

IF WAR COMES TO YOU

Facilitator Guide






INTRODUCTION

IF WAR COMES TO YOU (ifwarcomestoyou.com) is a learning experience designed for young people aged 15+.

It is much more than a film, it is an interactive tool to:



- » EXPLORE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL), also known as the laws of war.
- » CONSIDER HOW IHL CAN ALLEVIATE HUMAN SUFFERING in armed conflict.
- » DISCOVER THE VITAL ROLE WE ALL PLAY in promoting respect for these principles.

The core experience takes 1 hour to complete and consists of:

-  An immersive 'CHOOSE YOUR OWN PATH FILM', following a day in the life of 3 different characters, a civilian, a soldier, and an aid worker.
-  POP-UPS WITH EXTRA INFORMATION in buttons throughout the film.
-  A FICTIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA POST under the hashtag #LimitstoWar, raising awareness of international humanitarian law.
-  AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL of the International Committee of the Red Cross.
-  EXTRA INFORMATION EXPLORING KEY THEMES in IHL covered in the film, accompanied by relevant scenes.

Two optional activities can be added for deeper exploration, if time allows and if appropriate for your group. You can add one or both to the core session (to give a single extended session of 1.5 to 2 hours) or deliver them separately in a second 1-hour session.

The optional activities are:

-  RULES OF IHL QUIZ based on the pop-ups throughout the film.
-  LAWS OF WAR RESEARCH ACTIVITY using the film and the extra information provided in the *Laws of War* and *Resources* sections of the website.

This guide will help you use the experience effectively to run an engaging session. While prior knowledge or interest in IHL is useful, it is not essential.

Please allow 1 – 2 hours to prepare.



NAVIGATING 'IF WAR COMES TO YOU'

THE FILM

In this immersive 'choose your own path' film, participants step into the shoes of three different people impacted by war:

- » A SOLDIER leaving loved ones behind to defend their country.
- » A CIVILIAN navigating the chaos of conflict.
- » AN AID WORKER striving to bring relief to people affected by conflict.

Each of the interwoven scenarios takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to experience. Participants will discover the laws of war and their real-life impact and make decisions that immerse them in the characters' lives. Encounters between the characters help create the magic of the experience and encourage deeper reflection.

POP UPS

Throughout the film, '*Take a closer look?*' and '*Did you know?*' buttons appear on screen. These contain additional information related to the scene:

Cultural property

Civil defence

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanitarian workers and emergency preparedness

Rules of war and soldier conduct

Protection of installations containing dangerous forces

The emblems (red cross, red crescent, red crystal)

Family tracing and communication in war

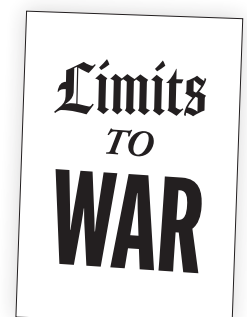
The film will pause when the button is clicked. The content of the pop-ups is also available to download – please see quiz a.

REFLECTIVE LEARNING

SOCIAL MEDIA POST

At the end of the experience, watch a social media post from Alex — a virtual character, and a member of the group 'Limits to War' from the film. Alex invites learners to reflect on what they've seen and learned, and to consider how the laws of war can help protect human dignity in times of armed conflict.

Learners are encouraged to post their own ideas and perspectives as part of a fictional youth-led campaign called #LimitstoWar. The background to the campaign is shown in the introduction to the film; it was prompted by the death of a young woman named Sofia, a civilian casualty of the armed conflict.



THE INTERVIEW

ALEX INTERVIEWS PIERRE KRÄHENBÜHL, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ICRC

Our virtual character, Alex, has interviewed the Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, using questions based on the posts submitted by users.

The interview appears after the social media post and can be used as part of your learning. It works well as a clear end to the session.

LAWS OF WAR

EXPLORING KEY THEMES

The Laws of War section includes scenes from the film paired with short, clear explanations of key IHL principles.

Limits to war	Protecting combatants
Fighting by the rules	Red cross, red crescent, and red crystal emblems
Protecting civilians	Humanitarian principles in action
Protecting civilian objects	The importance of education in times of war

These short overviews can be used to explain the laws of war during your session, and for the optional research activity. They can also be used to help facilitators prepare.

USING 'IF WAR COMES TO YOU' IN THE CLASSROOM

If War Comes to You was designed to support learning across different countries and settings.

Because schools and systems vary, we've included ideas for running a structured session, plus optional activities to spark group discussion.

These suggestions are just a starting point— feel free to adapt or build on them as you explore.

SUGGESTED LEARNING PATHWAYS

CORE EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION & SETUP (5 minutes)

WATCH THE FILM (15-30 minutes)

This can be done in the classroom or at home prior to the session, individually or in groups. If possible, participants should be encouraged to watch two or more characters. Consider giving your group different combinations of characters.

GROUP DISCUSSION (10-15 minutes)

Using the discussion guide, explore different perspectives on war and IHL.

PHOTOGRAM (10-15 minutes)

- » Watch Alex's social media post, reflect on the story's impact, and submit your own posts.
 - Encourage learners to consider what makes a strong post — should it be emotional, thought-provoking, or solution-oriented?
 - What could be done to make war 'suck a little bit less'?
- » Selected posts will be featured under Alex's message on the *If War Comes to You* website.



WATCH THE INTERVIEW (10 minutes)

This video answers frequently asked questions, some of which might have been raised during your session. After the video, learners can reflect on how they can and will support the respect of the rules of law at an individual level and can feel empowered to do so.

DEEPER EXPLORATION

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

These activities can be delivered as a second standalone session or integrated into the core experience, depending on the time you have available.

-  **A RULES OF IHL QUIZ** based on the pop-ups seen throughout the film (20–30 minutes)
-  **A LAWS OF WAR RESEARCH ACTIVITY** using the film and the extra information provided in the Laws of War and Resources sections of the website (40–50 minutes)

HOW TO PREPARE AS A FACILITATOR

Facilitators are not expected to have an in-depth prior knowledge or understanding of international humanitarian law (IHL). This guide is designed to ensure you have the key information you need before getting started. Preparation should take you around 2 hours.

1. Read the guide (15 minutes).
2. Watch all three films, civilian, soldier and aid worker at least once, taking the time to click on the 'Did you know' and 'Take a closer look' buttons (45 minutes).
3. Open and use Photogram and watch the interview video (10 minutes).
4. Read the Laws of War section (20 minutes). If interested, additional reading is recommended on this page and in the Resources section.
5. Read the Discussion Guide and Pop-Up Challenge documents (30 minutes).

FACILITATING SENSITIVE DISCUSSIONS

Some themes in this experience, such as representations of fighting, human suffering, family separation, detention, or the loss of loved ones, may be emotionally challenging for learners. Facilitators can help by:

- » Setting a respectful tone before discussions begin.
- » Allowing learners to express emotions and thoughts in a safe space.
- » Encouraging breaks or alternative ways to participate (e.g. writing reflections instead of speaking).
- » Reminding learners that humanitarian law exists to protect people, even in the darkest times.
- » If a learner seems particularly affected, facilitators should check in with them individually.

