

# **why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key**

## **Understanding the Question: Why Did Japan Attack Pearl Harbor DBQ Answer Key**

**why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key** is a commonly searched phrase among students and history enthusiasts seeking to understand the complex motivations behind Japan's surprise military strike on the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. This question often appears in Document-Based Questions (DBQ) on AP U.S. History exams, requiring examinees to analyze various documents and synthesize information to craft a comprehensive answer. The DBQ answer key serves as a guide to help students understand the key points and evidence necessary to construct a well-supported response.

In this article, we will explore the background, causes, and key factors that led to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, supported by historical analysis and evidence often included in DBQ responses. We will also discuss the importance of understanding the context and how to effectively utilize the DBQ answer key to improve historical writing skills.

## **The Historical Context Leading to the Attack**

### **Japan's Imperial Ambitions in Asia**

Japan's expansionist policies in the early 20th century set the stage for tensions with Western powers, especially the United States. Japan sought to establish a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, aiming to dominate East Asia and the Pacific.

- Annexation of Korea (1910) and subsequent invasions in China,
- Mukden Incident (1931) leading to Manchuria's invasion,
- Increasing military influence over Japanese government decisions.

These actions created friction with Western nations, particularly the United States, which viewed Japan's expansion as a threat to regional stability.

## **U.S. Economic Sanctions and Embargoes**

In response to Japan's aggressive moves in China and Manchuria, the United States implemented economic sanctions to curb Japan's military expansion.

- Imposition of oil embargoes in 1940 and 1941,
- Restrictions on exports of steel and other vital materials,
- Efforts to pressure Japan into ceasing its conquests.

These sanctions severely impacted Japan's economy and military capabilities, prompting Japan to consider drastic measures.

## **Rising Tensions and the Road to War**

As tensions escalated, diplomatic negotiations between the U.S. and Japan reached an impasse. Japan perceived the sanctions as an economic blockade, threatening its national security and ambitions.

- Diplomatic negotiations failed to resolve conflicts,
- Japan believed war was inevitable if sanctions continued,
- The military leadership decided on a preemptive strike to neutralize U.S. Pacific defenses.

This context set the stage for Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor as a strategic move to secure its empire and ensure resource access.

## **Key Reasons Why Japan Attacked Pearl Harbor**

### **Strategic Surprise and Naval Neutralization**

Japan aimed to deliver a crippling blow to the U.S. Pacific Fleet to prevent interference with its military campaigns in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

- To destroy aircraft carriers, battleships, and other vital naval assets,
- To create a window of opportunity for Japan's expansion,
- The element of surprise was critical to maximizing the attack's effectiveness.

The attack was designed to be swift and decisive, giving Japan control of the Pacific for a crucial period.

## **Preemptive Strike to Secure Resources**

Japan's military leaders believed that war with the United States was inevitable, and striking first would give Japan a strategic advantage.

- To secure access to resources in Southeast Asia, including oil, rubber, and other raw materials,
- To prevent the U.S. from establishing a strong naval presence in the Pacific,
- To ensure Japan's survival and continued growth as an imperial power.

The attack was viewed as a necessary preemptive move to safeguard Japan's economic and military interests.

## **Political and Military Motivations**

- Military leadership's belief that a decisive strike would weaken U.S. resolve and make negotiations impossible,
- Political leaders seeking to demonstrate strength and resolve to their citizens and allies,
- The desire to secure Japan's dominance in Asia and the Pacific.

The attack was also influenced by Japan's desire to assert itself as a major world power, challenging Western dominance.

## **The Role of U.S. Policies and International Relations**

### **Isolationism and Non-Intervention Policies**

During the 1930s, the United States maintained a policy of isolationism, avoiding involvement in European and Asian conflicts.

- The Neutrality Acts aimed to prevent U.S. entry into foreign wars,
- This policy delayed a strong U.S. response to Japan's aggression,
- It also allowed Japan to expand without immediate interference.

However, as Japan's actions grew more aggressive, the U.S. shifted toward economic sanctions and increased military preparedness.

## **Diplomatic Failures and Miscalculations**

Despite negotiations, diplomacy failed to prevent war. Japan believed that:

- The U.S. would not risk war over sanctions,
- The attack would weaken U.S. military capability enough to allow Japan free rein in the Pacific,
- The surprise attack would demoralize the United States and force negotiations on Japan's terms.

These miscalculations contributed to the decision to launch the attack.

## **The Impact and Aftermath of the Pearl Harbor Attack**

### **Entry of the United States into World War II**

The attack on Pearl Harbor was a turning point for the United States, leading directly to its entry into World War II.

- December 8, 1941: U.S. declares war on Japan,
- The attack unified American public opinion against Japan and its allies,
- The U.S. mobilized its vast military and economic resources for the war effort.

## **Strategic and Historical Significance**

- Marked the beginning of the Pacific Theater in WWII,
- Changed the course of history by positioning the U.S. as a global superpower,
- Led to significant battles such as Midway, Guadalcanal, and the island-hopping campaign.

The attack also prompted the internment of Japanese Americans and a reevaluation of U.S. foreign policy.

## **How to Use the DBQ Answer Key Effectively**

## Understanding the Key Points

The DBQ answer key provides essential evidence and thematic points to include in your essay:

- Roots of Japan's expansionism,
- Economic sanctions and diplomatic failures,
- Japan's strategic objectives,
- The importance of surprise and military planning.

Review these points to structure your response effectively.

## Incorporating Evidence and Document Analysis

- Use documents to support your thesis,
- Reference specific pieces of evidence from the DBQ,
- Connect documents to broader historical themes.

This approach demonstrates your ability to interpret historical sources critically.

## Crafting a Well-Organized Essay

- Start with a clear thesis statement that answers the prompt,
- Use paragraphs to develop each main idea,
- Integrate evidence logically and coherently,
- Conclude by summarizing key points and implications.

The answer key helps ensure you include all necessary components.

## Conclusion: The Importance of Understanding Why Japan Attacked Pearl Harbor

Understanding why Japan attacked Pearl Harbor involves examining a complex web of military, economic, political, and strategic factors. The attack was not a spontaneous event but the result of years of imperial ambitions, economic sanctions, diplomatic failures, and strategic calculations. For students preparing for the DBQ or any history exam, utilizing the answer key effectively can enhance their ability to craft comprehensive, evidence-based responses. Recognizing the multiple layers of causes behind Japan's attack provides a deeper appreciation of this pivotal moment in world history and its profound consequences for global events in the 20th century.

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **What was the primary reason behind Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor?**

Japan aimed to eliminate the US Pacific Fleet as a threat to its expansion in Asia and to secure access to resources by crippling America's military presence in Hawaii.

## **How does the DBQ answer key help students understand the Pearl Harbor attack?**

The DBQ answer key provides detailed explanations and evidence, helping students analyze the causes, motivations, and consequences of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor effectively.

## **What role did U.S. economic sanctions play in Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor?**

U.S. sanctions, including oil and trade embargoes, severely limited Japan's resources, prompting Japan to consider military action to secure its strategic goals, culminating in the attack.

## **How does analyzing a DBQ about Pearl Harbor deepen understanding of World War II origins?**

It encourages critical thinking by examining multiple perspectives, causes, and consequences, illustrating how diplomatic tensions and strategic interests led to the attack and broader conflict.

## **Why is it important to study the 'Why did Japan attack Pearl Harbor' DBQ with an answer key?**

Studying with an answer key helps students develop accurate historical understanding, improve analytical skills, and learn how to construct well-supported historical arguments.

## **What key factors are highlighted in the DBQ answer key regarding Japan's motivations for the attack?**

Factors include Japan's desire to expand its empire in Asia, retaliate against U.S. sanctions, and prevent interference with its military expansion, all of which contributed to the decision to attack Pearl Harbor.

# Additional Resources

## Why Did Japan Attack Pearl Harbor DBQ Answer Key: A Comprehensive Analysis

Understanding the motivations behind Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor is a complex historical inquiry that involves examining political, economic, military, and strategic factors of the early 20th century. The DBQ (Document-Based Question) answer key offers students and historians a structured approach to analyze these reasons, synthesize evidence, and develop well-supported responses. In this detailed review, we will explore the multifaceted causes of Japan's surprise attack, provide context, and analyze the significance of each factor, ultimately offering a thorough explanation suitable for educational and scholarly purposes.

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## Historical Context Leading Up to Pearl Harbor

Before delving into the specific reasons for the attack, it is crucial to understand the broader historical setting:

- **Japan's Expansionist Ambitions:** During the early 20th century, Japan sought to establish itself as a dominant power in Asia, driven by a desire for resources, strategic dominance, and national pride.
- **International Tensions:** Japan's aggressive policies led to conflicts such as the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and involvement in China, culminating in the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the Second Sino-Japanese War beginning in 1937.
- **Global Response:** Western powers, particularly the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands, imposed economic sanctions and trade restrictions to curb Japan's expansion, especially targeting oil and steel exports.

This tense environment set the stage for Japan's strategic calculations and diplomatic maneuvers leading to the attack.

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## Economic Factors: Embargoes and Resource Scarcity

One of the most pivotal reasons for Japan's attack was economic pressure stemming from U.S. and allied sanctions:

## **Japanese Dependence on Imported Resources**

- Japan lacked significant natural resources such as oil, rubber, and iron ore.
- The country relied heavily on imports, especially from the United States, which supplied roughly 80% of Japan's oil before restrictions.
- The invasion of China and military campaigns in Southeast Asia increased Japan's resource needs.

## **U.S. Embargo and Sanctions**

- In 1940-1941, the U.S. imposed an embargo on oil exports to Japan, aiming to deter further aggression in Asia.
- The embargo threatened Japan's military and industrial capabilities.
- Japan viewed this economic blockade as a direct threat to its national security and survival.

## **Japan's Response to Economic Sanctions**

- Japan considered sanctions an act of economic warfare.
- Their leaders believed that war was necessary to secure access to vital resources and to prevent economic strangulation.
- The decision to attack was partly driven by the desire to secure resource-rich territories in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

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## **Strategic and Military Factors**

Japan's military strategy and perceptions of threat played a significant role:

### **Perception of Encirclement and Threats**

- Japan perceived the U.S. Pacific Fleet as a major obstacle to its expansion.
- The presence of U.S. naval bases in Hawaii and the Philippines was seen as a direct threat to Japan's plans.
- Japan believed that a preemptive strike could neutralize the U.S. fleet and give Japan free rein in the Pacific.

### **Decisiveness of a Surprise Attack**

- Japan's military leaders favored a surprise attack to gain tactical advantage.

- The attack was intended to deliver a crippling blow that would prevent U.S. interference for at least a year.
- The hope was to weaken U.S. resolve and buy time for Japan to consolidate its empire.

## **Operational Planning**

- The attack on Pearl Harbor was meticulously planned, involving:
- Multiple waves of attack targeting battleships, airfields, and infrastructure.
- Use of aircraft carriers and aircraft to maximize damage.
- Aiming to destroy the Pacific Fleet's ability to respond quickly.

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## **Diplomatic Failures and Miscalculations**

Japan's decision to attack was also influenced by diplomatic developments:

### **Failed Negotiations with the United States**

- Throughout 1941, Japan engaged in negotiations with the U.S. to lift sanctions and reach a mutual understanding.
- Japan's government, led by Prime Minister Hideki Tojo and military leaders, believed that diplomacy was futile.
- They feared that the U.S. was intent on containing Japan's expansion and sought to force the U.S. into negotiations on Japan's terms.

### **Perception of American Weakness and Overconfidence**

- Some Japanese leaders believed that the U.S. was unwilling or unable to respond decisively to an attack.
- They underestimated American resilience and the political will to retaliate.
- This miscalculation led to a bold decision to strike first.

### **Strategic Deception**

- Japan employed deception tactics to mask its intentions.
- Diplomatic communications suggested negotiations were ongoing, while preparations for attack continued.
- The element of surprise was deemed crucial for success.

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# Imperial Ambitions and National Pride

Beyond strategic and economic motives, Japan's cultural and nationalistic factors influenced the attack:

## Rise of Militarism

- The military gained significant influence over Japan's government.
- Military leaders believed that territorial expansion and dominance were essential for Japan's future.
- The attack was seen as a way to demonstrate strength and resolve.

## Desire for Regional Dominance

- Japan aimed to establish a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, asserting dominance over Asia and the Pacific.
- The attack on Pearl Harbor was a step toward eliminating American influence and establishing regional hegemony.

## National Pride and the "Eastern Solution"

- The attack was also motivated by a desire to restore national pride after perceived humiliations and setbacks.
- Japan wanted to show it was a formidable power capable of challenging Western dominance.

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## Conclusion: A Multi-Faceted Cause

The attack on Pearl Harbor was not driven by a single factor but was the culmination of multiple interrelated reasons:

- Economic sanctions and resource scarcity created a sense of urgency and existential threat.
- Strategic considerations and military perceptions led Japan to believe that a preemptive strike was necessary.
- Diplomatic failures and miscalculations fostered a false sense of American weakness and the opportunity for surprise.
- Nationalistic ambitions and a desire for regional dominance fueled the resolve to act decisively and aggressively.

In essence, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor was the result of a complex blend of economic desperation, strategic necessity, diplomatic misjudgment, and imperial ambition. The DBQ answer key emphasizes the importance of analyzing

these factors through the lens of primary documents, understanding the perspectives of different actors, and recognizing the interconnectedness of these causes.

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Final thoughts:

Understanding why Japan attacked Pearl Harbor is essential for grasping the broader implications of World War II's Pacific theater. It highlights how economic pressures, military strategy, diplomatic failures, and national pride can converge to produce decisive, often catastrophic, actions. The DBQ approach encourages students to critically evaluate each factor, weigh evidence, and develop nuanced interpretations—skills that remain vital for historical inquiry.

## **Why Did Japan Attack Pearl Harbor Dbq Answer Key**

**why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key:** What Happened at Pearl Harbor? , 1968

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**why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key:** The Attack on Pearl Harbor John Davenport, John Davenport, PH.D., 2009 Traces events leading up to and resulting from the December 7, 1941, Japanese attack on American battleships at Pearl Harbor, which brought the United States into World War II.

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**why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key:** **The Attack on Pearl Harbor in United States History** Nathan Anthony, Robert Gardner, 2014-07-01 On December 7, 1941 the Japanese military launched a surprise attack on the American Naval base at Pearl Harbor. A reluctant nation was pushed into World War II by the surprise attack which killed thousands of American sailors and soldiers, nearly destroyed the United States Navy. In this book, authors Nathan Anthony and Robert Gardner offer a clear description of the attack on Pearl Harbor, from early Japanese spying operations to a detailed account of the key events of that fateful day.

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**why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key:** **Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack. Minority Views Submitted by Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Brewster** United States. Congress. Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, 1946

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launch pad that catapulted the United States into World War II. In the years leading up to our country's official involvement, the United States largely served as a militaristic waterboy for its allies, sending weapons and supplies while not actively participating in anything. Those are the facts. After that, everything gets a bit more uncertain. History books will tell you that despite some vague and indecipherable intelligence, the United States was more or less blindsided by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Certainly, that is true of the majority of the country's civilian population. Whether or not that accurately represents what top members of the United States' government believed is a different story. Instigated largely by reports from prominent members in Roosevelt's own cabinet, initial speculation has grown over the decades into what is often referred to as the Pearl Harbor advance-knowledge conspiracy theory. The gist of the theory is that Roosevelt and several other top American officials had received intelligence that Japan planned to attack Pearl Harbor, yet they allowed it to happen anyway. Why? Because, as most advance-knowledge conspiracy theorists claim, the United States was desperate to find a way to join the war without making the first move. If this is true, thousands of Americans died on December 7 just so our country would have an "excuse" to strike back. The nature of this jarring accusation makes it unusually difficult to investigate. While recent historians argue that the advance-knowledge conspiracy theory is not supported by facts, the simple truth is that the evidence used to refute the theory's claims are often volunteered by the same government that would be presumably attempting to cover the conspiracy up. (This argument, of course, also applies to conspiracy theories involving JFK's assassination, alien contact, etc.) Without going so far as to say I have a metaphorical dog in this fight, I must admit that I feel personally connected to this subject. As a Japanese-American, the attack on Pearl Harbor has always featured prominently in my understanding of my country and my heritage. My grandfather lived a few miles away from Pearl Harbor in 1941. He was only a teenager at the time, a boy who identified himself more with the American culture that surrounded him than the vague culture of a country he had never even visited. The attack on Pearl Harbor changed that. It forced lines to be redrawn in the sand that the melting pot of America had just started to successfully blur and blend. Decades later, I find myself still struggling to find how those lines of loyalty and identity now pertain to me. It is hard to be strictly objective with this topic, though, no matter what a person's ethnic background may be. As a citizen of this country, I would like to think the United States' government would never allow thousands of its soldiers and citizens to die just to facilitate its political desires. Unfortunately, perhaps such a desire is too naive for the world we live in. Disseminating the available research involves making two figurative piles: one for facts and one for possible facts. As expected, the fact pile is pathetically small compared to the towering mass of reports of a far more dubious nature. What does emerge, however, is a fairly comprehensive picture of how and why the United States government would have purposefully failed to fully prepare themselves for an attack. ...buy the book to continue reading!

#### **why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key: What Happened at Pearl Harbor?**

Hano Louis Trefousse,

**why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key: Pearl Harbor: Final Judgement** Henry C. Clausen, Bruce Lee, 2015-07-07 This account of the top secret investigation is essential history . . . the authoritative appraisal of why American armed forces met the Japanese attack asleep ( The Christian Science Monitor). On December 6, 1941, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, commander in chief of the United States Pacific Fleet, assured his staff that the Japanese would not attack Pearl Harbor. The next morning, Japanese carriers steamed toward Hawaii to launch one of the most devastating surprise attacks in the history of war, proving the admiral disastrously wrong. Immediately, an investigation began into how the American military could have been caught so unaware. The results of the initial investigation failed to implicate who was responsible for this intelligence debacle. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, realizing that high-ranking members of the military had provided false testimony, decided to reopen the investigation by bringing in an unknown major by the name of Henry C. Clausen. Over the course of ten months, from November 1944 to September 1945, Clausen led an exhaustive investigation. He logged more than fifty-five thousand miles and

interviewed over one hundred military and civilian personnel, ultimately producing an eight-hundred-page report that brought new evidence to light. Clausen left no stone unturned in his dogged effort to determine who was truly responsible for the disaster at Pearl Harbor. *Pearl Harbor: Final Judgement* reveals all of the eye-opening details of Clausen's investigation and is a damning account of massive intelligence failure. To this day, the story surrounding the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor stokes controversy and conspiracy theories. This book provides conclusive evidence that shows how the US military missed so many signals and how it could have avoided the events of that fateful day.

**why did japan attack pearl harbor dbq answer key: Pearl Harbor** Henry C. Clausen, Bruce Lee, 1992 Clausen was appointed as independent investigator of the events at Pearl Harbor by Secretary of War Stimson in 1944, and the present volume, co-authored with the late military historian Bruce Lee, is Clausen's riveting conclusion to his investigation, which he could not write when he presented his 800-page report to Stimson in 1945, for reasons of national security. Clausen definitively disproves the conspiracy theories about Pearl Harbor, explains why the Japanese attack was successful, and identifies those who were responsible for the American failure to protect itself. Annotation copyright by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

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