

WWII

President Roosevelt Addresses Congress

On December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan.

“Yesterday, 7 December 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**¹ 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 had deliberately sought to **deceive**² 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 were lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

¹ **solicitation:** request

² **deceive:** mislead; to cause to believe what is untrue

“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 Japanese forces 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**³ against us.

“No matter how long it may take us to overcome this **premeditated**⁴ 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.

³ **onslaught**: a violent attack

⁴ **premeditated**: planned ahead of time

“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, 7 December, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.”

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. When did President Roosevelt ask Congress to declare war on Japan?
 - a. December 7, 1941
 - b. October 8, 1941
 - c. January 1, 1942
 - d. December 8, 1941

2. The second paragraph of Roosevelt's speech
 - a. shows Roosevelt's sense of anger and betrayal
 - b. provides context for why the attack was so surprising
 - c. emphasizes the cooperation of Japan with the United States
 - d. conveys approval for the actions of the Japanese

3. Based on Roosevelt's speech, the actions of the Japanese can best be characterized as
 - a. generous and helpful.
 - b. cowardly and vengeful.
 - c. aggressive and sneaky.
 - d. destructive yet necessary

4. Read the following sentences: "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."

The word **implications** most nearly means

 - a. change
 - b. hysteria
 - c. meaning
 - d. exaggeration

5. The purpose of President Roosevelt's speech was to
 - a. ask Congress to declare war on Japan.
 - b. thank the Japanese for their assistance.
 - c. list all of the countries that the Japanese attacked.
 - d. ask other countries to assist the United States.

6. Why does President Roosevelt think that the attack on Pearl Harbor was “deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago”?

7. Describe Roosevelt’s tone as he speaks about his outlook on the rest of the war by using textual evidence.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

According to President Roosevelt, the United States needed to enter the war _____ it was under attack.

- a. because
- b. before
- c. while
- d. second

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Japanese forces attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Who? Japanese forces

(did) What? _____

Where? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** deceive: mislead, lie, cause someone to believe something false.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 1240**Featured Text Structure:** Persuasive – the writer analyzes both sides of an argument and offers convincing proof of his/her point of view in order to influence the reader**Passage Summary:** This passage is the speech President Roosevelt delivered to Congress asking it to declare war on Japan.

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 - c. January 1, 1942
 - d. **December 8, 1941**

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6. Why does President Roosevelt think that the attack on Pearl Harbor was “deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago”?

Suggested answer: President Roosevelt reasons that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that a certain period of planning was necessary which is why in the “intervening time” the Japanese government sought to deceive the United States with false statements and expressions of hope so that the United States would not suspect an impending attack.

7. Describe Roosevelt’s tone as he speaks about his outlook on the rest of the war by using textual evidence.

Suggested answer: President Roosevelt conveys a strong and determined tone as he asserts that the United States will win the war. He explains that no matter how long it might take to overcome the invasion, the “American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.”

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

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Who? Japanese forces

(did) What? **attacked the United States**

Where? **Pearl Harbor**

When? **December 7, 1941**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** deceive: mislead, lie, cause someone to believe something false.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.