

# Example of the attack on pearl harbor: usa enters world war ii essay

[War](#), [World War 2](#)



## **Paper Due Date**

Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 shocked the globe and was considered as the beginning of the new war that came into history as World War II. This global disaster became the most devastating and tragic event in the world history and the memory of the Second World War continues to be historians' and researchers' concern. Although USA proclaimed its neutrality during the war, soon after this American soldiers also were forced to become involved in World War II. It had taken two years after the outbreak of the war before " the day of infamy" changed Americans. Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 afflicted the whole American society as well as state and military institutions, and led to the end of American isolationism in this fatal war.

## **The background**

After the bitter experience of World War I the United States preferred the policy of neutrality, moreover, the nation was not strength enough after the Great Depression and the crisis of 1937-1939; that is why when the Second World War had broken out America had been standing aside for some time. On the other hand, Franklin D. Roosevelt still considered the option of entering the war and tried to prepare the Americans to the fact of participation in military actions: " First, the United States began supplying military and other aid to Great Britain and its allies, going so far as to accept noncash payment for such materials under the Lend-Lease Act. Second, Roosevelt instructed the U. S. Navy to shoot at German submarines on sight. Despite these actions, the United States was not officially at war" (" Franklin

D. Roosevelt's Pearl Harbor Speech" American Decades Primary Sources). Military tension between the United States and Japan started in the early 1920s and exacerbated in 1931 when Japan occupied Manchuria and established its control over its railroads, harbors, iron and coal mines. In 1932 the Japanese set up the government and proclaimed the creation of the Republic of Manchukuo (Davenport 26). The next ten years Japan had been making a lot of efforts in order to expand its influence in China that, in turns, had led to the full-scale war. The possibility of the war between the USA and Japan was already viewed by both of the nations in the 1920s, and by the end of the 1941 most of the war observers considered that hostilities between these countries were unavoidable. Shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor the Gallup Poll found that 52% of the American population had been expecting the war, 27% had not expected it, and 21% had not had any opinion (The Canadian Institute of Public Opinion). Therefore, American soldiery and their Japanese enemies as well understood the need to prepare for the future war in Pacific since Japan was going to neutralize the US Pacific Fleet, hence defend its gains in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies.

### **“ The Day of Infamy”**

“ In 1941 America was not ready for war. With US forces queuing for arms alongside Britain and Russia, Roosevelt knew he needed more time to build America's military capacity. If war was to come, he wanted Japan to be seen to be the aggressor, but Roosevelt was in no hurry” (Robinson “ Pearl Harbor: Rude Awakening”). Clearly aware of the possibility of war, Franklin D. Roosevelt had been waited for the right time to attack Japan unexpectedly to

appear as the attacking side rather than defending one. However, the counterpart was one step ahead and it allowed him to deliver a crushing blow to the USA when the Americans least expected it. It was Sunday, 7 December 1941; it was 7. 55 a. m. when the first dive bomber emerged over Pearl Harbor on Oahu Island, Hawaii. Commander Mitsuo Fuchida controlled 183 planes that had attacked airfield and ships in Pearl Harbor in the first wave of attack and then other 170 planes had attacked the US military equipment during the second wave of the attack (Pearl Harbor Attack – 7 December 1941). Two waves of the Japanese attack had been lasting for ninety minutes, and as a result, the American losses amounted to 4 battleships, 2 destroyers, one minelayer, 188 aircraft destroyed; and other 4 battleships, 3 light cruisers, 1 destroyer and 159 aircraft were seriously damaged (Pearl Harbor Attack – 7 December 1941). Human losses amounted to 2, 403 killed and other 1, 178 were injured (Pearl Harbor Attack – 7 December 1941). The next day the United States Congress declared war on Japan.

### **Franklin D. Roosevelt Speech**

Although the reaction of the American society to the attack on Pearl Harbor was mostly panic and fear, at the same time, the event had caused a wave of people's concern over the further course of the war. As the population of the USA considered the possibility of taking the hostilities to the mainland, people started to prepare for war, thus they denied the policy of isolationism and neutrality, and President of the nation F. D. Roosevelt also understood it. Hereby, on December 8, 1941 Roosevelt in his speech addressed Congress

and requested that the country declares war on Japan: " I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire" (" Franklin D. Roosevelt's Pearl Harbor Speech" American Decades Primary Sources). Strengthened by the support of American popular opinion, Congress immediately declared war. That meant the beginning of the Pacific war. This declaration of war was only directed to Japan since the President was not going to carry out military operations against Germany and its Allies, however, on 11 December 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. That meant the U. S. irreversible entering World War II.

## **The Consequences of Japan Invasion**

The attack on Pearl Harbor was sudden and unexpected - it could worsen the U. S. position and undermine its strength. In fact, the event of December, 7, undermined only the United States stability since the damage to harbor and its munitions was not as catastrophic as the Japanese had expected, though the losses were significant enough. As soon as the United States entered the war, Allies had immediately felt the benefit and the advantages from the U. S.' participation: new ally brought extra supplies of resources, industrial strength, huge reserves of stronger political leadership. The course of World War II had changed, and eventually the United States got a number of benefits after the end of the war; and the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945 meant the victory of the Soviet Union and its Allies and - what is essential - the end of World War II.

Conclusion

## Works cited

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