

## Hiroshima

1. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland and started a war that, within a few years, had spread around the world. The Allied forces (including those from Great Britain, the United States of America, the Soviet Union and Australia) battled the Axis, which included German, Italian and Japanese forces. By May 1945, the Axis forces had surrendered in Europe, but in the Pacific, Japan refused to surrender and the fighting continued. On 26 July, the United States demanded that if Japan didn't surrender without meeting certain conditions, the Allies would attack and destroy Japan.
2. The Japanese didn't know the Allied forces had a new and powerful weapon; an atomic bomb. They had been developing this bomb over the past few years and were ready to use it to end the war and to stop the terrible loss of life. The Japanese government rejected the demand to surrender in this way. So the atomic bomb was ordered to be dropped on the city of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. At 8.15 am, the bomb, nicknamed 'Little Boy', was dropped, and 57 seconds later it exploded over Hiroshima.
3. The energy, heat and light created by the bomb were far stronger than any bomb ever dropped before. First there was a blinding light, then a huge blast that sent a shock wave in all directions at the speed of sound. This, combined with the immense heat, destroyed much of the city and the people in it in a matter of seconds.
4. The Japanese army couldn't contact its soldiers in Hiroshima. Not knowing what had happened, they eventually sent a plane to find out. The aircraft crew circled the city in disbelief. A great burning scar on the land and a thick cloud of smoke were all that were left.
5. The blast had killed at least 70 000 men, women and children. But many thousands more died months and even years later from sickness caused by the atomic bomb. On 9 August, a bigger atomic bomb, nicknamed 'Fat Man', was dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki, killing many tens of thousands of people and destroying the city in one blow.
6. On 15 August 1945, Japan surrendered. World War II was finally over.

