

franklin d. roosevelt's pearl harbor address essay sample

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On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor, an American armed forces base on the island of Oahu, was attacked by the Japanese. The following day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) gave an address to the Vice President, speaker, members of the Senate and House of Representatives, and citizens of the United States concerning the bombing of Pearl Harbor. . While the rest of the world was at war, including Japan, FDR did not push to join the war, not until the US was attacked. The attack sparked a fire in FDR and he gave this address in hopes of spreading the fire to all of his fellow Americans.

President Roosevelt mentions in his address that the US and Japan were at peace and just an hour after the Japanese had bombed the island of Oahu, and more specifically Pearl Harbor, the Japanese ambassador to the US delivered a reply to a recent American message to the Secretary of State with no hint towards any attacks. In this address, Franklin D. Roosevelt emphasizes the need for the United States to declare war on Japan and educates the member of Congress and citizens of the United States of the attack on Pearl Harbor. In his address concerning the attack on Pearl Harbor, FDR successfully uses rhetorical appeals to persuade the nation that declaring war on Japan is the right thing to do.

Through this address, FDR appeals to one's emotions, or pathos, to advocate the declaration of war on Japan. President Roosevelt makes it very clear that this was a sudden and deliberate attack by the Japanese Empire on American soil. Being attacked on our home soil makes the country as a whole feel very vulnerable; especially just one day after the attack was made. The ambassador of Japan had delivered a letter to the secretary of state but it did not hint to any attack or war. This being said, FDR implies that the Japanese

had been lying to the US and deceiving them. At that point, it was not known if there would be another attack on the US mainland at any given time and with this information, FDR meant to compel Americans to declare war before any further attacks occurred. In appealing to their sense of safety and pride, he was hoping that American's pride in their country would give them all the more reason to fight back. Being attacked on home soil really makes one feel unsafe in their home and vulnerable to further attacks. FDR appealed to this as another way of pushing the idea that declaring war was necessity to keep their country and loved ones safe.

Logic is another key to FDR's address. During this time, the US is not involved in WWII, but Japan is. Around the same time was Pearl Harbor was bombed, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippine Islands, Wake Island, and Midway Island were attacked by the Japanese. The bombing of Pearl Harbor caused a huge loss of military equipment, and most of the base and a lot of the ships stationed there were destroyed, but more importantly though, many lives were lost that day. FDR sees this as an opportunity to appeals to one's sense of fight or flight. Americans have so much pride in their country that they are not about to just lay down and let Japan walk all over them, they will stand up and fight for their country. In this instance, pride is not being driven by emotion, but more by logic. In a time like that, one's logic is closely knitted to emotion. Therefore, a lot of FDR's emotional appeals in this address reflect back to one's logical thinking. FDR pronounced that day to be one forever in infamy. If the president of the United Stated felt so strongly about this day, it made sense that you should too. FDR had ways of appealing to

you that weren't obvious. Ethos was an extremely important part of FDR's Pearl Harbor address. FDR was president at the time of Pearl Harbor; therefore his information was first hand. Just being the president makes one find him an extremely credible source for information. The president also serves as Commander - in - Chief of the nation's armed forces. Seeing that FDR was advocating the idea of going to war with Japan, this made him extremely credible in that situation. Prior to his presidency, FDR was a well-known politician, which adds again to proving himself to be credible.

An appeal to ones ethos that I found that most wouldn't think of was the location at which his address was given. FDR gave his Pearl Harbor address to a joint session of congress. Congress does not hold joint sessions except for on special occasions. The fact that he gave his address to a joint congress makes him more credible to the average American watching a broadcast of the address at home because Congress is a highly powerful and important group of individuals. Congress being gathered in one place for FDR's address makes the address that much more credible and the situation that much more serious. Another source of credibility could come from the fact that Congress agreed with FDR that declaring war was the only option. In a way, FDR does not only use giving his speech to a joint Congress as a form of credibility, but also as a way to appeal to one's logic and emotion in the way that their approval makes it even more logical for the average American to get up and fight for his country, as well as a strong pull to the emotions of wanting to be a part of a higher group by joining the forces.

Overall, Franklin D. Roosevelt was extremely successful with his Pearl Harbor address. Shortly after his address was given to congress and all of America, the US declared war on Japan and entered WWII. Many great things came from the declaration of war on Japan. The US developed, tested, and used the first atomic bombs to ultimately defeat Japan and bring an end to the war. I feel that if FDR's Pearl Harbor address had not been successful that Japan would have attacked the US mainland and dominated WWII. The Pearl Harbor address was so successful because of it had strong pathos.

American's logic was being affected by their emotions at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, which made it very easy for FDR to connect the two together to be even more effective in his persuasion to declare war on Japan. The results of WWII still hold value to this day. Until September 11th, 2001, the US had not been attacked on its home soil since the attack on Pearl Harbor. Other countries feared the US, making it become a world super power. All of this began with the entering of the WWII; the US left an impression with the nuclear bombs and such strong patriotism.