

ESSAYS

Editor's Note: *Jeffrey Hackler developed the following lesson for use in high school U.S. History courses. Upon completion of the lesson, students should have a better understanding of why Japan's leaders ordered the attack on Pearl Harbor.*

Recommended Course and Grade: United States History, 11th grade and up.

Instructional Objectives: Students will be able to: (1) Explain the predicament Japan faced in the Pacific during the first half of the twentieth century leading up to December 1941. (2) Understand the Japanese leaders' motives in attacking Pearl Harbor.

Japan's Motives for Bombing Pearl Harbor, 1941

By Jeffrey Hackler

Most U.S. History textbooks offer students only a cursory explanation of Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor. While there is no single correct or simple reason for the attack, this lesson should help students realize that Japan's motivation for attacking Pearl Harbor was driven by its political self-interests, its scarcity of economic resources and perceived opportunity costs, and America's embargo policy. It should also become apparent to students that long-term as well as short-term events soured relations between Japan and America.

Historical Background for the Teacher: In 1853, Commodore Perry ended Japan's years of self-imposed isolation. Shortly thereafter, the Tokugawa Shogun agreed to a series of "unequal" treaties with the "great" nations of the West. After the Tokugawa collapsed, the Meiji leaders, starting in the 1870s, made it their number one priority to modernize the country as quickly as possible. They thought that if they could imitate the Western model politically, economically, militarily and socially, then the

"great" nations would remove the "unequal" treaties and Japan could emerge as one of the "great" nations of the world. It was an ambitious goal, but it seemed possible. Japan had an abundance of labor, capital, and a small, literate population with the will to transform itself.

However, Japan had a problem. Because of its meager natural resources, the leaders realized that the country could not, on its own, catch up to the West in terms of its industrial output. To find more iron ore, coal, and—as the population started to increase—more foodstuffs, Japan looked at neighboring areas for raw materials. Japan entered into and won two wars against her neighbors, China in 1894–5 and Russia in 1904–5, in order to secure natural resources from the Korean peninsula and the Manchurian region, located in the northeastern region of China.

At the end of World War I, the goal of the Meiji leaders was attained when Japan was recognized as one of the "great" nations by the Treaty of Versailles. During the 1920s, Japan continued to

CGP The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership 国際交流基金日米センター

FUNDING FOR OUTREACH AND EXCHANGE PROJECTS

The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) awards grants to US and Japanese nonprofit organizations for bilateral and multilateral projects that contribute to the improvement of US-Japan relations and the world's welfare through the collaborative efforts of both countries. CGP is seeking proposals for its Regional/Grassroots Programs in the following areas:

Educational and Public Outreach

CGP supports outreach projects that aim to improve education about Japan primarily at the K-12 level, such as teacher training and curriculum development initiatives. Support is also provided for outreach projects that seek to increase public awareness and understanding of issues facing the United States, Japan, and other countries around the world.

Exchange

CGP provides support for US-Japan and multilateral exchanges at the grassroots level that enable the citizens of each country to work collaboratively on global issues of common concern and to build networks. Examples include youth exchange projects and exchanges to develop the nonprofit sectors in Japan and the United States.

Our annual application deadlines are July 1 and December 1. We strongly encourage applicants to submit a concept paper at least two months before submitting a formal application. For further information regarding the Regional/Grassroots Programs and our other grant and fellowship opportunities, please see our website at <<http://www.cgp.org/cgplink/>> or contact CGP directly.

The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, 152 West 57th Street, 9th Floor, New York, New York 10019
Tel: (212) 489-1255, Fax: (212) 489-1344, E-mail: info@cgp.org

industrialize and established peaceful economic and diplomatic ties with countries around the world in order to find more raw materials and markets for their finished goods. In particular, Japan developed strong ties with Manchuria and the U.S. In Manchuria, Japan found the necessary resources of grains, coal and iron ore; from the U.S., Japan imported petroleum, steel, scrap iron and other materials. All went well until the end of the decade.

Japan's economic self-interest forced dramatic changes in her domestic and foreign policy during 1929–31 as it suffered the economic effects of the Great Depression, nervously watched the growth of Chinese nationalism, and was impressed by the rise of the military-led authoritarian governments of Germany and Italy. Facing a scarcity of resources, a growing population, and an economic depression at home, Japan assessed its comparative costs, decided that China and Russia were inferior to Japan's might, and set out on a path of military conquest rather than peaceful trade and diplomatic negotiations with her neighbors. Japan first overran Manchuria and turned it into a Japanese puppet state by 1932. It attacked strategic regions and cities in China starting in 1937. The only Western reactions to Japan's actions were to voice criticism and to issue harmless policy statements. In essence, the West and the U.S. were reluctant to take steps that carried any chance of initiating war with Japan. This was particularly prevalent in the U.S. where isolationist sentiment was strongly supported by many elements of the public.

In 1940, America did impose economic sanctions on Japan such as banning the export of iron ore, scrap iron and steel in the hopes that such a deprivation might stop Japan's imperialistic advance into China and Indochina. It did not work. In July 1941, the U.S. ended all trade with Japan and froze all of Japan's assets in the U.S. Great Britain, China and the Netherlands joined the U.S. in placing an embargo on oil exports to Japan. Japan was now deprived of several vital resources necessary for its economic survival.

At that moment, Japan had several choices. Option One was to stop and abandon its imperialistic conquests in Asia. Option Two was to maintain the "status quo" which would have ultimately forced Japan's economy to grind to a halt. Both of these options would have caused Japan to "lose face."

In order to replace embargoed resources and to establish its own economic sphere of influence (the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere) Japan pursued option three. Japan planned to gain control of parts of Southeast Asia, including the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia, and the Philippines, as well as many Pacific Islands. In order to make the last option work for as long a period of time as possible, Japanese leaders wanted to eliminate or to at least minimize the presence of the strong U.S. Navy in the Pacific, one which had the potential to disrupt the shipping lanes in the East China Sea and thereby thwart Japan's plans for a Greater East Asia Co-Proprosperity Sphere. This was Japan's hope when it launched the attack on the U.S. Navy stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

THE LESSON PLAN

MATERIALS: HANDOUT #1 (SEE PAGE 58)

ECONOMIC CONCEPTS INTRODUCED

Scarcity – not enough of an item or resources to fill a desire.

Opportunity Costs – the next best alternative.

Comparative Costs – compare two similar goods and choose the better value.

Sphere of Influence – a portion of one country controlled and influenced by a foreign country primarily for economic reasons.

Open Door Policy – The U.S. wished to preserve equal economic opportunity in all of the spheres of influence in China starting in 1900.

PROCEDURE

Time: One class period (60 minutes). The teacher should determine ahead of time how to use the class period effectively. If it is a long class (60+ minutes), be sure to leave 10 minutes at the end of class for the evaluative writing assignment (Step F). If it is a shorter class period, assign the evaluation writing assignment for homework.

The key to this lesson: Be sure to leave plenty of class time for discussion and debates as students test out their ideas. The questions in Step E also produce a lot of discussion. The "ah-ha" moment comes when the students challenge each other's views about how wars begin.

The Previous Night's Homework Assignment: Have the students read their U.S. History textbook and locate all references which mention the Japan-U.S. friction between 1900–41 or 1931–41. The information might be sketchy and brief, but the students should be prepared to offer at least one explanation as to why Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Also, students should look at their textbook's World War II map of the Pacific War which shows not only the extent of Japan's territorial acquisitions but also America's leapfrogging advances on Japan.

IN CLASS

Step A (spend about 5–10 minutes)

The teacher should begin class by asking:

What were the political reason(s) the textbook gave for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor?—write the cause(s) on the board.

What were the economic reason(s) the textbook gave for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor?—write the causes on the board.

Are the students satisfied with the answers on the blackboard? What other information would they want to know?

Step B (15–20 minutes)

Arrange the students into groups of three or four.

Give one copy of Handout #1 to each group. Students in each group must fill in all three columns for the 20 items *and* must be prepared to defend their choices. (Let the students know that some items have multiple answers.)

Step C

Now give every student Handout #1 so each student can copy down the class's (not the group's) answers.

ESSAYS



EXCHANGE: JAPAN

**EXCHANGE: JAPAN'S LANGUAGE
INSTITUTE AT BRYN MAWR COLLEGE
JUNE 11–AUGUST 3, 2001**

JAPANESE LANGUAGE: ORAL CONCENTRATION

Exchange: Japan will offer an eight-week, credit-granting, intensive Japanese course, with concentration on authentic spoken language. Five hours of instruction daily include structured language practice conducted by university instructors who are native speakers of Japanese, linguistic and cultural analysis by a professor of Japanese language, and directed language laboratory study with audiotapes, videotapes, and CD-ROM. Reading and writing are introduced in the fourth week of the first-level course.

TEACHING JAPANESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

For its fourteenth consecutive year, *Exchange: Japan* will offer an eight-week, credit-granting, intensive training program on teaching Japanese as a foreign language. The program places emphasis on actual practice teaching of students enrolled in Japanese courses, with sessions videotaped, reviewed, and critiqued. Lectures on pedagogy are given by instructional professors who are leading experts in the field. Training is also given in all other aspects of running a Japanese program, including curriculum development, daily scheduling, and evaluation of students' performance.

EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The Educational Exchange Program trains native Japanese to teach Japanese language and matches them with American colleges and universities, where they teach for one or two years in exchange for tuition-free study. Since 1988, more than 400 Educational Exchange Program participants have been trained and matched with over 135 colleges and universities. Successful applicants, who have undergone a competitive selection process, are trained for their assignments in *Exchange: Japan's* eight-week intensive program on Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact *Exchange: Japan*, P.O. Box 890, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010. Tel: 610-896-9100. Fax: 610-896-1700. E-mail: exchangejapan@uno.com. Website: www.exchangejapan.org.

Step D

Let one group after another lead the class in discussing their conclusions. Rotate the groups so that all share leadership responsibilities. (approximately 20 minutes)

The Teacher's Role in Step D is to

1. clarify points of disagreement;
2. start a discussion over some of the groups' answers and
3. remind the students that they are simulating the Japanese leaders' decision-making process.

Step E (remainder of period)

When the students have completed discussing the handout, the teacher should ask:

1. What does Handout #1 reveal about the Japanese leaders' decision-making process?
2. What were Japan's "opportunity costs" in late 1941?
3. What were the three options open to Japan after the U.S. placed an embargo on all Japanese goods and froze all Japan's credits?
4. Why did Japan choose to attack Pearl Harbor first and not the Philippines or Indochina?
5. How could the U.S. act so justifiably outraged by the Pearl Harbor attack? Did the U.S.'s actions force Japan to attack Pearl Harbor?
6. At what point was the attack inevitable?
7. What does Handout #1 tell us about any country's decisions to go to war?

Step F

Student evaluation (short essay assignment in class or homework)

Teacher may assign some of the unanswered questions in Step E or ask the following questions:

1. If you were a Japanese leader in 1941, what would be your feelings after looking at all the evidence? Can you think of another option other than bombing Pearl Harbor?
2. Japanese Admiral Yamamoto said after the Pearl Harbor attack, "I fear we woke a sleeping giant." What did he mean? How does this reflect upon the Japanese decision-making process? What factors did the Japanese not take fully into account? Would those factors have swayed the Japanese leaders to not launch the attack on Pearl Harbor?
3. To what degree do you think American leaders were "surprised" by Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941? Could American leaders have used other means in 1940 and 1941 to persuade the Japanese to stop their imperialistic ways?

TEACHER OPTIONS

The teacher may want to discuss Step A at the end of a class and give Handout #1 as homework. That would save time in class, since steps B and C could be skipped thereby allowing more discussion time in class for steps D and E.

The teacher may want to cut the number of items in Handout #1 from 20 to 14; any less, and the lesson is too watered down. Simplifying means the students would spend less time on Steps B and D but still allow the students plenty of time for discussion.

The teacher could also assign one of the questions from E as a written homework assignment and save the questions from Step F for the next test. ■

The following resources provide additional background on the Japanese decision to bomb Pearl Harbor.

BOOKS

Bergamini, David. *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy*. New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1971.

Bix, Herbert P. *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 2000.

Feis, Herbert. *The Road to Pearl Harbor: The Coming of the War between the United States and Japan*. New York: Atheneum Press, 1962.

Goldstein, Donald M., and Katherine V. Dillon (eds.). *The Pearl Harbor Papers: Inside the Japanese Plans*. Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's, Inc., 1999.

Ike, Nobutaka (ed.). *Japan's Decision for War: Records of the 1941 Policy Conferences*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967.

Morley, James William (ed.), David A. Titus (trans.). *The Final Confrontation: Japan's Negotiations with the United States, 1941*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Neu, Charles E. *Troubled Encounter: The United States and Japan*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1975.

Neuman, William L. *America Encounters Japan: From Perry to MacArthur*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963.

Prange, Gordon William, Donald M. Goldstein, Katherine V. Dillon. *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1982.

Toland, John. *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1970.

Van Alstyne, Richard W. *The United States and East Asia*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1973.

VIDEOS

Road to Infamy. History Channel/Lou Reda Productions, Easton, Pennsylvania (1998). 50 minutes. Color.

Pacific Century. Annenberg/CPB. Program #9: "Sentimental Imperialists: America in Asia." *Japan Series*. Vol. 4: "A Proper Place in the World" (1987) 57 minutes. Color.

INTERNET

USS Arizona Memorial—Official Web page: <http://www.nps.gov/usar/index.htm>

Remembering Pearl Harbor: <http://web.tampabay.rr.com/mspusf/PearlHarbor>

Pearl Harbor Remembered: <http://www.execpc.com/~dschaaf/mainmenu.html>

1940 Japan-America Student Conference Diary of Jim Halsema, Introduction by Grant Goodman: <http://falcon.cc.ukans.edu/~ceas/Halsema%20Diary/jasc1.html>

JEFFREY HACKLER has a Bachelor's Degree from Brown University and a Master's Degree from the University of Hawaii. He has taught at Iolani School in Honolulu, Hawaii, a coeducational, college-preparatory school for grades K-12 for eighteen years. He teaches an AP U.S. History course and a full-year tenth grade Asian Studies course, primarily the ancient histories of China and Japan up to 1911-12.

FRANKLIN R. BUCHANAN PRIZE CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The AAS Committee on Teaching About Asia (CTA) invites submissions for the Franklin R. Buchanan Prize, awarded annually to educators who develop curriculum materials dealing exclusively with one or more of the countries and cultures represented by the AAS. Submissions may be in a variety of formats, including print, film, video, CD-ROM, or web-based formats. They should be accessible to and designed for any grade level, elementary through adult. Factual accuracy and likely impact upon the intended audience are criteria for the award. The 2002 prize will be awarded at the Annual Meeting of the AAS in April 2002. Materials must have been published after January 1, 2000.

The winner will receive a year's membership (including journals) to AAS and a small monetary award.

Send submissions by November 1, 2001 to:

*Buchanan Prize
c/o Keith Snodgrass
South Asia Center
Jackson School, Box 353650
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195*

*Tel: 206-543-4800; Fax: 206-685-0668
E-Mail: snodgras@u.washington.edu*

Classroom Handout for Japan's Motives for Bombing Pearl Harbor, 1941

By Jeffrey Hackler

How did all of the following items influence or not influence Japan's decision makers to launch a large armada against Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 1941?

As you go down the list, you need to make three decisions about each numbered item.

In Column One, classify the item as *P* - political issue, *E* - economic issue, or *O* - other issue.

In Column Two, decide if the item was *LT* - long-term consideration, *ST* - short-term consideration, *I* - immediate irritation, or *NOT* - not a cause of irritation to Japan's decision makers.

In Column Three, determine if this item was, for Japan's decision makers, a *MAJ* - major factor or a *MIN* - minor factor when they considered the idea of attacking Pearl Harbor.

EXAMPLE:

	<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>
(1)	P, 0	LT	MAJ
(2)	E	LT	MAJ
(3)	E	LT	MIN

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Japan had not lost a war in its modern history (1854–1941). 2. Japan was a land-resource-poor country but had plenty of labor and a sufficient amount of capital. 3. Manchuria had the raw resources Japan needed, such as grains, coal and iron ore. 4. Japan was humiliated by the American law that excluded Japanese immigrants from entering the U.S. after 1924. 5. Japan's population was increasing tremendously, and unemployment rates grew alarmingly by the end of the 1920s. 6. Japan's domestic economic policy in 1927–8 led to a small internal economic depression. 7. The Great Depression in 1929 hit Japan hard domestically and internationally when the Western nations raised high tariff walls. 8. The growth of China's and Russia's military strength threatened Japan's secure economic position in Manchuria. 9. Japan's military successfully seized all of Manchuria in 1931 and made it a puppet state called Manchukuo. 10. In 1931, the League of Nations and the U.S. opposed Japan's militaristic imperialism but did not back up their threats with action. 11. By 1931, Japan's government did not satisfy the public; a new imperialistically minded government led by military men took control of the country and implemented new domestic and foreign policy. 12. Raw resources such as tin, rubber and petroleum were located in Indochina and the Philippines. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. In the 1930s, the U.S. was an important trading partner for Japan. Half of the resources vital to running Japan's economy came from the U.S. 14. America's policy in Asia in the 1930s was to chide Japan for its imperialism in China and to continue to proclaim an economic "Open Door" in China. 15. The Japanese leaders realized that America would not and could not stop Japanese imperialism militarily in China because of the U.S.'s long history of isolationism. 16. America decided in 1940 to place embargoes on a few special items. The Americans hoped this would force Japan to stop its expansionist activities in China and Indochina. 17. America in 1941 placed embargoes on all exports to Japan, including petroleum, and froze all of Japan's financial assets in America. As a result, Japan had less than one year's supply of petroleum on hand. 18. The British ruled Singapore, the Dutch ruled Indonesia, the French ruled Indochina and the U.S. ruled the Philippines. The Japanese by 1940–1 coveted each location for its raw materials and thought it could replace one imperialistic rule with its own and establish the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. 19. In 1941, Japan signed an alliance with Germany and Italy. 20. By 1941, Japan's navy was the strongest in the Pacific. Its only rival was the U.S. Navy headquartered at Pearl Harbor. |
|---|---|