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Shaken not stirred: After his *Oppenheimer* triumph, Cillian Murphy (above) is in the running to play James Bond.

Do nuclear bombs make us safer? As Christopher Nolan's film *Oppenheimer* storms the Oscars, fears of nuclear war have returned.

What's happening?

On Sunday night, British director Christopher Nolan won the prize he had been waiting for his whole life: the **Academy Award** for Best Picture. His blockbuster film *Oppenheimer* picked up seven awards in all at this year's Oscars ceremony.

Oppenheimer explores the life of J Robert Oppenheimer: the American scientist who helped to create **nuclear weapons**.

Find out more

Oppenheimer's actions changed the world forever. In August 1945, the US government dropped two bombs on Japanese cities. Japan gave in and World War Two ended.

Afterwards, countries rushed to build their own. The **Soviet Union** and the United States entered an arms race, each attempting to have more and more nuclear weapons.

As a result the world is always at **risk** of nuclear war. A single nuclear weapon can destroy a city. Some think the world would be a better place if they were never invented.

Others think nuclear weapons have stopped another world war. The last 80 years have been quite peaceful. Some countries may have decided not to go to war, because they knew the other side had nuclear weapons.

And there is a problem for those who want to get rid of nuclear weapons. Other countries have them too. We cannot force everyone else to destroy them. And they could always just make new ones.

Do nuclear bombs make us safer?

Some say

Yes! Since 1945, there has not been another world war. Countries know it is a bad idea due to the risk of nuclear weapons. And so nuclear weapons have saved lives.

Some people say

"A world without nuclear weapons would be less stable and more dangerous for all of us."

**Margaret Thatcher (1925 – 2013),
British prime minister**

What do you think?

Others think

No! Nuclear weapons mean one person with their finger on one button can do a huge amount of damage. This does not make us safer.

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - How often do you think about war? How does it make you feel?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How do nuclear weapons work?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are Oppenheimer and could secretly stop the bomb from working. Do you?

5. Express

What do others believe? - In groups, write a speech calling on world leaders to give up nuclear weapons.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Design a poster campaigning for a film of your choice to win the Best Picture Oscar.

Glossary

Academy Award - Hollywood's most prestigious honour, awarded annually since 1929 by Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The Golden Globes is often seen to predict potential Academy Award winners.

Nuclear weapons - A bomb or other weapon that uses nuclear energy to cause a big explosion.

Soviet Union - Officially the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). A powerful group of communist republics, the biggest being Russia, that existed from 1922 to 1991.

Risk - The chance or possibility of something bad happening.