

# The man who died for democracy

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## Heroes of 2024



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*Never a quitter:* According to Russian authorities, Navalny took a short walk at his Siberian penal colony before collapsing and ultimately dying on 16 February this year.

**Was Navalny's sacrifice worth it? In February, Alexei Navalny died in a Russian prison. He had spent his adult life campaigning against the Russian president.**

### What's happening?

On 16 February, Russian campaigner Alexei Navalny died in prison. He was just 47 years old.

Navalny was **Vladimir Putin's** most well-known **opponent**. For over a decade he had tried to win elections in Russia and told the world about **corruption**. As a result, he was sent to prison and even poisoned.

### Find out more

Navalny grew up in Obninsk, a small city 100km south-west of Moscow, to a Russian mother and a Ukrainian father.

Navalny led **protests** against Putin's United Russia party. In 2013 he ran to be mayor of **Moscow**, but he only received 27.3% of the vote.

Navalny planned to stand for the 2018 presidential election. Before that could happen he was found **guilty** of corruption and banned from running for office.

He was imprisoned and attacked. In 2017 he was sprayed with green dye and lost 80% of his sight in one eye. In 2019 he was imprisoned, then hospitalised with

severe damage to his skin and eyes.

While campaigning in 2020, he fell seriously ill. Doctors found traces of **Novichok** in his body.

In 2021 he was sentenced to two and a half years. His sentence was then increased by nine years, then 19.

In the film *Navalny*, released in 2022, Navalny says: "If they decide to kill me, it means that we are incredibly strong."

### Was Navalny's sacrifice worth it?

#### Some say

Yes! Navalny was right. That Russian leaders tried to silence him showed they were scared. He was an inspirational example. Other groups will take on his work and win.

#### Others think

No! Putin won re-election this year with 88% of all votes, despite Navalny's death and the war in **Ukraine**. Many Russians do not share Navalny's dream.

### Six steps to discovery

Some people say

1. Connect

*"Hope in reality is the worst of all evils because it prolongs the torments of man."*

**Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900), German philosopher**

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*What do you think?*

**How do you feel about this story?** - Would you ever give your life for a cause?

## 2. Wonder

**What questions do you have?** - For example: How popular was Navalny in Russia? Why was he sent to prison so many times?

## 3. Investigate

**What are the facts?** - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

## 4. Construct

**What is your point of view?** - Would you ever want to be a politician? Why or why not?

## 5. Express

**What do others believe?** - In pairs, discuss what makes a real life hero.

## 6. Reflect

**What might happen next?** - Do you think Navalny's sacrifice was worth it? Submit your ideas to [Student Voices](#).

## Glossary

**Vladimir Putin** - Russia's ruler since 2000. He is a strong opponent of the West.

**Opponent** - A rival in a competition, game or argument.

**Corruption** - When someone abuses their power for personal gain. It often involves bribery.

**Protests** - When people show they are unhappy about something. Some people protest by bringing a big group of people together and marching or chanting.

**Moscow** - The capital city of Russia.

**Guilty** - Responsible for doing something wrong.

**Novichok** - A group of nerve agents, most infamously used in the poisoning of former Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter in the UK in 2018.

**Ukraine** - A country in Eastern Europe. It was invaded by Russia in February 2022.