



# *PODCAST*

# *TRANSCRIPT*

Episode 144:

Title: "Hiroshima and Nagasaki"

Duration: 23:52

How to use this transcript:

1. Print this transcript:

We try to reduce our paper consumption, but we really recommend that you print out this document.

2. Write on it and take notes:

Circle, highlight and note anything that you want. We have even provided space for you to do so!

3. Listen first **without** the transcript:

Don't worry about understanding every single word. Just focus on training your ears to the sound of English.

4. Listen again **with** the transcript:

Listen a second time with the transcript, pausing whenever you want to

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 00:00 | <p>Hello and welcome to <i>The Déclic Anglais Podcast</i>. Today's episode will help French speakers (like you!) improve their English while learning about an important historical event. I'm your host, Tom, and today's episode is particularly significant as this month (August 2025) we mark the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.</p> <p>Please remember that there is a transcript (<i>une transcription</i>) available for this (and every) episode of this podcast. Just click the link in the description of this episode, or go to <a href="http://www.declicanglais.com/podcast">www.declicanglais.com/podcast</a>.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 01:27 | <p>Let us go back in time, dear listeners, to August 1945...</p> <p>For countries like France and Belgium, the Second World War is finally over. Just three months ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945, Nazi Germany finally surrendered. Jubilant celebrations broke out across Europe. But for millions of people in Asia the war against Japan continues.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |
| 02:15 | <p>The Empire of Japan in the 1940s was nothing like the modern Japan that we know today. It was a highly militaristic and imperialist power. The Japanese leaders, much like the Nazis, believed that they were a superior form of human – like the German <i>Übermenschen</i>. And they believed that this gave them the right to invade and dominate their neighbouring countries. While the Japanese said that their mission was to “free Asia of the European powers”, their true intention was to conquer and dominate all Asia.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 03:16 | <p>The Japanese first invaded Korea and China. They later invaded other countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore. The war against Japan began in 1941 when they attacked the US Navy at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. Since 1941, the Americans and British have been fighting the Japanese across Asia and the Pacific. But now in 1945, the war has been going badly for Japan – they have lost much of the lands that they conquered.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |
| 04:11 | <p>For months now, the Allies have been planning <i>Operation Downfall</i> (<i>en français l'Opération Chute / Effondrement</i>), where Allied soldiers (mostly American and British) will invade mainland Japan itself, with the hope of finally ending the Second World War. But the Japanese are fanatical fighters – they prefer to fight to the death, rather than surrender. The Allied commanders predict that the invasion will cause millions and millions of deaths on both sides.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 05:08 | <p>But the Allies have a kind of Plan B. You see, American scientists have been working on something called "The Manhattan Project." This top-secret project developed the world's first atomic bombs – weapons that, until 1945, had never been used before. Before 1945, you needed hundreds of aeroplanes, thousands of soldiers, millions of tons of bombs to destroy a city. But now the Americans had a new weapon that could destroy a city in seconds – the first nuclear bombs.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>     |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 06:12 | <p>US President Harry Truman faced a difficult decision:</p> <p><b>Should these terrible new weapons be used to end the war?</b></p> <p>On July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the United States and its allies issued the Potsdam Declaration (<i>les États-Unis et leurs alliés publient la déclaration de Potsdam</i>).</p> <p>This document demanded Japan's unconditional surrender: to cease fighting immediately – they just put down their weapons and stop the war.</p> <p>The Japanese government reject this ultimatum and seal the fate of the country. (<i>Le gouvernement japonais rejette cet ultimatum et scelle le destin du pays</i>).</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 07:30 | <p>Ok, let's move forward now to 6<sup>th</sup> August 1945.</p> <p>Very early in the morning an American B-29 bomber aeroplane takes off from an airbase in the Pacific Ocean. The aeroplane's name was the <i>Enola Gay</i>, and it was carrying a special cargo: a nuclear bomb codenamed "<i>Little Boy</i>". At 8:15 in the morning, the <i>Enola Gay</i> and <i>Little Boy</i> arrived at their destination: the Japanese city of Hiroshima.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |
| 08:35 | <p>People in the city saw the American aeroplane flying overhead. Some survivors of that day recall seeing the <i>Enola Gay</i> and paying no attention to it. You see, it was quite normal to see American aeroplanes flying over Japan at that point in the war. But these people had absolutely no idea of what was to follow...</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>  |

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 09:16 | <p>The explosion was unlike anything the world had ever seen. A bright flash lit up the sky, several times brighter than the sun. In less than a second, a massive fireball 370 metres across formed above the city. The temperature reaching 6000°C, anyone nearby was vaporised instantly. Then a terrible blast wave (<i>une onde de choc</i>), which destroyed everything in a 1.6-kilometre radius.</p> <p>A vast mushroom cloud (<i>un champignon atomique</i>) towered kilometres into the sky. In the space of just seconds, one aeroplane carrying one little bomb destroyed about 90% of the city. Around 70,000 people died immediately.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 10:47 | <p>Three days later, on August 9<sup>th</sup>, another American B-29 bomber took off, with yet another atomic bomb, this one called "Fat Man". Originally, this bomb was destined for the city of Kokura on Japan's Kyushu Island. But in a twist of fate (<i>un coup du sort</i>), the visibility above Kokura was very bad on 9<sup>th</sup> August. This meant that the pilot changed to their secondary target, the city Nagasaki. For the second time in one week, an entire city was obliterated in just seconds. The <i>Fat Man</i> bomb killed approximately 40,000 people in the blink of an eye (<i>en un clin d'oeil</i>).</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>               |
| 12:00 | <p>Dear listeners, it is incredibly difficult for us sitting here in our comfortable homes to comprehend the human cost of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Just the death toll (<i>le nombre de victimes</i>) is difficult to calculate exactly. However, historians have carefully studied the evidence.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>  |

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 12:35 | <p>Here are the devastating numbers:</p> <p>In Hiroshima:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• About 70,000 people died immediately from the blast and the fire</li><li>• By the end of 1945, another 70,000 people had died from injuries and radiation</li><li>• The total death toll (<i>le nombre de victimes</i>) reached approximately 140,000 by December 1945</li></ul> <p>About 90% of these victims were civilians (not military personnel).</p> <p>In Nagasaki:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Around 40,000 people died on the day of the bombing</li><li>• By the end of 1945, the death toll reached about 74,000</li></ul> <p>Like Hiroshima, most victims were ordinary civilians</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 13:45 | <p>But the numbers don't tell the whole story. Many survivors faced terrible burns and injuries. Doctors at the time didn't understand radiation sickness, a new kind of illness that made people sick weeks or months after the bombing. Even today, health studies continue to track the effects on the children and grandchildren of survivors. The Japanese government has recognized over 650,000 people as <i>hibakusha</i> (atomic bomb survivors) since 1945.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 14:38 | <p>Following the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese commanders were thrown into turmoil. Two important cities had been utterly destroyed in seconds. Initially, the Japanese commanders could not believe that only two aeroplanes carrying one bomb each could do such damage. On 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945, Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender. The Second World War was finally over, and without the need to invade Japan.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |
| 15:30 | <p><i>[bell sound effect]</i></p> <p><b>The Ethical Debate</b></p> <p>The decision to use atomic bombs is still one of the most debated choices in history. Even now, people wonder <i>(les gens se demandent)</i>: <b>“Was it the right decision?”</b></p> <p>You might have seen the recent movie <i>Oppenheimer</i>, which came out in 2023. This film tells the story of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the scientist who led the <i>Manhattan Project</i>. Like many scientists who worked on the bomb, Oppenheimer later struggled with the moral weight of what he had helped create.</p> <p>He famously quoted “I have become a destroyer of worlds.”</p> <p>Let's now look at the different viewpoints/opinions about using the bombs.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 16:55 | <p>Those who supported the decision argued that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Japanese military had shown they would fight to the last person. The Allies had been fighting the Japanese for four years already, and in battles like Okinawa, they saw how fanatical the Japanese soldiers were.</li> <li>• An invasion of Japan might have killed many millions more people on all sides. And not just soldiers, but potentially millions of civilians, too.</li> <li>• And finally, they argued that the shock of the atomic bombs convinced Japan to surrender (to <i>capitulate</i>) quickly, ending the war earlier and preventing more deaths</li> </ul> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |
| 17:55 | <p>Those who opposed the bombing argued that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1945, Japan was already close to a breaking point (<i>un point de rupture</i>), that it was only a matter of time before Japan surrendered.</li> <li>• They also argued that the United States could have demonstrated the bomb's power without dropping it on cities (<i>les Américains auraient pu démontrer la puissance de la bombe sans la larguer sur des villes</i>). For example, detonating it over the Pacific Ocean near a Japanese city so that people could clearly see the power, but without being killed.</li> <li>• And finally, they argued that using such a terrible weapon against civilians was morally wrong. They argued that it was murder, pure and simple.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 19:12 | <p><b>The Long-term Impact:</b></p> <p>The survivors of the bombings, known in Japanese as "hibakusha," faced many challenges. Many survivors were left with serious physical injuries and trauma. Many developed serious health problems from radiation exposure. These health issues often affected their children and grandchildren as well.</p> <p>In fact, even today, there are higher rates of cancer in Hiroshima and Nagasaki compared to other Japanese cities.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>  |
| 20:04 | <p>The bombings also had a profound effect on international relations and nuclear policy. The world had seen the devastating power of nuclear weapons, and realised the need for strict regulation. This led to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The creation of international treaties to control nuclear weapons.</li><li>- A global movement for nuclear disarmament.</li><li>- And even today, there are ongoing debates <i>(il y a des débats qui sont toujours en cours)</i> about nuclear energy and weapons.</li></ul> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 21:00 | <p>Hiroshima and Nagasaki were fully rebuilt many years ago, and modern Japan is a forward-thinking, progressive country. Today, in Hiroshima city centre stands a ruined building (<i>un bâtiment en ruines</i>) with a domed roof. In Japanese, it's called the Genbaku Dome, or in English "the Atomic Bomb Domb". On the morning of the attack, this once grandiose building was standing very close to where the <i>Little Boy</i> bomb detonated. Because of its strong/robust construction, the Genbaku Dome was one of the only buildings in Hiroshima to survive the nuclear blast.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p> |
| 22:07 | <p>The Japanese government keeps the Genbaku Dome as a kind of "preserved ruin". It serves as a memorial to the 140,000 people who lost their lives, and as a warning to us living 80 years in the future. The Genbaku Dome is a powerful symbol of what happens when countries are hijacked by fanaticism, when negotiations become impossible (when people no longer talk and listen), and when people become desperate.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |
| 22:57 | <p>Thank you for listening to this special episode, dear listeners. As we mark 80 years since these events, it's crucial to remember their impact. Understanding difficult history helps us build a better future. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki weren't just historical events - they influenced how we think about war and peace, and how great discoveries in science come with great responsibilities.</p> <p>Until next time, dear listeners! Bye for now.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>   |

## How did it go?

Take a moment to revisit the notes that you took.

List here 3 words or expressions (minimum) that you would like to remember from this podcast. We recommend that you consult a free, online dictionary like

[www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com) to ensure that you have the correct definition and context.

### **WORDS/EXPRESSIONS THAT I WANT TO REMEMBER:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.