

How to survive a crisis

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	None
Learning objectives	Historical events. Ethical/moral questioning on sieges. How to survive a crisis.
Subjects (maths, history, science, arts, etc)	History, Politics and law, social sciences.
Recommended Age (10 – 14) or (15 - 18)	15-18
Material needed	PC or iOS Android device
Sequence duration	5 hours
Individual or group activity	Individual playing in the classroom
Skills developed	Critical thinking, empathy, survival skills.
Comparison of game time and study time	1 hour history course, 3 hours of play, 1 hour debrief and discussion
Price range of the game	20€<
Similar games to use with the approach of the sequence	1979 Revolution: Black Friday

Step by step: how to implement the sequence

This War of Mine is a war survival and strategy game developed by the Polish game development company 11 Bit Studios. The game is inspired by the poor living conditions and the atrocities that Bosnian citizens faced during the Siege of Sarajevo. The game sneaks in a wealth of educational material in effective ways.

Cutting the costs

In order to diminish the price of this sequence, you can share a Steam account with your students. Download the game and let them play. The requirements of the game are fairly low, but you should explain some concepts of the game and of wars in general beforehand in order for it to be easier for them to play.

- **Step 1: Giving historical background (1 hour)**

Explain to your students the facts about the Siege of Sarajevo, the biggest Siege since World War II, then have a short brainstorming session and ask them to talk about what they think are the causes of these kinds of actions. You can also debrief together on solutions. Make sure to think about the consequences because this is what the game is about, and in this way, you can help the students to better understand the game settings when they play.

- **Step 2: Students play the game at home (2 to 3 hours)**

The game starts with a presentation of three characters: Katia, Pavle and Bruno. The player finds out a few things about each of them, for example that Katia was a reporter, Bruno had a cooking show on TV, and Pavle played on the local football team, and now they have the same purpose: to find food and shelter.



Image 1. This War of Mine. Source: <https://www.thiswarofmine.com/#media>

Players will use all 3 of these characters in the same game. They can choose which one they want to be and when, but they need to use all of them to finish the day.

In the game, you have to perform some tasks, like collecting ingredients for food or materials in order to be able to make a fire etc.

The action is divided into days, with everything starting on day 1.



Image 2. This War of Mine. Source: <https://www.thiswarofmine.com/#media>

The students' objective is simple: to finish the game. It should take 2- 3 hours of play. Because they are playing individually in the classroom, they should note some of the important steps they have taken in the game and what part of the game had the most significant impact on them. Make it clear from the beginning that you will discuss their notes together and have a short debriefing session about their opinions after playing.

- **Step 3: Group work**

Divide the students into three teams and assign a character from the video game to each team. Give them the task to discuss what type of ending the character had when each one of them played the video game. Have each team imagine a new ending for their character and make a short presentation. They can use various methods for presentations, like creating a poster, a PowerPoint presentation, a video or, an oral

presentation. Finally, have each team present their new endings in plenary with the whole classroom.

- **Step 4: Debrief and discussion**

The game involves the player emotionally through the text. The characters are begging each other for food, which may affect the players. So, this is something you discuss with your students. Ask them individually about how hard it was for them to play and be part of a survival game in a damaged world.

Ask your students to explain the choices they made and why. Let them share their thoughts about what they saw in the game and find the consequences of the siege, like the evacuation of the population, urban damages, Food shortages and the lack of money.

Finally, you can ask more open-ended questions such as:

- What would you do if you found yourself involved in a survival situation without food or shelter? How would you react?
- Do you think a Siege is a good thing for the community or the economy?
 - Do you think your life status matters in a survival situation? Would someone with a good job or more money do better than others? What other factors might influence your ability to have a better standing in a survival situation?

Getting the game:

[https://store.steampowered.com/app/282070/This War of Mine/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/282070/This_War_of_Mine/)

References:

11 bit studios. (2014). This War of Mine [Steam]. 11 bit studios.

[https://store.steampowered.com/app/282070/This War of Mine/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/282070/This_War_of_Mine/)

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This_War_of_Mine#Development

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