

**UNIT 6 Hard Times**  
**Depression and World War II 1929–1945**



**A NOISELESS  
FLASH, FROM  
HIROSHIMA**

**WITH  
JIM SOTO**

# SPEAK YOUR MIND

News reports often tell stories of people who escape tragedy because of some last-minute change in plans, such as missing an airplane flight.

When have you or someone close had such an experience, even on a less dramatic scale?

What sorts of emotions or thoughts follow this kind of experience?

Take a minute to consider and answer the question in your notebook.



## THE BOMB

On August 6, 1945, in an effort to end World War II, the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. A second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki 3 days later. On August 15, Japanese Emperor Hirohito announced his nation's surrender, by saying, "The enemy now possesses a new and terrible weapon with the power to destroy many innocent lives and do incalculable damage."

The bombing of Hiroshima destroyed two-thirds of the city's buildings. Between 70,000 and 130,000 people were killed instantly. Thousands more survived the initial blast but later died of radiation sickness, and countless other survivors suffered lifelong injuries and illnesses, such as cancer.



Journalist John Hersey tells about 6 survivors in his book *Hiroshima*, from which “A Noiseless Flash” is excerpted. First published in 1946 in the *New Yorker* magazine, *Hiroshima* is based on his interviews with survivors and recounts events of the morning of the blast and over the next few days and weeks.



# LITERARY ELEMENTS

## Point of View

Is the vantage point, or perspective, from which the story is told. In first-person point of view, the story is told by someone who participates in or witnesses the action. In third-person point of view, the narrator usually stands outside the action and observes.



## Irony

is a difference between appearance and reality. One type of irony is irony of situation, in which an event occurs that violates the expectations of the characters or reader.





John Hersey's *Hiroshima* is considered one of the most significant works of modern American journalism. As you read this excerpt, determine the point of view Hersey uses to recount survivors' stories of the bombing and consider why he decided on this perspective. Also look for examples of irony of situation in this retelling of actual events.



# ASSESSMENT

After reading pages 487-501 of your book complete the following activities:

1. REFER TO TEXT &
2. REASON WITH TEXT
3. & COMPARE LITERATURE
  - **Point of View and Irony** - From what point of view is Hiroshima told? What makes this point of view effective for this particular genre and subject matter?
  - Identify several examples of situational irony in this excerpt. Which example is the most powerful? Why?



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