Unit 6

Title: “Weapons of the Spirit”

Suggested Time: 6-7 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RI.9.1, RI.9.2, RI.9.4, RI.9.5, RI.9.6, RI.9.10; W.9.2, W.9.4, W.9.9; SL 9.1; L.9.1, L.9.2, L.9.4, L.9.5

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Principles should be steadfast, though circumstance and time can influence how we communicate them.

Although we may compromise our principles for the greater good during times of war, such compromise can result in feelings of regret.

True power lies not in military might, but in “a will governed by true conviction” (451).

Einstein’s use of language in these four pieces is shaped by his different purposes for writing, reflecting his beliefs, as well as conveying the tension between his beliefs and actions, and finally his regret.

Synopsis

This lesson consists of four short works by Albert Einstein. In the first piece, an interview from 1931, he urges people to channel their energy toward peace rather than war. In the second piece, a letter dated 1939, he warns President Franklin D. Roosevelt that Nazi Germany is trying to develop atomic bombs and asks that the U.S. government help scientists create similar weapons. In the third piece, written in 1950, Einstein urges governments to renounce policies of violence. In the fourth piece, an essay written in 1952, Einstein explains why he wrote the letter to Roosevelt and states his belief that preparing for war makes war inevitable.

The four short texts, taken together, illustrate the development of his thinking regarding the use of weapons and his beliefs about war. **Please note: Texts should be read in a different order than in the book. They should be read chronologically, in the order they were produced so that the sequence is: *Weapons of the Spirit, Letter to Roosevelt, The Arms Race,* and *On the Abolition of the Threat of War.***

1. Read the entire selection (all four pieces), keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the texts while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the first selection, *Weapons of the Spirit*, independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions: Weapons of the Spirit** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| According to Einstein, what are the wrong types of battles? | The wrong types of battles are those that are over imaginary geographical lines, racial prejudices, private greed, and pseudo-patriotism. (pg. 447, paragraph 1). |
| What evidence can you find to explain what Einstein means when he says, “Men should continue to fight, but they should fight for things worthwhile…”? | Einstein states that we should use the resources we spend on war to fight to raise the standard of living, fight for peace, fight to avert the economic catastrophe of worldwide unemployment. (Pg. 447, paragraphs 2-4) |
| In the first sentence of “Weapons of the Spirit” (447), Einstein uses the phrase, “…eradicate the combative instinct.” He closes by saying, “…the greatest of all causes [is] goodwill among men and peace on earth” (447). Einstein indicates that war breaks things down while the pursuit of “constructive tasks” promotes peace and goodwill. How does his use of war imagery to talk about the pursuit of peaceful endeavors impact the reader’s perception of the text that follows? Give examples of language choices throughout the text that contribute to the overall meaning and tone. | Einstein’s language in the first sentence is very forceful and concrete (“eradicate”, “combat”). This creates an emphatic tone and sets up the expectation that he is very passionate about what he is going to say. Throughout the text, he continues to use imagery of war to talk about the pursuit of peace (447, paragraph 1 – “…weapons of the spirit, not shrapnel…”; paragraph 2 – “power unleashed in war applied to constructive tasks”; paragraph 2 – “…a fraction of the money they exploded in hand grenades…would suffice to raise the standard of living…”; paragraph 3 - “heroic sacrifices for the cause of peace…”). The juxtaposition of war and peace throughout the selection creates a tension in the text that is resolved in the final sentence where “goodwill among men and peace on earth” are the final outcomes. |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | Page 447 – eradicate  Page 447 – suffice  Page 447 – catastrophe  Page 447 – goodwill  Page 447 - constructive | Page 447 - avert |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | Page 447 – belligerents | Page 447 – ungrudgingly |

1. Students read the second selection, *Letter to President Roosevelt*, independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions: Letter to President Roosevelt** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| Early in the letter, Einstein says he will present facts and recommendations about how the president should proceed in relation to the development of uranium as a new energy source. What are the facts he presents? What does he recommend for each fact? | **Fact**: Scientists are working on nuclear chain reactions using uranium, which will lead to the construction of bombs.  **Recommendation**: The Administration should stay in contact with the scientists.  **Fact**: The U.S has poor sources of uranium.  **Recommendation:** The U.S. needs to secure a good source of uranium.  **Fact:** The research on uranium is being done in universities, on limited budgets.  **Recommendation:**  The Administration needs to provide additional funding. |
| Why does Einstein state that “Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration”? | Watchfulness and potential quick action are necessary because the research will lead to the construction of very powerful, destructive bombs (paragraph 3) and the Germans have rich supplies of uranium ore and are also duplicating the American work on uranium nuclear chain reactions (last paragraph), which means they could develop the bomb first and use it against the U.S. |
| In the first selection, *Weapons of the Spirit*, Einstein uses verbs such as eradicate, fight, unleashed, exploded, and avert (447). In the second selection, the letter to President Roosevelt, Einstein uses verbs such as may, would, might, should, seem, and appear (448-449). How does his verb use contribute to the tone of each piece? Cite specific examples from each text to support your answer. | The strong verbs in the first piece indicate Einstein’s strong feelings on his topic [that men should “fight for things worthwhile… (447, paragraph 1)”] They lend an emphatic, even aggressive tone to the piece.  The use of modal and linking verbs in the second piece creates a more tentative, less assertive tone. A bomb “could be achieved” (leaving open the possibility that it could also not be achieved); the President “may think it advisable, (449)” (but then again, he may not…). |
| What tone do Einstein’s diction and syntax (in particular his use of passive voice and conditional language such as “may” and “might”) establish? How does his use of language impact the reader’s perception of his message in the second piece?  Einstein never directly states that the President should pursue the creation of a bomb, but it is clear that he is urging the President to do so in light of Germany’s activities. What language does Einstein use to get his message across? | Einstein’s diction and syntax in this piece remove the conviction from his voice and the urgency from his message. The tone is less assertive, perhaps in part because he is only making recommendations to someone with more authority than himself [“…you *may* think it advisable…(449, paragraph 5)”; “One possible way of you achieving this *might* be…(449, paragraph 5)”]. Another reason the tone is less assertive, especially when compared to the tone of the first piece, may be that Einstein himself feels less conviction about what he is advising the President to do. It reveals Einstein’s reluctance to violate his own set of values by recommending steps that support war. In the first piece, he declares himself a pacifist. In the second piece, he is advising the President to take steps that would lead to the creation of highly destructive weapons of war. When he says, “…it has been made *probable* … that it *may* become *possible* to set up a nuclear chain reaction… (448, paragraph 2)” and “…it is *conceivable*  -- though much *less certain* – that extremely powerful bombs of a new type *may* thus be constructed.… However, such bombs *might* very well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air, (449, paragraph 3)” he uses passive voice and conditional language to indicate possibilities rather than certainties.  He never directly advises the President to pursue the creation of the bomb, he merely suggests that it might be advisable to pursue the research, and hints that Germany may already be doing the same when he says, “I understand that Germany has actually stopped the sale of uranium… That she should have taken such early action might perhaps be understood on the ground that the son of the German Under-Secretary of State…is attached to the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium is now being repeated. (449)” By providing the President with simple facts about Germany’s activities right after he has given a description of the destructive potential of an atomic bomb, Einstein is offering a warning that if the U.S. doesn’t create the bomb, Germany will do so. |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | Page 448 – element  Page 449 – ores  Page 449 – comprise | Page 449 – conceivable |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | Page 448 - uranium  Page 449 – phenomenon  Page 449 – Under-Secretary of State | Page 448 – manuscript  Page 449 – industrial |

1. Students read the third selection, *The Arms Race*, independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions: The Arms Race** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| What is the impasse to which Einstein refers in paragraph 2 of *The Arms Race* (451)? | The impasse is the arms race, where “each step appears as the inevitable consequence of the one that went before” and leads toward “general annihilation (451, paragraph 1).” |
| In *Weapons of the Spirit* (447), Einstein acknowledges that man has a “combative instinct,” but advises that this instinct should be channeled into “constructive tasks.” How is the idea of this combative instinct communicated in *The Arms Race*? Provide specific examples from the texts to support your answer. | In *Weapons of the Spirit,* Einstein expresses the belief that men should channel the combative instinct into fighting for things that are worthwhile rather than fighting destructive wars.  In *The Arms Race*, Einstein shows how the “combative instinct” can take over even when men take actions to prevent war. “The arms race…” he notes, “…initiated as a preventive measure” (451). However, attempting to prevent war by preparing for it only feeds the combative instinct and leads to “…means of mass destruction…being perfected with feverish haste….” (451). He points out that “…although we have vanquished an external enemy, we have proved unable to free ourselves from the war mentality” (452). Creating bombs in the pursuit of peace is the opposite of channeling the combative instinct into “constructive tasks.”  In both pieces, Einstein insists that the end goal must be “peaceful coexistence” and “goodwill among men and peace on earth.” |
| How do the ideas Einstein expresses in *The Arms Race* connect to his letter to President Roosevelt, and how did the political climate at the time each piece was written affect how he presented those ideas? How do the two pieces both support and contradict each other? Provide specific examples from the texts to support your answers. | Both *The Arms Race* (written in 1950) and Einstein’s letter to President Roosevelt (written August 2, 1939) were written during times of escalating hostilities between nations. The letter was written just before the start of World War II (448). Einstein points out that the Germans are gathering uranium and working on the same types of atomic chain reactions as the Americans. He urges the President to take action, to move forward with the creation of the atomic bomb so that the United States does not fall behind Germany in the creation of such a powerful weapon. *The Arms Race* was written a few years after the end of World War II. The United States and the Soviet Union had “vanquished an external enemy” (451) but were now engaged in a power struggle with each other. Einstein’s frustration with this race to create and amass more and more destructive weapons is clear when he asks, “Is there any way out of this impasse created by man himself?” (451), and points out that, “We shall never achieve real peace as long as every step is taken with a possible future conflict in view…” (451).  The two pieces both support and contradict each other.  How they support each other: In *The Arms Race*, Einstein talks about how nations, in an effort to deter attacks from other nations, create more and more devastating weapons. “On both sides, means of mass destruction are being perfected with feverish haste and behind walls of secrecy. And now the public has been advised that the production of the hydrogen bomb is the new goal which will probably be accomplished.” In the letter to Roosevelt, Einstein recommends that the President support the development of uranium chain reactions leading to the production of the atom bomb, “to speed up the experimental work, which is at present being carried on….” He cautions that “Certain aspects of the situation …seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action…,” and points out that “Germany has actually stopped the sale of uranium…,” calling this step an “early action.” In both selections, the idea that weapons must be produced to prepare for the aggression of a foreign nation is an important one.  How they contradict each other: In *The Arms Race*, Einstein warns that this type of escalation is an “impasse” that will only lead to “general annihilation,” and expresses the opinion that the first goal must be “to do away with mutual fear and distrust. Solemn renunciation of the policy of violence…is without doubt necessary.” In the letter to the President, he is reacting to what he perceives as a direct threat in the potential for Germany to make a bomb that “might very well destroy [a] whole port together with some of the surrounding territory.” He advises the President to engage in the race to create the bomb. In *The Arms Race*, he directly opposes such escalation. The first step should be “mutual trust and, only secondarily…institutions such as courts of justice and the police.” He advises us, “This holds true for nations as well as for individuals.” |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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| **Meaning can be learned from context** | Page 451 – preventive measure  Page 451 – annihilation  Page 452 – inevitable  Page 452 – vanquished  Page 452 – coexistence | Page 451 – feverish  Page 452 – inexorable |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | Page 451 – hysterical  Page 452 – external enemy (context of WWII)  Page 452 – mutual | Page 452 – impasse  Page 452 – prevailing  Page 452 - renunciation |

1. Students read the fourth selection, *On the Abolition of the Threat of War*, independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions: On the Abolition of the Threat...** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| According to Einstein, why do nations “…feel compelled to prepare for war?” | Nations feel compelled to prepare for war because they do not want to be left behind in the general armament race that takes place when war remains as an option for solving conflicts (rather than “peaceful decisions [made] on a legal basis). |
| In paragraph 4, Einstein states, “Under these circumstances the fight against *means* has no chance of success.” What does “*means*” refer to? How do you know? How does the word “detestable” show how Einstein feels about the “means” to which he refers? | *Means* refers to weapons of war. In paragraph 3, Einstein states, “They feel obliged to prepare all possible means, even the most detestable ones, so as not to be left behind in the general armament race.” He says this immediately after pointing out that nations feel compelled to prepare for war, so the reader understands that he is continuing to reference wars. Additionally, the use of the word “detestable” shows Einstein’s distaste for these *means,* which he expresses earlier when talking about the atomic bomb: “I was fully aware of the terrible dander to mankind…to kill in war is not a whit better than to commit ordinary murder.” Thus, *means* are weapons of war, in particular devastating atomic bombs.  To detest something is to hate it, to find it abominable. If “means” are weapons of war, “detestable means” would be the worst kind of weapons, the kind that pose a “terrible danger to mankind,” and that would result in “universal destruction.” Einstein finds such weapons to be abominations. |
| How did Einstein feel about his part in producing the atomic bomb? What language in Einstein’s writings give away his feelings about what he has done? | Einstein seems to feel guilty about his part in producing the atomic bomb. At first, he tries to distance himself from its creation by saying his only part in it was to sign “a letter to President Roosevelt, pressing the need for experiments on a large scale in order to explore the possibilities for the production of an atomic bomb.” In fact, though his language in the letter was tentative, using words like “seem,” “appear,” “might,” and “possible,” he was actually encouraging the President to actively support the development of the bomb by ensuring adequate uranium supplies, funding, and cooperation between universities and private laboratories. He goes on to point out that he was aware of the danger that such a bomb presented, but felt “forced” to the step of recommending the development of the bomb because of the German advances in that arena. Again, he wants to distance himself from the creation; circumstance “forced” him to do it – he had no choice. By stating that he knew about the danger to mankind such a bomb would pose, claiming he was forced into it, and then adding that “to kill in war is not a whit better than to commit ordinary murder,” all within the space of one paragraph, Einstein makes himself complicit in the murders of those people killed by the atomic bomb. |
| In the first two paragraphs, Einstein provides a rationalization for his participation in the creation of the atomic bomb. What is his position at the end of the piece? Using specific references to the text, describe the shift in Einstein’s thinking. | At the end of the selection, Einstein states that, “One has to be resolved not to let himself be forced to actions that run counter to this goal [the goal of the radical abolition of wars].”  In paragraph 2, Einstein identifies himself as a “convinced pacifist” who was forced into taking steps that led towards war, and thus the murder of many thousands of people. In the next paragraph, he points out that nations will feel forced to such steps as long as they “are not resolved to abolish war” altogether. Preparing military defenses that are more advanced and more terrible than those of neighboring nations can only lead to war, according to Einstein. Peace cannot be assured in this way – only peaceful means can lead to peace.  He seems to be saying that if he had it to do again, he would not have let himself be forced into taking steps that ran counter to the goal of the abolition of war. In the end, he wishes his “conviction [had been] stronger than a seemingly invincible material power.” |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | Page 450 – pacifist  Page 450 – obliged  Page 451 - liberation | Page 450 – means  Page 450 – abolish |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | Page 450 – whit  Page 450 – compelled  Pace 450 – armament race  Page 451- invincible | Page 450 – radical  Page 451 – severe  Page 451 – conscious  Page 451 – testimony  Page 451 – conviction  Page 451 – material power |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt
  + *In 1954, Einstein stated, “I made one great mistake in my life…when I signed the letter to President Roosevelt recommending that atom bombs be made….” (inset on page 450). What beliefs does Einstein hold that would lead him to state that signing the letter was a mistake that violated his own set of values? How does his use of language in each piece reveal what he believes and how those beliefs developed over time? How does the expression of his beliefs shift from text to text? Compose an informative response using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence from all four texts to support your position.*
* Teacher Instructions

1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should remind students to use any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions.

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| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Page number*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “Men should fight for things worthwhile…. Their arms should be weapons of the spirit, not shrapnel and tanks.”  “Think of what a world we could build if the power unleashed in war were applied to constructive tasks!” | 447 | In signing the letter, Einstein was advocating for the creation of a material weapon in the same class as shrapnel and tanks. His true belief is that the men should fight to build humanity up, not tear it apart. The language he uses in this selection is very strong, in fact, it uses a lot of the imagery of war, and even foreshadows some of the language he will use later when talking about the power of the atomic bomb. Such language emphasizes his conviction that there are some things for which men should passionately fight. |
| “…it has been made probable…that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction….Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future.”  “This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable…that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed.”  “In view of this situation you may think it desirable…” | 448-449 | In his recommendation to President Roosevelt that the United States undertake the development of the atomic bomb, Einstein’s language is much less emphatic than when he talks about the pursuit of peace and constructive tasks. He does not say that nuclear chain reactions are going to happen in the near future, he says they “may” happen. He does not say that such a chain reaction will lead to the construction of bombs, but that it “would” lead to the possibility of the construction of bombs. He does not positively state that the President should take particular actions, only that the President “might think it desirable.” In using such uncertain language, Einstein takes the teeth out of his message. His recommendation becomes more of a weak warning and gentle suggestion than an encouragement to act. |
| “All of us…must realize that, although we have vanquished an external enemy we have proved unable to free ourselves from the war mentality. We shall never achieve real peace as long as every step is taken with a possible future conflict in view…” | 452 | Here, Einstein echoes an idea put forth in the first selection, written almost 20 years earlier: “It may not be possible in one generation to eradicate the combative instinct (447).” Even after the destruction wrought upon the world by the war, man has not given up on the war mentality. Einstein emphasizes that trying to ensure peace by preparing for war will only result in more war. Such preparation runs counter to his core beliefs as a pacifist that “only the radical abolition of wars and of the threat of war can help” (450). In signing the letter to Roosevelt, Einstein engaged in this war mentality and acted against his own set of values. |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves that they are to write a response that analyzes how Einstein’s language reveals his core beliefs and how the expression of these beliefs shifts from text to text over time.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (i.e. modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.

* Sample Answer:

Einstein was, in his own words, “a convinced pacifist” (450). His writings over the course of twenty years support this assertion. He repeatedly advocates for peaceful pursuits, for the “Abolition of the Threat of War,” (450) for making “heroic sacrifices for the cause of peace” (447). There is just one exception to this advocacy for peace: when Einstein writes the letter to President Roosevelt advising him to take steps toward the creation of the atomic bomb.

In the first piece, *Weapons of the Spirit*, Einstein states that “Men should fight for things worthwhile….Their arms should be weapons of the spirit, not shrapnel and tanks” (447). He believes that mankind has an impulse to fight, but that that impulse can be channeled into doing things that build humanity up, rather than tear it apart. “Think of what a world we could build if the power unleashed in war were applied to constructive tasks” (447). The force of his convictions is revealed in this piece through his language. He uses the imagery of war to talk about the pursuit of peace, something for which men should passionately fight. His language here also foreshadows some of the language he will use later to communicate the urgency of his message.

In his letter to Roosevelt, written eight years after *Weapons of the* Spirit, Einstein urges the President to undertake the development of the atomic bomb. To underscore his urgency, he speaks of the potential destructive power the atomic bomb. “Vast amounts of power… would be generated. … extremely powerful bombs of a new type may be thus constructed” (448). In speaking about the power of the atomic bomb, Einstein echoes the words he wrote in 1931, “…if the power unleashed in war were applied to constructive tasks” (447), only this time, rather than encouraging “constructive tasks,” he is advising the construction of a destructive force. Because he is a pacifist, Einstein seems to be contradicting his own set of principles in advising the President to pursue creation of such a weapon, but as he later states, he felt forced into it by circumstance. The danger that Germany would create the bomb first caused him to act against his own conscience. Although some of his language communicates the urgency of the situation, most of his language in the letter is much less emphatic than when he talks about the pursuit of peace and constructive tasks. He does not say that nuclear chain reactions are going to happen in the near future; he says they “may” happen. “…it has been made probable…that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction…” (448). He does not say that such a chain reaction will lead to the construction of bombs, but that it “would” lead to the *possibility* of the construction of bombs. “This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable…that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may be thus constructed” (448). He does not positively state that the President should take particular actions, only that the President might want to think about it. “In view of this situation, you may think it desirable…” (449). In using such uncertain language, Einstein takes the teeth out of his message. His recommendation becomes more of a weak warning and gentle suggestion than an encouragement to act. Though the danger of the situation forces him to write the letter, the voice of his conscience softens his message.

A few years after the end of World War II, Einstein wrote again about the pursuit of peace in *The Arms Race.* Here, Einstein echoes an idea put forth in the first selection, written almost 20 years earlier, that “It may not be possible in one generation to eradicate the combative instinct” (447). Even after the destruction wrought upon the world by the war, man has not given up on the war mentality. Instead, the United States and Soviet Union, who were allies during the war, find themselves enemies engaged in a struggle for power. Einstein states, “All of us…must realize that, although we have vanquished an external enemy we have proved unable to free ourselves from the war mentality” (452). Einstein points out that the arms race was started as a “preventive measure” (452), a way to ensure that no such war would happen again. However, trying to ensure peace by preparing for war is foolish. The combative instinct will take over and lead to more war. “We shall never achieve real peace as long as every step is taken with a possible future conflict in view…” (452). Such preparation runs counter to Einstein’s core beliefs as a pacifist that “only the radical abolition of wars and of the threat of war can help” (450).

It is in the final piece, *On the Abolition of the Threat of War*, that Einstein makes this bold statement of his beliefs. He has moved from advocating for “fighting for things worthwhile” (447) in 1931, to advocating for “the radical abolition of wars and the threat of war” (450); from the idealism of fighting with “weapons of the spirit,” to the pragmatism of “…the fight against means [having] no chance of success” (450) in the face of nations competing for dominance in the arms race. It is in this final piece that we see how the experiences of the past 20 years have influenced the evolution of Einstein’s ideas. He opens by acknowledging that he had a part in producing the atomic bomb, though he gives the impression that it was only a small part when he says, “My part in producing the atomic bomb consisted in a single act: I signed a letter to President Roosevelt, pressing the need for experiments on a large scale in order to explore the possibilities for the production of an atomic bomb” (450). He continues to distance himself from the actual creation of the bomb, as he did in the letter, focusing on the idea that he was only recommending the exploration of possibilities. The reason for his distance becomes clear in the next paragraph when he says, “To my mind, to kill in war is not a whit better than to commit ordinary murder” (450). By making the connection between the creation of the bomb and killing in war being the same as murder, Einstein reveals how guilty he feels for writing the letter. He feels complicit in the murder of thousands of people.

Even though he says that he could do nothing else, it seems clear that looking back, Einstein regrets his choice. “One has to be resolved not to let himself be forced to actions that run counter to this goal [of the abolition of war]” (450). He admits that this type of resolve is difficult, but points out that it is not impossible. He points to Gandhi as an example of a person who refuses to take actions that run counter to the goals of pacifism, a person whose “…conviction is stronger than a seemingly invincible material power” (451). It is Gandhi’s example that helps Einstein reconcile his actions during the war with his core beliefs, leading him to state, in 1954, that signing the letter to Roosevelt was the one great mistake of his life; a mistake that had some justification, but a mistake nonetheless.

Additional Tasks

* *Einstein uses certain imagery, words and phrase repeatedly throughout the texts, though they were produced over a span of nearly 20 years. What are some of the repeating words and phrase, how does he use them in each piece, and what is the cumulative impact of their use on the reader?*

Answer: Einstein talks about “power unleashed in war” and “energy…spent in the World War (447)” in the first piece. This war imagery connects to his idea that men have a combative instinct, but that instinct can be channeled into constructive endeavors. He states that “We must be prepared to make the same heroic sacrifices for the cause of peace that we make ungrudgingly for the cause of war (447).”

We see some of the same language in the letter to the President when he talks about uranium being “turned into a new and important source of energy... (448).” This energy source would generate “vast amounts of power (449).” The potential for constructive use for this energy and power is there, but so is the destructive potential. As Einstein warns, “extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed (449).” In the third text, there is an echo of the idea man’s “combative instinct.” “Although we have vanquished an external enemy, we have proved unable to free ourselves from the war mentality (452).” Einstein still sees that man’s impulse is to fight, but again, he points out that there are some things worth fighting for. We must “do away with mutual fear and distrust (452).” In the final text, Einstein comes back to the idea of heroic sacrifice when he says that “Gandhi…has pointed the way. He has shown of what sacrifices people are capable once they have found the right way [the way of peace] (451).” In the end, Einstein’s insistence that the pursuit of peace is the only way for the world to survive is made all the more urgent through the power and energy of his delivery, through the consistency of his message that “a will governed by firm conviction is stronger than a seemingly invincible material power (451).”

* *Is it wiser to be true to your principles or to compromise your personal feelings to respond to circumstance?*

Answer: Einstein felt he had to compromise his principles when the threat of Germany developing the atomic bomb became imminent. He recommended that the President support the development of the atomic bomb. If he had done nothing, his failure to act might have led to death and destruction on a large scale for Germany’s enemies. However, he seems to regret his recommendation as it led to death and destruction on a large scale for an enemy of the United States. In an attempt to stave off death and destruction in one arena, he contributed to it in another. Had he stuck to his principles he may have avoided the guilt he seemed to feel for his participation in the event.

Note to Teacher:

* The amount of scaffolding provided during this lesson will, of course, depend on the history background knowledge and language use knowledge of students. This is true of any lesson, but especially true of this complex and powerful lesson.
* Depending upon the needs of your class, you may need to provide addition instruction in:
  + The historical context of each piece (what was going on in the world at the time; Ghandi and his struggle; etc.)
  + How verb tenses help convey meaning (in particular, the use of modal verbs)
  + Writer’s craft – how writing can reflect/convey both intended and unintended messages from an author

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**“Weapons of the Spirit”**

**Text 1: “Weapons of the Spirit”**

1. According to Einstein, what are the wrong types of battles? (Pg. 447)
2. What evidence can you find to explain what Einstein means when he says, “Men should continue to fight, but they should fight for things worthwhile…”? (Pg. 447)
3. In the first sentence of “Weapons of the Spirit” (447), Einstein uses the phrase, “…eradicate the combative instinct.” He closes by saying, “…the greatest of all causes [is] goodwill among men and peace on earth” (447). Einstein indicates that war breaks things down while the pursuit of “constructive tasks” promotes peace and goodwill. How does his use of war imagery to talk about the pursuit of peaceful endeavors impact the reader’s perception of the text that follows? Give examples of language choices throughout the text that contribute to the overall meaning and tone.

**Text 2: “Letter to Roosevelt”**

1. Early in the letter, Einstein says he will present facts and recommendations about how the president should proceed in relation to the development of uranium as a new energy source. What are the facts he presents? What does he recommend for each fact?
2. Why does Einstein state that “Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration”?
3. In the first selection, “Weapons of the Spirit”, Einstein uses verbs such as eradicate, fight, unleashed, exploded, and avert (447). In the second selection, the letter to President Roosevelt, Einstein uses verbs such as may, would, might, should, seem, and appear (448-449). How does his verb use contribute to the tone of each piece? Cite specific examples from each text to support your answer.
4. What tone do Einstein’s diction and syntax (in particular his use of passive voice and conditional language such as “may” and “might”) establish? How does his use of language impact the reader’s perception of his message in the second piece?
5. Einstein never directly states that the President should pursue the creation of a bomb, but it is clear that he is urging the President to do so in light of Germany’s activities. What language does Einstein use to get his message across?

**Text 3: “The Arms Race”**

1. What is the impasse to which Einstein refers in paragraph 2 of “The Arms Race”? (Pg. 451)
2. In “Weapons of the Spirit”(447), Einstein acknowledges that man has a “combative instinct,” but advises that this instinct should be channeled into “constructive tasks.” How is the idea of this combative instinct communicated in *The Arms Race*? Provide specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
3. How do the ideas Einstein expresses in “The Arms Race” connect to his letter to President Roosevelt, and how did the political climate at the time each piece was written affect how he presented those ideas? How do the two pieces both support and contradict each other? Provide specific examples from the texts to support your answers.

**Text 4: “On the Abolition of the Threat of War”**

1. According to Einstein, why do nations “…feel compelled to prepare for war?”
2. In paragraph 4, Einstein states, “Under these circumstances the fight against *means* has no chance of success.” What does “*means*” refer to? How do you know? How does the word “detestable” show how Einstein feels about the “means” to which he refers?
3. How did Einstein feel about his part in producing the atomic bomb? What language in Einstein’s writings give away his feelings about what he has done?
4. In the first two paragraphs, Einstein provides a rationalization for his participation in the creation of the atomic bomb. What is his position at the end of the piece? Using specific references to the text, describe the shift in Einstein’s thinking.