**Topic: The Beginnings of World War II: U.S. Entry into the War**

**Essential Questions:** “When did World War II begin?  When and how did the United States enter the war?”

**National Standard for United States History:** Era 8, Standard 3  
The origins and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the United States role on world affairs.

**Instructional Objectives:**  Students will be able to:  
1. Explain and understand the beginnings of the war in Europe and Asia.  
2. Analyze and assess what caused America to enter the war, the impact of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the commitment required to fight a war on two fronts… the Atlantic and the Pacific.

**Background Description/Historical Significance:**

**Europe:** In 1918, at the end of World War I, much of Western Europe was economically and socially exhausted. Millions of Germans, French and British soldiers and over 100,000 Americans had died on the western front. The eastern front was also a bloody battlefield, had sapped what energy was left in Czarist Russia and a new communist government, renamed the United Soviet Socialist Republic, and was emerging. After the war, inflation became rampant in defeated Germany, social unrest grew, and the hopes generated by the Treaty of Versailles and the creation of the League of Nations never materialized… and, ultimately, the United States failed to adopt the Treaty.

In Germany, the Kaiser had abdicated as a condition of ending the war and the government which replaced him was weak and ineffective. Into this political vacuum, the National Socialist Party (NAZI) emerged and soon, under the leadership of Adolph Hitler, Germany was rebuilding its military forces and preparing for another war.

Hitler’s philosophy as described in his book, *Mein Kampf*, was filled with bigotry and promoted a concept of the racial superiority of the German people and of their Teutonic history. Slavs and other racial groups, especially Jews, were cited as being inferior and the cause of Germany’s problems and soon were being persecuted by the German Reich. Hitler said that the German people needed more land (*lebensraum*) and in 1938 with the west looking on in quiet compliance, Germany invaded and annexed Czechoslovakia and Austria.
It could be argued that World War II began with this first act of German aggression. Yet, many say the war “officially” began in 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland. It was the invasion of Poland which led Britain and France to declare war on Germany. In 1940, Hitler next turned to the west and invaded France. Quickly overrun by what was known as the “blitzkrieg”… a fast-moving army using tanks, paratroopers and supported by overwhelming airpower… the French surrendered. Britain also suffered heavy casualties in the fighting but, in the end, saved the majority of its army by withdrawing them in rescue by boats manned largely by civilians from the shores of Dunkirk, France.

The German invasion of France also accelerated a program called “lend-lease” started by the Roosevelt administration in the United States. Under the program, the American government “leased” or “loaned” to Great Britain and its allies supplies and equipment needed in the fight against Hitler’s aggression. Yet, throughout 1940 and through most of 1941, the United States continued to stay out of Europe’s war; hoping that it could avoid being dragged into the conflict.

In 1941, in Europe, Hitler made another major move with his military forces. On June 22nd, in an operation called “Barbarossa”, he turned in a surprise attack against his ally at the time, Russia, and the German “blitzkrieg” marched out of Poland and into the Soviet Union. Now, most of continental Europe was under the control of the Germany, Italy and the Axis powers. German troops had also invaded North Africa and were headed east toward Egypt.

Asia: Starting early in the 20th century, the Japanese had also been expanding their control and influence in the Pacific. A resounding victory over the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War (1905) led to Japan assuming political control of Korea as a protectorate. Though ancient enemies, the Japanese soon annexed Korea and occupied the country until the end of World War II. Emboldened by their success, Japan continued to pursue its aggression in the Far East and developed a policy called the Far East Co-Prosperity Sphere in which it assumed the right to dominate the region. The policy was emboldened by a hubris and arrogance in which the Japanese, much like the Germans, assumed that their nationality and race was superior and that this gave them the right to rule others.

In 1931, Japan subdued Manchuria by force, occupied the country, renamed it “Manchukuo” and treated it as a possession of the Japanese Empire. Already a presence in China, in 1937, Japan attacked and declared war on China and began to occupy large areas of that country. Japan’s aggression in Asia became an issue with the United States and with other world powers who had historic and economic interests in the region. Relations between the United States and Japan grew steadily worse, and the U.S. began to impose trade sanctions on the Japanese Empire.

Though relations between the two countries were strained, it was a total surprise to the United States when on December 7, 1941 the Japanese successfully executed what Americans would call a “sneak” attack on the U.S. Naval Fleet based in Honolulu,
Hawaii. On a quiet and sleepy Sunday morning, carrier-based aircraft of the Empire of Japan flew undetected to Pearl Harbor and unleashed a massive bombing and torpedo operation sinking ships and destroying installations in the harbor. Over 2,400 Americans died in the attack. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor also served as the catalyst which pushed the United States into World War II. It electrified the country, most Americans realized that war was now inevitable and the next day Congress voted to declare war on Japan. The day after that, Germany declared war on the United States. Americans stopped what they were doing and prepared for war. They flocked by the thousands to military recruiting stations across the country. World War II had now started for the United States and would not end until its enemies were defeated. It became a time of incredible unity among our citizens, a common resolve that our Nation has never seen before or since. It was a conflict that would be fought by Americans in a theater of war that would stretch from Australia to Great Britain, from northern Europe to the South Pacific; and it would become an event that would forever change the face of American life and the direction of world history.

Document “A”:

This is not a fireside chat on war. It is a talk on national security; because the nub of the whole purpose of your President is to keep you now; and your children later, and your grandchildren much later, out of a last-ditch war for the preservation of American independence and all of the things that American independence means to you and to me and to ours.

Tonight, in the presence of a world crisis, my mind goes back eight years ago to a night in the midst of a domestic crisis. It was a time when the wheels of American industry were grinding to a full stop, when the whole banking system of our country had ceased to function.

I well remember that while I sat in my study in the White House, preparing to talk with the people of the United States, I had before my eyes the picture of all those Americans with whom I was talking. I saw the workmen in the mills, the mines, the factories; the girl behind the counter; the small shopkeeper; the farmer doing his spring plowing; the widows and the old men wondering about their life's savings.

I tried to convey to the great mass of American people what the banking crisis meant to them in their daily lives.

Tonight, I want to do the same thing, with the same people, in this new crisis which faces America.
We met the issue of 1933 with courage and realism.

We face this new crisis—this new threat to the security of our Nation—with the same courage and realism.

Never before since Jamestown and Plymouth Rock has our American civilization been in such danger as now.

For, on September 27, 1940, by an agreement signed in Berlin, three powerful nations, two in Europe and one in Asia, joined themselves together in the threat that if the United States interfered with or blocked the expansion program of these three nations—a program aimed at world control—they would unite in ultimate action against the United States.

The Nazi masters of Germany have made it clear that they intend not only to dominate all life and thought in their own country, but also to enslave the whole of Europe, and then to use the resources of Europe to dominate the rest of the world.

Three weeks ago their leader stated, "There are two worlds that stand opposed to each other." Then in defiant reply to his opponents, he said this: "Others are correct when they say: 'With this world we cannot ever reconcile ourselves.' . . . I can beat any other power in the world." So said the leader of the Nazis.

In other words, the Axis not merely admits but proclaims that there can be no ultimate peace between their philosophy of government and our philosophy of government.

In view of the nature of this undeniable threat, it can be asserted, properly and categorically, that the United States has no right or reason to encourage talk of peace until the day shall come when there is a clear intention on the part of the aggressor nations to abandon all thought of dominating or conquering the world.

At this moment, the forces of the states that are leagued against all peoples who live in freedom are being held away from our shores. The Germans and Italians are being blocked on the other side of the Atlantic by the British, and by the Greeks, and by thousands of soldiers and sailors who were able to escape from subjugated countries. The Japanese are being engaged in Asia by the Chinese in another great defense.

In the Pacific is our fleet.

Some of our people like to believe that wars in Europe and in Asia are of no concern to us. But it is a matter of most vital concern to us that European and Asiatic war-makers should not gain control of the oceans which lead to this hemisphere.

One hundred and seventeen years ago the Monroe Doctrine was conceived by our Government as a measure of defense in the face of a threat against this hemisphere by an alliance in continental Europe. Thereafter, we stood on guard in the Atlantic, with the British as neighbors. There was no treaty. There was no "unwritten agreement".
Yet, there was the feeling, proven correct by history, that we as neighbors could settle any disputes in peaceful fashion. The fact is that during the whole of this time the Western Hemisphere has remained free from aggression from Europe or from Asia.

Does anyone seriously believe that we need to fear attack while a free Britain remains our most powerful naval neighbor in the Atlantic? Does anyone seriously believe, on the other hand, that we could rest easy if the Axis powers were our neighbor there?

If Great Britain goes down, the Axis powers will control the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia, and the high seas—and they will be in a position to bring enormous military and naval resources against this hemisphere. It is no exaggeration to say that all of us in the Americas would be living at the point of a gun—a gun loaded with explosive bullets, economic as well as military.

We should enter upon a new and terrible era in which the whole world, our hemisphere included, would be run by threats of brute force. To survive in such a world, we would have to convert ourselves permanently into a militaristic power on the basis of war economy.

Some of us like to believe that. Even if Great Britain falls, we are still safe, because of the broad expanse of the Atlantic and of the Pacific.

But the width of these oceans is not what it was in the days of clipper ships. At one point between Africa and Brazil the distance is less than from Washington to Denver—five hours for the latest type of bomber. And at the north of the Pacific Ocean, America and Asia almost touch each other. Even today we have planes which could fly from the British Isles to New England and back without refueling. And the range of the modern bomber is ever being increased.

During the past week many people in all parts of the Nation have told me what they wanted me to say tonight. Almost all of them expressed a courageous desire to hear the plain truth about the gravity of the situation. One telegram, however, expressed the attitude of the, small minority who want to see no evil and hear no evil, even though they know in their hearts that evil exists. That telegram begged me not to tell again of the ease with which our American cities could be bombed by any hostile power which had gained bases in this Western Hemisphere. The gist of that telegram was: "Please, Mr. President, don't frighten us by telling us the facts."

Frankly and definitely there is danger ahead—danger against which we must prepare. But we well know that we cannot escape danger, or the fear of it, by crawling into bed and pulling the covers over our heads.

Some nations of Europe were bound by solemn nonintervention pacts with Germany. Other nations were assured by Germany that they need never fear invasion. Nonintervention pact or not, the fact remains that they were attacked, overrun, and thrown into the modern form of slavery at an hour's notice or even without any notice at
all. As an exiled leader of one of these nations said to me the other day: "The notice was a minus quantity. It was given to my government two hours after German troops had poured into my country in a hundred places."

The fate of these nations tells us what it means to live at the point of a Nazi gun.

The Nazis have justified such actions by various pious frauds. One of these frauds is the claim that they are occupying a nation for the purpose of "restoring order". Another is that they are occupying or controlling a nation on the excuse that they are "protecting it" against the aggression of somebody else.

For example, Germany has said that she was occupying Belgium to save the Belgians from the British. Would she hesitate to say to any South American country, "We are occupying you to protect you from aggression by the United States"?

Belgium today is being used as an invasion base against Britain, now fighting for its life. Any South American country, in Nazi hands, would always constitute a jumping-off place for German attack on any one of the other republics of this hemisphere.

Analyze for yourselves the future of two other places even nearer to Germany if the Nazis won. Could Ireland hold out? Would Irish freedom be permitted as an amazing exception in an unfree world? Or the islands of the Azores which still fly the flag of Portugal after five centuries? We think of Hawaii as an outpost of defense in the Pacific. Yet, the Azores are closer to our shores in the Atlantic than Hawaii is on the other side.

There are those who say that the Axis powers would never have any desire to attack the Western Hemisphere. This is the same dangerous form of wishful thinking which has destroyed the powers of resistance of so many conquered peoples. The plain facts are that the Nazis have proclaimed, time and again, that all other races are their inferiors and therefore subject to their orders. And most important of all, the vast resources and wealth of this hemisphere constitute the most tempting loot in all the world.

Let us no longer blind ourselves to the undeniable fact that the evil forces which have crushed and undermined and corrupted so many others are already within our own gates. Your Government knows much about them and every day is ferreting them out.

Their secret emissaries are active in our own and neighboring countries. They seek to stir up suspicion and dissension to cause internal strife. They try to turn capital against labor and vice versa. They try to reawaken long slumbering racial and religious enmities which should have no place in this country. They are active in every group that promotes intolerance. They exploit for their own ends our natural abhorrence of war. These trouble breeders have but one purpose. It is to divide our people into hostile groups and to destroy our unity and shatter our will to defend ourselves.

There are also American citizens, many of them in high places, who, unwittingly in most cases, are aiding and abetting the work of these agents. I do not charge these American
citizens with being foreign agents. But I do charge them with doing exactly the kind of work that the dictators want done in the United States.

These people not only believe that we can save our own skins by shutting our eyes to the fate of other nations. Some of them go much further than that. They say that we can and should become the friends and even the partners of the Axis powers. Some of them even suggest that we should imitate the methods of the dictatorships. Americans never can and never will do that.

The experience of the past two years has proven beyond doubt that no nation can appease the Nazis. No man can tame a tiger into a kitten by stroking it. There can be no appeasement with ruthlessness. There can be no reasoning with an incendiary bomb. We know now that a nation can have peace with the Nazis only at the price of total surrender.

Even the people of Italy have been forced to become accomplices of the Nazis; but at this moment they do not know how soon they will be embraced to death by their allies.

The American appeasers ignore the warning to be found in the fate of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, and France. They tell you that the Axis powers are going to win anyway; that all this bloodshed in the world could be saved; and that the United States might just as well throw its influence into the scale of a dictated peace, and get the best out of it that we can.

They call it a "negotiated peace". Nonsense! Is it a negotiated peace if a gang of outlaws surrounds your community and on threat of extermination makes you pay tribute to save your own skins?

Such a dictated peace would be no peace at all. It would be only another armistice, leading to the most gigantic armament race and the most devastating trade wars in history. And in these contests the Americas would offer the only real resistance to the Axis powers.

With all their vaunted efficiency and parade of pious purpose in his war, there are still in their background the concentration camp and the servants of God in chains.

The history of recent years proves that shootings and chains and concentration camps are not simply the transient tools but the very altars of modern dictatorships. They may talk of a "new order" in the world, but what they have in mind is but a revival of the oldest end the worst tyranny. In that there is no liberty, no religion, no hope.

The proposed "new order" is the very opposite of a United States if Europe or a United States of Asia. It is not a government based upon the consent of the governed. It is not a union of ordinary, self-respecting men and women to protect themselves and their freedom and their dignity from oppression. It is an unholy alliance of power and pelf to dominate and enslave the human race.
The British people are conducting an active war against this unholy alliance. Our own future security is greatly dependent on the outcome of that fight. Our ability to "keep out of war" is going to be affected by that outcome.

Thinking in terms of today and tomorrow, I make the direct statement to the American people that there is far less chance of the United States getting into war if we do all we can now to support the nations defending themselves against attack by the Axis than if we acquiesce in their defeat, submit tamely to an Axis victory, and wait our turn to be the object of attack in another war later on.

If we are to be completely honest with ourselves, we must admit there is risk in any course we may take. But I deeply believe that the great majority of our people agree that the course that I advocate involves the least risk now and the greatest hope for world peace in the future.

The people of Europe who are defending themselves do not ask us to do their fighting. They ask us for the implements of war, the planes, the tanks, the guns, the freighters, which will enable them to fight for their liberty and our security. Emphatically we must get these weapons to them in sufficient volume and quickly enough, so that we and our children will be saved the agony and suffering of war which others have had to endure.

Let not defeatists tell us that it is too late. It will never be earlier. Tomorrow will be later than today.

Certain facts are self-evident.

In a military sense Great Britain and the British Empire are today the spearhead of resistance to world conquest. They are putting up a fight which will live forever in the story of human gallantry.

There is no demand for sending an American Expeditionary Force outside our own borders. There is no intention by any member of your Government to send such a force. You can, therefore, nail any talk about sending armies to Europe as deliberate untruth.

Our national policy is not directed toward war. Its sole purpose is to keep war away from our country and our people.

Democracy's fight against world conquest is being greatly aided, and must be more greatly aided, by the rearmament of the United States and by sending every ounce and every ton of munitions and supplies that we can possibly spare to help the defenders who are in the front lines. It is no more un-neutral for us to do that than it is for Sweden, Russia, and other nations near Germany to send steel and ore and oil and other war materials into Germany every day.
We are planning our own defense with the utmost urgency; and in its vast scale we must integrate the war needs of Britain and the other free nations resisting aggression.
This is not a matter of sentiment or of controversial personal opinion. It is a matter of realistic military policy, based on the advice of our military experts who are in close touch with existing warfare. These military and naval experts and the members of the Congress and the administration have a single-minded purpose—the defense of the United States.

This Nation is making a great effort to produce everything that is necessary in this emergency—and with all possible speed. This great effort requires great sacrifice.

I would ask no one to defend a democracy which in turn would not defend everyone in the Nation against want and privation. The strength of this Nation shall not be diluted by the failure of the Government to protect the economic well-being of all citizens.

If our capacity to produce is limited by machines, it must ever be remembered that these machines are operated by the skill and the stamina of the workers. As the Government is determined to protect the rights of workers, so the Nation has a right to expect that the men who man the machines will discharge their full responsibilities to the urgent needs of defense.

The worker possesses the same human dignity and is entitled to the same security of position as the engineer or manager or owner. For the workers provide the human power that turns out the destroyers, the airplanes, and the tanks.

The Nation expects our defense industries to continue operation without interruption by strikes or lock-outs. It expects and insists that management and workers will reconcile their differences by voluntary or legal means, to continue to produce the supplies that are so sorely needed.

And on the economic side of our great defense program, we are, as you know, bending every effort to maintain stability of prices and with that the stability of the cost of living.

Nine days ago I announced the setting up of a more effective organization to direct our gigantic efforts to increase the production of munitions. The appropriation of vast sums of money and a well-coordinated executive direction of our defense efforts are not in themselves enough. Guns, planes, and ships have to be built in the factories and arsenals of America. They have to be produced by workers and managers and engineers with the aid of machines, which in turn have to be built by hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the land.

In this great work there has been splendid cooperation between the Government and industry and labor.

American industrial genius, unmatched throughout the world in the solution of production problems, has been called upon to bring its resources and talents into action. Manufacturers of watches, of farm implements, linotypes, cash registers, automobiles,
sewing machines, lawn mowers, and locomotives are now making fuses, bomb-packing crates, telescope mounts, shells, pistols, and tanks.

But all our present efforts are not enough. We must have more ships, more guns, more planes-more of everything. This can only be accomplished if we discard the notion of "business as usual". This job cannot be done merely by superimposing on the existing productive facilities the added requirements for defense.

Our defense efforts must not be blocked by those who fear the future consequences of surplus plant capacity. The possible consequence of failure of our defense efforts now are much more to be feared.

After the present needs of our defense are past, a proper handling of the country's peacetime needs will require all of the new productive capacity-if not more.

No pessimistic policy about the future of America shall delay the immediate expansion of those industries essential to defense.

I want to make it clear that it is the purpose of the Nation to build now with all possible speed every machine and arsenal and factory that we need to manufacture our defense material. We have the men the skill, the wealth, and above all, the will.

I am confident that if and when production of consumer or luxury goods in certain industries requires the use of machines and raw materials essential for defense purposes, then such production must yield to our primary and compelling purpose.

I appeal to the owners of plants, to the managers, to the workers, to our own Government employees, to put every ounce of effort into producing these munitions swiftly and without stint. And with this appeal I give you the pledge that all of us who are officers of your Government will devote ourselves to the same whole-hearted extent to the great task which lies ahead.

As planes and ships and guns and shells are produced, your Government, with its defense experts, can then determine how best to us them to defend this hemisphere. The decision as to how much shall be sent abroad and how much shall remain at home must be made on the basis of our overall military necessities.

We must be the great arsenal of democracy. For us this is an emergency as serious as war itself. We must apply ourselves to our task with the same resolution, the same sense of urgency, the same spirit of patriotism and sacrifice, as we would show were we at war.

We have furnished the British great material support and we will furnish far more in the future.
There will be no "bottlenecks" in our determination to aid Great Britain. No dictator, no combination of dictators, will weaken that determination by threats of how they will construe that determination.

The British have received invaluable military support from the heroic Greek Army and from the forces of all the governments in exile. Their strength is growing. It is the strength of men and women who value their freedom more highly than they value their lives.

I believe that the Axis powers are not going to win this war. I base that belief on the latest and best information.

We have no excuse for defeatism. We have every good reason for hope—hope for peace, hope for the defense of our civilization and for the building of a better civilization in the future.

I have the profound conviction that the American people are now determined to put forth a mightier effort than they have ever yet made to increase our production of all the implements of defense, to meet the threat to our democratic faith.

As President of the United States I call for that national effort. I call for it in the name of this Nation which we love and honor and which we are privileged and proud to serve. I call upon our people with absolute confidence that our common cause will greatly succeed.

Radio Address Delivered by President Roosevelt From Washington, December 29, 1940


Document “B”:

“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 the moment at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation 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 the American land of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States . . . delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack. . . .”

“The distance of Hawaii from Japan makes obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese
Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statement and expressions of hope for continued peace. The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu. . . .

“Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. . . . 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. . . . Always will our whole Nation 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 to absolute victory. . . . We will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us. . . . 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.”

----- President Franklin Roosevelt, Address to Congress for a declaration of war, December 8, 1941

**Document “C”:**

“Dear Sis,

It is now 9:05 Sunday morning and we’ve been bombed now for over an hour. Our anti-aircraft guns are yammering and every so often a bomb strikes so close to rock this ship. Again a bomb. We are helpless down here in the Forward Engine Room. . . . We were just struck by a bomb near the bow. We’re fighting back as much as possible because we have no power to load our guns, no power circuits to fire them. It is all being done by hand. . . . There is only a handful of us down here as most of our men are ashore on Liberty. They really caught us sleeping this time. . . . The bombs are getting closer---God grant that they do not hit that loaded oil tanker that is lying right across from us. Ten million gallons of fuel oil would bathe this ship in an inferno of fire. There are destroyers laying near us and three other cruisers. They must be the targets including us. I am on the interior communications telephone and I can hear the various stations screaming orders at one [an]other. A man just brought us our gas masks. . . . Wave after wave of bombers must be coming. We’ve been struck several times now but fortunately there are no casualties as yet. It seems funny to be writing like this when it may be your last but I will keep writing until I am told to stop or am given another job. Some battleships that are tied up to the piers near the Fleet Air Base are reported to be afire. It seems that the airbase was their objective and the battleships were just too close to that field. We were really caught short this time. . . . We were under fire for nearly two hours and I’m going to sneak up to topside to see what happened.”

----- Letter from Ensign William Czako to his sister, Helen, December 7, 1941

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Collection, GLC09120.05)
“Document “D”:

“Japanese planes flew within fifty and one hundred feet of the water and dropped three torpedoes or mine in the channel... A torpedo hit the Ogala and Helena... There was no trouble distinguishing Japanese planes because the red sun painted on the side showed plainly... Planes kept coming for quite some time... I saw four battleships hit with bombs and fires broke out. I saw one battleship turn over. There were six to ten enemy planes visible at any one time over the harbor... Following the bombing of the battleship Pennsylvania, I saw a bomb fall near or on the destroyer Shaw in the floating dry-dock. This destroyer was later in flames.”


Document “E”:

![Image of newspaper page](image-url)
Sample Thought-provoking Questions To Develop Student Group or Whole-Class Discussion:

1. Why in “Document A” does President Roosevelt call for the United States to be the “great arsenal of democracy”?
2. In “Document A” Nazi Germany appears to be the biggest threat to world order? Why?
3. Given “Document A” how surprised do you think Americans were that Japan provoked American entry into World War II? Why?
4. Why did the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor and declare war on the United States?
5. Should the Japanese have continued to use diplomacy, instead of war, to resolve its differences with the United States? Explain your viewpoint.
Extension Map Activities:

Use the Pacific Theatre 1942 Map with this lesson to help inform your responses to the following question.

What was at stake for the world as a result of the extent of Japanese aggression in the Pacific?

**Summary:**

The teacher can refer the students back to the “essential question” posed at the start of the lesson:

When and how did the United States enter World War II?

The students are directed to respond and take a position (develop a viewpoint) on this historical issue concerning American entry into World War II. At the teacher’s discretion, students’ responses can be presented orally as closure to small groups and/or whole-class discussion, or in written form such as a response to an essay prompt or a journal entry into a “learning log” to bring effective closure to the lesson. Thus a circular approach to teaching and learning, the lesson was “opened” with a thought-provoking “essential question” as its primary learning objective at the start of the instructional period, developed through an examination, explanation, and evaluation of primary source document excerpts through group work, cooperative learning, pair-and-share, etc., and closed with a critical assessment through the lens of the lesson’s evaluative “essential question.”

**Application (“Transfer Task”):**

1. Students can compare and contrast how the United States entered different wars with foreign nations by reexamining the causes of the War of 1812, the War with Mexico, the Spanish-American War, and World War I.
2. How might a sneak attack generate a nation’s unity?
World War II at the Memorial:

1. Study the images of sculptor Ray Kaskey’s bas-relief panel that depict the following:
   - Lend-Lease/War Declared – Image 1
   - News of Pearl Harbor – Image 2
   - Draft Physical/Swearing In/Equipment Issue – Image 3

Image 1:
2. How do Kaskey’s relief panels capture the tone as illustrated in the documents read for this lesson? Do you think Kaskey’s panels reflect what you learned in this lesson? If so, explain how.

3. Examine the image of the pillars of states and territories. Notice that they are all connected by ropes. What does this tell you about the memorial’s design based on what you have learned in this lesson? What does this design tell you about the nation and the American people from 1941-1945.

4. Why do you think the memorial designers chose to have part of President Roosevelt’s War Address to Congress etched into the Memorial?

5. What does the site of the Memorial say about the importance of World War II?