

**Title:** The Atomic End to World War II and What it Means for Humans Today

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**Time Frame:** One week

**Grade Levels:** 9-12

**Courses:** United States History, World History, Government

**Standards:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1**

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3**

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6**

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8**

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9**

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

**Objectives:**

Students will compare and contrast different perspectives of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and draw a conclusion about whether or not dropping the bombs was a good decision.

Students will analyze alternatives to the use of atomic/nuclear weapons and determine if these would have been better options than dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Students will assess which option would have been the best to end the war with Japan.

Students will analyze the current state of nuclear weapons in the world and determine if nuclear weapons are necessary.

Students will create an advocacy/awareness project (letter, speech, video, presentation, essay, etc.) to argue for or against the existence of nuclear weapons.

### **For Teacher**

#### **Lesson Background Information:**

First, this lesson will expose students to the biased perspective presented in most American classrooms framing the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as positive events which ended World War II and prevented a land invasion of Japan and prolonged fighting.

Next, students will analyze the Japanese perspective of the bombings through various sources and diverse formats. Additionally, students will be presented with frequently overlooked alternatives to using the atomic bombs on Japanese citizens to end the war.

Students will also examine the lasting effects of nuclear proliferation and the potential pitfalls associated with nuclear weapons. The opinions of various political leaders on the issue will be investigated, and students will analyze what is being done to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Throughout the lesson, students are presented with information from all sides of the issue. In the end, students will form an opinion on the level of necessity for nuclear weapons and create an advocacy/awareness project (letter, speech, video, presentation, essay, etc.) to argue their point of view and attempt to gain support for their beliefs.

#### **Anticipatory Set:**

Students will be given a prompt and will participate in a “whip around”. During a whip around, students are given a minute or two to think about a prompt, then each student shares a very brief response to the class. Every student shares very quickly and there is no elaborating or deeper probing.

Prompt: Why did the United States drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II?

After all students have shared their thoughts during the whip around, have a short class discussion on the common answers and what causes students to hold those beliefs.

### **Procedures:**

1. First, students read an article explaining the typical American perspective of the bombings as a means to end the war. Students will discuss the article with classmates and create a T-chart to list the arguments in support of the bombings. Later, arguments against the bombings will be added to the chart.

#### Pro Bomb Article

<http://www.authentichistory.com/1939-1945/1-war/4-Pacific/4-abombdecision/2-support/>

2. Next, students will be exposed to the Japanese perspective through an article about a survivor of the Hiroshima bombing. Students will also analyze before and after pictures from the bombings, maps which detail the casualties as a result of the bombings, and art created by survivors of the bombings. Students will discuss their findings with classmates and add arguments against the bombings to their T-chart.

#### Article from Survivor

Masaya Nemoto, "Story of Hiroshima: Life of an Atomic Bomb Survivor," *Education About ASIA, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Fall 2015)*.

<http://www.fpri.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Hibakusha.pdf>

#### Hiroshima Panoramas (Before/After Pictures)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-06/hiroshima-atomic-bombing-panorama-interactive-images/6642730>

#### Hiroshima/Nagasaki Bomb Maps

<http://www.hiroshima-remembered.com/maps/>

#### Atomic Bomb Art- Hiroshima/Nagasaki

[https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/groundzero1945/gz\\_essay01.html](https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/groundzero1945/gz_essay01.html)

3. Next, students will read an article outlining alternatives to dropping the bombs and other arguments against the bombings. Additionally, students will read an article which argues that intimidating the Soviet Union and ensuring the United States' sole influence in post-war Japan were ulterior motives for dropping the atomic bombs. Lastly, students will read an article which

suggests Japan was already defeated and preparing to surrender prior to the dropping of the two atomic bombs. Students will, again, discuss their findings with classmates and add to their T-chart. At this point, students will write a short opinion on the bombings, arguing whether or not they should have occurred. This opinion should include which would have been the best option for ending the war- dropping the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a demonstration bomb off the coast, waiting for the Soviets to declare war on Japan, easing the conditions of surrender, or continuing conventional bombing and prepare for a land invasion of Japan- and an explanation supporting their opinion. At this point, students will participate in a class debate to determine which option has the most support and to challenge the thinking of each other in order to solidify opinions.

#### Arguments Against and Alternatives to Bombs Article

<http://www.authentichistory.com/1939-1945/1-war/4-Pacific/4-abombdecision/3-against/>

#### Intimidating the Soviet Union Article

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/atomic>

#### Japan Defeated and Prepared to Surrender Article

[http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v16/v16n3p-4\\_weber.html](http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v16/v16n3p-4_weber.html)

4. Next, students will explore various ideas surrounding nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapons in the modern world. First, students will read an article outlining the history of nuclear weapons. Second, students will watch two videos explaining some of the threats/problems which result from nuclear proliferation. Third, students will analyze a map of countries with nuclear capabilities along with a nuclear attack simulation website. Fourth, students will read an article which assesses the validity of possessing nuclear weapons in the modern world. Based on their investigations, students will start to form an opinion about nuclear weapons. As their opinions form, students will record information to support their thoughts.

#### Outline of the Nuclear Age Article

<http://www.fpri.org/article/2009/04/teaching-the-nuclear-age-a-history-institute-for-teachers/>

#### Threats/Problems with Nuclear Weapons

<http://www.choices.edu/resources/scholarsonline/cirincione/jci10.php>

<http://www.choices.edu/resources/scholarsonline/nichols/tn5.php>

#### Map of Countries with Weapons

<http://www.choices.edu/resources/documents/nw-mapping-map.pdf>

### Nuke Map Simulation

<http://nuclearsecrecy.com/nukemap/>

### Nuclear Deterrence and Terrorism Article

<http://www.fpri.org/article/2009/05/does-nuclear-deterrence-apply-in-the-age-of-terrorism/>

5. Students will investigate the actions being taken to prevent nuclear proliferation by various world leaders and organizations. First, students will watch two videos with President Obama from the United States, Prime Minister Cameron from the United Kingdom, and President Hollande of France speaking about ending the use of nuclear weapons. Students will also analyze excerpts from an interview with President Obama in which he discusses various issues dealing with nuclear weapons. Next, students will watch a video of Presidential nominees Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump debating what should be done about nuclear weapons.

Additionally, students will watch a video of former President of Brazil Fernando Henrique speaking about the reasons Brazil abandoned its nuclear weapons program.

Finally, students will use the United States' State Department website to research the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Student will investigate the goals of the treaty, which countries have signed the treaty, the strategies being implemented to encourage nonproliferation, the level of support of the treaty by various countries, and the effects the treaty has had.

### Video of Presidents and Transcript of Obama Interview

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2016/03/31/president-obama-how-we-can-make-our-vision-world-without-nuclear-weapons-reality>

### Clinton-Trump Debate

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/video/trump-clinton-debate-current-nuclear-weapons-policy-42379558>

### Fernando Henrique on Why Brazil Gave Up Nuclear Weapons

<http://www.choices.edu/resources/scholarsonline/cardoso/fhc10.php>

### United States' State Department Website on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty

<http://www.state.gov/t/isn/npt/index.htm>

6. The final component of this lesson is for students to create an advocacy or awareness project in which students will argue against the use of nuclear weapons. The format of this project is to be chosen by the students. Students can write a letter, write a speech, create a presentation,

record a video, write an essay, create an online campaign, or come up with any other format of their choosing. This project should include a detailed explanation of the problems associated with nuclear weapons and a plan to discontinue their existence throughout the world. This will include suggestions for domestic and foreign policies to address questions such as: What should the United States do with the nuclear weapons it currently possesses? How should the United States work with other nuclear countries to properly disarm and dispose of the weapons each possesses? How should the United States handle countries which currently possess nuclear capabilities but do not cooperate with denuclearization policies? How should the United States handle countries currently attempting to obtain nuclear capabilities? How should countries hold each other accountable in their disarmament and disposal of nuclear weapons? The purpose of this project is to get students to think critically about the use of nuclear weapons and their effects on the global community and take a stand against their use. With this, students are actively engaged in the political process and encouraging support for their point of view.

### **Conclusions:**

This lesson has several purposes. First, students will become aware of the bias behind the American view of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Second, students will build empathy for the victims of the bombings. Finally, students will actively participate in the movement to end nuclear proliferation and prevent the future use of nuclear weapons.

### **Modifications:**

Ultimately, the goal of the project is for students to encourage support for the elimination of nuclear weapons. However, as mentioned in the objectives and background information, students are able to argue in support of nuclear weapons if they hold the belief that they are necessary.

With the large amount of sources provided, it is possible to cut some of the content where appropriate. It is also possible to add additional videos, speeches, etc. to add to the information already included.

In order to reduce the amount of time required, this project could be broken into parts and each part could be assigned to a group. The groups would go through the steps listed in their part and present their findings to the other groups.

As a scaffolding, guided notes or graphic organizers could be created to help support students in their investigations.

### **Extensions:**

During the second part of the lesson, many books are available to students who have interest in further exploring the Japanese perspective of the bombings. While in Japan, I was given *Summer Cloud: A-bomb Experience of a Girls' School in Hiroshima* and *My Hiroshima*, which

both provide the survivors' perspective at an appropriate reading level. Full citations are listed in the sources section below. Additional survivor or scholarly sources are plentiful.

For creative or artistic students, they have the opportunity to create their own art focused on the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing and the nonproliferation movement.

The best opportunity for extension is for students to take action with their advocacy/awareness project. Posting a project online, sending a letter to a government representative, starting a petition or campaign online are all options for students to put their ideas into action.

### **Sources:**

#### Sources obtained directly from FPRI's website

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