



The United States at War

Objectives

1. Understand how the United States prepared for war and strengthened its ties with the Allies.
2. Discover why the United States finally entered World War II.
3. Learn how, after many early setbacks, the Allies began to turn the tide of battle in North Africa and the Pacific.

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Use Sentence Clues to Analyze Meaning After studying a word, look in the sentence for clues to its meaning. For example, you may find descriptions of what a verb does, examples of a noun, or details that explain an adjective.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

emphasize, p. 809


pendulum, p. 811

Key Terms and People

total war, p. 811

Dwight D. Eisenhower, p. 812

Douglas MacArthur, p. 812

 **Background Knowledge** When the war began, most Americans hoped to remain neutral. In this section, you will learn how the United States finally entered the war.

Main Idea

Though the United States officially remained neutral, Roosevelt found ways to help Britain defend against the Nazis.

Moving Toward War

In 1940, President Roosevelt sought reelection to a third term. His decision broke the precedent set by George Washington that Presidents serve only two terms. Roosevelt promised to maintain American neutrality. He told voters, "Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." FDR won reelection easily.

Lend-Lease Act Roosevelt sympathized with the Allies. Even before the campaign had begun, Winston Churchill had appealed to Roosevelt for military aid. Selling war supplies to Britain would violate the Neutrality Acts. Still, Roosevelt reached a compromise with Congress. The United States could sell supplies to Britain, but Britain would have to pay cash for all goods it received.

However, by the end of 1940, Britain's treasury was empty. Fearing that Britain would fall to the Nazis, Roosevelt persuaded Congress to pass a law he called Lend-Lease. It allowed the United States to lend or lease supplies to Britain and other nations fighting the Nazis. Isolationists objected that the law would draw the United States into war. Most Americans, however, favored the plan.

Lend-Lease convoys soon began moving across the Atlantic. Later, the Lend-Lease arrangement was extended to China and the Soviet Union. Under Lend-Lease, the United States became, in Roosevelt's words, "the great arsenal of democracy."

Military Buildup The United States took other steps to prepare for possible entry into the war. Congress approved greater spending



Franklin Roosevelt (left) and Winston Churchill (right)

for the army and navy. In September 1940, it passed a law that set up the first peacetime draft in American history.

Roosevelt took another unprecedented step in 1940. He ordered the Army Air Corps to organize an African American unit under the command of black officers. A flight training program was set up at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. The Tuskegee Airmen would later compile a superb combat record.

Atlantic Charter In August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill issued the Atlantic Charter, outlining their goals for the postwar world. They agreed that their nations would seek no territorial gain from the war and emphasized the right of all people to choose their own government. They also called for a new international organization that might succeed where the League of Nations had failed.

✓ **Checkpoint** What was the Lend-Lease Act of 1941?

The United States Enters the War

Events in Asia, not Europe, finally drew the United States into war. In July 1941, Japan invaded the French colony of Indochina (present-day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia). In response, Roosevelt banned American exports of iron and steel scrap to Japan. He also restricted the sale of oil to Japan.

Facing a shortage of fuel for their navy, Japanese leaders decided on war. Plans for an attack on the United States were soon underway.

Vocabulary Builder

emphasize (EHM fah sīz) *v.* to stress; to give particular importance to

Main Idea

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II.

The Tuskegee Airmen

“My own opinion was that blacks could best overcome racist attitudes through their achievements, even though those achievements had to take place within the hateful environment of segregation. . . . The coming war represented a golden opportunity. . . . We owned a fighter squadron—something that would have been unthinkable only a short time earlier. It was all ours. . . . Furthermore, we would be required to analyze our own problems and solve them with our own skills.”

—Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., *Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., American*



Benjamin Davis
at Tuskegee

Reading Primary Sources

Skills Activity

Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., commanded the Tuskegee Airmen and later became the first African American general in the Air Force. Here, he describes his feelings about the formation of the flying program.

- (a) **Detect Points of View** How does Davis feel about segregation?
- (b) **Identify Benefits** How does Davis think African Americans might benefit from the United States entering World War II?

ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

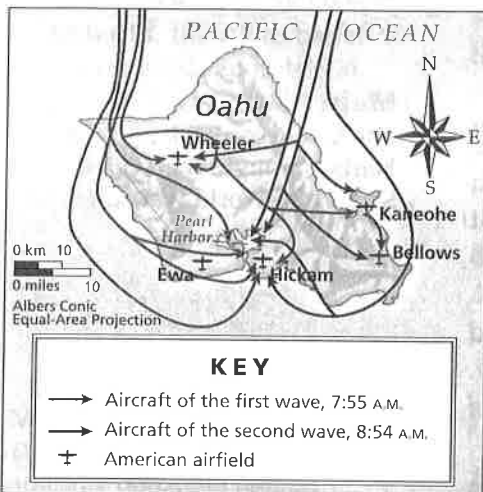
History Interactive

**Learn About
Pearl Harbor**

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President Roosevelt called December 7, 1941, "a day that will live in infamy." The attack on Pearl Harbor shocked Americans and propelled the United States into the most extensive war in history. **Critical Thinking: Link Past and Present** How was the reaction to Pearl Harbor similar to the reaction to terrorist attacks on the United States in our time?



At Pearl Harbor, the peace of a Sunday morning was shattered by Japanese bombers. Coming in two waves, the attack destroyed or seriously damaged much of the American fleet and killed thousands of Americans.



"Remember Pearl Harbor" became the nation's battle cry. This poster was created the year after the attack.



Newspaper headlines blared what everybody knew at once: The nation was now at war!

Pearl Harbor On December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers launched a surprise attack on American naval, air, and ground forces at Pearl Harbor, on the Hawaiian island of Oahu (oh AH hoo). The attack destroyed nearly half of the island's 400 military aircraft and damaged 8 battleships, two beyond repair. About 2,400 Americans were killed.

The assault on Pearl Harbor caught American military leaders by surprise. Though aware of the possibility of a Japanese attack, they did not expect the attack to come as far east as Hawaii.

The next day, a grave President Roosevelt addressed Congress.

“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.”

—Franklin Roosevelt, speech, December 8, 1941

Later that day, Congress declared war on Japan. Japan's allies, Germany and Italy, then declared war on the United States. Against their wishes, Americans were again involved in a world war.

A Global Conflict Even more than World War I, World War II was truly a global conflict. On one side were the Axis powers, an alliance made up of Germany, Italy, Japan, and six other nations. Opposing the Axis powers were the Allied powers. Before the war was over, the Allied powers would include Britain, France, the Soviet Union, the United States, China, and 45 other countries.

More than any war before it, World War II was a total war. Total war is conflict involving not just armies but entire nations. Countries on each side put all their resources into the war effort. Civilian populations often became targets of bombings.

☒ **Checkpoint** Why did Japan attack United States forces?

Europe and North Africa

In early 1942, the Allies faced a bleak situation on all fronts. Germany controlled most of Western Europe. Although Britain had not fallen, it was powerless to challenge the Nazi position on the continent. In Eastern Europe, the Nazis had advanced deep into Soviet territory. Soviet losses numbered in the millions. Still, in 1942, the pendulum began to swing in the Allies' favor.

The Soviets Resist Hitler had expected the Soviet Union to collapse swiftly in the face of his ferocious assault. But in December 1941, Soviet troops—assisted by the brutal Russian winter—halted the German advance just miles from Moscow.

The Germans mounted another offensive in mid-1942. A major battle took place in and around the Russian city of Stalingrad. Months of bitter fighting ended in a clear Soviet victory. From then on, the Soviets slowly drove the Germans back westward.



Use Sentence Clues to Analyze Meaning

What happened on the “day of infamy”? How did Roosevelt react to the event? What does *infamy* mean?

Main Idea

The German advance was slowed by Soviet resistance and by Allied victories in North Africa.

Vocabulary Builder

pendulum (PEHN jah luhm) *n.*
hanging weight that swings from side to side in a steady rhythm



World War II in North Africa

MAP MASTER

Skills Activity

In 1942 and 1943, Allied victories in North Africa set the stage for the coming campaign in Europe.

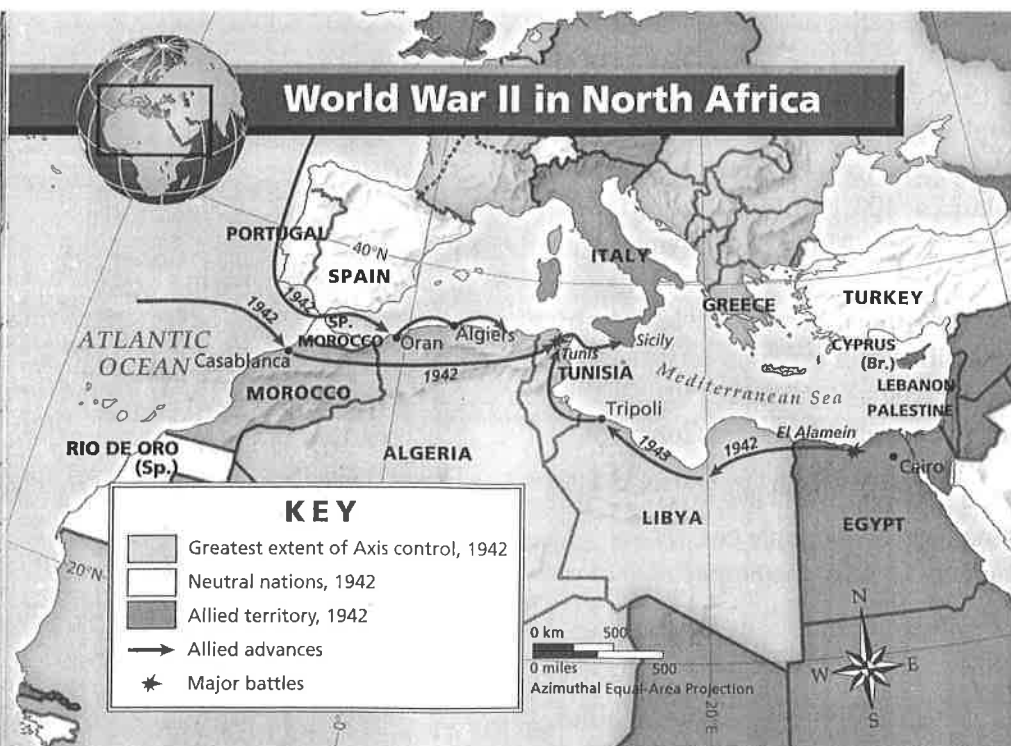
- Interpret a Map** What battle shown here marked the beginning of the Allied advance?
- Evaluate Information** Describe what happened at Tunis in 1943.

MapMaster Online

For: Interactive map

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The Tide Turns in North Africa In North Africa, Erwin Rommel, Germany's most respected general, won a number of quick victories. Then, in October 1942, British troops defeated German forces at El Alamein (el AL uh mayn) in Egypt. Slowly, the British drove Rommel's tank corps westward into Tunisia.

Meanwhile, in November, the first American ground troops in combat landed in North Africa. Under the command of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, they occupied Morocco and Algeria. Hemmed in on both sides, Rommel's army surrendered in May 1943.

✓Checkpoint How did Allied fortunes change in North Africa?

Main Idea

Japan's rapid advance across the Pacific was finally halted in two major naval battles.

Japan Sweeps Through the Pacific

In the days after Pearl Harbor, Japanese armies swiftly took control of Hong Kong, Malaya, Thailand, Burma, Guam, and Wake Island. To the south, they occupied the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia) and the Solomon Islands and threatened Australia.

The Philippines Fall Hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese aircraft bombed airfields in the Philippines, the island chain governed by the United States. The Japanese air force destroyed most of the planes that could defend the islands against their invasion.

Two weeks later, a Japanese invasion force landed on Luzon, the key Philippine island. There, General Douglas MacArthur commanded a Filipino-American force. As the enemy closed in on Manila, the capital city, MacArthur withdrew his forces onto the Bataan (bah TAHN) peninsula. He was then ordered by President Roosevelt to go to Australia and take command of all U.S. troops in the region. But as he left the Philippines, MacArthur vowed, "I shall return."

On Bataan and the nearby island of Corregidor, the trapped Americans and Filipinos waged a heroic defense. By early March, they were the only major forces in the Pacific that had not given way to the Japanese. The defenders of Bataan finally surrendered on April 9. Corregidor fell the following month.

Bataan Death March At Bataan, the Japanese captured nearly 70,000 soldiers. Already weak from hunger, the American and Filipino prisoners were then forced to walk 65 miles to a prison camp. Along the way, so many prisoners died of starvation, disease, or violence that their trek soon became known as the Bataan Death March.

Coral Sea and Midway The tide began to turn in the Pacific with two historic naval battles. In May 1942, at the Battle of the Coral Sea, American and Japanese navies waged a new form of warfare. For the first time, opposing ships did not see one another. Instead, planes taking off from the decks of huge aircraft carriers attacked enemy ships many miles away. Both sides suffered heavy losses, but the United States halted the Japanese drive to New Guinea.

A month later, the Japanese sought to take the island of Midway, home of a key American military base. But the Americans sank 4 Japanese aircraft carriers, destroyed 322 Japanese aircraft, and reduced Japan's supply of highly trained pilots. After the Battle of Midway, Japan's navy no longer ruled the Pacific.

Checkpoint What was the Bataan Death March?

Looking Back and Ahead The attack on Pearl Harbor brought American forces into the biggest war in history. In the next section, you will see how the war affected Americans at home.



Bataan Death March

Section 2 | Check Your Progress

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Identify** Name two ways that President Roosevelt strengthened ties with Britain in the early years of the war.
(b) Detect Points of View Why did some Americans view these actions as wrong?
- (a) Recall** Why did the situation look bad for the Allies in early 1942?
(b) Apply Information Explain why each of the following places is considered a turning point in the war: Stalingrad, El Alamein, Midway.

Reading Skill

- Use Sentence Clues to Analyze Meaning** Use sentence clues to analyze the meaning of *ferocious* in the following sentence: Hitler had expected the Soviet Union to collapse swiftly in the face of his *ferocious* assault. According to that sentence, what did Hitler think would happen because his assault was ferocious? What does *ferocious* mean?

informal definition for a younger child.

Writing

- Use print or Internet resources to find more information about one of the battles or people discussed in this section. Identify at least three sources of nonprint material on the topic. List the sources you find and describe their contents.

Vocabulary Builder

- Write two definitions of the term **total war**—one a formal definition for a teacher, the other an