



DID YOU KNOW? Ukraine has a population of around 44 million people.



An anti-war march in Berlin drew 100,000 people.

President Zelensky, servant of the people



President Zelensky

Before Volodymyr Zelensky became president of Ukraine in 2019, he was a popular comedian and actor in Ukraine. One of Zelensky's most famous roles is a strange case of life imitating art. In the TV comedy series *Servant of the People*, Zelensky played a teacher who said how bad he thought the government was and later became president. After the success of the series, Zelensky launched a political career and became president for real, with a political party called *Servant of the People*.

World unites to support Ukraine

From Argentina to Australia, and the US to Japan, thousands of people around the world have taken part in marches calling for peace in Ukraine, a country in eastern Europe. The demonstrations took place after Russia invaded the country by sending troops into it.

country from Russian forces. "Our main goal is to end this (war). Our truth is that this is our land, our country, our children and we will protect all of this."

Why is Putin invading Ukraine?

In 2014, Russia claimed a region of Ukraine – Crimea, which is in the south – as its own. Putin views Ukraine as part of Russia. This is because Ukraine and Russia have strong ties. Today, they share a 1,200-mile border. Ukraine used to be part of the Soviet Union (a group of countries that were once ruled from Moscow, the capital of Russia), which was founded in 1922. In 1991, the Soviet Union split into 15 different countries, including Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

Putin is also worried about Ukraine joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which is a military and political alliance between a group of 30 countries including France, Germany, the UK and the US. He says this would give NATO too much power in the region close to

the Russian border. It is believed that Putin wants to remove Ukraine's President Zelensky, who was fairly elected in 2019 by the people of Ukraine. In Russia, Putin and his government control most of the media (newspapers, radio and television). The news there is saying that Russia is trying to free Ukraine and that the Ukrainians are attacking Russians.

What about people in Ukraine?

Many people in Ukraine are fleeing from the fighting and are heading to neighbouring countries. Men aged between 18 and 60 are not allowed to leave Ukraine because they are expected to stay and fight. Many people have been taking shelter in basements and underground train stations. At the time *The Week Junior* went to press, 536 civilians (people who aren't in the military) had died and 400 people were injured. Hundreds of thousands of people had left their homes.

Many Ukrainian refugees have gone to Poland, which had taken in 453,000 people by 2 March. A refugee is someone who has left their home country because of war or the threat of violence. Others have travelled to Hungary, Moldova, Romania and Slovakia. The European Union (EU), an organisation of 27 countries that work together on trade and peace, has given all Ukrainian refugees the right to live and work in EU countries for the next three years.



What is happening in Ukraine?

On 21 February, Russian president Vladimir Putin recognised Donetsk and Luhansk, two regions of eastern Ukraine, as independent states, meaning that Russia does not see them as belonging to Ukraine. He sent Russian troops into these areas. On 24 February, Russian forces launched attacks on other parts of Ukraine. At the time *The Week Junior* went to press, Russian forces were moving towards Ukraine's capital Kyiv, and the second-largest city, Kharkiv, was under attack. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said the Ukrainian army and people would defend their

How have people outside Ukraine reacted?

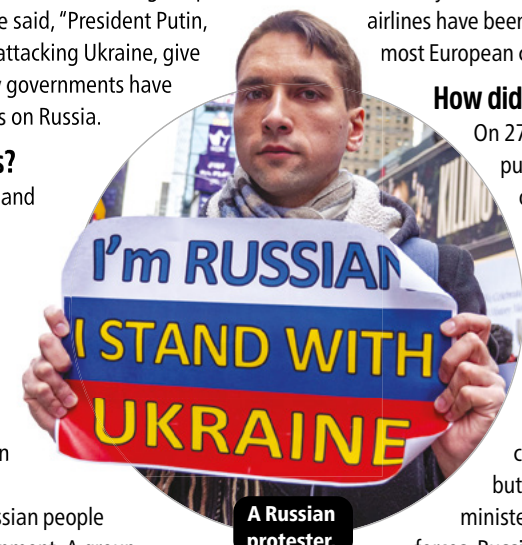
There have been protests in many countries, including Australia, Japan, Thailand and the US, as well as in Europe. On 27 February, more than 100,000 people gathered in Berlin, Germany, and about 80,000 people in Prague, Czech Republic. In the UK, there were marches in towns and cities across the country. People in Russia have also been protesting against the invasion. Almost 6,000 people in Russia have been arrested during anti-war demonstrations since the invasion began. Fridays for Future, the climate movement established by Greta Thunberg, has launched rallies to protest against the invasion. The first was due to take place on 3 March in 40 cities.

How are people helping Ukrainians?

People across the world have been raising money to help people in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees. Charities, including the Red Cross, CARE and the children's charity UNICEF, have launched appeals. On 28 February, António Guterres of the United Nations (UN) launched an appeal to raise money to help people in Ukraine. The UN is a group of 193 countries that takes action on human rights, peace and climate change. He said, "President Putin, stop your troops from attacking Ukraine, give peace a chance." Many governments have also imposed sanctions on Russia.

What are sanctions?

Sanctions are financial and political punishments against a country and individuals. Countries around the world have imposed sanctions on Russia. Most of these sanctions are financial and have been placed against Russian banks and wealthy Russian people who support the government. A group of Russian banks have been denied access to Swift, which is an international payments system that allows



A Russian protester.

How did Putin react?

On 27 February, Putin said he was putting Russia's nuclear forces on special alert. Nuclear weapons are powerful bombs that use nuclear energy. Putin's comments do not mean that Russia is close to using nuclear weapons. Any order to use nuclear weapons would not come through Putin alone, but also the Russian defence minister and the head of the armed forces. Russian military expert Pavel Podvig, said, "It's not like there is a button on the president's table."



Ukrainian refugees are given hot drinks as they arrive in Poland.

UKRAINE'S FLAG
The blue and yellow of Ukraine's flag represents blue skies over golden wheat fields.

What other punishments has Russia received?

Outside of government sanctions, the men's football Uefa European Champions League final has been moved from the Russian city of St. Petersburg to Paris, France. Fifa, football's world governing body, has suspended Russia from taking part in international games until further notice. Uefa, the governing body for European football, has banned Russian clubs from its competitions. Russia has also been banned from taking part in this year's Eurovision Song Contest. Energy companies BP and Shell have pulled out of Russian projects and investments.

Are there talks to stop the conflict?

Talks took place on 28 February between representatives from the governments of Ukraine and Russia. The discussions took place on the border between Belarus and Ukraine and a second lot of talks were due to take place on 2 March. Ukraine has asked for the fighting to stop and Russian soldiers to leave the country.

WHAT TO DO IF THE NEWS IS UPSETTING YOU



Talk to a trusted adult.

It is normal to feel worried or upset if you see news that is scary, such as the news about Ukraine. Make sure that you talk to a parent, guardian or an adult you trust about what you are hearing and seeing. Childline, a service supporting young people, says, "It can really help to share your feelings." It is also important to remember the following:

- The reason that events like these are in the news is because they are very unusual. Being worried or upset is natural.

- There is plenty of good news too. Look inside *The Week Junior* and you'll find positive stories and things to keep you busy. See our Do Something activity on page 24.
- Try writing down how you feel, or draw a picture to express your feelings.
- Playing a game, riding your bike or going outside can really help.

