

**Lesson Title:** Pre-WWII Pacific W/Japan

**Lesson Design By:** Elmer Gaug, Braymer C-4,  
Government, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

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## **TEACHING TRADITIONAL AMERICAN HISTORY PROGRAM**

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Mike Lair, Project Director

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**LESSON OVERVIEW:** What circumstances encouraged the Japanese to attack Pearl Harbor? Considering this question will prompt the student to realize that a similar set of circumstances could arise today. This lesson will point out to the student that a scarcity of natural resources can and will cause governments to react. This reaction may not always be in a civilized manner.

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

- How did geography play a role in Japan's decision to bomb Pearl Harbor?
- How did the conflict between Japan and the U.S. affect the ability of the Japanese to carry out their aggressive war plans and daily lives?
- How did the termination of the U.S. trade agreements with Japan provoke the attack on Pearl Harbor?
- How would we relate as Americans to a similar scarcity of a natural resource?

**OBJECTIVES:** After completing this lesson the student will be able to:

- Explain how the following islands/countries: Japan – Philippines – Australia – Guam – China – Iwo Jima contributed to Japan's war effort. GLE: (5 c3) Understanding the concept of location.
- Determine how natural resources were a large factor in Japan's trade. GLE (4 b2) Understanding economic concepts.
- Analyze the circumstances during 1930-1940 surrounding Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor.

ASSESSMENT: Within one page discuss an overview of Prewar WWII in reference to WWII era Japan.

- 20 points Correctly identify how each contributed to the war effort
- Japan – China – Natural Resources – Pearl Harbor
- 15 points Correctly identify how three of the above contributed to the war effort.
- 10 points Correctly identify how two of the above contributed to the war effort.
- 5 points Correctly identify how one of the above contributed to the war effort.
- 0 points Nothing was written or the above was not correctly identified.

The following is an example of a constructed response to the above assessment.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan was moving from a warlord-feudal system into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When a community becomes a nation, it tends to go from an agrarian society to an industrialized society. When dealing with an industrialized society, more demands for goods evolve. In Japan's situation it entered the industrialized stage and then realized that it had a deficiency in a number of natural resources, with petroleum being the most significant deficiency. Another natural resource that Japan had a deficiency of was iron ore. Japan began to relieve its deficiency of these natural resources by an aggressive Far East War. This included the invasion of China, in particular Manchuri, the natural resource rich region of China. As this aggression continued, the United States foreign policy changed toward Japan. The U.S. interrupted the shipments of iron ore and petroleum products to Japan. When the interruption of these natural resources and their products occurred, Japan had a need to respond to the situation. The response that Japan chose, was to attack Pearl Harbor. In part, the Japanese wanted to be assured the U.S. would not interfere with their aggression. Japan felt that the U.S. was responding to their Far East aggression and what was next.

- Evidence of the desired result would be that the student mentioned all of the above and places the information in a constructive manner.

- Did the student provide more information than was required for a good paper?

MATERIALS: The following are several texts that can be used.

- AMERICAS'S STORY: Jacobs, Wilder, Ludlum and Brown. Houghton Mifflin Co. c1990. Chapter 29.
- HISTORY and LIFE: Wallbank, Schrier, Maier and Smith. Scott Foresman Co. c1990. Chapter 34.
- For maps, any generic Pacific Rim map will work.

CLASS TIME: Three class periods of 47 minutes each

TEACHER INPUT: The following topics and facts are key concepts for student understanding of the pre-war effort and that history repeats itself.

- With a pull-down map point out the geography locations indicated above.
- Explain that Japan is a natural resource poor country.
- Remember that Japan was on an aggressive war effort in relation to China.
- China had the natural resources that Japan needed and it was close by.
- It would be helpful to explain the relationship between the U.S. and Japan in relation to trade agreements at this time.
- The U.S. was a major trading partner of Japan at this time.
- As a consequence, all at once the U.S. cancelled its Japanese trade agreements.
- Close to 50% of the U.S. petroleum was imported at this time and 50% of that came from the Middle-East.
- Explain the U.S. reaction to the Middle-East oil embargo of 1973.
- As part of your activities – you could ask how students would have reacted if they were the leaders of Japan.

ACTIVITIES: The following are some activities that will encourage the students to ask questions.

- Use a classroom map of the Western Pacific Rim that shows the islands and countries involved in Japan's Pre WWII effort.

You have been assigned to be the correspondent for the USS Backfire. You write a 500 word article referring to the geography of this region, including the relative distance between these islands and Japan. The article should help the reader recognize Japan's situation. Note: The above should include the importance of a Japanese Navy to defend its supply line. This report will also contain Japan's lack of natural resources and its dependence on the islands to secure a supply of natural resources.

- Have the students/or you assign the students to several groups. Then the students can assign themselves into roles of various Japanese duties. This could be a military commander, civilian overseeing Japan's trade situation of various supplies that are needed to maintain a reasonable economy and a military logistics person to supply the military. In your role, you decide what Japan's reaction could be when the U.S. discontinued trade with Japan. Japan chose to attack Pearl Harbor. You are member of Emperor Hirohito's advisory council. An example would be: If I were the Military Commander, I would likely have this opinion
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**CLOSURE**: Make a strong point that the U.S. could be in a similar situation as Japan was before WWII. The U.S. depends on a number of products that are from other countries and some of these countries are not the friendliest toward the U.S. The most common commodity at this time is petroleum. Name some other commodities that would be similar, for example platinum and molybdenum would be in this group of essential materials that the U.S. must import in order to maintain a "normal" economy.