

INTERACTIVE GLOSSARY

ONLINE RESOURCES



Find visual presentation of the glossary terms with this symbol on ww2classroom.org.



CHAIN REACTION

When a single **nuclear reaction** leads to additional and ongoing **reactions**, with the possibility of becoming self-sustaining.



CRITICAL MASS

The amount of atomic material required to sustain nuclear **fission**.



ISOTOPE

Variants of chemical elements that have the same number of protons but different numbers of neutrons, which means that different **isotopes** can have the same atomic number (based on number of protons) but have a different mass number.

IMPLOSION-METHOD

A detonation method in which explosive devices surround a core of nuclear material, such as **plutonium**, that is near the point of **critical mass**. With the triggering of the devices, the imploding force squeezes the **plutonium** pit, forcing **critical mass** and resulting in an external explosion.



FISSION

A **nuclear reaction** in which an atom's nucleus splits into smaller parts.

GUN-METHOD

Fission-based weapons designed to detonate when a piece of sub-critical material shoots into supercritical material and ignites an explosion.

NUCLEAR REACTION

When, through the process of **fission** or radioactive decay, the nucleus of an atom changes into a different element.



PLUTONIUM

A radioactive element with the atomic number 94, produced in **uranium** reactors.

TRINITITE

The green-colored, lightly radioactive glassy residue created during the Trinity Test, in which the heat of the nuclear blast melted the sand within the bomb test site.



URANIUM

A naturally-occurring radioactive element used for the production of nuclear energy. The most common **isotope** used is U-235.