

Statement by the President Announcing the Use of the A-Bomb at Hiroshima, August 6, 1945 by Harry S. Truman

1 Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima and destroyed
2 its usefulness to the enemy....

3 The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many
4 fold. And the end is not yet. With this bomb we have now added a new and revolutionary
5 increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces. In their present
6 form these bombs are now in production and even more powerful forms are in development.

7 It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from
8 which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East....

9 The battle of the laboratories held fateful risks for us as well as the battles of the air, land,
10 and sea, and we have now won the battle of the laboratories as we have won the other battles.
11 Beginning in 1940, before Pearl Harbor, scientific knowledge useful in war was pooled between
12 the United States and Great Britain, and many priceless helps to our victories have come from
13 that arrangement. Under that general policy the research on the atomic bomb was begun. With
14 American and British scientists working together we entered the race of discovery against the
15 Germans.

16 The United States had available the large number of scientists of distinction in the many
17 needed areas of knowledge. It had the tremendous industrial and financial resources necessary
18 for the project and they could be devoted to it without undue impairment of other vital war work.
19 In the United States the laboratory work and the production plants, on which a substantial start
20 had already been made, would be out of reach of enemy bombing, while at that time Britain was
21 exposed to constant air attack and was still threatened with the possibility of invasion. For these
22 reasons Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt agreed that it was wise to carry on the
23 project here.... We have spent two billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history –
24 and won.

25 But the greatest marvel is not the size of the enterprise, its secrecy, nor its cost, but the
26 achievement of scientific brains in putting together infinitely complex pieces of knowledge held
27 by many men in different fields of science into a workable plan. And hardly less marvelous has
28 been the capacity of industry to design and of labor to operate, the machines and methods to do
29 things never done before so that the brainchild of many minds came forth in physical shape and
30 performed as it was supposed to do. Both science and industry worked under the direction of the
31 United States Army, which achieved a unique success in managing so diverse a problem in the
32 advancement of knowledge in an amazingly short time.... What has been done is the greatest
33 achievement of organized science in history....

34 The fact that we can release atomic energy ushers in a new era in man's understanding of
35 nature's forces. Atomic energy may in the future supplement the power that now comes
36 from coal, oil, and falling water, but at present it cannot be produced on a basis to compete with
37 them commercially. Before that comes there must be a long period of intensive research. It has
38 never been the habit of the scientists of this country or the policy of this government to withhold
39 from the world scientific knowledge. Normally, therefore, everything about the work with
40 atomic energy would be made public.

41 But under the present circumstances it is not intended to divulge the technical processes
42 of production or all the military applications, pending further examination of possible methods of
43 protecting us and the rest of the world from the danger of sudden destruction.

44 I shall recommend that the Congress of the United States consider promptly the
45 establishment of an appropriate commission to control the production and use of atomic power
46 within the United States. I shall give further consideration and make further recommendations to
47 the Congress as to how atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence towards the
48 maintenance of world peace.

1. The primary function of the first paragraph, “Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima and destroyed its usefulness to the enemy...” (lines 1-2), is to
- a. define a key concept
 - b. illustrate the topic of the passage with an anecdote
 - c. to set up the central topic of the essay**
 - d. state the main argument of the passage
 - e. challenge a common assumption

ANS: C

Rationale: The first statement in the White House press release on August 6, 1945, sixteen hours after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, began with a description of the devastating destructive power the newly developed weapon.

2. The primary audience for this passage was
- a. Russian soldiers
 - b. Japanese politicians
 - c. American citizens**
 - d. Nuclear scientists
 - e. Japanese citizens

ANS: C

Rationale: The primary audience for this statement was the American public, though certainly the rest of the world would soon be watching as the devastation of the Japanese cities was revealed.

3. The tone of President Truman’s statement can best be described as
- a. formal and scholarly
 - b. defensive and indignant
 - c. conversational and optimistic
 - d. angry and excited
 - e. measured and informative**

ANS: E

Rationale: The overall tone of the statement is deliberate, measured, and informative. Although specific details were modified at the last moment, Truman's four-page statement had been carefully crafted in the many months since the bomb's invention. It was important to assert American military dominance, while acknowledging inevitable American concern for human life. The news was announced in the form of a routine press release, just over one thousand words long.

4. The primary purpose of the passage is to
I inform

II persuade

III. justify

a. I, II, and III

b. I and II only

c. II and III only

d. I and III only

e. I only

ANS: A

Rationale: The president's main goals were to inform his audience about the devastating power of the newly-developed atomic bomb, persuade his audience that bombing Japan was necessary, and justify the significant investment that was made to develop the bomb.

5. President Truman's repeated use of the pronoun "we" throughout the statement primarily serves which of the following purposes?

a. sets a casual, informal tone

b. creates a sense of collective purpose

c. separates the goals of the government from the goals of the people

d. reminds the audience that the president is only one man in a larger government

e. establishes the speaker's importance through use of the "royal we"

ANS: B

Rationale: Truman's use of the collective first person "we" primarily serves to create a sense of shared national purpose. The "we" makes Truman a member of the community he leads, with shared interests and goals, not a man apart. This strategy may also be designed to share responsibility for the consequences of the design, development, and application of the atomic bomb.

6. The sixth paragraph, that begins, "But the greatest marvel is not the size of the enterprise..." features an appeal to

a. shared values of scientific progress

b. pride in American ingenuity

c. admiration of cooperative achievement

d! all of these

e! none of these

ANS: D

Rationale: These lines appeal to the audience's shared belief in the value of scientific progress, pride in American ingenuity, and admiration of cooperative achievement.

7. One essential idea promoted in President Truman's statement is that

a. the atomic bomb performed as it was designed.

b. atomic energy will replace power from coal, oil and falling water.

c. there is great potential for human suffering created by atomic science.

d. the President has great pride in the scientific achievement represented by the atomic bomb.

e. there were tremendous costs involved in the development of the atomic bomb.

ANS:

Rationale: President Truman's statement emphasizes scientific and technical triumph over the forces of nature. Truman's pride in the scientific achievement seems of paramount importance.

The statement makes no mention of the human victims of the atomic bombs. He points out, almost as an aside, that, “atomic energy may in the future supplement the power that now comes from coal, oil, and falling water,” but a “long period of intensive research” is necessary before that becomes commercially feasible (Lines 35-37).

8. In lines 3-4, Truman says, “The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold.” How do these sentences contribute to the President’s goal?

- a. They incite a desire for vengeance in the American people.
- b. They attempt to justify the use of the atomic bomb against Japan.**
- c. They imply that there is danger of imminent attack against the United States.
- d. They anticipate a counterargument that will be addressed later in the statement.
- e! All of the above

ANS: B

Truman cites retribution for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to justify the use of the atomic bomb. The full text of the statement mentions that Japan had rejected the Potsdam ultimatum calling for unconditional surrender to end the war.

9. What are some important facts about the Hiroshima bombing that are missing from President Truman’s statement?

- a. the lethality of the bomb’s radiation
- b. descriptions of the civilian targets destroyed by the bomb
- c. the thousands of people who were killed and injured by the bomb
- d. the second city to be bombed
- e! all of the above

ANS: E

Rationale: The official language of the statement did not count human costs, in terms of casualties, lethal radiation released by the bomb in the predominantly civilian population of Hiroshima, and the fact that Hiroshima was not the only target for the atom bomb.