



**THE NATIONAL  
D-DAY MUSEUM  
NEW ORLEANS**

# **A Day of Infamy**

## Analyzing FDR's Pearl Harbor Speech

A Lesson Plan from  
The Department of Education of  
The National D-Day Museum

“America's World War II Museum”

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# A Day of Infamy

## Analyzing FDR's Pearl Harbor Speech

The Education Department of The National D-Day Museum designed this lesson to work in conjunction with the opening of the Museum's exhibit, *The D-Day Invasions of the Pacific*, and in commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It can be used at any time.

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will analyze FDR's *Day of Infamy* speech, learn the facts of Pearl Harbor, and compare and contrast the attack on Pearl Harbor with the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

**BENCHMARKS: Grades 7-8** C-1A-M8; C-1D-M3; H-1A-M1; H-1A-M2; H-1A-M3;  
H-1A-M4; H-1A-M5; H-1B-M16; H-1B-M17;  
H-1C-M17; H-1C-M18

**Grades 9-12** C-1C-H2; C-1D-H1; H-1A-H1; H-1A-H2; H-1A-H3;  
H-1A-H4; H-1A-H6; H-1B-H13; H-1B-H17; H-1B-H18

### DIRECTIONS:

1. This lesson is designed to be used on December 7, but it can be used at other times.
2. Announce to the class that *there is a special announcement for all students* and play the 4-minute CD of FDR's "Day of Infamy" speech (*enclosed*). If conducted on December 7, at the conclusion of the speech, announce that *today we are commemorating the anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the United States' entry into WWII*.
3. Distribute copies of the *Pearl Harbor Fact Sheet (enclosed)*. Selected students may read the fact sheet aloud to the class. You may also wish to distribute copies of FDR's speech (*enclosed*).
4. Lead students in a discussion using the *Discussion Questions* sheet (*enclosed*). These questions are provided as a guide for teachers. Facilitate an open and respectful discussion based on these questions comparing and contrasting the attack on Pearl Harbor with the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. This discussion may last anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes. Every student should be encouraged to participate.
5. Ask students to compare and contrast George W. Bush's speech to the American people on September 20, 2001 (*enclosed*) with Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" speech. Are there similar words and phrases used? What words and phrases are used to rouse emotions in the listeners? Why do you think Roosevelt repeats the phrase "Last night Japanese forces attacked..."? What is the purpose of each speech? Does each speech accomplish its purpose? Is one speech better than the other? Why?

**ASSESSMENT:** Students will be assessed by their participation in the class discussion and on the completion of any class or individual follow-up activity.

**ENRICHMENT:** Have students write a short essay describing where they were and what they were doing when they heard about the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. This is probably the first historical event of this magnitude that students have experienced.

# Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" Speech

(edited CD text)

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. This morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

## "Day of Infamy" Speech (full text)

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. This morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces - with the unbounded determination of our people - we will gain the inevitable triumph - so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

## A Pearl Harbor Fact Sheet



The USS *Arizona* burns after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese military launched a surprise attack on the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Since early 1941 the U.S. had been supplying Great Britain in its fight against the Nazis. It had also been pressuring Japan to halt its military expansion in Asia and the Pacific. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. could no longer avoid an active fight. On December 8, U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt asked Congress for and received a declaration of war against Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy, allied with Japan, declared war on the U.S. The United States had entered World War II.

Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto planned the Pearl Harbor attack. Two things inspired Yamamoto's Pearl Harbor idea: a prophetic book and a historic attack. The book was *The Great Pacific War*, written in 1925 by Hector Bywater, a British naval authority. It was a realistic account of a clash between the United States and Japan that begins with the Japanese destruction of the U.S. fleet and proceeds to a Japanese attack on Guam and the Philippines. When Britain's Royal Air Force successfully attacked the Italian fleet at Taranto on November 11, 1940, Yamamoto was convinced that Bywater's fiction could become reality.

On December 6, 1941, the U.S. intercepted a Japanese message that inquired about ship movements and berthing positions at Pearl Harbor. The cryptologist gave the message to her superior who said he would get back to her on Monday, December 8. On Sunday, December 7, a radar operator on Oahu saw a large group of airplanes on his screen heading toward the island. He called his superior who told him it was probably a group of U.S. B-17 bombers and not to worry about it.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began at 7:55 that morning. The entire attack took only one hour and 15 minutes. Captain Mitsuo Fuchida sent the code message, "Tora, Tora, Tora," to the Japanese fleet after flying over Oahu to indicate the Americans had been caught by surprise. The Japanese planned to give the U.S. a declaration of war the moment the attack began so they would not violate the first article of the Hague Convention of 1907, but the message was delayed and not relayed to U.S. officials in Washington until the attack was already in progress.

The Japanese strike force consisted of 353 aircraft launched from four heavy carriers. These included 40 torpedo planes, 103 level bombers, 131 dive-bombers, and 79 fighters. The attack also consisted of two heavy cruisers, 35 submarines, two light cruisers, nine oilers, two battleships, and 11 destroyers.

The attack killed 2,403 U.S. personnel, including 68 civilians, and destroyed or damaged 19 U.S. Navy ships, including 8 battleships. The four aircraft carriers of the U.S. Pacific fleet were out to sea on a practice maneuver. The Japanese were unable to locate them and were forced to return home with the U.S. carrier fleet intact.

The battleship USS *Arizona* remains sunken in Pearl Harbor with its crew onboard. Half of the dead at Pearl Harbor were on the *Arizona*. A United States flag flies above the sunken battleship, which serves as a memorial to all Americans who died in the attack.

Dorie Miller, a steward on the USS *West Virginia*, distinguished himself by courageous conduct and devotion to duty during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He first assisted his mortally wounded captain and then manned a machine gun, which he was not accustomed to operating, successfully destroying two Japanese aircraft. He was the first African American awarded the Navy Cross, the service's highest award, for his actions during the attack.

The Japanese lost 29 aircraft and 5 midget submarines in the attack. One Japanese soldier was taken prisoner and 129 Japanese soldiers were killed. Out of all the Japanese ships that participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor only one, the *Ushio*, survived until the end of the war. It was surrendered to the U.S. at Yokosuka Naval Base. When Admiral Yamamoto learned that his forces had not destroyed the U.S. aircraft carriers or completely destroyed the U.S. fleet, he feared that the United States, with its enormous industrial potential, would soon recover and fight back.

The United States did recover—and quicker than Yamamoto could have imagined. After only six months, the U.S. carrier fleet dealt a decisive blow to Yamamoto's navy in June 1942 at the Battle of Midway, sinking four Japanese aircraft carriers. This U.S. victory marked the height of Japanese expansion in the Pacific.

<b>U.S. Casualties</b>			
Service	Killed	Wounded	Total
Navy	2,008	710	2,718
Army	218	364	582
Marines	109	69	178
Civilians	68	35	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,403</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>3,581</b>

<b>U.S. Aircraft Damage</b>		
Service	Damaged	Destroyed
Navy	31	92
Army Air Corps	128	77

<b>U.S. Ship Damage</b>			
Type of Ship	Damaged	Destroyed	Years Repaired
Battleships	6	2	1942-1944
Cruisers	3	0	1942
Destroyers	3	0	1942-1944
Auxiliaries	4	1	1942

## Discussion Questions

**Directions:** After students have listened to President Roosevelt’s “Day of Infamy” speech and read the Pearl Harbor Fact Sheet, begin a class discussion using the following questions. Encourage all students to participate openly, honestly, and with a sense of tolerance.

1. We heard President Roosevelt describe the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as “a day that will live in infamy....” Infamy means disgrace, dishonor, or great wickedness. What do you think were the various emotions of Americans in the first hours and days after they heard the news of the attack?
2. How do you think young Americans your age reacted to the news of Pearl Harbor? In what ways did the coming of WWII to the United States affect students your age?
3. Most Americans who experienced the Pearl Harbor attack remember to this day where they were when they heard the news. To them it is a shared generational moment. The same can be said of people who experienced President John Kennedy or Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassinations. Do you think you have experienced a historical moment that you will always remember? Do you think the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States will be such a memory?
4. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, life in America changed in many ways. Food and clothing were rationed, some travel was restricted, more men were drafted into the military, and more volunteered for military service. Even entertainment—movies, music, comic books—changed, reflecting wartime moods and subjects. Compare and contrast how life in the United States changed after Pearl Harbor with how it might change after the September 11 attacks. Compare and contrast those changes specifically for students your age.
5. Compare and contrast President Roosevelt and George W. Bush’s reactions to Pearl Harbor and the September 11 attacks on the United States.
6. What do you think were the biggest concerns of Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor? What are your biggest concerns following the September 11 attacks?
7. The U.S. government, seeking internal security, responded to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor by interning 110,000 Japanese Americans in relocation camps across the country for the duration of the war. The U.S. government recently admitted that it had violated those individuals’ civil rights and compensated those still living with \$20,000 each. Can the United States today maintain its security while ensuring its citizens their constitutional rights? What are the dangers of overreacting and under reacting to the September 11 attacks?

# George W. Bush's Speech to the American People,

September 20, 2001 (excerpted)

In the normal course of events, Presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the Union. Tonight, no such report is needed. It has already been delivered by the American people. We have seen it in the courage of passengers, who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground. We have seen the state of our Union in the endurance of rescuers, working past exhaustion. We have seen the unfurling of flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers -- in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. We have seen the decency of a loving and giving people who have made the grief of strangers their own.

My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our Union -- and it is strong.

Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.

On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars -- but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war -- but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks -- but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day -- and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.

Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking: Who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda. They are the same murderers indicted for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and responsible for bombing the USS Cole.

Al Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money; its goal is remaking the world -- and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.

Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.

Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber -- a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms -- our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

Americans are asking: How will we fight and win this war? We will direct every resource at our command -- every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law

enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war -- to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network.

This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.

Americans are asking: What is expected of us? I ask you to live your lives, and hug your children. I know many citizens have fears tonight, and I ask you to be calm and resolute, even in the face of a continuing threat. I ask you to uphold the values of America, and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith.

I ask for your patience, with the delays and inconveniences that may accompany tighter security; and for your patience in what will be a long struggle.

I ask your continued participation and confidence in the American economy. Terrorists attacked a symbol of American prosperity. They did not touch its source. America is successful because of the hard work, and creativity, and enterprise of our people. These were the true strengths of our economy before September 11th, and they are our strengths today.

Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom -- the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time -- now depends on us. Our nation -- this generation -- will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.

Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice -- assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America.

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Weintraub, Stanley. Long Day's Journey Into War. New York: The Lyons Press, 200.

Willmott, H.P. Pearl Harbor. London: Cassell and Co., 2001.

## Internet Sites

The USS Arizona Memorial National Park Site

<http://www.nps.gov/usar/>

Pearl Harbor Survivors/NPS Volunteers

<http://www.members.aol.com/azmemph/viplink1.htm>

Osprey Publishing Essential Pearl Harbor Site

<http://www.essentialpearlharbor.com/>

National Geographic Pearl Harbor Site

<http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/pearlharbor>

USS Arizona and Pearl Harbor Remembered Site

<http://www.buckeyewebdesign.com/pearl/pearlharbor.html>

Full Pearl Harbor Casualty List

<http://www.usswestvirginia.org/fulllist.htm>

The History Place Pearl Harbor Site

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/pearl.htm>

A Student-Made Interactive Site

<http://library.thinkquest.org/J0112601/>