

World War Two - Pearl Harbor

by ReadWorks



Pearl Harbor shortly after attack began, photo from a Japanese plane

The United States stayed out of World War II until 1941. Early in the morning, on December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor. The attack was a complete surprise. Japanese planes torpedoed and bombed U.S. ships and military stations. By late morning, the attack was over. Japan's planes left 2,403 Americans dead (including 68 civilians) and 1,178 military members and civilians wounded. There were 188 planes destroyed, 159 aircraft damaged, and 21 ships damaged or destroyed.

When President Roosevelt found out about the attack, he asked Congress to declare war. The United States was behind him. Before the attack, the people of the U.S. had been divided over whether to help France and Great Britain fight Germany. Many people wanted to stay out of the war. People did not yet know about the horrors of Nazi concentration camps. But Japan's act of war changed the course of history. As a Japanese official said, "I am afraid that we have awakened a sleeping giant." Once moved to act, the U.S. was a giant. The U.S. came to Britain's aid and changed the outcome of the war.

President Roosevelt called the day of the attack "a day that will live in infamy." Below is the S.O.S. dispatch sent by the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Army, who was stationed at Pearl Harbor. He sent only:

"AIR RAID ON PEARL HARBOR X THIS IS NOT A DRILL."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the text, where was the U.S. naval base that Japan attacked on December 7, 1941?

- A. Pearl Harbor
- B. France
- C. Great Britain
- D. Germany

2. According to the text, what caused the United States to enter World War II?

- A. The United States was tired of Britain and France losing.
- B. The United States wanted to assist Germany.
- C. The United States was asked by Great Britain to enter the war.
- D. Japan attacked the United States without any warning.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

When President Roosevelt found out about the attack, he asked Congress to declare war. The United States was behind him. Before the attack, the people of the U.S. had been divided over whether to help France and Great Britain fight Germany. Many people wanted to stay out of the war.

What can you conclude based on this information?

- A. The attack on Pearl Harbor had no impact on how Americans felt about joining the war.
- B. The attack on Pearl Harbor led to less Americans being supportive of joining the war.
- C. The attack on Pearl Harbor led to Americans being in support of declaring war on Japan but not Germany.
- D. The attack on Pearl Harbor changed American minds around whether the U.S. should join the war.

4. What was probably true about the attack on Pearl Harbor based on the text?

- A. Japan was asked to attack the U.S. and provoke the U.S. into becoming involved in World War II.
- B. If the U.S. had known they were going to be attacked, they might have been able to save some of the people.
- C. Even though the U.S. knew about the attack, there was nothing they could have done to save lives.
- D. Because of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. did not have enough soldiers or materials to go to war.

5. What is this text mostly about?

- A. concentration camps during World War II
- B. why harbors are important in war
- C. Japan's alliance with Germany
- D. an attack on a U.S. military base and its consequences

6. Read these sentences from the text.

President Roosevelt called the day of the attack "a day that will live in infamy." Below is the S.O.S. dispatch sent by the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Army, who was **stationed** at Pearl Harbor. He sent only:

"AIR RAID ON PEARL HARBOR X THIS IS NOT A DRILL."

What does the word "**stationed**" mean as used in the text?

- A. the place where radio is transmitted
- B. high ranking or placed on top
- C. assigned to or located in
- D. a place where buses are located

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

The United States entered World War II _____ it was attacked by Japan.

- A. although
- B. first
- C. second
- D. after

8. According to the text, what did President Roosevelt do once he heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

9. What did the Japanese official mean when he said, "I am afraid that we have awakened a sleeping giant"? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
