

Extended Controversial Issue Discussion Lesson Plan Template

Lesson Title: Philosophical Chairs: Justification for the Dropping the Atomic Bombs

Author Name: Kylie Miller

Contact Information: Email: Kimiller@washoeschools.net

Appropriate for Grade Level(s): 10-12

US History Standard(s)/Applicable CCSS(s): H.2 (9-12).11 Describe the cultural, economic, political, and technological impact of World War II.

Seek information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions.

Discussion Question(s): Was the dropping of the atomic bombs justified?

Engagement Strategy: Philosophical Chairs

Student Readings (list): Truman Speech Announcing the Use of the Atomic Bombs, Pro v Con: conflicting Views of Major Events in American History: Drop the bomb v Choose Another Way to End the War, Hiroshima by John Hersey, A Nation Faces Conflict, Dropping the bomb: Hiroshima and Nagasaki Saved Lives by Spencer Tucker
Images: "Devastation at Hiroshima, after the atomic bomb was dropped" by Keystone Images, Hiroshima Victim, Kumio Yamashita.

Total Time Needed: 230 Minutes

Lesson Outline:

Time Frame (e.g. 15 minutes)	What is the teacher doing?	What are students doing?
10 Min.	Explaining Philosophical Chair assignment.	Listening, reading directions out loud.
10 Min.	Explain readings and images that the students will be using.	Listening going through documents.
120 Min.	Reading Circles: Monitoring groups while they read through the documents. Helping with confusing concepts.	Reading Circles: Working with their groups. Reading and annotating documents, answering text-based questions.
10 Min.	Cross the Line: Reading statements concerning the justifications for war out loud.	Cross the Line: students listen to statements and move to the side of the room that they agree with.
60 Min.	Philosophical Chairs: Keeping track of individual student progress. Keeping students on topic.	Philosophical Chairs: Students discuss justification for bomb using their text while following the norms of Phil. Chairs.
10 min.	Go over instructions and guidelines for DBQ on justification for the bomb.	Students listen to instructions on DBQ and go through documents.
80 Min.	Monitor students and help with questions while students write DBQs.	Students write DBQs using the same evidence they used for the discussion and using the same topic.

Description of Lesson Assessment: Rubric covering their participation in activities leading up to the discussion as well as their participation and performance during the discussion, also a separate rubric for their DBQ.

How will students reflect on the process and their learning? Students will be writing a reflection on how they thought they performed during the discussion and also what they learned or what they now have a better understanding of post-discussion. The students will also be using the information they have gained and their documents to then write a DBQ.

Statement by the President Announcing the Use of the A-bomb At Hiroshima (Excerpted)

August 6, 1945

Sixteen Hours Ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, an important Japanese Army base. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of T.N.T. It had more than two thousand times the blast power of the British "Grand Slam" which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare.

The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold. And the end is not yet. With this bomb we have now added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces. In their present form these bombs are now in production and even more powerful forms are in development.....

Beginning in 1940, before Pearl Harbor, scientific knowledge useful in war was pooled between the United States and Great Britain, and many priceless helps to our victories have come from that arrangement. Under that general policy the research on the atomic bomb was begun. With American and British scientists working together we entered the race of discovery against the Germans.....

We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake; we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war.

It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum. If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth. Behind this air attack will follow sea and land forces in such numbers and power as they have not yet seen and with the fighting skill of which they are already well aware.....

It has never been the habit of the scientists of this country or the policy of this Government to withhold from the world scientific knowledge. Normally, therefore, everything about the work with atomic energy would be made public.

But under present circumstances it is not intended to divulge the technical processes of production or all the military applications, pending further examination of possible methods of protecting us and the rest of the world from the danger of sudden destruction.

I shall recommend that the Congress of the United States consider promptly the establishment of an appropriate commission to control the production and use of atomic power within the United States. I shall give further consideration and make further recommendations to the Congress as to how atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence towards the maintenance of world peace.

The Essential Documents of American History was compiled by Norman P. Desmarais and James H. McGovern of Providence College.

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Document 2



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Caption:

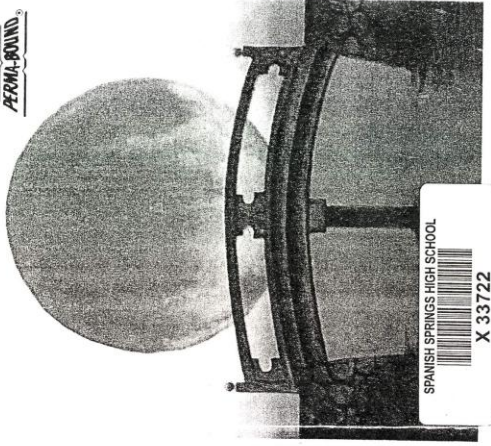
Hiroshima Victim: 14th December 1946: Kunio Yamashita displaying the injuries he suffered as a result of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima on the 6th August 1945. (Photo by Keystone/Getty Images)

source #4

JOHN HEKSELY HIROSHIMA

"EVERYONE ABLE TO READ SHOULD READ IT"
-SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

PERMA-BOUND



a tiger, alone worth ten million yen, or more than twenty-five thousand dollars.

His marriage was working out well. He had been able to pick and choose. There had not been many such eligible young men as he in Mukahara, and numerous marriage brokers had sounded him out. He had followed up some of these feelers. One father of an offered bride had received his agent and turned him down. Perhaps this was because Dr. Sasaki had a reputation of having been a very bad boy, a "tomcat," some said, when he was young; and the father may have known about his illegal treatment of patients in Mukahara in the evenings after his work at the Red Cross Hospital. But perhaps it was also because the father was overcautious. It was said of him that he not only followed the Japanese saying, "Check an old iron bridge well before crossing," he would not cross even after checking. Dr. Sasaki, never in his life having experienced such a rebuff, had decided that this was the girl for him, and with the help of two persistent go-betweens he had eventually won the wary parent over. Now, married only a few months, he was quickly learning that his wife was wiser and more sensible than he.

Much of Dr. Sasaki's work as a surgeon at the Red Cross Hospital in the next five years was in the removal of keloid scars—hideously ugly, thick, itchy, rubbery, copper-red crablike growths that often formed over bad burns that hibakusha had suffered, and particularly those victims who had been exposed to the great heat of the bomb within two kilometres of the hypocenter. In dealing with the keloids, Dr. Sasaki and his colleagues were groping in the dark, because they had no reliable literature to guide them. They found that after the bulbous scars had been removed they often recurred. Some, if they were left unattended, became infected, and others caused underlying muscles to tense up. He and his colleagues eventually came to the reluctant

conclusion that they should not have operated on many of the keloids. The scars tended in time to shrink spontaneously, and could then be more easily excised, or be left alone.

In 1951, Dr. Sasaki decided to quit working for the hospital, with its awful memories, and to set himself up, as his father had done, in a private clinic in Mukahara. He was ambitious. He had had an older brother, who, according to the custom of Japanese medical families, had been expected to succeed to the father's practice; the second son would have to make his own way, and in 1939, urged by the propaganda of the time to seek a fortune in the vast undeveloped reaches of China, Terutomi Sasaki had gone there and had studied at the Japanese Eastern Medical University, in T'ingtau. He had graduated and returned to Hiroshima shortly before the bombing. His brother had been killed in the war, so the way was clear for him—not only to start a practice in his father's town but also to withdraw from Hiroshima and, in effect, from being a hibakusha. For the next four decades, he also never spoke to anyone about the hours and days after the bombing.

His grandfather having deposited large sums in the Bank of Hiroshima, Dr. Sasaki went to it confidently expecting a big loan to help him get started. But the bank said that a clinic in such a small town could easily fail, and it put a cap on his credit of three hundred thousand yen, then less than a thousand dollars. So Dr. Sasaki started treating patients in his wife's parents' house. He performed simple surgery—on appendixes, gastric ulcers, compound fractures—but he also rather daringly practiced every other sort of medicine, too, except gynecology and obstetrics. He did surprisingly well. Before long, he was getting nearly a hundred patients a day. Some came to him from considerable distances. The bank noticed, and his limit of credit rose to a million yen.

parasites, which were not fatal in themselves but were seriously debilitating to those who had had radiation sickness. The doctor treated Nakamura-san (as he would have addressed her) with santonin, a somewhat dangerous medicine derived from certain varieties of artemisia. To pay the doctor, she was forced to sell her last valuable possession, her husband's sewing machine. She came to think of that act as marking the lowest and saddest moment of her whole life.

Is referring to those who went through the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, the Japanese tended to shy away from the term "survivors," because in its focus on being alive it might suggest some slight to the sacred dead. The class of people to which Nakamura-san belonged came, therefore, to be called by a more neutral name, "hibakusha"—literally, "explosion-affected persons." For more than a decade after the bombings, the hibakusha lived in an economic limbo, apparently because the Japanese government did not want to find itself saddled with anything like moral responsibility for heinous acts of the victorious United States. Although it soon became clear that many hibakusha suffered consequences of their exposure to the bombs which were quite different in nature and degree from those of survivors even of the ghastly fire bombings in Tokyo and elsewhere, the government made no special provision for their relief—until, ironically, after the storm of rage that swept across Japan when the twenty-three crewmen of a fishing vessel, the *Lucky Dragon No. 5*, and its cargo of tuna were irradiated by the American test of a hydrogen bomb at Bikini in 1954. It took three years even then for a relief law for the hibakusha to pass the Diet.

Though Nakamura-san could not know it, she thus had a bleak period ahead of her. In Hiroshima, the early postwar years were, besides, a time, especially painful for poor people like her, of disorder, hunger, greed, thievery, black markets. Non-hibakusha employers

developed a prejudice against the survivors as word got around that they were prone to all sorts of ailments, and that even those, like Nakamura-san, who were not cruelly maimed and had not developed any serious overt symptoms were unreliable workers, since most of them seemed to suffer, as she did, from the mysterious but real malaise that came to be known as one kind of lasting A-bomb sickness: a nagging weakness and weariness, dizziness now and then, digestive troubles, all aggravated by a feeling of oppression, a sense of doom, for it was said that unspeakable diseases might at any time plant nasty flowers in the bodies of their victims, and even in those of their descendants.

As Nakamura-san struggled to get from day to day, she had no time for attitudinizing about the bomb or anything else. She was sustained, curiously, by a kind of passivity, summed up in a phrase she herself sometimes used—"shikata ga nai," meaning, loosely, "It can't be helped." She was not religious, but she lived in a culture long colored by the Buddhist belief that resignation might lead to clear vision; she had shared with other citizens a deep feeling of powerlessness in the face of a state authority that had been divinely strong ever since the Meiji Restoration in 1868; and the hell she had witnessed and the terrible aftermath unfolding around her reached so far beyond human understanding that it was impossible to think of them as the work of resentable human beings, such as the pilot of the *Enola Gay*, or President Truman, or the scientists who had made the bomb—or even, nearer at hand, the Japanese militarists who had helped to bring on the war. The bombing almost seemed a natural disaster—one that it had simply been her bad luck, her fate (which must be accepted), to suffer.

When she had been wormed and felt slightly better, she made an arrangement to deliver bread for a baker named Takahashi, whose bakery was in Nobori-cho. On days when she had the strength to do it, she would take orders for bread from retail shops in her neighborhood,

By the summer of 1945, World War II appeared to be nearing its end. Germany had surrendered and U.S. ships and airplanes had blockaded Japan. In May, American troops captured Okinawa, just a few hundred miles from Japan. And, though the Soviet Union had not declared war on Japan, it was expected to do so soon. The U.S. and its allies demanded the Japanese government's "unconditional surrender." However, the Japanese government had not surrendered. Plans were made to invade Japan in the fall. In July, President Truman was informed that scientists had invented a new bomb, capable of destroying an entire city.

Drop the Bomb By "Enola May"

The U.S. has been at war for 3½ years. More than 250,000 American soldiers have died fighting Germany and Japan. Despite our recent victories, the Japanese government has not surrendered.

The Japanese have demonstrated a willingness to fight to the death. This is because they consider it shameful to surrender to an enemy. In the past several months, the Japanese have even organized squadrons of *kamikaze* pilots. These are people who load their planes with bombs and then crash them into American ships.

In the last battle, we invaded and captured the island of Okinawa. 100,000 Japanese soldiers defended it. Very few of them surrendered. Capturing Okinawa resulted in 12,000 Americans being killed and 36,000 wounded.

There are still 2,000,000 Japanese soldiers defending the homeland. An invasion of Japan would result in at least 250,000 Americans being killed and wounded, because the Japanese will fight to the last man.

It is fortunate that we developed the technology for the Atomic Bomb. We can now convince Japan to surrender without having to invade. We must use it. And, we must use it on a legitimate military target, even if civilians will be killed.

To win this war and to prevent future wars, we must use the Bomb.

There is another consideration. The use of the Atomic Bomb will display to the world its awesome power. Since we are the only nation with the technology to make one, we can ensure peace in the post-war world. It is possible that this new weapon will make war obsolete. But the world will only believe what it sees.

We could offer them lenient surrender terms. But, that will send a terrible message to the world. Within a decade, we will be at war again, defending democracy from another dictator.

We could drop the bomb on a deserted island or at least a target that has no civilians. But, then the Japanese will believe we are not willing to use it to destroy human life on a large scale. If that happens, we will have completely wasted the bomb's ability to convince Japan to surrender. Plus, there are just two bombs so we have to make each of them count.

There are no other reasonable options. We could try a blockade of Japan, but that would take years. Plus, since Japan has been blockaded for nearly a year and has not surrendered, there is no guarantee that they will ever surrender.

Choose Another Way to End the War By "Bob Heimer"

military options. We have just begun a blockade so we do not know how effective it could be. Japan has few natural resources. For all we know, the blockade could convince Japan to surrender in a month.

We should not rule out an invasion. Military experts believe we could capture the island of Kyushu with less than 30,000 American casualties. This might convince the Japanese government we are willing to invade the main island and may lead to its surrender.

If these options are all tried and they all fail, then we should drop the Atomic Bomb. But, we should only use it as a demonstration, on a deserted island, for example.

There is another consideration when making this decision. The Atomic Bomb will have an important role in the post-war world. Do we want to be the only country that ever used it against another people? What precedent will that set for others who learn the technology?

We have always felt that America is great because we are morally good. Dropping the Atomic Bomb on a civilian target, when we have not tried all other options to end the war, is not morally good.

We should not use the Atomic Bomb on Japan until we have tried all other options. Killing civilians is an immoral way to try to win the war. It is also ineffective. Earlier in the year, we firebombed Tokyo and killed 80,000 people. But, this did not convince Japan to surrender. The Atomic Bomb will probably not kill more people, so we can expect the same result.

We must try other options. For example, we have not done all we can through diplomacy. The Soviet Union is the only major power not to declare war on Japan. The Japanese government may hope the Soviet Union will join them and swing the tide in their favor. Or it may believe the Soviet Union will try to mediate some effort at peace. If we can get the Soviet Union to publicly join our side, it may cause the Japanese government to surrender.

We could also negotiate better. For example, we should not demand 'unconditional surrender.' The U.S. will eventually compromise with the Japanese anyway, so the demand that they surrender unconditionally is just rhetoric. Maybe if we agreed to some minor conditions about how the Japanese will be governed after the war, they would surrender. We should end our silly and unreasonable demand for unconditional surrender and negotiate. We could also consider other



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Hiroshima

Japan

Copyright:

City:

Location:

Caption:

"The aftermath of the atom bomb dropped on **Hiroshima**, Japan, by the Americans at the end of World War II. The occupants of the burned-out bus were all killed. (Photo by Keystone/Getty Images)" -- Image Date: 1/8/1945 -- Image Date: 1/8/1945

A Nation Faces Conflict, 1939-1960 / Dropping the Bomb: Hiroshima and Nagasaki / Dropping the Bomb Saved Lives



Dropping the atomic bombs on Japan saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers and was the only way to end the war quickly. In the summer of 1945, American planners hoped that a naval blockade and strategic bombing campaign of the Japanese home islands would bring the war to an end. The prospects for an actual invasion appeared dim, as Japanese leaders made major preparations to defend against such an attack. In light of the heavy casualties sustained by U.S. forces in the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa earlier that year, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff were reluctant to carry out Operation DOWNFALL, the planned land invasion of Japan. The Japanese military had a million soldiers, 3,000 Kamikaze aircraft, and 5,000 suicide boats available to defend its home islands. Civilians were also being prepared to fight to the death. With the U.S. invasion scheduled for November 1, 1945, and well aware that the cost of such an enterprise was likely to be high, the Joint Chiefs of Staff pressed President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the February 1945 Yalta Conference to persuade the Soviet Union to enter the war against Japan at any cost.



Following the successful test detonation of an atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945, sharp debate arose among advisers to U.S. President Harry S. Truman (who had succeeded Roosevelt as president on the latter's death in April) regarding whether to employ the new weapon against Japan. The terror threshold had already been passed in the firebombing of Japanese cities. Indeed, the most destructive single air raid in history was not the atomic bombing of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, but the firebombing of Tokyo on the night of March 9–10, 1945. This was total war. It was always assumed that the bomb would be used if it became available. American planners believed that employing the bomb would, in all likelihood, bring the war to a speedy end, saving many American lives. It would also mean that the United States would not have to share occupation of Japan with the Soviet Union, and hopefully it would deter Soviet leader Joseph Stalin from future aggression. The atomic bomb was thus essentially a psychological weapon, rather than a purely military tool, the use of which was designed to influence Japanese political leaders. Dropping it appeared to be the only way to realize the American goal of unconditional surrender.

Revisionist historians have held that the Japanese government was trying desperately to leave the war and that employing the bomb was unnecessary. Intercepts of diplomatic messages indicated, however, that Japan had not yet reached the decision to surrender when the first bomb was dropped. While Emperor Hirohito and his principal advisers had concluded that Japan could not win the war, they still held out hope for a negotiated settlement and believed that a last decisive battle would force the Allies to grant more favorable peace terms.

Postatomic bomb estimates have claimed the possibility of up to a million casualties in a U.S. invasion of Japan. However, historian Ray Skates concludes in his authoritative study *The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb* (1998) that Operation OLYMPIC, the first phase of the invasion of Japan (the conquest of the island of Kyushu planned for November 1945), would alone have taken two months and resulted in 75,000 to 100,000 U.S. casualties. Such losses, while they

would not have affected the outcome of the war, might indeed have brought about the political goals sought by the Japanese leaders for more favorable surrender terms.

Prolonging the war would have meant a significantly higher cost in Japanese lives than those actually killed in the atomic bombings. During the war, the Japanese lost 323,495 dead on the home front, the vast majority of them from air attack. With continued strategic bombing this total would have swelled, and many other Japanese would simply have died of starvation. By August 1945, Japan's largest cities had been largely burned out. Waterborne transportation had been interdicted by airborne mining and submarines, and the Japanese nation was close to starvation. The reduced food supply was highly dependent on railroad distribution, and the railroads would have been the next major strategic bombing target. In effect, dropping the bomb resulted in a net saving of both Japanese and American lives.



The first bomb fell on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. On August 8, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, Stalin honoring, to the day, his pledge at Yalta to enter the war against Japan "two or three months after the defeat of Germany," which had occurred on May 8, 1945. On August 9, a second atomic bomb fell on Nagasaki.

After prolonged meetings with his advisers, Hirohito made the decision for peace. The U.S. dropping of the atomic bombs enabled him to take this difficult step in the face of a sharply divided cabinet. Even so, his decision was not without danger, for fanatics determined to fight on to the end plotted to assassinate the emperor to prevent announcement of the decision. To forestall this, Hirohito communicated the decision over radio. On the afternoon of August 15, 1945, in a voice never heard before by the Japanese people, Hirohito told his people that Japan would accept the Potsdam Declaration and surrender. In so doing, he specifically mentioned the atomic bomb: "Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is indeed incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives." World War II had come to an end, and the atomic bomb played a major role in it, saving both Japanese and American lives.

Works Cited

Frank, Richard B. *Downfall: The End of the Japanese Empire*. New York: Random House, 1999; Mosley, Leonard. *Hirohito, Emperor of Japan*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966; Skates, John Ray. *The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998.

About the Author

Spencer C. Tucker

Spence Tucker earned a PhD from the Virginia Military Institute and was a Fulbright scholar in France. He was an army captain and intelligence analyst in the Pentagon during the Vietnam War, then taught for 30 years at Texas Christian University before returning to his alma mater for six years as the holder of the John Biggs Chair of Military History. He retired from teaching in 2003. He is now Senior Fellow of Military History at ABC-CLIO. Dr. Tucker has written or edited more than 25 books, including ABC-CLIO's encyclopedias of World War I and II and the award-winning *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War*.

Philosophical Chairs: Was the Dropping of the Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki Justified?

The dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the close of World War II is one of the most controversial events that have taken place in history to date. There are those who argue that any event that could bring one of the most devastating wars to a close must be justified while there are others who argue that the effect the bombs had on the Japanese people illustrate a true crime against humanity.

It is now your turn to decide for yourself using narratives and first-hand accounts from various viewpoints whether or not the dropping of the bombs was justified. To do this, we will be discussing the issues using the Philosophical Chairs format.

Guidelines for Philosophical Chairs:

- ✓ The room will be set up in a U formation. One side will be in agreement (the dropping of the bomb was justified) the opposite side will be in disagreement (the dropping of the bomb was not justified). The section in between will be the neutral zone.
- ✓ The Pro side will begin the discussion and then it will be the Con side's turn. A person who speaks on either side must wait until two people on their side have spoken before they can speak again.
- ✓ Students in the neutral section may move to either side based on which side of the argument they agree with, however, they must explain to the class why they have decided to take a certain side.
- ✓ Students on the Pro and Con sides may also move to other sections of the room as the discussion progresses, those students will also need to explain their reasons for doing so.
- ✓ While in the neutral section students should be taking notes on both sides of the discussion. They may also ask students on either the pro or con side to clarify their arguments.
- ✓ Students may not raise their hands to speak while someone else is speaking, they must wait until the speaker has finished.
- ✓ At the end of the discussion, each side takes 1 minute to summarize their main arguments and make a final statement.
- ✓ While another student has the floor, all other students need to remain silent.
- ✓ **Arguments need to be based on evidence!**

Philosophical Chairs Grading Rubric

30-25 Points	24-20 Points	19-15 Points	14-10 Points	9-0 Points
Student completed all work leading up to discussion. Student spoke at least twice during discussion. Student's arguments were connected to the text. Student followed all norms of the strategy.	Student completed all work leading up to discussion. Student spoke at least twice during discussion. Arguments were mostly connected to text. Student followed norms regularly.	Student Completed at least half of the work leading up to discussion. Student spoke at least once during discussion. Arguments were mostly connected to text. Student followed norms regularly.	Student completed less than half of the work leading up to discussion. Student spoke at least once during discussion. Arguments were sometimes connected to the text. Students mostly followed norms.	Student did not complete work leading up to discussion. Student did not speak during discussion or only spoke once. Arguments were not connected to text. Student mostly did not follow norms.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Reading Circles: Was the Dropping of the Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki Justified?

Source 1

What do you notice about the image?

What is the location and date of the image? How much time has passed since the bomb was dropped?

What arguments can you make using this image (pro or con)?

Source 2: Before reading the document, list several things you notice (date, author, type of source). Based on the title what kind of information do you believe you will find in the document?

Take turns reading the document out loud. Annotate the reading as you go.

How does Truman use Pearl Harbor as justification for his argument?

Explain Truman's argument that the bomb "was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction".

Explain how atomic power can lead to world peace.

What other arguments can you make based on this document?

Source 3: Before reading the documents, list several things you notice (date, author, type of source). Based on the titles what kind of information do you believe you will find in these documents?

Take turns reading the documents out loud. Annotate the readings as you go.

“Drop the Bomb”

What evidence about Japanese culture and past experiences with the Japanese military give justification for the dropping of the bomb?

What other options are given other than the bomb and how are those options rejected?

What other arguments can you make based on this document?

“Choose another Way to End the War”

What evidence about Japanese culture and past experiences with the Japanese military provide arguments against the dropping of the bomb?

What other options are provided besides the dropping of the bombs?

What possible consequences might occur if the bomb were to be dropped?

What other arguments can you make based on this document?

Source 4: Before reading the document, list several things you notice (date, author, type of source). Based on the title what kind of information do you believe you will find in the document?

Take turns reading the document out loud. Annotate the readings as you go.

How were survivors labeled and how were they treated?

What ailments did survivors sometimes experience?

What other arguments can you make based on this document?

Source 5: Before reading the document, list several things you notice (date, author, type of source). Based on the title what kind of information do you believe you will find in the document?

Take turns reading the document out loud. Annotate the readings as you go.

How is the bomb both a “psychological weapon” as well as a “military tool”?

What were other possible outcomes had the bomb not been dropped?

How does Tucker make the argument that the bomb aided the Japanese people in some ways?

What other arguments can you make based on this document?

Source 6

What do you notice about the image?

What is the location and date of the image? How much time has passed since the bomb was dropped?

What arguments can you make using this image (pro or con)?

DBQ: Dropping of the Atomic Bombs

This question is based on the accompanying documents 1-6. Some of the documents have been edited for the purpose of the question. The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the context of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

Historical Context: By the summer of 1945, World War II was coming to a close. The war in Europe had already ended but the war in the Pacific between the U.S and Japan was still going on. In the U.S, scientists had been developing the first atomic bomb. On the 6th of August, U.S forces dropped the first of two bombs on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, three days later they dropped the second bomb on the Japanese city of Nagasaki.

Task: Using the information from the documents and your knowledge of social studies, address the following subjects using at least 4 of the documents in a five paragraph essay. You should use the essay to take a stance on whether or not the dropping of the bomb was justified.

- Discuss the various outcomes that came with the dropping of the bombs.
- Discuss the impact that bomb had on the people of Japan.
- Discuss the impact the bomb had on the U.S.

Document 1



Hiroshima Victim December 14th, 1946 by Keystone/Getty Images

Document 2

Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, an important Japanese Army base. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of T.N.T....

The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold...

We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake; we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war. It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum. If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.

Statement by President Truman Announcing the Use of the A-bomb At Hiroshima, August 6th, 1945.

Document 3

The U.S has been at war for 3 ½ years. More than 250,000 American soldiers have died fighting Germany and Japan. Despite our recent victories, the Japanese government has not surrendered. .. There are still 2,000,000 Japanese soldiers defending the homeland. An invasion of Japan would result in at least 250,000 soldiers being killed and wounded...It is fortunate that we developed the technology for the Atomic Bomb. We can now convince Japan to surrender without having to invade... We could try a blockade of Japan, but that would take years...We could drop the bomb on a deserted island...But, then the Japanese will believe we are not willing to use it to destroy human life on a large scale. ..Plus there are just two bomb so we have to make each of them count...To win this war and prevent future wars, we must use this bomb.

“Drop the Bomb” by Enola May

Document 4

...We must try other options. For example, we have not done all we can through diplomacy. The Soviet Union is the only major power not to declare war on Japan...If we can get the Soviet Union to join our side, it may cause the Japanese government to surrender...we should not demand ‘unconditional surrender.’.. Maybe if we agreed to some minor conditions about how the Japanese will be governed after the war they would surrender...There is another consideration when making this decision. The Atomic Bomb will have an important role in the post-war world. Do we want to be the only country that ever used it against other people? What precedent will that set for others who learn the technology? We have always felt that America is great because we are morally good.

Choose Another Way to End the War by “Bob Heimer”

Document 5

...even those, like Nakamura-san, who were not cruelly maimed and had not developed any serious overt symptoms were unreliable workers, since most of them seemed to suffer...from mysterious but real malaise that came to be known as one kind of lasting A-bomb sickness: a nagging weakness and weariness, dizziness now and then, digestive troubles, all aggravated by feelings of oppression, a sense of doom... Much of Dr. Sasaki’s work as a surgeon...was in the removal of Keloid scars- hideously ugly, thick, itchy, rubbery, copper-red crablike growths that often formed over bad burns...They found that after the bulbous scars had been removed they often recurred...

Hiroshima by John Hersey

Document 6



Hiroshima

Japan

Location:

Caption:

"The aftermath of the atom bomb dropped on **Hiroshima**, Japan, by the Americans at the end of World War II. The occupants of the burned-out bus were all killed. (Photo by Keystone/Getty Images)" -- Image Date: 1/8/1945 -- Image Date: 1/8/1945

The Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: A Justifiable Means to and end or a Crime Against the Japanese People?

On August 6th, 1945, President Truman addressed the American people, informing them that one of the most influential events in history had occurred, “Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima,...That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of TNT...which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare” (Dudley 119). By the summer of 1945, millions of soldiers and citizens of the world had perished after years of fighting in the Second World War. Although Europe’s involvement in the war had come to an end, the War in the Pacific between the United States and Japan had not found its conclusion. However, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito, was unaware that the United States had developed a weapon that’s power to destroy and devastate, had never been introduced to warfare. The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki have come to be among the most controversial military maneuvers in history. While some argue that because the bombings ended World War II, more lives of both American and Japanese soldiers were saved than there were victims of the bombs; others argue that more diplomatic measures could have been attempted thus possibly preventing the need for the bombs. The argument that the dropping of the bombs have prevented possible future wars from occurring has been made. However, the lasting environmental, social, and medical effects of the bomb have left their mark on Japan. These factors are only some of the elements that lead one to ask; were the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki justified?

After years of stifling battles in the Pacific and Europe and thousands of lives lost, America was desperate for an end to the war that had crippling effects on both their country and the world at large. The American military feared the results of a land invasion of Japan would be devastating to both the American forces and the citizens of Japan. “Post atomic bomb estimates have claimed the possibility of up to a million casualties in a U.S invasion of Japan” (Tucker, “Dropping the Bomb: Hiroshima and Nagasaki”, ABC-CLIO). Prolonging the war would have also resulted in the lives of many more Japanese citizens. By the summer of

1945, Japan's largest cities had been burned and the results of airstrikes and submarines had brought the Japanese nation to the brink of starvation. In the event of an invasion by the U.S, Japanese railroads would have been destroyed causing the distribution of food and supplies to come to a halt (Tucker, "Dropping the Bomb: Hiroshima and Nagasaki", ABC-CLIO). President Truman and the American military held that by dropping the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they were in fact saving more American and Japanese lives than they were destroying, therefore, justifying the dropping of the bombs.

Critics of the bombings use the state of Japanese devastation at the time of the bombings to argue that the bombs were unnecessary. The conditions in Japan at the time of the bombings would have led to an imminent surrender. "The atomic bomb was used at a time when Japan's navy was sunk, her airforce virtually destroyed, her homeland surrounded, her supplies cut off...recognition of her imminent defeat could be read between the lines of every Japanese communique" (Dudley 121). Critics also argue that other means of negotiation and diplomacy were not thoroughly explored prior to the bombings. Because the Soviet Union was the only major power to not declare war on Japan, it may have been possible to persuade the Soviets to publicly join the side of the Americans, therefore possibly causing the Japanese to surrender (Beauchemin 34). Those who argue that the dropping of the bombs was not justified also point out that the bombs could have been dropped elsewhere in order to show the Japanese the power of the bomb and possibly lead to a Japanese surrender without having to use the bombs on Japan itself, "But, we should only use it as a demonstration, on a deserted island, for example" (Beauchemin 34). Critics of the dropping of the bombs hold that there were a number of other options that could have been attempted prior to the dropping of the bombs that may have prevented their necessity.

Advocates for the bomb, however, argue that the actions of the American Military not only lead to an immediate peace and an end to the war, they also stress that the atomic bombs have led to a lasting peace for the future. Proponents of the dropping of the bombs declare that the maneuver has prevented future world wars from occurring. When the Atomic Bombs were used, they proved their awesome power, it was believed at the

time the bombs were dropped that this illustration of destruction would cause war to become obsolete and secure American peace because (at the time) they were the only country that possessed such a weapon (Beauchemin 33). Although war has continued since the dropping of the bombs, the world has not experienced as devastating and impactful a war since World War II. American Military leaders also argued that dropping the bombs would result in a more appealing environment among Japanese, Soviet, and American leaders post-bomb. “It would also mean that the United States would not have to share occupation of Japan with the Soviet Union,...it would deter soviet leader, Joseph Stalin from future aggression. The atomic bomb was thus...a psychological weapon, rather than purely a military tool, the use of which was designed to influence Japanese political leaders” (Tucker, “Dropping the Bomb: Hiroshima and Nagasaki”, ABC-CLIO). American military and political leaders hold that ironically, the bombs served as a weapon of peace as well as a weapon of war.

Although the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the first, and only, instances in which atomic weaponry was used, the medical, social, and environmental effects the bombs left behind can still be seen today. Victims of the atomic bomb suffered from severe burns resulting in scars. Doctors in Hiroshima devoted much of their time post-bomb to the removal of keloid scars, thick, itchy, and rubbery growths that often formed over bad burns that victims had suffered (Hersey 102). Medical ailments were known to affect a victim’s work habits, survivors known as “hibaksha” (explosion affected persons) often found it difficult to attain work due to these ailments. Employers developed a prejudice against hibaksha because they were prone to many ailments most notably what they referred to as A-Bomb Sickness (later known as radiation sickness) which involved symptoms like weakness, weariness, dizziness and digestive troubles making it difficult to work normal hours (Hersey 93). Years after the bombs were dropped, the effects of radiation were still being documented among hibaksha. “...It was evident by 1950 that the incidence of leukemia in hibaksha was much higher than normal; among those who had been exposed within one kilometer of the hypocenter, the incidence was reported to be between ten and fifty times above the norm” (Hersey 104). Furthermore, the environmental effects of the bomb were also devastating. The bombs turned the city of Hiroshima, which had previously been a thriving and

bustling city into rubble (Keystone/Getty). Although some may argue that the dropping of the bombs ended the war early, others would argue that for the Japanese, the effects of the bombs were still long-lasting.

World War II was one of the most tragic episodes of the history of the world. Many lives were lost and thriving cities were devastated with destruction. The atomic bombs brought this war to an end, but at what cost? It is argued that the bombs saved more lives than it destroyed, that there were no other possible options that would have resulted in a timely and unconditional Japanese surrender. Furthermore, supporters of the bomb argue that the dropping of the atomic bombs have prevented future conflicts from occurring. However, do the results of the bomb and the lasting effects on the cities of Hiroshima and Japan outweigh those justifications? Decades have passed since the dropping of the atomic bombs and still the events that took place on August 6th and 9th of 1945 remain among the most controversial in history.

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