

Reading Guide for:

## Lesson 20: Was the United States Justified in Dropping the Atomic Bombs on Japan?

**CQ#4:** How should individuals & nations be held responsible for their actions in war?

- Should the United States have dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

**Instructions:** Use the article, both historian arguments and endnotes, to provide written responses to the following prompts. Highlight text as you see fit.

### **Historian A: Unjustified**

1. In paragraph 2, Historian A claims that by the summer of 1945, Japan was ready to surrender and only had one condition--they wanted to keep their emperor. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnote #1)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

2. In paragraph 3, Historian A claims that the US used the atomic bombs to scare Russia into letting us have our way in postwar Europe and Asia. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnote#2)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

3. In paragraph 5, Historian A claims that after learning of the successful test of the atomic bomb, President Truman became much more confident in dealing with the Soviet Union. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnote#5)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

4. In paragraphs 7&8, Historian A claims that the US used the bombs to end the war quickly before the Soviet Union got involved. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnote#7)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

5. In paragraph 10, Historian A claims that top military leaders opposed the use of the atomic bombs because they felt Japan was already trying to surrender. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnote#8)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

### **Historian B: Justified**

6. In paragraphs 2&3, Historian B claims that even in the summer of 1945, Japan was ready to continue fighting in hopes of avoiding unconditional surrender. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnotes #2&3)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

7. In paragraph 4, Historian B claims that the US could not agree to allowing the Japanese to keep their emperor because it would encourage continued fighting and weaken the American war effort. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnote#4)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

8. In paragraph 5, Historian B claims that the Japanese wanted much more than to just keep their emperor and that the bombs were therefore needed to get the Japanese to accept defeat. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnote#5)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

9. In paragraph 7, Historian B argues that the US did not use the atomic bombs to scare Russia into doing what we wanted in Europe because we were so unsuccessful in getting the Russia to do what we wanted. How strong is the reasoning of this argument? Explain.

Very Strong	Kind of Strong	Kind of Weak	Very Weak
Explanation:			

10. In paragraph 9, Historian B claims that before we used the atomic bombs, we warned the Japanese that we were going to use them unless they Japanese surrendered unconditionally. To what extent is that claim supported by the evidence provided (see endnote#9)? Explain.

Strongly Supported	Somewhat Supported	Not very Supported	Not at all Supported
Explanation:			

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