 24, 2023 marked one year since Russian President Vladimir Putin's army invaded Ukraine.

The **unprovoked** attack has caused great pain over the past 12 months. The conflict has damaged families, economies, and the **world order**. And it's still unclear when – or how – the war will end.

**The War Rages On**

Mr. Putin had hoped to swiftly capture the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, and to topple Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government. After all, Russia's massive army far outnumbered Ukraine’s military. Russia also had a greater **arsenal** of more powerful weapons.

But that's not what happened. Russian troops were surprisingly incompetent. By contrast, Ukrainians fought hard and well. So Russia quickly had to abandon plans to take the capital. Instead, it shifted its **offensive** to the south and east. There, its forces captured the city of Mariupol. It was all part of an effort to create a corridor along the Black Sea coast. The goal was to link the **Crimean peninsula** and the **Donbas region**. Those are areas Moscow invaded and **annexed** in 2014.

However, in late summer, Ukrainian forces struck back. They forced Russian troops from parts of the south and east of the country. Next, they liberated the key city of Kherson.

Since then, neither side has made big advances. Russia has kept up pressure by using missiles and drones to target Ukraine's cities and infrastructure. It has also engaged in a months-long campaign to capture the eastern city of Bakhmut. However, it is no closer than Ukraine to declaring military victory.

**The Human Toll**

By late 2022, at least 100,000 Ukrainian military personnel and 200,000 Russian troops had been killed or wounded in the war. **Civilian** **casualties** have been high, too. The **United Nations (UN)** says that by the end of 2022, at least 7155 Ukrainians had died. Another 11,662 had been wounded.

Many of these civilians were not just caught in the crossfire. The UN says that Russia has committed **war crimes**. How? By deliberately striking apartment buildings, schools, hospitals, factories, and shelters. The attacks injured women, children, and the elderly.

**Widespread Damage**

Before the war, Ukraine had a population of 44 million. Roughly 16 million Ukrainians have had to leave their homes since the conflict began. Some have relocated within the country. Others have fled to nearby nations, elsewhere in Europe, or North America.

For those who have stayed, the situation is desperate. Up to 40 percent of the nation’s housing has been damaged. As well, about half of Ukraine’s energy infrastructure has been destroyed or damaged. That has left many civilians with limited power, water, and heat in bitter winter temperatures.

Making matters worse, Ukraine’s economy has also been hit hard. It shrank by 35 percent in 2022. That means many incomes are dropping below the **poverty line**. Up to 18 million Ukrainians will likely need humanitarian aid in the near future.

**No Backing Down**

No question, the human toll is terrible. The war is the largest military conflict in Europe since World War II. Yet neither Mr. Putin nor Mr. Zelenskyy shows any signs of giving up.

So what may happen next? On February 14, NATO   
**Secretary-General** Jens Stoltenberg said that Russia appeared to be preparing for a spring offensive. The move could usher in a dangerous new phase in the war.

Analysts say that Russia has adjusted its strategy and learned from its defeats over the last 12 months. As well, the military conducted a major **mobilization** in the fall. Some 300,000 troops have now joined the Russian side. Tens of thousands of well‑trained **mercenaries** are also believed to be fighting for Russia in Ukraine.

True, Russia suffered heavy losses of military equipment and ammunition earlier in the war. However, domestic production of these materials has increased. As well, Russia's allies have stepped up to help. North Korea has been supplying rockets and artillery. Iran has been contributing drones. Chinese companies have been supplying non-lethal aid.

**Ukraine Asks for Help**

Meanwhile, President Zelenskyy has been pleading with the West for more support.

Since the war began, the U.S., Canada, and Europe have been providing military intelligence, weapons, and financial aid to Ukraine. They have also levied crippling **sanctions** against Russia to try to damage Russia’s economy.

This assistance has made a big difference. However, the Ukrainian army has used up much of its artillery shells, anti‑tank weapons, and surface‑to-air missiles. More supplies are urgently needed. Mr. Zelenskyy says his army also needs at least 300 advanced tanks, and fighter jets, too. And he wants them as quickly as possible.

**Western Support**

In mid-February, NATO members pledged to supply more ammunition. As well, the U.S., UK, Canada, Germany, and other nations will send about 80 tanks. But it will take time before they reach the battlefield.

Then, on February 20, U.S. President Joe Biden made a surprise visit to Kyiv. There, he meet with President Zelenskyy. He wanted to show the world that the U.S. is prepared to support Ukraine as long as necessary.

"One year later, Kyiv stands. And Ukraine stands. Democracy stands. The Americans stand with you, and the world stands with you," he stated.

He also promised an additional $2.175 billion in aid. That's on top of the more than $50 billion the U.S. has already provided.

**An Urgent Situation**

Why is the West backing Ukraine so strongly? Because the outcome has global consequences. The war has fuelled a worldwide rise in inflation and energy prices. But there's an even more important reason. Since the end of World War II, global powers have lived by rules meant to avoid a third world war. A Russian victory could threaten that world order – and world peace.

"We've managed to avoid conflict directly between great powers," U.S. **Secretary of State** Antony Blinken said. "This system, for all its imperfections, works. But now, it's being challenged."

**Why Did Russia Invade Ukraine?**

President Putin said he ordered the invasion – what he called 'a special military operation' – to secure Russia's borders. He argued that after the **USSR** **dissolved** in 1991, the West promised not to expand **NATO**. Yet the organization has allowed six former **Warsaw Pact** members and three former **Soviet republics** to join since that pledge was made, and Ukraine wants to join, too.

Mr. Putin also said that he needed to stand up for pro‑Russian Ukrainians and Ukrainians of Russian **ethnic** origin. He claimed they were being persecuted and even killed by the Ukrainian government, which he said was being run by **Nazis**.

The Russian President's critics and opponents say that these accusations are baseless. For one thing, the West never made a firm promise not to expand NATO. For another, no NATO country had shown any sign of wanting to attack Russia. Furthermore, NATO had indicated it had no plans to admit Ukraine anytime soon.

While it’s true that tens of thousands of Ukrainians, many from the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, support closer ties to Russia, there is no evidence that they were being harshly treated by the Ukrainian government. And the accusations of Nazis running the Ukrainian government? They were completely false.

**annex:** to take control of a country or region by force

**arsenal:** a large collection of weapons and military equipment

**civilian:** non-military citizen

**casualty:** someone who is injured or killed in an accident or military action

**Crimean peninsula:** a peninsula of southern Ukraine between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov

**dissolve:** the process of officially ending the existence of a group or organization

**Donbas region:** a historical, cultural, and economic region in eastern Ukraine

**ethnic:** relating to a group of people with the same culture and traditions

**mercenary:** a soldier who fights for any country or group that offers payment

**mobilization:** the act of getting ready for war

**NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization – a political and military alliance designed to defend democracy, created after World War II, that 30 countries currently belong to

**Nazis:** people who adhere to the ideology and practice of Nazism, a body of political and economic beliefs put into effect in Germany from 1933 to 1945 by Adolf Hitler

**offensive:** the action of attacking an enemy

**poverty line:** the official level of income that is necessary to be able to pay for the basic things you need to live

**Soviet Republic:** a republic within the USSR

**sanctions:** an official order that limits trade, contact, etc. with a country to make it do something

**Secretary-General:** an official in charge of a large organization

**Secretary of State:** the person who represents the U.S. to foreign countries

**USSR:** Union of Soviet Socialist republics, a former federal union of 15 nations in eastern Europe and western and northern Asia, comprising the larger part of the former Russian Empire: formed in 1921 and dissolved in December 1991.

**United Nations (UN):** organization of 193 independent states, formed in 1945 to promote international peace and security

**unprovoked:** an action not caused by anything another party has said or done

**war crime:** a cruel act that is committed during a war and is against the international rules of war

**Warsaw Pact:** a treaty of mutual defense and military aid created in 1955 by communist states of Europe under Soviet influence. The alliance ended in 1991.

**world order:** a system controlling events in the world, especially a set of arrangements established internationally for preserving global political stability

**Comprehension Questions**

1. When did Russia invade Ukraine? What was the initial plan for this 'special military operation'?

2. What reason did President Putin give for this attack regarding NATO?

3. What reason did President Putin give for this attack regarding protecting pro-Russian Ukrainians?

4. Describe how this invasion progressed during the first few weeks.

5. Where did Russia shift its attention to in April?

6. How did many western countries respond to Russia’s ‘special military operation’?

7. What did Ukrainian military forces accomplish in late summer?

8. Describe what has happened militarily since this large counterattack.

9. Why has President Zelenskyy recently made urgent requests for more assistance from the West? What was the result?

10. What do many reports suggest will happen in the coming weeks?

**Questions for Further Thought**

1. As you see it, why are NATO's current members willing to pledge billions of dollars of their own country's resources to Ukraine who is not yet a member of NATO? Give reasons to support your response.

2. Respond to one of the quotes below. What is your understanding of this quote? For what reasons do you agree with the speaker? For what reasons do you disagree? What emotions does this quote evoke and what thoughts does it provoke? As you see it, what is the significance of this quote?

"***I want the war to be finished as soon as possible, but I know it's just impossible… and the worst thing is that everybody is getting used to it, and the world as well.***" – Halyna Dmytryshyn, a Ukrainian refugee living in Ottawa

"***Freedom is priceless. It's worth fighting for for as long as it takes.***" – U.S. President Joe Biden on the one-year anniversary of Ukraine's invasion

***Mr. Putin has "complete control over the media. He can turn anything he wants into a victory."*** – Jack Watline, a senior researcher for land warfare at the Royal United Services Institute, a London think tank

***"Russia is now a global pariah and the world remains inspired by Ukrainian bravery and resilience. In short, Russia has lost: they've lost strategically, operationally, and tactically."*** – top U.S. General Mark Milley

**Questions For Online Exploration**

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

1. Listen to the following podcast that looks back and ahead at the conflict in Ukraine:  
**https://www.cbc.ca/radio/frontburner/a-look-back-and-ahead-at-the-war-in-ukraine-1.6701916** [27:35] (podcast)

What did you learn? What questions do you still have?

2. Learn more about the most recent developments in this conflict:  
**https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/russia-ukraine-war-1.6746242  
https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ukraine-war-russia-bakhmut-1.6670438  
https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ukraine-russia-bakhmut-military-aid-1.6736374  
https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/russia-ukraine-war-bakhmut-1.6708783  
https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2130974275851** [2:05]

What is the importance of the city of Bakhmut in this conflict?

3. What could the promise of western tanks mean for Ukraine's fight against Russia?:  
**https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/leopard-2-explainer-1.6724730  
https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ukraine-invasion-day-336-1.6725190   
https://www.cbc.ca/radio/frontburner/will-tanks-end-or-escalate-the-war-in-ukraine-transcript-1.6731664** [26:47] (podcast)

**Putting It All Together**

**A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. **Russia is worried about the number of countries that have joined:** a) the EU b) NATO  
 c) the USSR d) the UN

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. **The eastern part of Ukraine is called the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ region.** a) Mariupol b) Donbas  
 c) Donetsk d) Crimea

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. **Who visited the Ukrainian president on February 20 in Kyiv?** a) Vladimir Putin b) Justin Bieber  
 c) Pope Francis d) Joe Biden

**B.** Mark the statements **T (True)** or **F (False)**. If a statement is **True**, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is **False**, write the words that make it true on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. **True** or **False?** Russia expected a quick victory when it invaded Ukraine last February.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True** or **False?** Some 16 million Ukrainians have fled their homes because of the war.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True** or **False?** The Red Cross has supported Ukraine with ammunition, weapons, and tanks.

**C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.**

7. Many nations have imposed economic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ against Russia.

8. NATO = North \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Treaty Organization.

9. A mercenary is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who fights only for money.

**D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. *(Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)***

10. For what reasons is the West, including Canada, supporting Ukraine in its efforts to repel the Russian invasion? Explain.

