



World War II and Pearl Harbor featuring the song “Remember Pearl Harbor”

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why did the United States officially stay out of the beginning of World War II and how did the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor change that?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will examine different artifacts related to the song “Remember Pearl Harbor” in order to be introduced to the historic significance of Pearl Harbor. Students will then analyze newspaper articles to develop arguments for and against the United States entering World War II before Pearl Harbor to understand America’s isolation policy. Students will also use newspaper clippings in an investigation to answer the question, “Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor?” Lastly, students will listen to interviews with American civilians in the days after Pearl Harbor and World War II veterans who were stationed at Pearl Harbor.



“Remember Pearl Harbor” sheet music from the National Air and Space Museum Library. By Don Reid and Sammy Kaye. Published by the Republic Music Corp, 1941.

Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Americans were divided on what role the United States should have in World War II, if any role at all. Since the end of World War I, the dominating sentiment in American foreign policy was isolationism. In the 1930s, many Americans supported staying out of other countries’ affairs and focusing on problems at home, like the Great Depression.

Isolation sentiment was still the dominant point of view as World War II progressed throughout 1940 and 1941. Most isolationists were disillusioned with the United States’ role in World War I and did not believe the country needed to involve itself in European affairs again. Many who supported isolationism believed that neutrality, combined with shoring up the U.S. military defenses and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, would keep America safe.

Those who supported intervention argued that the Allies were a critical barrier between Germany and its influence into the Western Hemisphere. If the Allies were to fall, Germany would gain control of a significant part of territory and resources in the world. Some interventionists also believed that Germany would not stop its territorial expansion in Europe and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans would not be enough protection for the U.S. Therefore, interventionists called for action on the part of the United States to not only help the Allies but also as protection for the United States. Isolationism won out until the attack on Pearl Harbor, although President Roosevelt

pushed to aid the Allies by providing supplies through the Cash-and-Carry policy and the Lend-Lease Act.

Before the 1930s, the relationship between Japan and the United States was considered friendly according to newspapers from the time period and historians. But as Japan expanded their sphere of influence into China and other countries in Asia in the 1930s, that relationship soured. As World War II progressed into 1941 and Japan continued its empire building, the United States set economic and trade restrictions on oil and other resources for Japan as a response. The attack on Pearl Harbor was in part a response to these restrictions as well as an attempt to immobilize the U.S. Pacific Fleet so they could not interfere with Japan's invasion of British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies.

On December 8, 1941, the U.S. declared war on Japan and in turn the Axis powers because of their alliance pact, bringing the U.S. into World War II. The song "Remember Pearl Harbor" was written in the week after the attack and could be considered a battle cry as well as a motivational plea in the fighting that was to come in World War II.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- United States policy of isolationism leading up to World War II
- Why World War II started
- The Allied Powers and the Axis Powers
- Why the United States did not formally participate in World War II at the beginning
- Events leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and its impact on the United States

2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to describe the United States isolationism policy leading up to the Pearl Harbor attack and how that attack changed public opinion on joining World War II through the examination of music artifacts, newspaper articles, veteran interviews, and interviews with people on the street in the days following the attack.

ACTIVITIES

DISCLAIMER

This lesson contains primary source documents and other materials that may include terms and images reflecting the attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs of different times that today are considered offensive and demeaning. TeachRock does not endorse the views expressed in these documents, but recognizes the value such materials provide for historical inquiry. For guidance on introducing controversial historical materials into the classroom, we suggest reviewing this document from the Library of Congress. <https://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2011/11/dealing-with-difficult-subjects-in-primary-sources/>



MATERIALS NEEDED

- An internet accessible device for each student
- Sticky notes, two different colors
- Tape
- Highlighters

PREPARATION

1. Distribute **Slideshow 1 - "Remember Pearl Harbor" Artifacts** to each student electronically.
2. Distribute **Handout - Pearl Harbor Interviews** to each student electronically.

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Divide students into groups of four and ask them to open **Slideshow 1 - "Remember Pearl Harbor" Artifacts**. Instruct students to choose one of the artifacts to analyze so that all four are covered in each group. Allow time for students to analyze their assigned artifacts.
2. Display **Image 1, Artifact Discussion Prompts** and instruct students to answer the questions in a group discussion.
3. Ask students to share what was discussed in their groups with the class.
4. Inform students that on December 7th 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service attacked the U.S. Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii during World War II. The war began in September 1939 and at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack the United States was not officially participating in World War II. In the rest of the lesson, students will examine why the United States did not officially join the war until 1941 and how the attack on Pearl Harbor changed that.

PROCEDURE

Part 1: Isolation vs Intervention

1. Display **Image 2 - Germany Expansion** and distribute **Handout - Beginning of World War II Timeline** to students and ask them to read the timeline. (*Students should hold onto the timeline to refer back to during Part 1 and Part 2 of the lesson.*) Then, ask students:
 - What factors led to the rise of the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler in Germany in the 1930s? (*Resentment of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the Allies policy of appeasement.*)
 - Can you think of anything else happening in the 1930s that might

have also led to the rise of the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler? (*the global Great Depression.*)

- What do you notice about the United States on the timeline? (*It does not say they were involved in what was going on.*)
 - America did not officially join the war until December 1941, what reasons might the U.S. have had to stay out of the war? (*The U.S. was still in the Great Depression, World War I and its destruction in the minds of Americans, the desire to focus on issues at home.*)
2. Ask students: (*If helpful, ask a student to record answers on the board for students to refer back to.*)
 - What does the word “isolate” mean?
 - What do you think “isolationism” might mean in American foreign policy?
 - What does the word “intervene” mean?
 - What do you think “interventionism” might mean in American foreign policy?
 3. Explain to students that between September 1939 when the Allies declared war on Germany and December 1941, there was a lot of debate over whether the United States should join the war in Europe.
 4. Divide the class into two groups and distribute **Handout - Isolationism Primary Sources** to one group and **Handout - Interventionism Primary Sources** to the other. Be sure to provide enough copies so that everyone in the group can view one of the primary sources.
 5. Display **Image 3, Isolation vs. Intervention Directions** and allow time for the group to complete the task. Then ask both sides to share their arguments with the class. Meanwhile have a student record the arguments on the board or digitally for students to refer back to.
 6. Ask students to contemplate what they heard and to choose a side that they agree with by asking the following question and providing the following directions:
 - Is there something you would want to hear again or review before making your decision?
 - Ask students to move to one side of the room for isolation and the other for intervention to vote.
 - Ask student volunteers to share why they made that decision.
 7. Display **Slideshow 2, Is it Isolationism or Interventionism?** and distribute two sticky notes to each student of different colors. Move through the presentation and ask students to read each slide and vote by using the sticky notes, is it isolationism or interventionism? If students raise different sticky note colors, stop and discuss why opinions differ.
 8. Distribute **Handout - “Arsenal of Democracy” Fireside Chat** as an Exit Ticket and ask students to read the excerpt and answer the questions.

Part 2: Pearl Harbor

1. Display **Slideshow 3, Pearl Harbor Introduction** and present the images and information about Pearl Harbor. Then ask students:



- What questions do you have? (*The intention here is that one question will be "Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor?" to segue into the next activity.*)
2. Display **Image 4, Investigation Board** and divide the class into groups of four to five. Distribute one copy of **Handout - Case File: Pearl Harbor Investigation**, tape, highlighters, and sticky notes to each group. Instruct student groups to follow the directions in the handout and create an investigation board like in the image displayed to answer the question, "Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor?"
 3. Ask student groups to share what they discovered in their investigation and their answer to the question. "Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor?". (*If time allows, ask one or more groups to present their board.*)
 4. Inform students that the United States declared war on Japan the day after Pearl Harbor; December 8, 1941, which brought the United States into World War II on the side of the Allies.
 5. Ask students to open **Handout - Pearl Harbor Interviews** on their device and to follow the directions to explore interviews with American citizens in the days after Pearl Harbor and with World War II veterans. After an allotted amount of time, ask students to share what they discovered.

SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Play the this clip from C-Span. Then display **Image 5, "Remember Pearl Harbor" Writing Prompt** and ask students to write two paragraphs to answer the questions.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Explore Now What a Time: Blues, Gospel, and the Fort Valley Music Festivals, 1938 to 1943 on the Library of Congress website: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/blues-gospel-and-the-fort-valley-music-festivals/about-this-collection/>
2. Explore the Pearl Harbor National Memorial: <https://www.nps.gov/perl/index.htm>
3. What more do you want to know about WWII? Use Chronicling America to find out more: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/>
4. View the online exhibition "Through the Enemy's Eyes: Japan's Map of the Attack on Pearl Harbor": <https://www.loc.gov/ghe/cascade/index.html?appid=9b2d25bdf8674c1ca96635b209c5f856>



STANDARDS

COLLEGE, CAREER, AND CIVIC LIFE (C3) SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

History

D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.15.9-12. Distinguish between long-term causes and triggering events in developing a historical argument.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

CALIFORNIA HISTORY—SOCIAL SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS

11.7 Students analyze America's participation in World War II.

1. Examine the origins of American involvement in the war, with an emphasis on the events that precipitated the attack on Pearl Harbor.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

US2.43 Analyze the events that led to the United States' participation in World War II, including the impact of the bombing of Pearl Harbor on the course and outcome of the war.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE FRAMEWORK STANDARDS

Topic 3. Defending democracy: responses to fascism and communism [USII.T3]

1. Develop an argument which analyzes the effectiveness of American isolationism and analyzes the impact of isolationism on U.S. foreign policy.
3. Explain the reasons for American involvement in World War II and the key actions and events leading up to declarations of war against Japan and Germany.



5. Using primary sources such as news articles/analyses, editorials, and radio/newsreel coverage, analyze one of the events that led to World War II, one of the major battles of the war and its consequences, or one of the conferences of Allied leaders following the war.

CONNECTICUT SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK

US-5. World War II

US.His.1.c. Evaluate the role of economic and political developments that created the conditions leading to WWII and the Holocaust (e.g., Great Depression, nationalism, militarism).

NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS - SOCIAL STUDIES

SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 9: Global Connections

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Reading Information Text Standards for Grades 11-12

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing for Grades 9-12

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.



CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening for Grades 9-12

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence,



conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.



RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

- Handout - Isolationism Primary Sources
- Handout - Interventionism Primary Sources
- Handout - "Arsenal of Democracy" Fireside Chat
- Handout - Case File: Pearl Harbor Investigation
- Handout - Pearl Harbor Interviews