As World War II began, the United States remained officially neutral but aided Great Britain considerably in its fight against Germany. In the Pacific, Japan’s territorial expansion led to growing tensions with the United States, which peaked when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

**FDR Supports England**

**MAIN Idea** President Roosevelt favored changes in American neutrality laws, although Americans remained divided about the war and American involvement.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Have you ever been drawn into an argument when you just wanted to be left alone? Read about the increasing difficulties that the United States faced in trying to stay out of World War II.

President Roosevelt officially proclaimed the United States neutral two days after Britain and France declared war on Germany. Despite this proclamation, however, he was determined to help the two countries as much as possible in their struggle against Hitler.

**Destroyers-for-Bases Deal**

Soon after the war began, Roosevelt called Congress into a special session to revise the neutrality laws. He asked Congress to eliminate the ban on arms sales to nations at war. Public opinion strongly supported the president. Congress passed the new law, but isolationists demanded a price for the revision. Under the Neutrality Act of 1939, warring nations could buy weapons from the United States only on a “cash-and-carry” basis. This law was similar to the 1937 Neutrality Act governing the sale of nonmilitary items to countries that were at war.

In the spring of 1940, the United States faced its first test in remaining neutral. In May, Prime Minister Winston Churchill asked Roosevelt to transfer old American destroyers to Britain, which had lost nearly half its destroyers. To protect its cargo ships from German submarines and to block any German attempt to invade Britain, the nation needed more destroyers.

Determined to give Churchill the destroyers, Roosevelt used a loophole in the neutrality act that required cash for purchases. In exchange for the right to build American bases on British-controlled Newfoundland, Bermuda, and islands in the Caribbean, Roosevelt sent 50 old American destroyers to Britain. Because the deal did not involve an actual sale, the neutrality act did not apply.
The Isolationist Debate

Widespread acceptance of the destroyers-for-bases deal reflected a change in public opinion. By July 1940, most Americans favored offering limited aid to the Allies. That spirit was hardly unanimous, however. In fact, people who wanted greater American involvement in the war and those who felt that the United States should remain neutral began debating the issue in the spring of 1940.

At one extreme was the Fight for Freedom Committee, a group that urged the repeal of all neutrality laws and stronger action against Germany. At the other extreme was the America First Committee. It was a staunchly isolationist group opposed to any American intervention or aid to the Allies. The committee’s members included aviator Charles Lindbergh and Senator Gerald Nye.

Closer to the center, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, which journalist William Allen White headed, pressed for increased American aid to the Allies but opposed armed intervention.

The heated neutrality debate took place during the 1940 presidential election campaign. For months, Americans had wondered whether President Roosevelt would follow the tradition George Washington had set and retire after a second term. With the United States in a precarious position, however, many believed a change of leaders might not be in the country’s best interest. Roosevelt decided to run for an unprecedented third term.

During the campaign, FDR steered a careful course between neutrality and intervention. The Republican nominee, Wendell Willkie, did the same, promising he too would assist the Allies but stay out of the war. The voters reelected Roosevelt by a wide margin, preferring to keep a president they knew during this crisis period.
Edging Toward War

**MAIN Idea** In 1940 and 1941, the United States took more steps to provide aid to Great Britain.

**HISTORY AND YOU** What kinds of aid does America provide other countries today? Why? Read why FDR thought it was important to “lend” Britain some help.

With the election over, Roosevelt expanded the nation’s role in the war. Britain was fighting for democracy, he said, and the United States had to help. Speaking to Congress, he listed the “Four Freedoms” for which both the United States and Britain stood: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

The Lend-Lease Act

By December 1940, Great Britain had run out of funds to wage its war against Germany. Roosevelt came up with a way to remove the cash requirement of the most recent neutrality act. He proposed the **Lend-Lease Act**, which allowed the United States to lend or lease arms to any country considered “vital to the defense of the United States.” The act allowed Roosevelt to send weapons to Britain if the British government promised to return or pay rent for them after the war.

Roosevelt warned that, if Britain fell, an “unholy alliance” of Germany, Japan, and Italy would keep trying to conquer the world. The president argued that the United States should become the “great arsenal of democracy” to keep the British fighting and make it unnecessary for Americans to go to war.

The America First Committee disagreed, but Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act by a wide margin. By the time the program ended, the United States had “lent” more than $40 billion in weapons, vehicles, and other supplies to the Allied war effort.

While shipments of supplies to Britain began at once, lend-lease aid eventually went to the Soviet Union, as well. In June 1941, violating the Nazi-Soviet pact, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. Although Churchill detested communism and considered Stalin a harsh dictator, he vowed that any person or state “who fights against Nazism will have our aid.” Roosevelt, too, supported this policy.

A Hemispheric Defense Zone

Congressional approval of the Lend-Lease Act did not solve the problem of getting American arms and supplies to Britain. German submarines patrolling the Atlantic Ocean were sinking hundreds of thousands of tons of shipments each month; the British Navy did not have enough ships to stop them.

Because the United States was still technically neutral, Roosevelt could not order the U.S. Navy to protect British cargo ships. Instead, he developed the idea of a **hemispheric defense zone**. Roosevelt declared that the entire western half of the Atlantic was part of the Western Hemisphere and, therefore, neutral. He then ordered the U.S. Navy to patrol the western Atlantic and reveal the location of German submarines to the British.

The Atlantic Charter

In August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill met on board American and British warships anchored near Newfoundland. During these meetings, the two men agreed on the text of

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**PRIMARY SOURCE**

**Aiding Britain, 1939–1941**

*The Four Freedoms*

“In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want—which . . . will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.”

—Address to Congress, January 6, 1941
the Atlantic Charter. This agreement committed both nations to a postwar world of democracy, nonaggression, free trade, economic advancement, and freedom of the seas. By late September, an additional 15 anti-Axis nations had signed the charter. Churchill later said that FDR pledged to “force an ‘incident’ . . . which would justify him in opening hostilities” with Germany.

An incident quickly presented itself. In early September, a German submarine, or U-boat, fired on an American destroyer that had been radioing the U-boat’s position to the British. Roosevelt promptly responded by ordering American ships to follow a “shoot-on-sight” policy toward German submarines.

The Germans escalated hostilities the following month, targeting two American destroyers. One of them, the Reuben James, sank after being torpedoed, killing 115 sailors. As the end of 1941 drew near, Germany and the United States continued a tense standoff.

**Reading Check** Evaluating How did the Lend-Lease Act help the Allied war effort?

### How Did FDR Help Britain While the U.S. Remained Neutral?

- Neutrality Act of 1939 allowed warring nations to buy weapons from the United States if they paid cash and transported arms on their own ships
- Destroyers-for-bases provided old American destroyers in exchange for the right to build U.S. defense bases in British-controlled Bermuda, Caribbean Islands, and Newfoundland
- Lend-Lease Act permitted U.S. to lend or lease arms to any country “vital to the defense of the United States”
- Hemispheric defense zone established the entire western half of the Atlantic as part of the Western Hemisphere and, therefore, neutral

### What Did the Atlantic Charter Declare?

1. The U.S. and Britain do not seek to expand their territories.
2. Neither seeks territorial changes against the wishes of the people involved.
3. Both respect people’s right to select their own government.
4. All nations should have access to trade and raw materials.
5. Improved labor standards and economic advances are vital.
6. Both nations hope people will be free from want and fear.
7. Everyone should be able to freely travel the high seas.
8. All nations must abandon the use of force; disarmament is necessary after the war.

**Japan Attacks**

**MAIN Idea** The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor led the United States to declare war on Japan.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Do you remember how the United States acquired territory in the Pacific? Read about the threats to American interests as Japan expanded its empire.

Despite the growing tensions in the Atlantic, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor finally brought the United States into World War II. Ironically, Roosevelt’s efforts to help Britain fight Germany resulted in Japan’s decision to attack the United States.

**America Embargoes Japan**

Roosevelt knew that Britain needed much of its navy in Asia to protect its territories there from Japanese attack. As German submarines sank British ships in the Atlantic, however, the British began moving warships from Southeast Asia, leaving India and other colonial possessions vulnerable.
To hinder Japanese aggression, Roosevelt began applying economic pressure. Japan depended on the United States for many key materials, including scrap iron, steel, and especially oil. At that time, the United States supplied roughly 80 percent of Japan’s oil. In July 1940 Congress gave the president the power to restrict the sale of strategic materials (materials important for fighting a war). Roosevelt immediately blocked the sale of airplane fuel and scrap iron to Japan. Furious, the Japanese signed an alliance with Germany and Italy, becoming a member of the Axis.

In 1941 Roosevelt began sending lend-lease aid to China. Japan, which had invaded China in 1937, controlled much of the Chinese coast by 1941. Roosevelt hoped that lend-lease aid would enable the Chinese to tie down the Japanese and prevent them from attacking elsewhere. The strategy failed. By July 1941, Japan had sent military forces into southern Indochina, posing a direct threat to the British Empire.

Roosevelt responded. He froze all Japanese assets in the United States, reduced the amount of oil being shipped to Japan, and sent General Douglas MacArthur to the Philippines to build up American defenses there.

Roosevelt made it clear that the oil embargo would end only if Japan withdrew from Indochina and made peace with China. With its war against China in jeopardy because of a lack of oil and other resources, the Japanese military planned to attack the resource-rich British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia. They also decided to seize the Philippines and to attack the American fleet at Pearl Harbor. While the Japanese prepared for war, negotiations with the Americans continued, but neither side would back down. In late November...
1941, six Japanese aircraft carriers, two battleships, and several other warships set out for Hawaii.

Japan Attacks Pearl Harbor

The Japanese government appeared to be continuing negotiations with the United States in good faith. American intelligence, however, had decoded Japanese communications that made it clear that Japan was preparing to go to war against the United States.

On November 27, American commanders at the Pearl Harbor naval base received a war warning from Washington, but it did not mention Hawaii as a possible target. Because of the great distance from Japan to Hawaii, officials doubted that Japan would attempt such a long-range attack.

The U.S. military’s inability to correctly interpret the information they were receiving left Pearl Harbor an open target. The result was devastating. Japan’s surprise attack on December 7, 1941, sank or damaged eight battleships, three cruisers, four destroyers, and six other vessels. The attack also destroyed 188 airplanes and killed 2,403 Americans. Another 1,178 were injured.

That night, a gray-faced Roosevelt met with his cabinet, telling them the country faced the most serious crisis since the Civil War. The next day, he asked Congress to declare war:

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

"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.... No matter how long it may take us... the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory."

—from *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*

The Senate voted 82 to 0 and the House 388 to 1 to declare war on Japan.

Germany Declares War

Although Japan and Germany were allies, Hitler was not bound to declare war against the United States. The terms of the alliance specified that Germany had to come to Japan’s aid only if Japan was attacked, not if it attacked another country. Hitler had grown frustrated with the American navy’s attacks on German submarines, however, and he believed the time had come to declare war.

Hitler greatly underestimated the strength of the United States. He expected the Japanese to easily defeat the Americans in the Pacific. By helping Japan, he hoped for Japanese support against the Soviet Union after they had defeated the Americans. On December 11, Germany and Italy both declared war on the United States.

**Examining** Why did military officials not expect an attack on Pearl Harbor?
Causes of the Rise of Dictators

Italy
- Mussolini’s Fascist Party believed in the supreme power of the state.
- In 1922 Mussolini threatened to march on Rome; the king appointed Mussolini as the premier.

Germany
- Hitler’s Nazi Party believed in an all-powerful state, territorial expansion, and ethnic purity.
- Hitler believed that Germans needed more living space and called for Germany to expand east into Poland and Russia.
- Germany invaded Poland in 1939, France in 1940, and the USSR in 1941.

Japan
- Military leaders pushed for territorial expansion.
- Japan attacked Manchuria in 1931.
- Japan invaded China in 1937.
- Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Effects

Holocaust
- During the Holocaust, the Nazis killed an estimated 6 million Jews.
- Jews were targeted and sent to concentration or extermination camps throughout Europe.

World War II
- Leaders of France and Britain tried to appease Hitler by allowing territorial growth.
- Britain and France declared war on Germany following the invasion of Poland.
- The United States sent aid to the Allied forces through the lend-lease program and cash-and-carry provision.
- France was defeated by the Nazis, who occupied the country in 1940.
- The United States declared war on Japan in 1941, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.
ASSESSMENT

TEST-TAKING TIP

Look at each question to find clues to support your answer. Try not to get confused by the wording of the question. Then look for an answer that best fits the question.

Reviewing Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the word or words that best complete the sentence.

1. What type of government considered the nation more important than the individual?
   A dictatorship
   B monarchy
   C fascism
   D democracy

2. What did Hitler call Germany’s quick air strikes?
   A blitzkrieg
   B Kristallnacht
   C Anschluss
   D gestapo

3. What were the Nuremberg Laws?
   A regulations passed by Congress that explained when the United States could go to war against Germany
   B regulations passed by Congress that restricted the number of Jewish immigrants allowed into the U.S.
   C regulations passed by the United Nations that outlawed World War II
   D regulations passed by Germany that deprived German Jews of certain rights such as citizenship

4. __________, such as oil, steel, and iron supplies, were used by the United States to put pressure on Japan.
   A Rationed items
   B Strategic materials
   C Lend-Lease goods
   D Cash-and-carry materials

Reviewing Main Ideas

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

Section 1 (pp. 454–459)

5. Which factor encouraged an American policy of neutrality during the 1930s?
   A disillusionment with World War I and its results
   B decline in the military readiness of other nations
   C repeal of Prohibition
   D economic prosperity of the period

6. In the 1930s the United States responded to the rise of fascism in Europe by
   A invading Germany and Italy.
   B forming military alliances.
   C passing a series of neutrality laws.
   D joining the League of Nations.

Section 2 (pp. 460–465)

7. What term refers to the German annexation of Austria?
   A Kristallnacht
   B Anschluss
   C Munich Conference
   D Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact

8. When France fell to the Nazis, the French and British evacuated thousands of troops from
   A Dunkirk.
   B Danzig.
   C Buchenwald.
   D Poland.

If You Missed Questions . . .

Go to Page . . .

454 462 466 478 458–459 458 460 462–464

GO ON
Section 3 (pp. 466–471)

9. Concentration camps and extermination camps were part of what Nazis called
   A. justice for all.
   B. the “final solution.”
   C. population control.
   D. the last straw.

Section 4 (pp. 474–479)

10. In 1939 the immediate response of the United States to the start of World War II in Europe was to
   A. modify its neutrality policy by providing aid to the Allies.
   B. declare war on Germany and Italy.
   C. strengthen its isolationist position by ending trade with Britain.
   D. send troops to the Allied nations to act as advisers.

11. What was one step that America took to aid Great Britain?
   A. created a hemispheric defense zone
   B. founded the America First Committee
   C. called for the Wannsee Conference
   D. attended the Munich Conference

12. Why did the United States enter the war in 1941?
   A. blitzkrieg over Poland
   B. bombing of Pearl Harbor
   C. embargo on Japan
   D. sinking of the Lusitania

Critical Thinking

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

13. When Roosevelt signed the Lend-Lease Act, he said America must become the “arsenal of democracy” in order to
   A. end the Depression.
   B. help the Axis Powers.
   C. remain neutral.
   D. help Britain.

Base your answers to questions 14 and 15 on the map below and on your knowledge of Chapter 13.

Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps

14. In which two countries were most of the concentration and extermination camps located?
   A. Germany and France
   B. Germany and Poland
   C. Germany and the Soviet Union
   D. Germany and Austria

15. What can you conclude about the extent of the Nazis’ concentration and extermination camps?
   A. The Nazis constructed camps in every European country.
   B. The Nazis constructed camps in countries that Germany conquered.
   C. The Nazis constructed camps in Britain.
   D. The Nazis constructed camps in the Soviet Union.
16. Why were the British able to prevent the Germans from invading their country?
   A. The United States joined the Allied forces.
   B. Germany could not penetrate the Maginot Line.
   C. France defeated Germany and pushed them back into Belgium.
   D. Britain had developed radar stations to detect German aircraft.

Analyze the cartoon and answer the question that follows. Base your answer on the cartoon and on your knowledge of Chapter 13.

17. According to the cartoon, how did Americans feel about assisting the Allies?
   A. They sent troops to help make the world safe for democracy.
   B. Many Americans were willing to help the British but did not want to sell them arms.
   C. Many Americans did not want to help the British fight the Germans.
   D. The United States sold arms to Britain and France.

Document-Based Questions
Directions: Analyze the document and answer the short-answer questions that follow the document.

Daniel Inouye earned a Medal of Honor for his service in World War II and later became a United States senator. In 1941, however, he was a teenager living in Hawaii. This is his account of Pearl Harbor:

“As soon as I finished brushing my teeth and pulled on my trousers, I automatically clicked on the little radio that stood on the shelf above my bed. I remember that I was buttoning my shirt and looking out the window . . . when the hum of the warming set gave way to a frenzied voice. ‘This is no test,’ the voice cried out. ‘Pearl Harbor is being bombed by the Japanese!’”

[The family ran outside to look toward the naval base at Pearl Harbor.]

“And then we saw the planes. They came zooming up out of that sea of gray smoke, flying north toward where we stood and climbing into the bluest part of the sky, and they came in twos and threes, in neat formations, and if it hadn’t been for that red ball on their wings, the rising sun of the Japanese Empire, you could easily believe that they were Americans, flying over in precise military salute.”

—quoted in Eyewitness to America

18. How did Inouye find out about the attack on Pearl Harbor?
19. What made him certain that the planes were Japanese, not American?

Extended Response
20. Could the Holocaust have been avoided if the Allies had intervened? Write an essay that takes a position and defends it. Your essay should include an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use relevant facts and details to support your conclusion.

STOP