



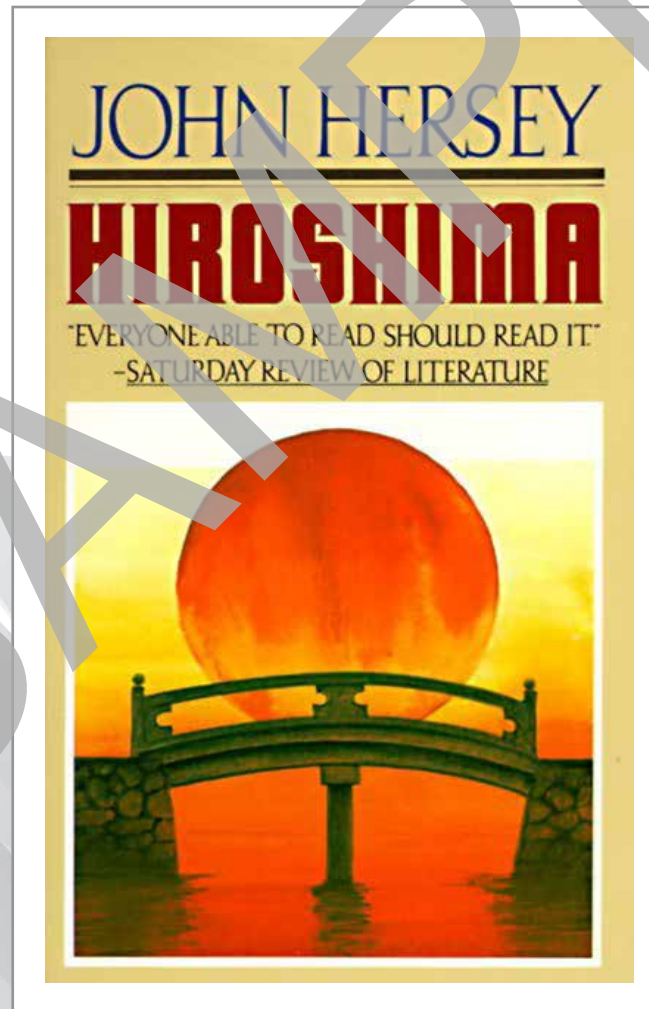
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Hiroshima

John R. Hersey



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Hiroshima

John R. Hersey

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, evaluating,
organizing, metacognition,
generalizing

Literary Elements

Style, nonfiction genre,
characterization

Comprehension

Predicting, cause/effect

Writing

Research reporting,
descriptive, news writing

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, cooperative
groups

Vocabulary

Degree, etymology,
classifying, syntax

Summary of Hiroshima

First published in the *New Yorker* issue of August 31, 1946, *Hiroshima* is a nonfiction account of six survivors of the atomic bomb. That edition of the story ran to four chapters. In 1985, nearly forty years after the original publication, Hersey returned to Hiroshima to find out what had happened to the six survivors. He added a fifth chapter to the book. The six survivors whose stories are detailed are a female personnel clerk, a well-to-do physician, a tailor's widow, a German priest, a young surgeon, and the pastor of the Hiroshima Methodist Church.

The Author

John Hersey was born in 1914 in China, son of a YMCA secretary and a missionary. An American, he devoted his adult life to writing novels and essays examining moral implications of contemporary political events. He won the Pulitzer Prize for *A Bell for Adano* in 1944. He earned his B.A. at Yale University and attended Clare College, Cambridge, England. He worked for a time as Sinclair Lewis's secretary and then for several years as a journalist. He taught at Yale while continuing his writing career. Hersey has five children and three grandchildren.

Initiating Activities

1. Why is Hiroshima famous and infamous?
2. What are the historical facts about the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima?
3. Show a film depicting the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.
4. Read the first paragraph aloud. What do you predict about this book from the cover, the end papers, the beginning?
5. Tie in the book with a science unit explaining the atomic bomb or a social studies unit on the Second World War.
6. *Hiroshima* is nonfiction. What do you expect of the book? (See page 5 for a guide to ideas about nonfiction.)

Chapter One: "A Noiseless Flash"

Pages 1-16

Plot Summary

Each character is identified and his location at the time of the bomb is revealed.

Vocabulary

deltaic 1	volition 2	rendezvous 2	abstinence 3
estuarial 4	reconnaissance 5	evacuate 6	hullabaloo 7
prefectural 7	incendiary 8	pommelled 9	hedonistic 9
incessant 9	xenophobic 11	repugnant 12	terminus 14

Vocabulary Questions

1. What is the difference between "terminus" and "end"?
2. What is a phobia? What particular phobia is xenophobia?
3. What is the opposite of hedonistic?
4. Collect some words for bodies of running water.

Discussion Questions and Activities

1. When was the book written? (*The copyright is 1946.*)
2. Style is the manner of writing which an author chooses for a particular book. What is Hersey's style in *Hiroshima*? (*nonfiction, clipped, newspaper-like*) Why do you think he chose such a style?
3. Who was Mr. B? (*the U.S. B-29 bomber*) Why do you think we give human names to inanimate objects?
4. Identify the six survivors discussed in Chapter One. Fill in on the survivor chart descriptions of each before the bomb and experiences in Chapter One. (See suggested answers on page 15.)
5. What do you know from this chapter about the situation in Hiroshima before the atomic bomb?
 - *The city was expecting air attacks and evacuation and civilian shelters were prepared.*
 - *Japanese military government was exact and blunt in their announcements.*
 - *The people and country were becoming increasingly xenophobic.*
 - *There was a shortage of food.*
 - *Government control was extensive.*

-
6. Why is the first chapter entitled “A Noiseless Flash”? (*All of the survivors remembered the tremendous flash of light across the sky but almost no one recalled hearing any noise of the bomb.*)
 7. Why do you think Hersey tells us how far each survivor was from the center of the explosion? (*as a comparison, to make all survivors equal, to remind the reader of the explosion*)
 8. What do you think Hersey’s viewpoint is on the atomic bomb? Why?
 9. In Chapter One Hersey tells details of six survivors. What general information is revealed about August 6, 1945? (*An atomic bomb was exploded on Hiroshima. People saw a large light but no noise. Japanese authorities had sent an all-clear signal before the bombing. Destruction was extensive and immediate. Whole houses were destroyed. Many people were injured or killed by the bomb.*)
 10. While Hersey gives us a specific nonfiction account of six survivors, he also allows us as readers to draw generalizations about Hiroshima at each period in August, 1945. Record your generalizations on the chart after reading each chapter. (See page 11 of this guide.)

Supplementary Activities

1. In groups, consider how the events in this chapter would have been reported on television news in 30-second news flashes or in headlines. Present your ideas to the rest of the class.
2. Research: Who was John Hersey? Prepare a one-page summary identifying him.
3. Writing: Finish this paragraph: “The author of *Hiroshima* really grabbed my attention in the first chapter...” Explain *why* and *how* Hersey got your attention.
4. Writing: Look at some current news stories. Underline the who, what, where, when, and why. Then write a short news story about a current school event.
5. Begin attribute webs for chosen characters. Complete as the book is read. Different class members might prepare webs for different characters, sharing with the entire class. (See page 12 of this guide.)
6. Get a handle on keeping track of the characters. (See page 13 of this guide.)

Generalizations After Reading Each Chapter

Chapter One: _____

Chapter Two: _____

Chapter Three: _____

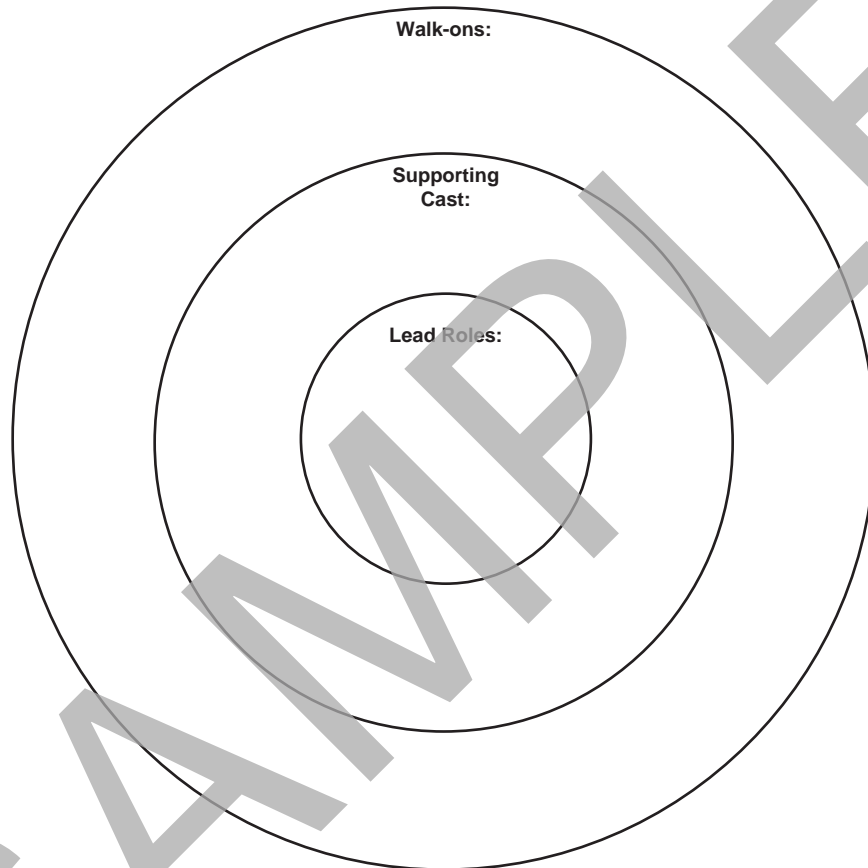
Chapter Four: _____

Chapter Five: _____

Hints: Why did the author include the details he did?
How is each character adapting?
What is the world learning of nuclear weapons?

Your Book Has Been Optioned for the Movies

1. You are the casting director. Who are the lead roles, supporting cast, and walk-ons? What kind of characters are they? What actors will fill the roles? How should they look? What acting abilities will they need?



2. Design costumes for the cast. Explain your choices.
3. Pick the music. Will you need background music only or will you have musical "numbers"?
4. Design the set.
5. Identify and describe the props.
6. What will you title your movie? Why?