Developing a Hypothesis

The nuclear meltdown at Chernobyl, even more than my launch of Perestroika (reforms), was perhaps the real cause of the collapse of the Soviet Union five years later. Indeed, the Chernobyl catastrophe was an historic turning point: there was the era before the disaster, and there is the very different era that has followed.

- Mikhail Gorbachev

Main Research Question:

Do you agree with Mikhail Gorbachev? Could the realities of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster have contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union?

Brainstorm!

**GLASNOST**

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| Questions to think about | What do I think? |
| Soviet policy of open discussion of political and social issues. It was instituted by Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s and began the democratization of the Soviet Union**.**  **Hmm. How might this create a new reality for people living in the Soviet Union?** |  |
| Changes to the political structure of the Soviet Union occurred: the power of the Communist Party was reduced, and multi-candidate elections took place.  **Hmm. How might this create challenges for the political state?** |  |
| Permitted criticism of government officials and allowed the media free dissemination of news and information.  **Hmm. How might this influence what citizens' think is "real" during a disaster?** |  |

**Photo Credit:** chernobylgallery.com