

Level 4

Time's person of 2014



Ebola Fighters, Time's December 2014 covers

Time is a well-known American weekly news magazine. At the end of each year it selects its “Person of the Year”. This person then appears on the front cover of the magazine’s December issue. However, *Time* magazine’s choice is not always a single person. Sometimes it is an organization or group of people.

In 2013 the magazine’s choice was Pope Francis, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. This year the magazine’s “Person of the Year” is the “Ebola Fighters”. *Time* explained that these “fighters” are everyone who has worked with Ebola patients in West Africa. They include doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers, and the graveyard workers who bury those who die from the disease.

Time started its “Person of the Year” in 1927. Charles Lindbergh was the magazine’s first “Man of the Year”. He was a pilot. In 1927 Lindbergh flew a plane across the Atlantic Ocean. No one had done this before.

Time says that its “Person of the Year” is “someone or something” that has had a big effect on world news over the last 12 months. This could be good or bad. Yet, whatever happened, the “Person of the Year” must have caused changes and made a difference.

The magazine says that the “Person of the Year” is not meant to be a prize or honor. In the past, it has selected people who have become mass murderers. Both Adolf Hitler, who led Nazi Germany, and Joseph Stalin, a former leader of the Russian-led Soviet Union, have been “Man of the Year”. Stalin was chosen twice.

Time magazine’s “Person of the Year” does not have to be a person or group of people. In 1983 the personal computer was chosen. The *Time* “Person of the Year” in 2011 was “The Protester”. Then, there were large street demonstrations in many Arab countries. These included Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen. The protesters were all demonstrating about their corrupt leaders.

No one knows where the Ebola virus comes from. Experts suspect that fruit bats carry it. There have been outbreaks of this disease in some African countries before. The current one is the worst.

The current Ebola outbreak in West Africa began in Guinea at the beginning of the year. It soon spread to two nearby countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Ebola is passed from person to person by body fluids that contain the virus. Healthcare workers looking after Ebola patients have to dress in protective clothing.

Most people who get Ebola die. Currently there is no known cure. Several international drug, or pharmaceutical, companies are testing new medicines and vaccines. However, these are unlikely to be ready for at least six months. So far, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has killed around 6,300 people. This figure includes at least 350 Ebola Fighters.

Comprehension Questions:

1. How does *Time* magazine select its “Person of the Year”?
2. Who are the “Ebola fighters”?
3. How is Ebola spread from person to person?

Discussion Questions:

4. What is the article’s main idea?
5. Pretend you are a news reporter. How would you discuss *Time* magazine’s “Person of the Year”?
6. What do you think about the Ebola fighters being chosen as the magazine’s cover?
7. If you can choose another person or group to be “Person of the Year”, who would it be and why?