

**White Light, Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki**  
**Teacher's Guide**

**Before viewing the film**

**1. Give the following handouts to students:**

*White Light, Black Rain* study guide  
KWL Chart

**2. Vocabulary:** Students will use a dictionary or the internet to find the definitions of the following words and phrases that will appear in the film (words are included in the study guide).

Atomic bomb	Hiroshima	Nagasaki	Emperor
radiation	Empire	patriotism	nuclear weapon
radioactive	vaporize	premeditated	Hibakusha

**3. Research:** Students will research the time in history and learn about the events leading up to the decision by the U.S. to use nuclear weapons against Japan in 1945.

**4. KWL Chart:** Based on what students already know and what they learned in their research, they will fill in the KWL chart with what they know about nuclear weapons and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and what they want to know.

**5. Discuss:** Students will discuss their KWL chart with the class.

**View the film**

The film is separated into 4 sections: Introduction, THE SURVIVORS, THE BOMB and THE AFTERMATH. You can follow the instructions below at the end of each section:

**1. View:** Watch the section of the film

**2. Questions:** Stop the film at the end of the section so students can write their answers to the questions for that section

**3. KWL Chart:** Students will fill out what they learned and what they want to know about this event in history

**3. Discuss:** Students will discuss their answers and KWL chart with the class

**After viewing the film**

1. Students will answer questions, fill out the KWL chart and discuss.

2. Students will do three follow-up activities – using [www.hbo.com/docs](http://www.hbo.com/docs) as a resource

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**BEFORE VIEWING THE FILM**

**1. Vocabulary:** Using a dictionary or the internet, find the definitions of the following words and phrases that will appear in *White Light, Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*.

Atomic bomb  
radiation  
radioactive

Hiroshima  
Empire  
vaporize

Nagasaki  
patriotism  
premeditated

Emperor  
nuclear weapon  
Hibakusha

**2. Research:** Use the following websites to research the time in history and learn about the events leading up to the decision by the U.S. to use nuclear weapons against Japan in 1945. (These links can also be found on hbo.com)

[http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/bomb/large/index.php](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/index.php)

The decision to drop the atomic bomb – notes to and from President Truman

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB162/index.htm>

Primary sources- national security archive

<http://www.cccoe.k12.ca.us/abomb/timeline.htm>

Timeline of the atomic bomb

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/world-war-2/history/1495.html>

Timeline of World War II

<http://www.dannen.com/decision/index.html>

Atomic bomb: decision – documents on the decision to use atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - links

<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/teacher/abomb.htm>

Atomic bomb- Truman press release august 6, 1945 – student activity

**3. Activity:** Using information from the resources above, write a letter to President Truman advising him whether or not to drop the bomb on Japan. Be sure to use plenty of information from the resources above to support your opinion.

**4. KWL Chart:** Fill in the KWL Chart with what you know and would like to know about this event in history.

**5. Discuss:** Discuss your letter and KWL chart with the class

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**WHILE VIEWING**

This film is separated into four parts: Introduction, THE SURVIVORS, THE BOMB and THE AFTERMATH. Your teacher will stop the film after each section so you can answer questions, fill in your KWL Chart and discuss the section with the class. Be sure to take notes, answer questions, and/or fill in your chart while watching each section.

**INTRODUCTION section questions**

1. What is significant about this quote? “75% of the population of Japan was born after 1945” What does this tell you about the population of Japan today and in the future?
2. Why do you think the teenagers don’t know what happened on August 6th, 1945?
3. Why do you think the filmmaker wanted to begin the film in this way?

**2. THE SURVIVORS section**

1. What messages were being sent to the people of the United States about the Japanese?
2. What messages were being sent to the people of Japan about the war?
3. What affect did these messages have on the people of each country and how did they affect their outlook on the war?
4. Do you think the governments misled the people of Japan and the United States? If so, how and why?

**3. THE BOMB**

1. How did the American men feel about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?
2. When asked about his role in the bombing, one man said:

*“People say ‘what’d you do in those early days?’ and my answer was ‘whatever I was told to do’...I guess I wasn’t learned enough or sophisticated enough to appreciate what it meant in the long run for the future of the world.”*

Write your thoughts in response to this statement.

3. Another man said "*We have opened Pandora's box, and the genie can't be stuffed back in the bottle.*" What did he mean by this?

**4. AFTERMATH**

1. Describe all of the ways in which this event affected the survivors of the bombings.
2. How were the survivors treated after the bombing?
3. Why do you think the survivors were treated the way they were?
4. Why is it important to document the stories of these survivors?
5. Do you think that the dropping of the bombs was a good idea? Why or why not?
6. How is the use of nuclear weapons different from other types of warfare?
7. Write your thoughts in response to the following fact from the film:

*There are now enough nuclear weapons in the world to equal 400,000 Hiroshimas*

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**FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES**

Go to the *White Light, Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* website off of [www.hbo.com/docs](http://www.hbo.com/docs).

**ACTIVITY ONE: Reflect**

1. Off of the site, view the slideshow of paintings depicting the aftermath of the bombings created by the survivors featured in the film.
2. Choose one painting and write a poem or letter to the person who created the image.
3. Print the painting and attach your poem or letter

**ACTIVITY TWO: Research**

1. Off of the site, visit the resource page and research radiation exposure and other effects of nuclear warfare.
2. Add what you learn to your KWL chart

**ACTIVITY THREE: Take action**

1. Off of the site, visit the resource page and research the current nuclear weapon situation in the world.
2. Using the letter you wrote to President Truman before the film; information from your KWL Chart and information from your research, write an opinion paper on nuclear weapons and how you feel about them. Use Hiroshima and Nagasaki as examples supporting your position.

Choose one of the following ways to express your opinion:

- a. Write a newspaper editorial
- b. Write a letter to a world leader
- c. Write a 5-paragraph essay
- d. Write a letter asking for support from an anti or pro nuclear proliferation organization
- e. Other

**White Light, Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki**  
**KWL Chart**

On August 6th and 9th, 1945, two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. Fill in the following chart with what you KNOW, WANT to know and what you LEARNED about nuclear weapons and this event in history.

What you KNOW	What you WANT to know	What you LEARNED