

A Declaration of War

Goal: Students will learn about the entrance of the United States into World War II through an analysis of an aural and written document.

Objectives:

- 1) Students will listen to a recording of President Roosevelt's December 8, 1941 address to Congress, making observations about the content and meaning of the speech.
- 2) Students will familiarize themselves with the meanings of 17 vocabulary words.
- 3) Students will synthesize the information gathered from their observations in order to draw conclusions about the events discussed.
- 4) Students will use extrapolation and inference in order to make predictions about information not discussed in the speech.

If you have access to a computer with an internet connection, log on to:

http://www.chicago_law.net/speeches/speech.html

This site contains audio of several speeches, including President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's address to Congress on December 8, 1941, the day following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In this speech, Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. RealAudio Player is required to access the speech, but the site offers a download, making it possible for you to hear the speech within just a few minutes. Have the class listen to the speech together. Running time is 4 minutes 44 seconds.

1) Prepare your class to listen to the speech by telling them that they will be listening to an address given by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the Congress of the United States. Tell the students to listen carefully, as they will be answering questions about the speech. Read over the questions with the students before they listen to the recording.

Questions

Observation

- 1) On what date was the speech given?
- 2) What is the main event discussed in the speech?
- 3) Where did the attack on the United States occur?
- 4) Who were the attackers?

5) What other places were attacked?

Inference

1) What is the purpose of this speech? (What goal does Roosevelt have in giving this speech?) What evidence in the recording helps you to know why it was made?

2) How do you think the attack affected the ability and power of the United States Armed Forces? What evidence in the speech supports your answer?

Extrapolation, Explanation, and Prediction

1) Write a question to President Roosevelt that is left unanswered by his speech.

2) Make a prediction about how Congress acted in response to the speech.

Text of President Roosevelt's Pearl Harbor Speech (December 8, 1941)

To the Congress of the United States:

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 the 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 colleagues 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 had 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 an 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 *unbounding determination* of our people – we will gain the *inevitable triumph* – so help us God.

Vocabulary:

Infamy – Shame, disgrace

Deliberately – On purpose

Solicitation – Request

Maintenance – Upkeep of, continuance

Commenced – Began

Diplomatic – Having to do with relations between nations

During the intervening time – Meanwhile

Offensive – Attack of an army

Implications – Consequences

Onslaught – Assault or attack

Premeditated – Planned in advance

Assert – To say or state something with confidence

Uttermost – Outer limit

Treachery – Disloyalty, betrayal of trust

Hostilities – Acts of war

Unbounding determination – Complete dedication to finding a solution

Inevitable triumph – Certain victory