

The atomic bombings of japan essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Source E is a speech made by President Truman on the 7th of August 1945. The president is very much in favour of the bomb and has an overall positive interpretation. He supports the use of the bomb because he felt that he was under pressure to defeat Japan in the war, he wanted revenge over the attack at Pearl Harbour and because he wanted to be remembered as the President who achieved victory for America and defeated Japan. However, this did not justify the 84, 000 deaths that the Atom Bomb caused or the radiation sickness that followed.

Alternatively, we can argue that the bomb could have been dropped on a remote island as a warning to the Japanese to surrender. However, we can understand why Truman felt that it was necessary to drop the bomb on Hiroshima. The war had been going on for 4 years, and the end was not in sight, the American people were getting frustrated and the many deaths of Americans made Truman want to drop the bomb without questioning it. In source E, he states, " We have used it in order to shorten the agony of the war, in orders to save thousands of Americans".

Truman delivers his speech in a very authoritative tone and this persuades the American public that the use of the bomb on Japan was the right decision. In the source, we can see that he takes full responsibility for the bomb and supports it completely. He was keen to use the bomb for the revenge of Pearl Harbour, and the thousands of Americans that had been killed horribly as he says, " We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbour"

Americans were island hopping in order to capture the islands of Japan, but there was a huge cost of life as American soldiers suffered huge losses on the two islands of Okinawa and Iwo Jima. They had the prospect of losing a million, and the Japanese were not prepared to surrender, so when Truman was informed that the bomb would make the Japanese surrender in a week, he rapidly grasped the opportunity to use it on Japan. However, Truman did not consider ethical issues, the overwhelming majority of the dead were civilians.

Truman also felt that it was important to drop the bomb because he despised Russia, and did not want them to attack before Japan had surrendered “ We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan’s capacity to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us”. Truman had a motive for personal glory, and dropping the bomb on Japan, was like a personal achievement. The American public praised him as the President who got Japan to surrender. When President Roosevelt died on 12th April, 1945.

Truman only served 82 days as vice president, and was later elected as the President of the United States. He was remembered as the man who achieved victory for America and got Japan to surrender. Truman completely supported the decision to drop the bomb, and in part B of Source E, we can see that after 14 years, his views had not yet altered “ The dropping of the two bombs stopped the war and saved millions of lives”. Source A is an article from a British newspaper, and mostly agrees with Truman’s viewpoint of dropping the bomb because Britain had helped America in the war against Japan.

Because of this, we can assume that the readers of this newspaper also support America's decision. The newspapers could not give any negative remarks about the bomb because of censorship, and this might raise questions about how much they agree with Truman. The newspaper describes the bomb as "the bomb that has changed the world" and highlights how significant it is and the powerful affect that it had whilst testing it in America. It recognises the power of the bomb and sees it as something special. However, the source gives little detail about the effects of the bomb in Japan.

The newspaper agrees with Truman that the bomb would have an impact on the war, but does not give the other side of the story and the details about the effects of the bomb on Japan. The newspaper is not fully in agreement with Truman, as it does not give enough information. This article is sympathetic to America and generally agrees with Truman's view, however is not fully in agreement, as it was written the same day that the bomb was dropped, and this means that they would not have been fully aware of the after-effects.

Source B is a letter written by a high-ranking American Pilot describing the dropping of the bomb on Japan to his son. The author of the source makes it very important, as he was part of the team that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. He is in agreement with Truman and is in favour of the bomb. However, the source was written on the same day that the bomb had been dropped, and like Source A this means that the pilot could not be fully in agreement with Truman, as he would not have known the effects of the Atom Bomb on the Japanese.

Unlike Truman, that was absent, this pilot has regrets about what he has done as he says, " What regrets I have... " The pilot realises that he is responsible for dropping the bomb on Japan and has regrets about his actions in the mission but still approves it as he feels that it " may bring the countries of the world together and prevent further wars". He is somewhat in favour of the bomb but also has regrets. This pilot is not as enthusiastic and firm about his opinions on the bomb unlike President Truman in Source E, but is aware of the damage and deaths that were caused by it.

Source C is a secondary source that helps us understand why Truman dropped the bomb on Japan. The source describes America's tactics of island hopping and tells us that Americans had " suffered 25, 000 casualties" trying to capture the island of Iwo Jima. America was trying to capture all the islands around Japan to stop their supplies, and by doing this, they got nearer and nearer to Japan. They had the prospect of a very long, drawn out war and America faced a high number of casualties over a period of 4 months with 75, 000 soldiers dead.

This source is not pro American, but the author gives us detailed information about the war. The Japanese were fighting until their death and Americans faced a high death rate. This source can be used to back up Truman's view that the bomb would " save thousands of Americans" in long term, and when he was informed that the bomb would make Japan surrender in a week, Truman decided to use the bomb without questioning it. Source C fully agrees with Truman's view on the Atom Bomb and shows very strong evidence to back Truman's words up.

Source D is micro evidence from Kasai Yukiko remembering what her teacher told her to do when allies invaded Japan. In the 1930-40's teachers were very authoritative figures and were treated with immense respect. Whatever they told you to do; you had to do it. Kasai's teacher taught her to fight with Japanese spirit and enforced the fact that she should kill "at least one enemy soldier" and she remembers, "If you don't kill at least one enemy soldier, you don't deserve to live". This is known as the Code of Bushida, this taught the Japanese that they must never surrender and that their own lives were worthless.

We would expect this source to disagree with Truman's view, as we would never think that a Japanese person would justify the use of the bomb. However, this source is very ironic, as it supports Source E. This is what would have happened if Truman had not decided to use the bomb on Japan, many Americans would have suffered horrible deaths, and, by making that decision, in long term; it actually did "save thousands of Americans" and the bomb did "shorten the agony of the war" The Atom Bomb saved more lives than the tens of thousands that it killed.

Source G is written by a man who was a prisoner of war. He was captured by the Japanese whilst island hopping, and has encountered the Japanese everyday, for 4 years. This means that he has good insight into their minds and has a lot of experience with them because of his interactions. This man fully backs up what Truman says, and he states "if the Emperor and his cabinet had decided to fight on, the Japanese would literally, have fought to the last man". Like Source D, this is what would have happened if Truman had decided not to drop the bomb.

This man understands the way the Japanese think and fully agrees with Truman's views. Source F is a visual source, showing the positive view that the American soldiers had on the Atom Bomb. The source is very clear, and shows ten men smiling and celebrating their victory over Japan. As American soldiers, they were the ones who faced the prospect of fighting Japan, having their lives put at risk. The source is very emotional and shows all the men gathered around a newspaper with the headline "Atom Bomb destroys entire city says Japs". Truman's decision to drop the bomb on Japan filled these men with hope.

The bomb for them, meant victory and revenge. As Truman says "We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbour" "We have used it in order to... save thousands of Americans". The men in this photograph represent the thousands that were saved by the bomb; they represent the survivors of the thousands who were island hopping in Okinawa and Iwo Jima. The Americans in this photograph are full of glory, happiness and revenge. They are joyful and fully in agreement with Truman's decision to drop the Atom Bomb on Japan.

Source K is a video that shows a variety of interpretations and mixed attitudes about the Atom Bomb. It partly agrees with Source E as only some individuals in the video agree with Truman. In the video, American soldiers that were interviewed in 1995 looked back at the time of the bomb and still had approval of Truman's decision. Sheldon Johnson called the bomb "a beautiful great thing" and said "we hated the Japanese". After 50 years, many American soldiers look back and see the bomb as a solution and can recall the terror that the Japanese people had.

Many looked back on their lives and gave credit to the Atom Bomb because they wouldn't have gone through the many experiences that they did. The many soldiers interviewed in 1995 bear the same emotions as the men in Source F as they went through similar experiences. The individuals in this video agree with Truman's view and feel that the bomb had a huge impact on the war and saved many American lives. Professor James P Kendall from Source N sees the bomb as a source of great power and doesn't see it as a source of mass destruction.

He states that "the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth could cross the Atlantic on a few ounces of the fuel" and says that "In the next 10 or 15 years it would be developed as a power for heating and for industrial application", and he was right, as many ships today are nuclear powered. Kendall sees nuclear power as a source of energy and describes its potential to make big ships move across the ocean. He feels that nuclear energy could be used for constructive purposes, not destructive ones. Kendall agrees with Truman, as he sees the Atom Bomb as a link to nuclear power.

However, not all the sources take a positive view on Truman's actions. Sources H & I are from British prisoners of war, who supported the USA. They were captured by the Japanese and kept in Nagasaki where they were treated most cruelly. We would expect these men to agree with Truman's view as Japan was their enemy, but they didn't. These men disagree with Truman's decision to drop the bomb, because of their upfront experience of the bomb. These men saw "pin-pricks of people on fire" and "the torn limbs and flesh hanging on so many of the Japanese".

These sights had an emotional impact and haunted them, and this influenced their interpretations of the Atom Bomb. Unlike Truman, these men were emotionally involved; they were eye witnesses to what seemed to be the biggest horror and they were helping the people of Nagasaki who once treated them most cruelly. " I was cradling dying people or trying to put this stuff on their wounds". They were fighting for America but felt shame for what happened, as Ron Bryer says " I looked at my clean hands and felt ashamed".

The source gives no positive comment about the bomb, and as years went by, the effects of the bomb stayed with them and haunted them. They were witnesses and survivors of the bomb and this coloured their interpretations. These men are selective about what they remember; as they only discuss the negative aspects of what happened. The date of Source plays a significant role as it was published in 1981, approximately 50 years after the event. Their perceptions of the bomb might have changed over time. These two sources are only talking about the negative effects of the bomb, but this isn't what I expect them to talk about.

Source J is a Japanese source by Michihiko Hachiya who was a survivor in Hiroshima. He is completely against Truman's view of the Atom Bomb as he was an eye witness of the destruction and deaths that occurred in Hiroshima due to the bomb. Hiroshima was his city, where he lived with family and friends. For him, the bomb was a negative experience; as many of his family and friends died. He cannot see how it can be justified and does not grasp the big picture of how the bomb shortened the agony of the war.

The author is emotionally involved and can only see the Japanese as victims. Our own house began to sway, and in a minute it, too, collapsed in a cloud of dust” “ Fires sprang up and whipped by a vicious wind began to spread”. “ There were shadowy forms of people”. The arguments that Truman had made carried no weight. This man completely opposed Truman’s view of the Atom Bomb. Source K has a mixture of different perspectives about the Atom Bomb; I have already visited Source K and have mentioned the individuals who agreed with Truman’s view about the bomb. In this video, there are also many individuals who disagree with Truman’s view on the bomb.

Akira Ashida, a Japanese man was in a train with his brother when the bomb was dropped. He later developed tumours and was affected physically as well as mentally. Sumiteru Tanaguschi is another Japanese victim of the Atom Bomb. He was delivering newspapers when the bomb was dropped, and the bomb scarred his body and his mind. These two men represent all the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They do not see the bomb as “ a beautiful great thing” or a device to stop the Japanese in their tracks, but as a horrible personal experience that has haunted them for all their lives.

These two people, are still very bitter and their personal experience of the bomb makes them very much oppose Truman’s view. After 50 years, they still cannot forgive what had happened to them, and they represent the survivors of the bomb that suffered terribly. Sources L & M are the perspectives of victims that suffered radiation sickness after the atom bomb had been dropped. In many cases of radiation sickness, they did not know what the causes were. “ The doctors told me, they thought these were symptoms of general weakness”.

Radiation sickness had a sinister affect on the Japanese and 140, 000 were suffering from it. Bluish spots appeared on their bodies... bleeding began from ears, nose and mouth". Source L is published by a British reporter who is appalled by what he's seen. However, they didn't acknowledge that the bomb ended the war early because of all the unseen, hidden effects that the bomb caused. They did not think that the bomb did " shorten the agony of the war". For the Japanese, it was like the war had gone on for years. The " strange and horrible disease" killed thousands of people, and doctors did not even know how to cure it.

These two sources disagree with Truman's view of the Atom Bomb as the Japanese suffered for years after the bomb had dropped. Sources A, B, C, D, F, G and N agree with President Truman's decision to drop the Atom Bomb in 1945. Source A has some limitations but partly agrees. Source B agrees with Truman's views but has some regrets about his actions, Source C is a secondary source that helped us understand why Truman dropped the bomb. Source D is an ironic source that gives us insight into the Japanese's mentality; we can argue that Kasai's words could be used to back up Truman's view.

Source F is a visual source that completely agrees with Truman's view.

Source G is from a British prisoner of war who understood the Japanese and was fully backing up Truman's view and Source N agrees with Truman, and sees the bomb as a source of nuclear power. Sources H, I, J, L and M disagree with President Truman's decision to drop the Atom Bomb in 1945. Source H&I are British but there experiences in Nagasaki turn them against it.

Source J is by a Hiroshima survivor who experienced the bomb and its effects and Sources L & M experience the horrible effects of radiation sickness.