

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR THE IRAN CONFLICT?



The situation in Iran is ever-changing and a challenging topic for teachers to approach in the classroom. It’s easy to find misinformation, conflicting arguments and confusing stories online, which is where the majority of young people find their news. With these lessons, VotesforSchools aimed to give young people a better understanding of what’s going on beneath the headlines, whilst supporting teachers to facilitate important discussions about the conflict. They explored the significance of geography, a timeline of events to provide essential context and the different opinions that have been shared on the US, Israel and Iran’s actions. As with all their VotesforSchools lessons, the focus was on providing unbiased information to facilitate an important discussion, so that young people have the confidence to share their thoughts on significant issues. Given the rapidly developing situation in Iran, please note that the lesson content was up to date as of 12th March 2026.

Melanie
Data Manager 

42,677

TOTAL VOTES

9,898

VOTES AGE 5-11

32,779

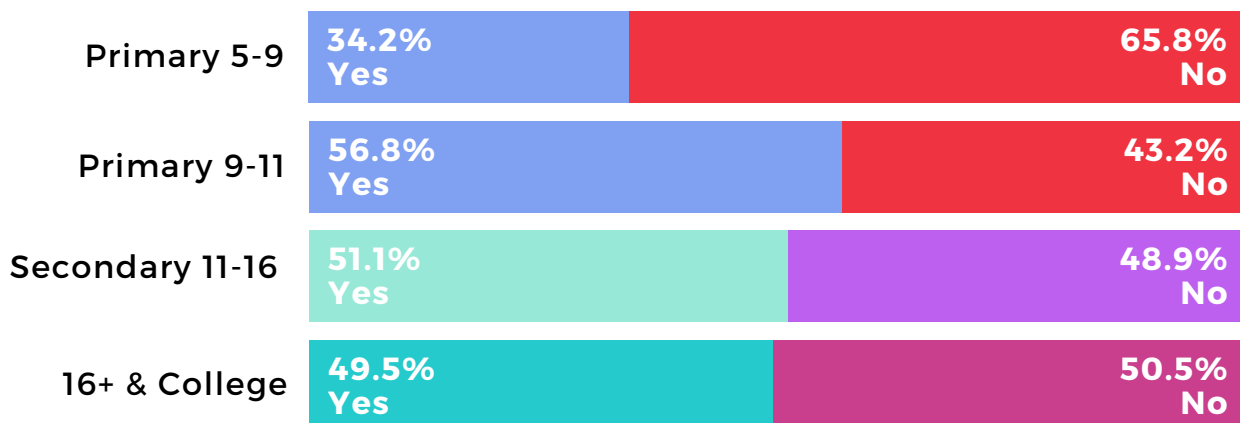
VOTES AGE 11-16+

The VoteTopic questions discussed amongst the different age groups were:

Primary 5-9: “Is it easy to manage big feelings?”

Primary 9-11: “Have you found recent news overwhelming?”

Secondary 11-16, 16+ & College: “Do you understand the reasons for the Iran conflict?”





PRIMARY 9-11: HAVE YOU FOUND RECENT NEWS OVERWHELMING?

In a January VoteTopic, 63% of 7-11-year olds and 78% of 5-7-year olds said they were interested in world news. Since then, the US and Israel launched attacks in Iran and the developing situation has been dominating the headlines. Each Primary pupil's exposure to the topic will have differed, and so we provided essential context with a platform for them to discuss how news like this makes them feel.

The greatest different between those who found recent news overwhelming and those who didn't, was in how removed they felt from it in the UK. Some pupils were concerned about fighting in the UK or the beginning of a world war, whilst others were confident that the attacks would be confined to Iran and the surrounding areas. We also heard from voters with relatives or friends in Iran or neighbouring countries, and they felt particularly connected to and worried about the news stories they had read.

5-9-year olds were considering how easy it is to manage big feelings; many highlighted techniques they use to cope with their emotions and these mirrored the ways in which older pupils handle feelings of overwhelm at the news. Techniques included avoiding the online world, practising relaxation techniques and focusing on activities that they enjoy, such as colouring and sports: "Sometimes I can get overwhelmed that it will affect me but you need to focus on other things like fun hobbies, going on peaceful walks, happy breathing or mindful colouring."

Whilst some voters advocated for avoiding the news entirely, other said they felt more clear-headed when they were provided with an unbiased and coherent narrative. For these pupils, their worry is exacerbated by conflicting opinions and confusing stories that lack context.

Yes because what if the war spreads to our country now the UK are involved?

Primary Yes Voter

No, recent news isn't overwhelming as I am here and safe in the UK, far away from the middle east. I am supporting everyone I know that is stuck there.

Primary No Voter



SECONDARY, 16+ & COLLEGE: DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR THE IRAN CONFLICT?

In a January VoteTopic, 56% of Secondary students and 76% of 16+ & College students said that global politics was relevant to them, with many arguing that keeping informed helps them to be confident in their opinions.

Therefore, it came as no surprise when students showed a strong engagement with this topic and a keen desire to have their opinions heard.

A lack of trust in world leaders and the information they share was common, which led to many voters arguing that, whilst they comprehend the reasons given, they are still unsure what to believe. This echoed the sentiment in our first VoteTopic of the year, where many students said they didn't trust the stories they read on social media, despite it being their main source of news.

In a similar vein to their Primary peers, many felt confused by conflicting narratives and felt there was more to the attacks than the official explanations provided.

Another common concern was the consequences of the fighting on innocent civilians living in the countries affected. Some argued that war is never justified and that the main priority of all countries should be protecting human life. There were also some concerns shared about the potential for the war to escalate and the UK to become more involved.

I feel like I know the reasons I have been told, but feel there is a lot the general public might not know.

Secondary Yes Voter

We do not understand it. War is pointless; innocent children should have the right to live a full life.

Secondary No Voter

They could recall the reasons why the conflict is happening but do not think they justify the war.

Secondary Yes Voter

It is hard to know what is going on when there are so many stories and viewpoints that are conflicting.

Secondary No Voter