On May 7, 1945, Germany’s Nazi forces finally surrendered to America and its allies.¹ This ended the European conflict of World War II. However, one of Germany’s allies refused to stop fighting. Despite repeated² demands that it surrender, Japan continued to battle America and its allies.

Harry S. Truman, America’s president at the time, struggled with what to do. Japan was our enemy. It had attacked an American naval base at Pearl Harbor, which made Americans very angry. Many Americans felt the Japanese had to be stopped. Truman decided to do something drastic.³ He made one of the biggest decisions in history. He ordered the use of a new American weapon known as an atomic bomb. The bomb was the deadliest weapon ever made. It had been tested but never used. Scientists believed it could destroy an entire town and cause illness among survivors for years to come.

On August 6, 1945, an American airplane dropped the first atomic bomb used in warfare on an important Japanese military town named Hiroshima. A second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan on August 9. Both Hiroshima and Nagasaki were devastated.⁴ The bombs killed from 110,000 to 140,000 people. They destroyed large areas of the two cities—about 2.5 square miles in Nagasaki and 5 square miles in Hiroshima. The bombs also released

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¹ allies – persons, groups, or nations united with one another for a special purpose
² repeated – said, done, or made more than one time
³ drastic – acting with force or violence
⁴ devastated – laid to waste, destroyed
hazardous chemicals into the air, which remained in the atmosphere for some time. The air made people very sick. Thousands more died years after the bombs were dropped because of the exposure to these harmful, cancer-causing chemicals.

The terrible destruction caused by the bombs led Japan to surrender on September 2, 1945. Japan’s surrender meant the war was over. Today in Hiroshima, Peace Memorial Park sits where the bomb was dropped. Every year on August 6, people come to the park to remember those who were lost and to pray for peace.

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5 hazardous – dangerous, risky
1. The United States dropped an atomic bomb on Japan because it wanted
   a. Japan to keep on fighting.
   b. revenge.
   c. Japan to surrender.
   d. to test the bomb.

2. The author most likely chose the picture to show
   a. a building that is in Nagasaki.
   b. effects of the atomic bomb.
   c. how the Japanese rebuilt Hiroshima after the bomb.
   d. the Peace Memorial Park site.

3. The effects of the atomic bomb were
   a. immediate.
   b. both immediate and gradual.
   c. gradual.
   d. minimal.

4. The purpose of Peace Memorial Park is to
   a. make Americans feel badly about what they did.
   b. show America that Japan has healed.
   c. give people a place for prayer and remembrance.
   d. encourage worldwide prayer on August 6.

5. The passage is mostly about
   a. why tourists enjoy coming to Hiroshima.
   b. how atomic bombs are made.
   c. why an atomic bomb was used and its effects.
   d. a special bomb used against the Germans.

6. What effect did the atomic bomb have on people’s health years after it was dropped?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
7. Did President Harry S. Truman make the right decision in using the atomic bomb against the Japanese? Explain your answer.

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Truman decided to use the atomic bomb ________ he knew it would kill innocent people.

   a. because
   b. although
   c. especially
   d. indeed

9. Read the following sentence.

The atomic bomb released hazardous chemicals into the air of Hiroshima.

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

What? the atomic bomb

(did) What? ______________________________________________________

Where? _______________________________________________________

10. **Vocabulary Word**: devastated: laid to waste, destroyed.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: ________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 850

Featured Text Structure: Cause/Effect – the writer presents the reason an event happened and its results

Passage Summary: At the end of World War II, after the Germans had already surrendered, the U.S. continued to fight Japan. President Truman decided to use a new weapon called an atomic bomb, which destroyed Japanese towns but ended the war.

1. The United States dropped an atomic bomb on Japan because it wanted
   a) Japan to keep on fighting.
   b) revenge.
   c) Japan to surrender.
   d) to test the bomb.

2. The author most likely chose the picture to show
   a. a building that is in Nagasaki.
   b. effects of the atomic bomb.
   c. how the Japanese rebuilt Hiroshima after the bomb.
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   a) make Americans feel badly about what they did.
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5. The passage is mostly about
   a. why tourists enjoy coming to Hiroshima.
   b. how atomic bombs are made.
   c. why an atomic bomb was used and its effects.
   d. a special bomb used against the Germans.
6. What effect did the atomic bomb have on people’s health years after it was dropped?

**Suggested answer:** Years after it was dropped, the atomic bomb made people sick because of exposure to harmful, cancer-causing chemicals.

7. Did President Harry S. Truman make the right decision in using the atomic bomb against the Japanese? Explain your answer.

**Suggested answer:** Answers may vary but could state that President Truman made the wrong decision because many innocent Japanese people died. Alternatively, the student could answer that President Truman made the right decision because many more people would have died if the war had continued.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Truman decided to use the atomic bomb ________ he knew it would kill innocent people.

a. because  

b. although  

c. especially  

d. indeed

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

The atomic bomb released hazardous chemicals into the air of Hiroshima.

What? the atomic bomb

(did) What? **released hazardous chemicals**

Where? **into the air of Hiroshima**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** devastated: laid to waste, destroyed.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.