

# #9011

## 1945: FALLOUT

PBS VIDEO

1999

Grade Levels: 9-13+

57 minutes



### DESCRIPTION

Nuclear energy, born in 1945, fosters both fear and promise. Presents an overview of the development of the bomb, its use to end World War II, and its subsequent effects. Reviews bomb-testing, protests, proliferation, Chernobyl, and treaties. Vintage film, personal recollections, and graphic scenes enrich this chronology of the A-bomb. NOTE: Recommend teacher preview.

### ACADEMIC STANDARDS

#### Subject Area: World History (1900-1945)

- Standard: Understands the causes and global consequences of World War II
  - Benchmark: Understands the climax and moral implications of World War II (e.g., the moral implications of military technologies and techniques used in the war, statistics of population displacement caused by the war, debates surrounding the use of the atomic bomb to end the war with Japan)

#### Subject Area: Historical Understanding

- Standard: Understands the historical perspective
  - Benchmark: Analyzes the effects specific decisions had on history and studies how things might have been different in the absence of those decisions
  - Benchmark: Understands that the consequences of human intentions are influenced by the means of carrying them out
  - Benchmark: Understands how the past affects our private lives and society in general

### INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To explore when and why nuclear power is promoted.
2. To examine the secrecy surrounding nuclear weapons and energy.
3. To research recent controversies surrounding nuclear weapons and energy.
4. To examine why the bombing of Hiroshima was an important event in world history.
5. To observe the emotional and physical effects of the atomic bomb.

### BEFORE SHOWING

1. Preview the program before using it in the classroom.
2. Have students note how secrecy was associated with nuclear weapons or nuclear energy.
3. As a class, brainstorm a list of reasons why the bombing of Hiroshima was an important event in world history. Discuss which reasons might be controversial and why.

## AFTER SHOWING

### Discussion Items and Questions

1. How were speakers in the program involved in or affected by nuclear weapons and energy? In each case, how much were they told about the effects of these technologies? What information was withheld? What were some reasons for the secrecy surrounding nuclear weapons and energy?
2. How did citizens' responses to the development of nuclear weapons and energy change over time? Why do you think many Americans still support the decision to use atomic weapons in World War II?
3. In what situations, if any, do you think a government has the right to keep secrets from its citizens? Who should decide how much citizens should know about the government's actions? What are some of the consequences for citizens and society if they don't know all the facts about a government action?
4. Why do you think Sheldon Johnson describes the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as beautiful? If you could respond to his description, what would you tell him? Does Sumiteru Taniguchi's quotation support or oppose Johnson's view of the dropping of the bomb?
5. What were the emotional and physical effects of the atomic bomb? How are nuclear weapons similar to or different from other military weapons?
6. Have your feelings or thoughts about the atomic bomb changed after watching the program? If so, how?

### Applications and Activities

1. Have students research recent controversies surrounding nuclear weapons and energy. Controversies might include the reexamination in 1995 of Truman's decision to bomb Hiroshima; assessments of damage caused by the Chernobyl nuclear accident; revelations of secret radiation experiments sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission; nuclear testing by France; reevaluation of the impact of nuclear testing by the United States; and residents' protests against unsafe disposal of radioactive waste at military sites. Students should consider people's motives and arguments on both sides of the issue they research.
2. To increase students' awareness of the human impact of nuclear weapons, have students read and discuss the following excerpts from *Hiroshima* by John Hersey (Vintage Books, 1946): pages 35-40, 45-51, and 61-65. The first two excerpts describe how six bombing survivors cared for one another immediately after the bombing, and the third excerpt describes their response to Japan's surrender. After students read the excerpts, discuss the following questions: How does the book emphasize the unique aspects of nuclear warfare? How does it downplay those aspects? Why do you think the book had a powerful effect on American readers?
3. Have students research why Hiroshima was selected as a target, what other options were presented to President Truman and by whom, and what information President Truman used to make his decision. After students complete their research, create a class list of President Truman's options. Ask students to write a briefing for President Truman that explains their position on whether or not the bomb should be dropped.

## RELATED RESOURCES



### Captioned Media Program

- 1945-1989: The Cold War #3203



### World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **ATOMICARCHIVE.COM**

<http://www.atomicarchive.com/index.shtml>

Explores the history surrounding the invention of the atomic bomb. Learn about the science behind the weapons, peruse an archive of historical documents on nuclear history, view a collection of historic animations and interactive atomic bombs, and more.

- **FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS**

<http://www.fas.org/>

Read current topics on various types of bombs, securing nuclear materials. Explore other topics such as government secrecy, arms control agreements, weapons of mass destruction, and much more.

- **REMEMBERING NAGASAKI**

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/nagasaki/mainn.html>

View photographs after the atomic bomb was dropped in Nagasaki, read survivors' comments on the bombing, share or read commentaries on opinions about the bombing, and others.