

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Franklin Roosevelt died suddenly on April 12, 1945, and Harry Truman became president. Many Americans believed he was unqualified for the job. One person said, "If Harry Truman can be president, my neighbor can be president." This "common man" would make the most important decision of the twentieth century.

America was winning the war against Japan, but the Japanese were fighting valiantly. The enemy would not be defeated unless the American army invaded Japan. Experts concluded more than one million Americans would die in the assault on the Japanese home islands.

Some people urged the president not to use the atomic bomb on Japan. General Dwight Eisenhower was the commander of the Allied forces in Europe, and would eventually succeed Truman as president. Eisenhower opposed the bomb for two reasons. "First, the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing. Second, I hated to see our country be the first to use such a weapon."



Mushroom cloud over Hiroshima

President Truman gave the order to drop an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima in August 1945. Even after testing, the American scientists were unsure of what would happen. The Americans thought about warning the Japanese first, but the enemy might have moved Allied prisoners to the site. The Americans rejected dropping the bomb in the ocean. They decided the war would not end unless

the Japanese government understood the damage America would inflict.

The world entered the frightening atomic age at 8:14 a.m. local time in the Japanese city of Hiroshima. One minute later, an atomic bomb destroyed the city. The first flash of the explosion was as bright as a thousand suns. It is estimated that 80,000 people were instantly vaporized. The blast created violent winds that caused firestorms. Co-pilot Robert Lewis said he could taste the atomic fusion. He later wrote in his journal, "My God, what have we done!" Another member of the crew said, "Thank God the war is over and I don't have to get shot at. I can go home."



Gen. Douglas MacArthur

Truman later said he did not agonize over using the bomb. He wanted to make Japan surrender without an invasion. "The atom bomb was no 'great decision,'" he later said. "That was not any decision you had to worry about." A second bomb destroyed the city of Nagasaki. Japan agreed to surrender a week later.

The Japanese feared brutal treatment after their defeat, but General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Occupied Forces, was determined to treat his former enemy with dignity and respect. He decreed that any American soldier that so much as slapped a Japanese would be imprisoned for five years. The Japanese were courteous and respectful toward the Americans. The climate of trust and respect between the two nations allowed Japan to develop into one of the world's richest nations.

### Fill in the Blanks

When American P \_\_\_\_\_ Harry T \_\_\_\_\_ gave the o \_\_\_\_\_ to b \_\_\_\_\_ the J \_\_\_\_\_ city of H \_\_\_\_\_ in the \*s \_\_\_\_\_ of 1945, many American s \_\_\_\_\_ were u \_\_\_\_\_ of what would h \_\_\_\_\_. The a \_\_\_\_\_ bomb that d \_\_\_\_\_ Hiroshima created an e \_\_\_\_\_ as b \_\_\_\_\_ as one thousand s \_\_\_\_\_. An estimated 80,000 people were \*k \_\_\_\_\_ within an instant. Japan s \_\_\_\_\_ a week after a s \_\_\_\_\_ bomb d \_\_\_\_\_ the c \_\_\_\_\_ of N \_\_\_\_\_.

\*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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**Answer in complete sentences**

1. How did Harry Truman become President of the United States?

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\*2. America unleashed a horrific weapon that killed hundreds of thousands of innocent Japanese civilians. An estimated 80,000 died instantly, and more than one million people died of painful radiation after the war. Most experts agree that as many as one million soldiers would have died if the war with Japan continued. Did Harry Truman make the correct decision when he ordered the bombing of Hiroshima? Defend your decision.

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\*3. Write a paragraph that explains why American did not warn Japan before dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Your paragraph must includes a topic sentence, at least two supporting sentences, and a conclusion that restates, but does not repeat, the topic sentence.

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\*4. Imagine you are Harry Truman in the summer of 1945. A year earlier, very few Americans knew who you were. Now you are faced with what might be the important decision in history. Describe at least two people you would call on for advice as you decided whether or not to become the first person to order the use of an atomic weapon.

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\*5. Why did General Dwight Eisenhower oppose using nuclear weapons in Japan?

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\*6. Do you think Douglas MacArthur made the right decision when he insisted the Japanese people be treated with respect after their surrender?

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