

Name: _____

Hiroshima and Nagasaki – Socratic Seminar

“Should the U.S. have dropped the atomic bombs in Japan?”

Use these comment posts from www.debate.org to help construct your own position and argument. Next to each post, put an “S” for social, “E” for economic, and/or “P” for political to categorize each point.

Yes, the U.S. should have

Yes, of course!

I think they deserved to be bombed because they bombed us at Pearl Harbor. Yes, we feel pity for them because it killed 70,000 plus. But they also killed some of our people. That's really not right. You expect to kill our people and us to be just fine with it? No! That's not how it works.

Yes they should have

Yes we should have because they had plenty of opportunities to surrender and they didn't. We told them if they didn't surrender, there would be utter mass destruction put upon them. They chose to ignore it and brush it off. If we had invaded, then probably 1/4th of Japan's population would have been killed. Yes, it was terrible that so many people died, but in the end, it was what the U.S. Thought was necessary. Japan still didn't surrender after the first bomb was dropped, only after the second one was dropped, the emperor of Japan stepped in and gave the final decision of surrendering.

The U.S had to drop the bomb

The dropping of those two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was very bad. However, a land invasion would have cost an excess of one million American lives. The Japanese of the 1940's would have fought to the last inch of that island, and the body count would have been astronomically higher if the bombs weren't dropped. It was the lesser of two evils.

No, the U.S. should not have

Dropping the atomic bomb was wrong.

One bomb is understandable, but to be completely honest Japan would have surrendered without bombs. The mass murdering (because that's exactly what it was) of millions of Japanese citizens was unnecessary! We would have been devastated if they bombed America and it was our families that were wiped out. Then after all of it America decides they can say who gets to use their nuclear weapons and who can't. I don't think so!

It was inhumane.

The people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not criminals. Harmless, innocent civilians were brutally murdered, the subsequent radiation made the cities unlivable for the longest time, and the environment was harmed horribly. Not only was it inhumane to the survivors, but that land is now ruined by radiation. There is no excuse for causing the devastation that the U.S. released upon that area of land.

Atomic bombs = too extreme

Why end war with more war? It is not at all necessary. It isn't right to kill kids and murder whole families just because the government thinks it is okay to do so. It also led to other countries developing weapons of mass destruction and nuclear missile programs. This has become a huge threat to world peace. Had the US not dropped the bombs, we wouldn't be facing this threat today.

What do you think?

(Write a paragraph stating your thoughts and positioning on this argument)



To tell the truth, I'd like to lock away that painful and sorrowful scar at the bottom of my heart, and not talk about it. But 61 years after that unforgettable day, I feel that I must pass the story on. We, the atomic bomb survivors, will one day all be dead. I speak to you in the belief that accurately telling the facts in the testament to my life.

The Pacific war started in December 1941, when I was six years old, and finished when I was ten. It fills me with sorrow to think that if only that war hadn't happened, that hideous atomic bomb would never have been dropped. The toughest things for we children were that there was nothing to eat, and that we had to go school barefoot because we had no shoes. But we did our best under the government's slogan of "Forget your wishes until we've won."

However, the fighting intensified, and we started to lead our lives in dugouts or air-raid shelters. On that unforgettable day of August 9th 1945, the air-raid sirens started ringing out from early in the morning, and we children rushed to our regular dugout, around 800 meters from the epicenter of the blast. Many other children were hiding inside the dark hole. Presently, we heard a voice saying, "Air-raid warning lifted, air-raid warning lifted." Some of the children rushed outside, but others of us, including my sister and I stayed in the shelter.

That was the moment it happened. There was a flash of light, and the very second that it appeared as though the hole was illuminated from corner to corner, a violent gust of wind blew in; we were blown off our feet, dashed against the rocks, and I fainted. Somebody slapped my head, and I regained my senses. I was shocked: the air-raid shelter, which should have been empty, was full of people with charred bodies; people with ripped flesh, covered in blood; people whose eyeballs had burst out of their sockets; people whose burns had swollen their bodies by two or three times. Everywhere people were wailing, "Give me some water, help me!" I was scared, paralyzed with fear and unable to move. All I could do was scream, "Mommy, help me!" My younger sister had been sent flying by the blast, and I had no idea what had happened to my friends. My elder sister's child had also been sent flying. Eventually the three of us were reunited, and huddled together screaming for help. But no help came. We could hear a voice crying, "Hey! Who's there? Somebody kill me!" Who looked and saw one of my older friends, Sakurai sprawled on the ground; his stomach was burst and his intestines were hanging out. The shelter stank of charred corpses, and we vomited as we waited for help. At last we heard a voice from outside asking, "Hey, is there anyone alive in there?" We replied that we were alive and yelled for help. My foster father had come to rescue us. He helped us outside, and again I was shocked: not a single house was left standing. There was nothing but a mountain of charred corpses and rubble. We found the charred corpse of my elder sister at our house. My mother's corpse was lying next to that of a lady neighbor. My dazed brother, a medical student at Nagasaki University, came to look for us with the help of his friends. He was pleased that we survived, but on August 11th he left us with the words, "I don't want to die, I don't want to die," before growing as cold as ice.

Faced with the choice of finding the courage to die or the courage to live, my sister unfortunately chose the former. But I chose the courage to live. Now I am genuinely happy to have lived, and truly hope that future generations will also live, whatever troubles they may face. It has been said that 'a human life is heavier than the Earth itself.' I want you to understand the suffering of the many people who have passed away whilst refusing to die in the name of war.

Let us pool our wisdom and try to build a world with no wars and no nuclear weapons, so that nobody is ever exposed to these weapons again. In order to achieve this, it is my heartfelt hope that the atomic-bombed city of Nagasaki sends out a message to people everywhere that human being and nuclear weapons cannot exist together.

