Pearl Harbor Analysis WorkSheet.
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Primary Source Document Analysis: President Roosevelt’s “Day of Infamy” speech - December 8, 1941
Directions: Read the excerpt of President Roosevelt’s speech available below (original source). Answer the analysis questions that follow.

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 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.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it 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 statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

Always will we 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.

Hostilities exist. 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 unbounded determination of our people - we will gain the inevitable triumph - so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.
Analysis Questions:

1) President Roosevelt describes the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as “a day that will live in infamy....” Infamy means disgrace, dishonor, or great wickedness. What do you think were the various emotions of Americans in the first hours and days after they heard the news of the attack?

2) What do you think were the biggest concerns of American citizens after the attack at Pearl Harbor?

3) Why do you think President Roosevelt mentions that “It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it 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 statements and expressions of hope for continued peace”?

   a) How does this help him build an argument for war with Japan?

4) How does President Roosevelt attempt to inspire confidence in Americans during this difficult moment in American history?

5) Who was the Japanese empire allied with during World War II?

   a) Predict: Which countries does this also mean the US will be at war with?
U.S. DECLARES WAR, PACIFIC BATTLE WIDENS
UNITY IN CONGRESS

Washington, Dec. 8.--The United States today formally declared war on Japan. Congress, with only one dissenting vote, approved the resolution in the record time of 33 minutes after President Roosevelt denounced Japanese aggression in ringing tones. He personally delivered his message to a joint session of the Senate and House. At 4:10 P. M. he affixed his signature to the resolution. There was no debate like that between April 2, 1917, when President Wilson requested war against Germany, and April 6, when a declaration of war was approved by Congress. President Roosevelt spoke only 6 minutes and 30 seconds today compared with Woodrow Wilson's 29 minutes and 34 seconds. The vote today against Japan was 82 to 0 in the Senate and 388 to 1 in the House. The lone vote against the resolution was in the House that of Miss Jeanette Rankin, Republican, of Montana. Her "No" was greeted with boos and hisses. In 1917 she voted against the resolution for war against Germany.

A Sudden and Deliberate Attack

President Roosevelt's brief and decisive words were addressed to the assembled representatives of the basic organizations of American democracy--the Senate, the House, the Cabinet and the Supreme Court. "America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan," he said. "We will gain the inevitable triumph, so help us God."

Thunderous cheers greeted the Chief Executive and Commander in Chief throughout the address. This was particularly pronounced when he declared that Americans "will remember the character of the onslaught against us," a day, he remarked, which will live in infamy. "This form of treachery shall never endanger us again," he declared amid cheers. "The American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory." Then, to the accompaniment of a great roar of cheering, he asked for war against Japan.

Mentioning one by one in staccato phrases the Japanese attacks on the Philippines, American Midway, Wake and Guam Islands, British Hong Kong and Malaya, he bluntly informed the people by radio and their representatives directly: "Hostilities exist. There is no blinking the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger. 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."

Victory May Take Time, He Warns

It may take a long time, Mr. Roosevelt warned, "to overcome this premeditated invasion," but of the unbounding determination of the American people and confidence in our armed forces neither he nor they had any doubt. Then he said: "I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, Dec. 7, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire."

It was to a solemn Congress and to grim galleries that the President mentioned the casualties in Hawaii--officially estimated at 1,500 dead and 1,500 wounded. Mr. Roosevelt spoke concisely, clearly and to the point to an already convinced audience already stirred to belligerency by the wantonness of the Japanese attack.

Extraordinary precautions were taken by the secret Service to guard the President during his short trip over the indirect mile and a quarter route from the Executive Mansion to the Capitol and back to the White House.
Analysis Questions:

1) According to the article, how does FDR’s speech compare to President Wilson’s?
   
a) What does this suggest to you about the difference between the US involvement in World War II in comparison to US involvement in World War I?

2) What adjectives does the article use to describe President Roosevelt’s speech?

3) What adjectives does the article use to describe the mood or tone of the room during the speech?

4) Why do you think the article mentions: “Extraordinary precautions were taken by the secret Service to guard the President during his short trip over the indirect mile and a quarter route from the Executive Mansion to the Capitol and back to the White House”? What might this communicate to the readers?
Imagine it is 1941 and you have both read the speech delivered by FDR, listened to the speech on the radio, and read the NY Times article reporting on the speech.

As an American citizen living in the United States at the time - how do YOU feel about President Roosevelt’s speech?

Write a short two paragraph letter to the editor of the NY Times describing your reaction to President Roosevelt’s speech.

- Do you think the President did enough to inspire confidence in the American people after the attack at Pearl Harbor? If so, why? If not, what do you think he should have done to inspire more confidence? (Cite evidence from the speech that supports your reasoning)
- What are you worried about now that the US is at war with Japan? What do you want to hear about from the President in his next message?

- **describe** means “to illustrate something in words or tell about it”