

The Atomic bomb and Sadako

Name: _____

Vice-President Harry S. Truman became president of the United States after President Franklin D. Roosevelt died in April, 1945. Shortly after becoming president, Truman was faced with one of the most difficult decisions of his life. Should he use the newly invented atomic bomb against Japan in an effort to save American lives and end World War II.

Scientists told President Truman that approximately 20,000 Japanese would die and many homes and factories would be destroyed if he used the atomic bomb. In reality the first atomic bomb killed 80,000 - 100,000 people and destroyed five square miles in Hiroshima. Three days later, the second atomic bomb killed 40,000 people in Nagasaki. Thousands more died later as a result of injuries and from exposure to radiation.

1. Was the atomic bomb a necessary evil? Use the chart below to analyze the pros and cons then tell what you would have decided and why.

| | Option 1: Use the atomic bomb | Option 2: Don't use the atomic bomb |
|------|--|--|
| Pros | It would probably end the war with Japan and save the lives of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers. | Thousands of innocent Japanese civilians would not be killed. |
| Cons | It would mean the death of thousands of innocent civilians. It would do extensive damage to the city of Hiroshima. | The American military would have to invade Japan. About 500,000 American soldiers would probably die in this attack. Even more Japanese civilians and soldiers would also die. |

If you had been the President of the United States, what would you have decided?

Why?

How would you have felt knowing you were responsible for the devastation and deaths of so many civilians?

2. Why do you think folding a thousand paper cranes was so important to Sadako and her friends?

Why do you think children all over the world still fold paper cranes and send them to Hiroshima?