World War II was about to start in Europe in 1939. Scientist Albert Einstein wrote a letter to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In his letter, Einstein warned the President that German scientists were getting close to successfully splitting the uranium atom. A chain reaction of splitting uranium atoms could make a huge explosion. Einstein told Roosevelt that Nazi Germany might be able to build an atomic bomb. He recommended “watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action.”

In a secret project called the Manhattan Project, scientists in the United States began nuclear research. A lab was built at Los Alamos, New Mexico. Scientists hurried to be the first to create a bomb that would make a nuclear explosion. On July 16, 1945, a test atomic bomb was exploded successfully in New Mexico. Scientists watched from bunkers as a bright light flashed. A mushroom cloud shot 40,000 feet into the air. The tower holding the bomb was completely vaporized.

President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, and Harry S Truman took over as President of the United States. When he became President, Truman learned about the Manhattan Project. The Secretary of War gave Truman a report that said, “Within four months, we shall ... have completed the most terrible weapon ever known in human history.” A month later, Germany surrendered, and the war in Europe was over. But, World War II still raged in the Pacific, where the Allies were fighting the Japanese.

Allied troops had fought their way through the Pacific to Japan. On June 22, 1945, fighting between Japanese and American troops ended in Okinawa. Okinawa is an island about 350 miles from Japan. Over 100,000 Japanese troops were killed, and the Americans also lost thousands of soldiers. The next Allied move would be an invasion of Japan. Some said that invading Japan might cost the lives of a million American soldiers. Truman had to decide whether to use the atomic bomb against Japan. Thousands of innocent people would be killed, but it would end the war. Truman decided to use the bomb.

On August 6, 1945, Americans dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. As many as 75,000 people died instantly, and another 100,000 were injured. The Japanese refused to surrender. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki, Japan. On September 2, 1945, Japan surrendered. With this Allied victory over Japan, World War II ended.
The Atomic Bomb

Multiple Choice
Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

1. ______ wrote a letter to President Roosevelt warning him about the Nazis’ ability to build an atomic bomb.
   A. Adolf Hitler
   B. Harry Truman
   C. Albert Einstein
   D. Winston Churchill

2. The Manhattan Project was a secret ______ project.
   A. German
   B. Japanese
   C. Jewish
   D. American

3. After the war ended in Europe, the Allies fought the ________ in the Pacific.
   A. Germans
   B. Italians
   C. Chinese
   D. Japanese

4. The first atomic bomb was dropped on ________.
   A. Hiroshima, Japan
   B. Tokyo, Japan
   C. Nagasaki, Japan
   D. Berlin, Germany

5. After the ________ bomb was dropped on Japan, the Japanese government surrendered.
   A. first
   B. second
   C. third
   D. fourth
Crossword Puzzle
Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS
1. The second atomic bomb was dropped on ________, Japan.
3. Thousands of innocent people would be killed, but dropping the bomb would end the ________.
4. Einstein warned Roosevelt that German scientists had successfully split the ________ atom.
6. The United States built a lab in ________ ________ where scientists did nuclear research.
8. Some said that invading Japan might cost the lives of a/an ________ American soldiers.
9. World War II ended when Japan ________ to the Allies.

DOWN
1. Einstein said that ________ Germany might be able to build an atomic bomb.
2. President ________ took over after Roosevelt died.
5. In the successful testing of the atomic ________, the tower holding the bomb was completely vaporized.
7. When Germany surrendered, the war in ________ was over.
Use the map to answer the following questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.

1. Name three places on the map that were not under Japanese control.

   

2. Name the sites of three major battles.

   

3. Name two places the Allies had advanced to by 1945.

   

The Atomic Bomb

Map – World War II in the Pacific
True/False

Decide if each statement is true or false, and write “true” or “false” in the blank.

1. The Manhattan Project was a secret American project to build an atomic bomb.  
   ________

2. After the first bomb was dropped on Japan, the Japanese government surrendered.  
   ________

3. World War II ended when the Allies surrendered to Japan.  
   ________

4. The Nazis built a lab in New Mexico where scientists did nuclear research.  
   ________

5. Dropping the atomic bomb ended World War I.  
   ________

Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

6. Some said that invading Japan might cost the lives of a __________ American soldiers.
   
   A. hundred
   B. thousand
   C. million
   D. billion

7. When __________ surrendered, the war in Europe was over.
   
   A. Italy
   B. Japan
   C. the United States
   D. Germany

Short Answer

Answer the following question in complete sentences.

8. What decision did President Truman have to make?

________________________________________________________________________
In October of 1949, after years of civil war, Mao Zedong and the Communists gained control of China. They set up a totalitarian state called the People’s Republic of China. Mao promised to build a new, strong China and to end foreign control of Chinese industries.

Mao believed in a communist economic system called Marxism. Under this system, all lands, mines, factories, and businesses would be owned by all the people. There would be no private property, and all goods and services would be shared equally. People who believed in this type of system thought that if the government controlled industry, poverty would end and everyone would be equal.

Chinese society always had been made up mostly of peasants who worked on farms. However, before Mao’s rule, Chinese farmers owned no land. Instead, landlords owned the land. Mao’s forces took the land from the landlords and split it up among the peasants. Any landlords who argued with this policy were killed.

The Communists wanted to turn China into a modern, industrial nation. The government brought all private companies under government ownership. It made a five-year plan to improve industry. By 1957, China’s businesses, including the coal, electric, and steel businesses, had improved drastically.

After this success, Mao planned another program called the Great Leap Forward. Under this plan, farmers would work together on large farms called communes. Each commune was made up of thousands of acres of land and had about 25,000 people working on it. The people worked the land together. They ate together in large communal dining rooms and slept in dormitories.

However, peasants had no reason to work hard when they could not profit from their work. The commune system slowed down farming, and bad weather added to the problems. Soon, there was not enough food to feed all the people. A great famine took place, and between 1959 and 1961, millions of Chinese people starved to death. The Great Leap Forward had failed, and the government got rid of the program.

Mistakes like the Great Leap Forward left many Chinese unhappy with communism. Mao made several major errors during the time he led China. However, many saw him as the revolutionary leader who saved their country. Today, although it is still a communist nation, China has more moderate leadership and has taken on more capitalistic ideas.
Communism Comes to China

Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

1. Mao Zedong believed in a communist economic system called __________.
   A. Marxism
   B. capitalism
   C. socialism
   D. fascism

2. The Communists wanted to turn China into a/an __________ nation.
   A. agricultural, peasant
   B. modern, industrial
   C. old-fashioned, traditional
   D. modern, capitalistic

3. Under Mao’s plan, called the Great Leap Forward, __________.
   A. farmers worked together in communes
   B. peasants had no reason to work hard
   C. millions of Chinese people starved to death
   D. all of the above

4. In a Marxist economic system, there is no __________.
   A. land
   B. industry
   C. private property
   D. all of the above

5. Each commune had about __________ people working on it.
   A. 2
   B. 25
   C. 250
   D. 25,000
Communism Comes to China

Crossword Puzzle
Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS
1. Peasants had no reason to work hard when they could not _______ from their work.
5. Mistakes like the Great Leap Forward left many Chinese unhappy with ________.
8. China's coal, electric, and steel _______ improved drastically.
9. People who believed in Marxism thought that if the _______ controlled industry, poverty would end and everyone would be equal.
10. Mao promised to end _______ control of Chinese industries.

DOWN
2. In the great _______, millions of Chinese people starved to death.
3. Mao's forces took land from the landlords and split it among the ________.
4. In communes, people ate together in large dining rooms and slept in ________.
6. After years of civil war, ________ ________ and the Communists gained control of China.
7. Mao Zedong set up a totalitarian state called the People's Republic of ________.
Communism Comes to China

Time Line – China Under Mao Zedong

Use the time line to answer the following questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.

1949
• Mao Zedong announces the birth of the People’s Republic of China and pledges that China will be “independent ... prosperous, and strong.”

1958
• Mao launches the Great Leap Forward, a communal farming system.

1959–1961
• A great famine hits China, and 30 million people starve to death.

1966
• Mao starts the Cultural Revolution, which is supposed to renew the revolutionary spirit in China. Mao thinks young Chinese should experience revolution as his generation did. Thousands of people are killed, and China’s economy is hurt.

1976
• Mao Zedong dies. China is ruled by more moderate leaders.

1. What was the Cultural Revolution?

2. How many years did Mao Zedong rule China?

3. What happened in 1949?
True/False
Decide if each statement is true or false, and write “true” or “false” in the blank.

_________ 1. Mao Zedong set up a totalitarian state called the People’s Republic of China.

_________ 2. Mistakes like the Great Leap Forward left many Chinese unhappy with capitalism.

_________ 3. Mao took land from the peasants and gave it to landlords.

_________ 4. Mao believed that if the government controlled industry, poverty would end and everyone would be equal.

_________ 5. In communes, people worked together in large factories.

Multiple Choice
Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

☐ 6. Under Mao Zedong, China’s ______ business improved drastically.
   A. coal
   B. electric
   C. steel
   D. all of the above

☐ 7. In the great famine, ______ of Chinese people starved to death.
   A. hundreds
   B. thousands
   C. millions
   D. billions

Short Answer
Answer the following question in complete sentences.

8. What was the Great Leap Forward?