

THE NUCLEAR AGE AND THE COLD WAR

GRADE 9 HISTORY TERM 2

UNDERSTANDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

- Only two nuclear weapons have ever been used during war, both by the United States near the end of World War II in 1945. The bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The world entered the Nuclear Age.
- The science of nuclear or atomic weapons is very complicated, but the effects of the weapons are easy to understand:
- Victims directly underneath the explosions were vaporized instantly. The heat was so intense that bodies got so hot that they literally disappeared into thin air.
- Nuclear bombs have huge explosive capacity, and cause very strong bomb blasts.
- Fire swept through the cities. The heat created was so great, that clothes caught fire on people over 3 km away from the center of the explosion.
- Roof tiles melted half a kilometer away.
- The wind speed on the ground directly beneath the explosion was 1 600 km per hour. The force of the wind flattened most buildings.
- The explosion released rays of nuclear radiation. Radiation poisoning killed tens of thousands of people in the cities. Deaths from radiation continued to occur for years after the explosions.
- The destruction caused by these bombs is possibly the reason why nuclear weapons have not been used in warfare again.

SUBTOPIC 1

**INCREASING TENSION BETWEEN THE ALLIES
AFTER WWII IN EUROPE**

TENSION BETWEEN RUSSIA, THE USA AND BRITAIN

- **The Yalta Conference February 1945 and the division of Germany**
- As you learnt in the previous topic, the Allies fought the Axis powers in World War II. The Allied powers had defeated Germany and Italy by May 1945. The war in Europe had ended.
- At the Yalta Conference, in February 1945, before the end of the war, the Allies had decided that when Germany was defeated, it would be divided into four zones.
- In June 1945, the Allies divided up Germany and Berlin and took over the government of Germany. In July 1945 American, British, and French troops moved into Berlin.

SOURCE A: IN 1945 GERMANY WAS DIVIDED INTO FOUR PARTS. FRANCE, BRITAIN, AMERICA AND RUSSIA EACH CONTROLLED A PART. BERLIN, THE CAPITAL CITY, WAS IN THE RUSSIAN ZONE. IT WAS ALSO DIVIDED INTO FOUR.



TENSION BETWEEN RUSSIA, THE USA AND BRITAIN

- **The Potsdam Conference 17 July – 2 August 1945**
- The Potsdam Conference was held at the end of the war. Participants were the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States. They gathered to decide how to administer punishment to the defeated Nazi Germany.
- The three nations were represented by Communist Party General Secretary Joseph Stalin, Prime Ministers Winston Churchill, and later, Clement Attlee, and President Harry S. Truman. At the Potsdam conference it became clear that there was increased tension between the Allies.

TENSION BETWEEN RUSSIA, THE USA AND BRITAIN

- **The Soviet Union was occupying Central and Eastern Europe**
- Russian troops did not withdraw from the countries in Eastern Europe (See [Source A](#)). Stalin insisted that his control of Eastern Europe was a defensive measure against possible future attacks from the West.
- **Britain had a new Prime Minister**
- During the conference, there was a general election in Britain. Churchill's party was defeated. Clement Attlee became the Prime Minister. Attlee deeply distrusted Stalin.

TENSION BETWEEN RUSSIA, THE USA AND BRITAIN

- **America had a new President, and the war was ending**
- President Roosevelt died just before the end of WWII, and Vice-President, Harry Truman became the president. During the war, Roosevelt trusted Stalin not to take over Eastern Europe. With the end of the war, Allied unity collapsed. Truman was much more suspicious of Stalin than Roosevelt had been.
- **The US had tested an atomic bomb**
- On 16 July 1945, the Americans successfully tested an **atomic bomb** in the New Mexico desert, USA. Churchill and Truman agreed that the weapon should be used to defeat Japan.
- **Stalin knew about the bomb**
- Truman did not tell Stalin about the atomic bomb until 25 July. It later became known that Stalin already knew about the atomic bomb as he had **KGB** spies that had infiltrated the group that made the bomb. By 26 July, the Potsdam Declaration had been broadcast to Japan, threatening total destruction unless the Japanese government surrendered.

ACTIVITY 1

- At which conference was it decided to divide Germany between the Allies?
- Use [Source B](#) to explain how Germany was divided up at the end of WWII.
- List four things that caused tension between the Allies at the Potsdam Conference.
- Why do you think Stalin had good reason to distrust America and Britain during this conference?
- Why do you think Atlee and Truman distrusted Stalin at this conference?
- What do you notice about the relationship between the three people in the photograph in [Source C](#)?
- What do you notice about the relationship between the three people in the photograph in Source D?
- What difference do you notice in the body language of the three people sitting in the photographs in [Source C](#) and Source D?
- Explain why the body language of the three leaders is so different in the two photographs.

THE USSR (COMMUNISM) VS. USA AND THE WEST (CAPITALISM)

- **The USSR and communism**
- A great change took place in Russia during World War I. In the Russian Revolution of 1917 the king, Tsar Nicholas II, was overthrown and a communist government took over the government. Russia was renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The Russian Revolution was a turning point in world history.
- Lenin, the leader of a communist political party, called the Bolsheviks, took over Russia in 1917 in the world's first communist revolution. Lenin and the Bolsheviks offered what ordinary, poverty-stricken Russians wanted: Peace, land and bread! Russia withdrew from World War I in 1917.
- Stalin took over the leadership of the Soviet Union when Lenin died in 1924. Stalin was a ruthless dictator. With the use of extreme violence, he created a mighty military industrial world power, and led the Soviet Union into World War II. He was still in power when World War II ended in 1945.

LENIN AND STALIN

LENIN TOOK OVER RUSSIA IN 1917 IN THE WORLD'S FIRST COMMUNIST REVOLUTION



STALIN WAS THE DICTATOR OF THE USSR FROM 1924 UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1953



COMMUNISM

- **Communist ideology**
- Communists do not like a few rich people controlling all the wealth in the country.
- They believe that the government should rule in the interests of all, not just the rich.
- The wealth should be shared equally between people.
- A communist economy is centrally planned to make sure that there is economic equality.
- No one can own private property or make a profit.
- The state owns all large industries and other sources of wealth.
- Communist governments are not usually democratic.

COMMUNISM

- Unlike Nazism and fascism, the **ideology** of communism is highly sophisticated. The ideas were developed by some of the world's greatest thinkers – men like Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Communism is a revolutionary movement that promotes the violent overthrow of capitalism. Communism became a popular ideology among poor people all over the world. The governments of America and Western Europe thought that communism was a threat to them, and wherever they could, they tried to stamp it out.

CAPITALISM

- **The USA and the West, and capitalism**
- The United States of America is a capitalist country. It became an extremely powerful nation during the First World War. It is a very big country that occupies most of North America with its 50 states. The capital city is Washington D.C.
- The countries that are allied to the USA are referred to as 'the West'. The West includes the capitalist, democratic countries in Western Europe, including Britain.

CAPITALISM

- **Capitalist ideology**
- The main ideology behind capitalism is the belief that there is nothing wrong with some people being very rich, and other people being poor.
- The possibility of making a profit motivates people to work harder.
- Individuals own private property.
- In capitalist countries, the government does not control the economy.
- The rights of individuals who own huge industries and gather great wealth are protected while other people remain very poor.
- Capitalist governments may be democratic, but are sometimes fascist.

CAPITALISM

- Harry Truman led America through the final stages of World War II and through the years after the war. He was strongly opposed to the Soviet Union expanding its control in Europe and other parts of the world. He wanted the United States to resist communism and to limit Soviet expansion.

ACTIVITY 2

Capitalism	Communism
Governments should not interfere with the rights of individuals to make their own living.	When people work together as equals, they achieve greater things.
People need freedom.	Governments should make sure that everyone's needs are met.
When people compete against one another, they achieve greater things.	People need one another.
Some people have more than others because they make better use of their abilities.	Everybody's needs are equally important.

SUBTOPIC 2

**THE END OF WWII IN THE PACIFIC: ATOMIC
BOMBS AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NUCLEAR
AGE**

WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW DID WORLD WAR II COME TO AN END?

- **Albert Einstein's ideas**

- Albert Einstein is one of the best-known scientists who ever lived. He grew up in Germany and developed scientific ideas that changed our understanding of the universe. In 1921 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics.
- Einstein was not directly involved in the making of the nuclear or atomic bomb, but his scientific theories were used to develop the first nuclear bomb. When Hitler began to gain power in Germany, Einstein was horrified. As he was Jewish, he left Europe to escape the Nazis and went to live in America. He encouraged the American government to invent an atomic bomb to stop Nazi ideas from spreading. The atomic bombs that American scientists invented were not used on Nazi Germany, but on another Axis power, namely Japan.

WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW DID WORLD WAR II COME TO AN END?

- **The Manhattan Project**

- In 1939, the US government started the Manhattan Project: a top secret research project to research and produce an atomic bomb. From 1939 to 1945, America's best scientists worked on the Project. The bomb they were trying to create had the code name '[The Gadget](#)'. On 16 July 1945, 'The Gadget' was successfully exploded in the desert near Los Alamos in the state of New Mexico. The heat of the blast was so hot that it turned the sand under the explosion to glass.
- After years of hard work, the leader of the Manhattan Project, Robert Oppenheimer, was relieved about the success of the explosion, but at the same time he realised it had deadly destructive power.

WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW DID WORLD WAR II COME TO AN END?

- **The end of WW II and the beginning of the Nuclear Age**
- By May 1945, Germany and Italy had been defeated, but Japan was still fighting. To defeat Japan, in August 1945, America dropped its newly invented atomic bombs of enormous power on two Japanese cities. The city of Hiroshima was bombed on 6 August and on 9 August a bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki. The cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were chosen as targets because they produced weapons of war for Japan.
- The number of people who died instantly at Hiroshima was over 90 000 and at Nagasaki over 60 000. In both cities, thousands more were seriously injured.

WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW DID WORLD WAR II COME TO AN END?

- On 14 August, Japan finally admitted it had been defeated. The Second World War had ended. Since America dropped atomic or nuclear bombs, we have been living in an age that is often called the Nuclear Age or the Atomic Age. The threat of terrifying and devastating nuclear weapons changed the nature of war forever.
- Einstein was deeply concerned about humanity and world peace. After the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, he tried to persuade world leaders to give up nuclear weapons.

ACTIVITY 1

- Whose scientific ideas was the invention of the atomic bomb based on?
- Look at the definition of the word 'gadget'. How is the code name for the atomic bomb very different from the usual definition of the word?
- Why do you think the inventors of the atomic bomb called the bomb 'The Gadget'?
- What was the name of the American project that researched and invented the atomic bomb?
- Who was the leader of this project?
- Look at the photograph in [Source A](#) and read what the leader (of the project to invent the bomb) said, as he watched the bomb explode in the experiment in the desert, in Source B. Explain what you think Source B means by: 'Now, I am become Death, the shatterer of worlds.'
- Why would the world never be the same after the use of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?
- Read [Source C](#). Why does Einstein regret his development of his scientific theories?

WHY DID THE USA DROP THE BOMBS?

- The American government wanted to end the war in the Pacific against the Japanese. They argued that the only way to end the war was to drop the atomic bombs. There were three main reasons for dropping these bombs:
- **To avoid further casualties**
- Massive [casualties](#) on both sides would have occurred in the invasion of Japan. Also, Japan was still fighting the war in China. It was argued that if the war continued, it would have caused the deaths of about 250 000 people per month, mostly Asian.
- **To keep Stalin out of Japan and to frighten the USSR**
- The American government saw the atomic bomb as a way to keep Stalin in check. The bombings of Japanese cities were to [intimidate](#) the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union did not have atomic weapons yet. By using these weapons, the USA wanted to show that they were militarily superior to the USSR. The Americans also wanted to stop the USSR from invading Japan, so that they did not have to share victory with the USSR like they did in Germany.

WHY DID THE USA DROP THE BOMBS?

- To frighten the Japanese military leaders into surrendering
- The destruction caused by the bombs would instil fear of further destruction and force the Japanese to surrender.

ACTIVITY 2

- Read Source D. What evidence does it provide that many more people would have died if the atomic bombs were not used?
- Read Source E. Explain in what way the atomic bomb was a psychological weapon as well as a weapon of mass destruction.
- Read Source F. In what way does it give a good reason for the dropping of the atomic bombs?
- Read Source G. What evidence in this Source shows why the Japanese surrendered?

WAS IT JUSTIFIED?

- You have read about why the American government decided to drop the atomic bombs. But, there is a debate among historians over whether the Americans should have used the atomic bombs on Japan. The question is asked: Was the dropping of the atomic bombs justified? In other words, were there good enough reasons for the dropping of the bombs? The issue that has divided historians is whether the use of the bomb was necessary to achieve victory in the war in the Pacific against Japan. To help you to construct your own argument, read the following sources that show some of the effects of the dropping of the bombs.

SOURCE H: A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE FIRST ATOMIC BOMB EXPLODING OVER HIROSHIMA. THIS ATOMIC BOMB, WHICH GENERATED A POWERFUL WIND, DESTROYED BUILDINGS WITHIN A 2,4 KM RADIUS. WHEN A NUCLEAR BOMB EXPLODES, A HUGE MUSHROOM-SHAPED CLOUD FORMS.



SOURCE 1: A PHOTOGRAPH WHICH SHOWS A PERSON BURNED BY THE RADIATION OF THE ATOMIC BOMB. ABOUT A THIRD OF HIROSHIMA'S POPULATION WAS KILLED WITHIN A WEEK OF THE BOMBING. DURING THE WEEKS AFTER THE BOMBS, PEOPLE CONTINUED TO DIE OF BURNS. DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS, PEOPLE DIED OF RADIATION SICKNESS AND CANCER CAUSED BY THE BOMBS. FIFTY YEARS LATER, CHILDREN WERE STILL BEING BORN WITH DEFECTS CAUSED BY THE BOMB.



***SOURCE J: A
PHOTOGRAPH OF A
LOST YOUNG CHILD
AFTER THE ATOMIC
BOMB WAS
DROPPED ON
HIROSHIMA.
THOUSANDS OF
CHILDREN WERE
ORPHANED BY THE
ATOMIC BOMBS.***



SOURCE K: A PHOTOGRAPH OF SOME OF THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE ATOMIC BOMBS. THIS WAS THE EFFECT OF THE BOMB THAT WAS DROPPED OVER HIROSHIMA.



- The use of the atomic bomb was justified. It brought Japan to her knees and ended the horrible war. If the war had gone on longer, without the use of the atomic bomb, how many thousands and thousands of helpless men, women and children would have needlessly died and suffered?
- Correll, John T. The Smithsonian and the Enola Gay. Speech at the U.S. Air Force Association, 15 March 1994.
- Source L: An opinion about the dropping of the bombs

- I ordered atomic bombs dropped on the two cities ... dropping the bombs ended the war and saved lives.
- *American President, Harry Truman, 1945*
- *Source M: An explanation by American President Truman of why he ordered the dropping of the atomic bombs*

- The first atomic bomb was called 'Little Boy' and the aeroplane that dropped the bomb was called the 'Enola Gay'. The pilot's name was Paul Tibbets. He later said:
- On August 6, 1945 as the Enola Gay approached the Japanese city of Hiroshima, I fervently hoped for success in the first use of a nuclear weapon. To me it meant putting an end to World War II. I viewed my mission as one to save lives ... Our job was to serve. Our sworn duty was to God, country and victory ... there is no humanity in warfare.
- *From official website of General Paul W. Tibbets: www.theenolagay.com/*
- *Source N: A description of how the pilot felt while flying the aeroplane which dropped the first atomic bomb*

- Japan occupied large parts of China during the Second World War. They used Chinese people as workers in the coal mines. Here is how a Chinese worker remembers the experience:
- The Japanese did not treat the Chinese workers like human beings, but like animals. The workers had to drink the stinking water at the bottom of the coal pit. When people became ill, they tied their legs and arms, and kicked them into the pit. Dogs were waiting down there, biting and tearing the bodies to pieces ...
- *Quoted in Walsh, B. (1996). Modern World History. London: John Murray, p.238*
- *Source O: A description of how Chinese workers were treated by the Japanese during WW II*

- Just at that moment the sky flashed. I do not know how to describe that light – my eyes seemed to be on fire. The next moment I was knocked to the ground. Things started falling down around me. I couldn't see anything. Soon I noticed that the air smelled terrible. Then I was shocked to realise that the skin of my face had come off. Then the skin came off my hands and arms too, from the elbows to the fingertips.
- *Walsh, B. Modern World History: London: John Murray, pages 61-63.*
- *Source P: An eyewitness account of the damage done by the atomic bomb on Hiroshima*

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- *Source P: An eyewitness account of the damage done by the atomic bomb on Hiroshima*

- I ran to the railway bridge ... people were running around like mad, trying to get across the river. In the middle of the bridge were four or five bodies. They could not be recognised as human beings, although they were still moving. Their skin hung from them like strands of seaweed. Instead of noses, there were holes! Their ears and hands were so swollen as to be shapeless. Fifty or sixty people were still clinging to red-hot rails. In their terror of dying, they clawed over one another, their eyes hanging from their sockets, pushing one another into the river, and screaming all the time.
- *Walsh, B. Modern World History: London: John Murray, pages 61-63.*
- *Source Q: A description of the effect of the atomic bomb from an eyewitness account*

- In the hospitals I found people who suffered no injuries when the bomb fell, but who are dying now from uncanny after-effects. For no clear reason they lost their appetites, their hair fell out, and bluish spots appeared on their bodies. They then began to bleed from the ears, nose and mouth.
- *Walsh, B. Modern World History: London: John Murray, pages 61-63.*
- *Source R: A newspaper report on the bombing of Hiroshima by a newspaper reporter who arrived at the scene after the bomb on Hiroshima*

ACTIVITY 3

- Read all the sources again and look at the photographs very carefully.
- Rewrite this table into your notebook. Then write in the right-hand column what you believe after reading the source (whether the atomic bomb should have been dropped, or that the atomic bomb should not have been dropped).
- For homework, construct an argument in which you answer the question: Was the dropping of the atomic bombs justified? Read the Skills Focus box below to help you with your homework task.
- For homework, write a few sentences that explain in what way the nature of war had changed forever.

Source	Should or should not
H	
I	
J	
K	
L	
M	
N	
O	
P	
Q	
R	