

## Cross-Disciplinary

### Linus Pauling: A Life Well Spent

Read the following paragraphs, and complete the exercises below.

In 1946, the year after the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II, Albert Einstein formed the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists. The goal of the committee was to make the public aware of the dangers of atomic weapons.

Despite the warnings of the scientists, both the United States and the Soviet Union continued to make and test nuclear weapons. But at least one member of Einstein's committee, Linus Pauling, did not give up. Pauling and his wife gave hundreds of lectures each year, working to increase public awareness.

Pauling's concerns were very serious. Nuclear testing in the atmosphere produced radiation that could cause birth defects, cancer, and other diseases for several generations of people. If used in an all-out war, weapons as powerful as those that were being developed could destroy civilization.

Linus Pauling was awarded the 1962 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts, which led to a nuclear test-ban treaty in 1963. While he continued to do scientific and medical research for the rest of his life, Pauling could not ignore the dangers of war and nuclear weapons. As a result, he made important contributions to the world as a scientist and as a humanitarian.

#### EXERCISES

1. Explain Pauling's concerns about nuclear testing and nuclear weapons.

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2. Is a scientific understanding of nuclear weapons and their effects an important part of making informed decisions about them? Explain your answer.

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3. Pauling expressed this belief about the social responsibility of scientists: "I think that scientists . . . should help their fellow citizens to understand what the issues are and how they look at it." Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.

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