



**CALIFORNIA CONTENT
STANDARD 11.7.7**

The Atomic Bomb

Specific Objective: Understand the decision to drop atomic bombs and the consequences of the decision.

Read the summary to answer questions on the next page.

The Debate

Reasons To Use the Atomic Bomb	Reasons Not To Use the Atomic Bomb
<p>The invasion of Japan would cost thousands of American lives. Japan might not surrender until it was invaded and conquered. The atomic bomb would end the war and save lives. It was like other weapons in the war, only more powerful. Firebombing of Tokyo and other cities also caused huge casualties. The United States didn't want its investment in developing the bomb to be seen as a waste of time and money. It would show the USSR how powerful the United States was and give the United States more bargaining power after the war.</p>	<p>The Japanese were close to defeat and would have surrendered soon without an all-out invasion. It might have been possible to demonstrate the bomb to the Japanese before dropping it on cities. Some thought Japan would surrender once it saw a demonstration of the bomb's power. Its power was greater than needed to defeat the Japanese. It was a troubling precedent for the United States to be the first in the world to use such a deadly weapon.</p>

The Decision

- Japan was warned that it would face “prompt and utter destruction” if it did not surrender immediately.
- President Truman chose to drop two bombs. He wrote, “The final decision . . . was up to me. . . . I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used.”

The Immediate Results

- Atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima (August 6, 1945) and Nagasaki (August 9).
- About two-thirds of Hiroshima was destroyed immediately; about 66,000 people were killed and 69,000 injured.
- About half of Nagasaki was destroyed immediately; about 39,000 people were killed and 25,000 injured.
- By the end of 1945 about 100,000 more had died from injuries and radiation poisoning.
- Japan agreed to surrender unconditionally about a week after the bombs were dropped.

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Directions: Choose the letter of the *best* answer.

- 1 Why did the U.S. military fear invading Japan in the summer of 1945?**
 - A It feared U.S. forces would be defeated if they invaded Japan.
 - B The battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa showed that an invasion would cost many casualties.
 - C It feared the USSR might be drawn into the war on Japan's side.
 - D There were too many U.S. prisoners of war in Japan who would be endangered during an invasion.
- 2 Which statement is an argument for using the atomic bomb?**
 - A Its development had been relatively quick and easy.
 - B It was like other weapons of war, just more powerful.
 - C The USSR had already developed an atomic bomb.
 - D It would be the first bombing attack on the mainland of Japan.
- 3 Which statement is an argument against using the atomic bomb?**
 - A Too many people already knew about its existence.
 - B It was too difficult to demonstrate it to the Japanese before using it.
 - C Its power was greater than needed to defeat the Japanese.
 - D The United States could demonstrate its power by being the first to use it.

- 4 In President Truman's view, the atomic bomb was**
 - A a scientific experiment gone astray.
 - B a military weapon that should be used.
 - C an unnecessary and tragic measure.
 - D a matter for the generals to decide.
- 5 Which statement best describes the consequences of dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the end of 1945?**
 - A After the initial impact there were no further casualties.
 - B The only significant consequence reported was eye damage.
 - C There was an outbreak of skin disease but few further casualties.
 - D There were several thousand casualties beyond the initial impact.