

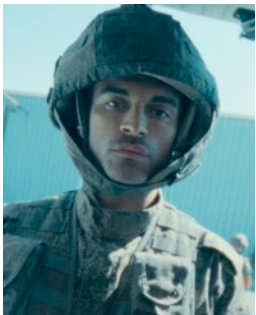
IF WAR COMES TO YOU

Discussion Guide

The following general questions are designed to prompt debate.

REFERENCE: Additional information is also available on the 'Laws of War' page, to help to prepare in advance.

1. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE RULES IN WAR?



Many people think war is only chaos, but rules exist to reduce suffering and protect civilians. International humanitarian law (IHL) recognises that although humans do sometimes resort to violence to settle their differences, there are certain universal human values, which have existed around the world and for centuries, and which must be maintained. The spirit and principles of the Geneva Conventions capture this, which is why they have stood the test of time.

REFERENCE: [Limits to War](#)

SEE ALSO: [Alex's interview with the ICRC Director General \(00'49 to 01'37\).](#)

2. WHY WOULD ANYONE FOLLOW THE RULES IN WAR?

The rules have been agreed by every country in the world. They are there to protect everyone—soldiers, civilians, and aid workers. They help to prevent unnecessary suffering and to limit the destruction caused by armed conflict. Following the rules also helps to repair relationships after conflicts end. Ask students if they think all soldiers follow the laws of war, and why they do or don't.

REFERENCE: [Fighting by the Rules](#)

3. WHO DO THESE RULES PROTECT?

They protect people who are not or no longer taking part in the fighting. This includes civilians (including humanitarian workers), medical personnel (including military medics), and captured or wounded combatants. The rules ensure humane treatment and set limits on how wars can be fought. There are also rules to protect civilian objects, and objects that are essential for civilians to survive, such as water sources, crops, energy sources.

REFERENCE: [Protecting Civilians](#)

4. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NEUTRAL AND IMPARTIAL IN A WAR ZONE? WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Impartiality means helping people based on need, whoever they are. It's not about where they are from, their religion, or any other reason. Neutrality means not taking sides. It allows humanitarian workers to gain trust from all parties so that they can reach those who are suffering.

REFERENCE: [Humanitarian Principles in Action](#)

5. HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT'S LEGAL OR ILLEGAL IN WAR?

The Geneva Conventions and other treaties set clear rules on how wars can be fought. It is up to Governments to make sure that they uphold these rules. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement also helps to ensure that everyone knows the rules and that they are respected.

REFERENCE: [Red Cross & Red Crescent](#)

6. WHAT WOULD WAR LOOK LIKE WITHOUT ANY RULES?



Without rules, war would be even more destructive, with no protection for those not taking part in the fighting. Without laws of war, humanitarian aid would be blocked, hospitals attacked, and civilians left without protection.

REFERENCE: [Limits to War](#)

SEE ALSO: [Alex's interview with the ICRC Director General, 01'38 to 02'48.](#)

7. WHY DOES EDUCATION MATTER DURING WAR?



Schools provide stability and hope during armed conflict. It is important to ensure continuing education in war to give young people the knowledge and skills that are essential for rebuilding communities and shaping a peaceful future.

REFERENCE: [The Importance of Education in Times of War](#)

SEE ALSO: [Alex's interview with the ICRC Director General, 02'49 to 04'03.](#)

8. HOW DOES WAR AFFECT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

War makes everyday challenges even harder for people with disabilities, from fleeing conflict zones to accessing medical care. Often, normal health and social services are disrupted, or inaccessible, making it hard to access the care and support that people need. The number of people with disabilities can increase during armed conflict, because of new impairments or conflict-related injuries, poor standards of surgical and medical care, breakdown in support structures and preventive health care, and the effects of war on mental health. It is essential that humanitarian responses include and consult people with disabilities.

REFERENCE: [Alex's interview with the ICRC Director General, from 04'04 to 05'34.](#)

Activity

Write or discuss how the civilian character in the film was thinking or feeling during the events of the film.