

A Difficult Decision

Weigh reasons, concerns, and consequences in a wartime choice.

SS5H4.c "Discuss President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two reasons U.S. leaders considered using the atomic bomb. Circle two details that show a concern or consequence of the decision.

Truman's Wartime Choice

- ① In 1945, World War II was ending in Europe, but Japan was still fighting the United States and its allies. President Harry S. Truman had to decide how to end the war. U.S. leaders feared that invading Japan could cause many deaths among American troops and Japanese soldiers and civilians. Japan had not accepted the Allies' call to surrender.
- ② Truman knew that the United States had a new atomic bomb, a weapon with enormous destructive power. Some advisers believed using it might force Japan to surrender quickly and avoid an invasion. Others questioned whether the bomb should be used, especially against a city where civilians lived. Truman also considered warning Japan or showing the bomb's power in an unpopulated place.
- ③ Truman ordered atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9. Both cities suffered terrible destruction, and many people were killed, including civilians. Japan announced its surrender on August 15. Historians still discuss Truman's decision. Some say the bombs helped end the war quickly, while others emphasize the human cost and question whether other choices could have worked.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What problem did President Truman need to solve in 1945?

2 What was one reason some advisers supported using the atomic bomb?

3 What concern did some people have about using the bomb?

4 Why do historians still discuss Truman's decision?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write four sentences explaining why Truman's decision was difficult. Include one reason leaders thought the bomb could help, one human cost or concern, and your evidence-based view of why people still debate the choice.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons U.S. leaders considered using the atomic bomb. Circle two details that show a concern or consequence of the decision. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What problem did President Truman need to solve in 1945?	He had to decide how to end the war with Japan, which was still fighting.
2	What was one reason some advisers supported using the atomic bomb?	They thought it might force Japan to surrender quickly and avoid an invasion.
3	What concern did some people have about using the bomb?	They questioned using it against a city where civilians lived.
4	Why do historians still discuss Truman's decision?	The bombs may have helped end the war quickly, but they caused terrible destruction and killed many civilians. Historians also question whether other choices could have worked.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Truman faced a hard choice because Japan was still fighting. Some advisers thought an atomic bomb could force a quick surrender and avoid an invasion. However, the bombs destroyed cities and killed many civilians. I think the decision was difficult because leaders wanted to end the war but had to consider the human cost.

Accept responses that accurately weigh a military reason for using the bombs against civilian harm or another concern. Students may express different views if they support them with details from the passage.