

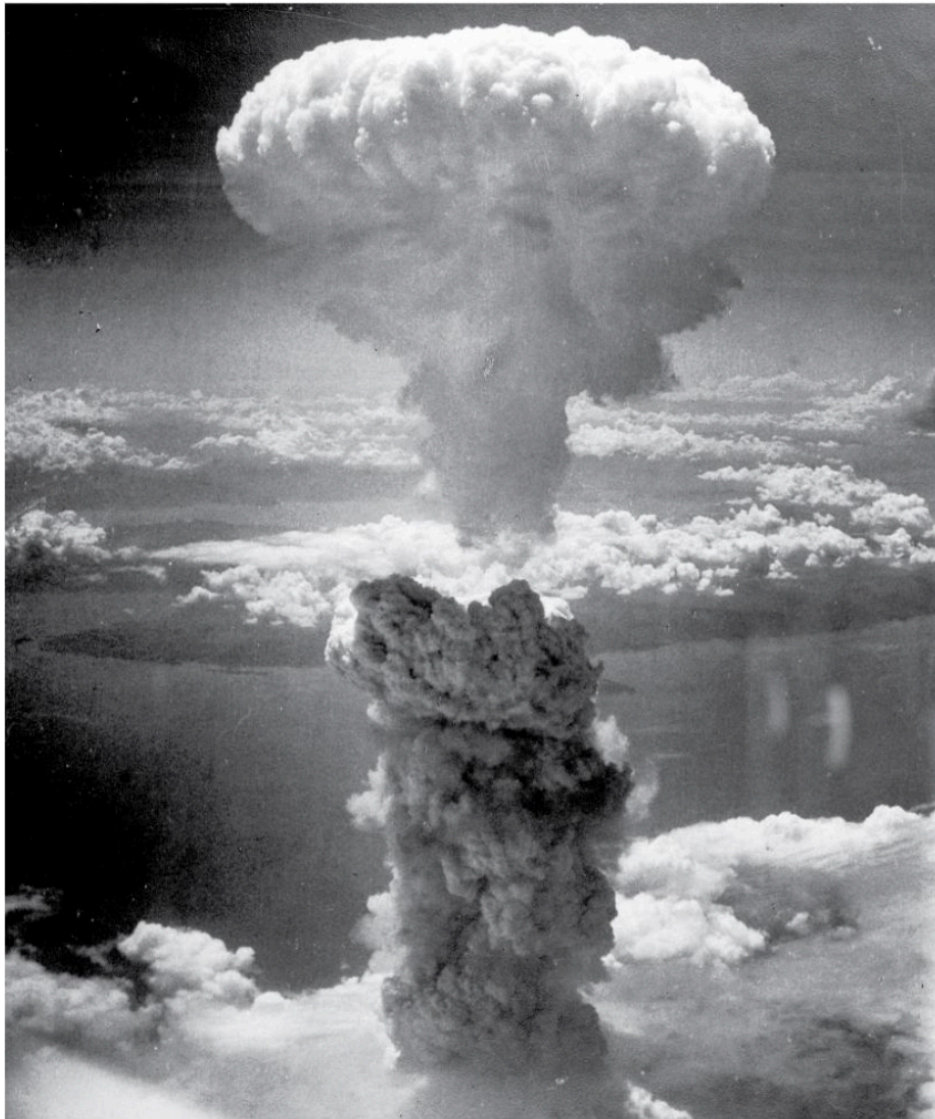
Handout A: Student Document Packet

Prompt:

Evaluate the use of the atomic bomb on Japan during World War II.

Overview:

The prompt is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.



This image depicts the mushroom cloud produced by the atomic bomb dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. The cloud rose approximately 11 miles above the bomb's hypocenter, the surface point directly beneath where the bomb was dropped.

Documents:

Document 1: Einstein-Szilard Letter, 1939

Document 2: Account of the Bataan Death March

Document 3: Excerpt from *With the Old Breed* by Eugene B. Sledge

Document 4: Potsdam Declaration, July 26, 1945

Document 5: President Harry Truman's Statement Announcing the Use of the Atomic Bomb, August 6, 1945

Document 6: Excerpt from *Hiroshima* by John Hersey

Document 7: Images from the bombing of Hiroshima

Part 1: Document Analysis

Document 1: Einstein-Szilard Letter, 1939

Source:

<https://www.atomicheritage.org/key-documents/einstein-szilard-letter>

Introduction:

Albert Einstein was a German-born, world-renowned scientist, who won the Nobel Prize in 1922 for his work in theoretical physics. Einstein visited the United States in 1933. At that time, Adolph Hitler was coming to power in Germany. Einstein, an academic of Jewish heritage, did not return to Germany. On the eve of World War II, he sent the following letter to President Roosevelt.

Text
Albert Einstein Old Grove Rd. Nassau Point Peconic, Long Island
August 2nd, 1939
F.D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, White House Washington, D.C.
Sir:
Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations:
In the course of the last four months it has been made probable—through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America—that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future.

<p>This phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable—though much less certain—that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory. However, such bombs might very well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air. . . .</p>
<p>In view of this situation you may think it desirable to have some permanent contact maintained between the Administration and the group of physicists working on chain reactions in America. One possible way of achieving this might be for you to entrust with this task a person who has your confidence and who could perhaps serve in an unofficial capacity. His task might comprise the following:</p>
<p>a) to approach Government Departments, keep them informed of the further development, and put forward recommendations for Government action, giving particular attention to the problem of securing a supply of uranium ore for the United States.</p>
<p>b) to speed up the experimental work, which is at present being carried on within the limits of the budgets of University laboratories, by providing funds, if such funds be required, through his contacts with private persons who are willing to make contributions for this cause, and perhaps also by obtaining the co-operation of industrial laboratories which have the necessary equipment.</p>
<p>I understand that Germany has actually stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines which she has taken over. That she should have taken such early action might perhaps be understood on the ground that the son of the German Under-Secretary of State, von Weizsäcker, is attached to the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium is now being repeated.</p>
<p>Yours very truly, Albert Einstein</p>

Document 2: Account of the Bataan Death March

Introduction:

After U.S. and Philippine troops surrendered to the Japanese on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines, they became prisoners of war (POWs). The following is an eyewitness account of the march of these POWs along the coast—what came to be known as the Bataan Death March—written by Lieutenant John Spainhower, as quoted in *War Diary 1939–1945*.

Text
<p>I was questioned by a Japanese officer, who found out that I had been in a Philippine Scout Battalion. The Japanese hated the Scouts. . . . Anyway, they took me outside and I was forced to watch as they buried six of my Scouts alive. They made the men dig their own graves, and then had them kneel down in a pit. The guards hit them over the head with shovels to stun them and then piled earth on top.</p>

Document 3: Excerpt from *With the Old Breed* by Eugene B. Sledge

Introduction:

Eugene B. Sledge was an 18-year-old Marine stationed in the Pacific theater during World War II. The following excerpt comes from his war memoir, *With the Old Breed*.

Text
You developed an attitude of no mercy because they [the Japanese soldiers] had no mercy on us. It was a no-quarter, savage kind of thing. At Peleliu . . . this Jap had been hit. One of my buddies was field-stripping him for souvenirs. I must admit it really bothered me, the guys dragging him around like a carcass. I was just horrified. This guy had been a human being. It didn't take me long to overcome that feeling. . . .
Our drill instructor at boot camp would tell us, "You're not going to Europe, you're going to the Pacific. Don't hesitate to fight the Japs dirty. Most Americans, from the time they're kids, are taught not to hit below the belt. It's not sportsmanlike. Well nobody has taught the Japs that, and war ain't sport. Kick him in the balls before he kicks you in yours."
I've seen guys shoot wounded Japanese when it was not really necessary and knock gold teeth out of their mouths. Most of them had gold teeth. . . . At Peleliu, I thought I'd collect gold teeth. . . .
The way you extracted gold teeth was by putting the tip of the blade on the tooth of the dead Japanese—I've seen guys do it to wounded ones—and hit the hilt of the knife to knock the tooth loose. How could American boys do this? If you're reduced to savagery by a situation, anything's possible.
I saw this Jap machine-gunner squattin' on the ground. One of our . . . riflemen had killed him. Took the top of his skull off. It rained all that night. This Jap gunner didn't fall over for some reason. He was just sitting upright . . . His eyes were wide open. . . . I noticed this buddy of mine just flippin' chunks of coral into the [man's] skull about three feet away. Every time he'd get one in there, it'd splash. It reminded me of a child throwin' pebbles into a puddle. . . . There was nothing malicious in his action. This was just a mild-mannered kid who was now a twentieth century savage.

Document 4: Potsdam Declaration, July 26, 1945

Source:

<https://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c06.html>

Introduction:

The Potsdam Conference took place in occupied Germany from July 17 to August 2, 1945. Germany had surrendered to the Allies on May 7, 1945, but the war in the Pacific continued. The Potsdam Declaration was issued by the United States, Great Britain, and China.

Text
1. We—the President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end this war.
2. The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied Nations to prosecute the war against Japan until she ceases to resist.

3. The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of the aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an example to the people of Japan. The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, will mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.
4. The time has come for Japan to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the Empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.
5. Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.
6. There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.
7. Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.
8. The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.
9. The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.
10. We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.
11. Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those which would enable her to re-arm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.
12. The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government.
13. We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.

Document 5: President Harry Truman's Statement Announcing the Use of the Atomic Bomb, August 6, 1945

Source:

<https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/august-6-1945-statement-president-announcing-use-bomb>

Introduction:

After the detonation of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima, President Truman read a prepared speech to the American people. In the speech, Truman described the destructive force of the atomic bomb, the efforts behind its creation, and why it was used.

Text
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. . . .
Before 1939, it was the accepted belief of scientists that it was theoretically possible to release atomic energy. . . . By 1942, however, we knew that the Germans were working feverishly to find a way to add atomic energy to the other engines of war with which they hoped to enslave the world. But they failed. . . .
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.
The United States had available the large number of scientists of distinction in the many needed areas of knowledge. It had the tremendous industrial and financial resources necessary for the project and they could be devoted to it without undue impairment of other vital war work. . . . We have spent two billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history—and won. . . .
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. . . .
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.

Document 6: Excerpt from *Hiroshima* by John Hersey

Source:

Hersey, John. *Hiroshima*. New York: Bantam, 1946, 1–7.

Introduction:

Hiroshima is a work of nonfiction that tells the stories of six survivors of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, covering a period immediately before and one year after the bombing on August 6, 1945. In the following excerpt, Mr. Tanimoto (a survivor of the initial bomb drop) runs into the city in search of his wife and child. This is one of a few scenes where we encounter large groups of severely injured, nameless victims of the bomb.

Text

At exactly fifteen minutes past eight in the morning, on August 6, 1945, Japanese time, at the moment when the atomic bomb flashed above Hiroshima . . . a hundred thousand people were killed by the atomic bomb . . .

He [Mr. Tanimoto] was the only person making his way into the city; he met hundreds and hundreds who were fleeing, and every one of them seemed to be hurt in some way. The eyebrows of some were burned off and skin hung from their faces and hands. Others, because of pain, held their arms up as if carrying something in both hands. Some were vomiting as they walked. Many were naked or in shreds of clothing. On some undressed bodies, the burns had made patterns—of undershirt straps and suspenders and, on the skin of some women (since white repelled the heat from the bomb and dark clothes absorbed it and conducted it to the skin), the shapes of flowers they had had on their kimonos. Many, although injured themselves, supported relatives who were worse off. Almost all had their heads bowed, looked straight ahead, were silent, and showed no expression whatsoever.

Document 7: Images from the bombing of Hiroshima

Image 1

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atomic_bombings_of_Hiroshima_and_Nagasaki#/media/File:Hiroshima_aftermath.jpg



This image of Hiroshima after it was bombed was taken by Paul Tibbets, the pilot of the B-29 bomber plane named the Enola Gay (after Tibbets's mother) that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

Image 2

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atomic_bombings_of_Hiroshima_and_Nagasaki#/media/File:Hiroshima_Dome_1945.gif



This photograph, taken in early October 1945 by Shigeo Hayashi, shows the ruins of the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall, commonly called the Genbaku Dome, after the bombing. These ruins now serve as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial.

Image 3

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atomic_bombings_of_Hiroshima_and_Nagasaki#/media/File:Victim_of_Atomic_Bomb_003.jpg



Hiroshima survivor Toyoko Kugata being treated at the Red Cross Hospital (October 6, 1945).

Part II: Essay

Now that you have considered all of the documents in the context of the prompt, plan, and write your response.

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.
- Support an argument in response to the prompt, using at least six documents.
- Use at least one additional piece of specific historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt.
- For at least three of the documents, explain how or why the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.
- Use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the prompt.