



Use of Atomic Bombs in World War II Close Evaluation of a Model Flow Sheet

The debatable issue for this project is:

Was the United States justified in using atomic bombs against Japan in World War II?

With a partner, read and discuss each of the following questions carefully, referring back frequently to the full flow sheet model of a debate on this issue. One of you should write out your responses – consensus, if you come to an agreement on a question, or reflecting your disagreement if you do not come to consensus.

Arguments

1. What is missing from the summary of the evidence in the first argument for “Team A” that should be included in the argument’s reasoning in order for it not to have a rather important hole? What might this reasoning sound like for this team’s first argument, if it is effective in filling in this gap?
2. Same questions as above for the third argument for Team A: what is missing from the evidence that the argument’s reasoning would have to supply, and how should it sound if it fills in this gap effectively?
3. Could the first argument for Team B have been strengthened if it specified (in the evidence and reasoning) a standard for morality in wartime? If so, what should that standard be? If not, why not?
4. Explain the significance to the debate as whole – all of the other arguments – if Team B wins their second argument.
5. Does the date (1974) of the evidence supporting Team B’s third argument matter? Why and/or why not?

Counter-Arguments

6. Explain the distinction between Team B's two counter-arguments to Team A's first argument.
7. The first counter-argument to Team A's third argument uses a historical analogy. Explain the analogy in your own words and describe the power of argumentative analogies in refutation, using this example.
8. The second counter-argument against Team B's first argument is that many more people would have died in an American invasion of Japan at the end of WWII, and that an invasion was the only viable military alternative to using atomic bombs. How will Team A want to best support the argument that an invasion was the only option?
9. Paraphrase the first counter-argument to Team B's third argument. Is it an effective refutation of this argument? Why and/or why not?
10. Team A does not refer to any evidence to support their second counter-argument to Team B's third argument. Explain how their argument is specifically weakened by lacking support from documents or secondary sources.

Evaluation Arguments

11. Who wins the argumentation over whether using atomic weapons on Japan was immoral, and why?
12. Who wins the argumentation over whether the U.S. could have demonstrated the power of atomic weapons to Japan to warn them, and why?
13. Who wins the argumentation over whether use of atomic bombs on Japan shortened the war and thereby saved thousands or millions of lives, and why?
14. Who wins the argumentation over whether Japan started the war with the U.S. by attacking Pearl Harbor and therefore the U.S. was justified in responding with full military force, and why?
15. How do you piece all of the argumentation together? Who wins this debate? And why?