

# NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

## Activity Title: Japan Chooses War

**Activity Objectives:** The students understand the reasons Japan decided to go to war with the United States in 1941.

TEKS:

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

113.18(b)(3)(A), 113.18(b)(4)(F), 113.18(b)(5)(B),(C), 113.18(b)(6)(B),  
113.18(b)(16)(A), 113.18(b)(17)(A)

### **U.S. History Since 1877:**

113.41(c)(2)(D), 113.41(c)(4)(A), 113.41(c)(7)(A)

### **World History Studies:**

113.42(c)(1)(E),(F), 113.42(c)(8)(D), 113.42(c)(12)(A),(B),(C)

### **World Geography Studies:**

113.43(c)(6)(B), 113.43(c)(14)(C), 113.43(c)(16)(C), 113.43(c)(18)(A)

**Areas of the museum to visit for this lesson plan: The George H.W. Bush Gallery**

**Teacher Note: If you are bringing a large group you will want to split them up into groups of 10- 25 and have them start at different locations. These smaller sizes allow all to access the various areas at one time.**

## Introduction:

Why did Japan go to war against the United States and its Allies in 1941? What made them decide to attack a country that had so many more people and so much more industry? The simple answer is that they needed oil, without which their war machine would starve.

The nearest supply of oil was in the Dutch East Indies. To take the oil fields, they had to go to war with the Netherlands.

They also needed the tin, rubber and manganese of Malaya, which was a British colony, this meant they had to go to war with Great Britain.

In order to secure the routes between the Dutch East Indies and Malaya to Japan they had to take the Philippines, Guam and Wake Island which were all American possessions. This meant war with the United States.

In order to secure their hold on the Philippines they had to destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor.

But it wasn't just about oil. Other factors were involved. These factors included Japanese militarism, extreme nationalism and wrong ideas about the character of their soon to be enemies.

### **Activity Description:**

#### **1. Prior to the museum visit (Time Frame: 20 min.):**

On a map of Asia and the Pacific, have the students locate the following areas so they will have a better understanding of the geography involved prior to arriving at the museum:

- |  |  |                     |
|--|--|---------------------|
| a. Japan                                 | b. China   | c. Korea            |
| d. Manchuria                             | e. Ryukyu Islands                                    | f. Marshall Islands |
| g. Mariana Islands                       | h. Caroline Islands                                  | i. Palau Islands    |
| j. Mongolia                              | k. French Indochina (now Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) |                     |
| l. The Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) | m. Malaya (now Malaysia)                             |                     |
| n. Singapore                             | o. The Philippines                                   | p. Pearl Harbor     |

#### **2. During the museum visit (Time Frame: 1 hr.):**

**All areas referred to are on the map of the George H.W. Bush Gallery**

#### **Seeds of Conflict (# 120 on the map)**

a. Japan got its first look at Western military power when Commodore Perry landed on Japan. The capabilities of Perry's ships made the Japanese realize they must modernize or they might be conquered by the Europeans or Americans. When did Commodore Perry land on Japan?

---

b. On the panel China in Turmoil: As China descended into chaos, Japan saw an opportunity to expand. In 1871 it took the group of islands that stretch off the southwest coast of Japan. What is the name of this island group?

---

c. On the panel Japan and China Clash: Japan defeated the Chinese and seized territory they felt Japan needed for military and economic reasons. Name two of the territories Japan took from China.

---

---

d. On the panel Triple Intervention: Three European countries united to prevent Japanese encroachment into Manchuria. This caused the Japanese to believe the West would never consider Japan as an equal. Which three European countries were they?

---

---

---

e. The panel The Last Empire discusses the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. What was the name of the naval battle that destroyed the Russian Fleet?

---

f. On the panel Changing Attitudes Towards China, list two things that caused the Japanese to lose respect for China.

---

---

g. On the panel A New Threat – Japan, who was the real power behind the throne?

---

What is a shogun?

---

h. On New Rivals: The United States and Japan , who mediated the treaty between Japan and Russia to end the Russo-Japanese War?

---

Note: The Japanese were not happy with the results of the peace treaty and felt they had been cheated. They felt they had won the war and lost the peace. This caused resentment among the Japanese towards the United States.

**Road to Empire (# 130 on the map)**

i. On the panel The Legacy of World War I where did Japan look for raw materials?

---

j. On The Rise of Japanese Militarism name two things that gave the Imperial Japanese Army a strong power base.

---

---

k. On The Samurai~Those Who Serve” what is Bushido?

---

Complete the following:

“Duty is weightier than a mountain, while death is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

l. On Japan in World War I it mentions that Japan seized four island possessions in the Pacific from Germany. What were they?

---

---

---

---

m. The Washington Naval Conference 1921-1922 gave the United States and Great Britain a 5:5:3 ratio in capital ships over Japan. Did Japan like the results of this conference?

---

n. On Civil War in China who gained control of China in 1927?

---

o. In Japanese Expansionism 1931-1937 Japan withdrew from the League of Nations, why?

---

---

On 7 July 1937, the Japanese used an incident to justify attacking the Chinese Nationalists. Where did this incident occur?

---

p. On the Rape of Nanking, Chiang Kai Shek's capital fell to the Japanese on 14 December 1937. How many Chinese are estimated to have been killed by the Japanese at Nanking?

---

q. Go to the panel Japan's Quagmire in China. In 1939 Japan wanted to expand into Outer Mongolia. They were defeated at Nomonhan by whom?

---

r. On the panel Japan's Internal Struggles: Civilian versus Military name two government ministers assassinated by the Japanese.

---

---

s. Go to the panel A Nation Prepared for Total War. Military training became part of the high school curriculum in what year?

---

**Countdown to War (# 140 on the map)**

t. On A Spreading Conflict who were the European democracies focused on instead of Japan?

---

u. Japan Moves into Indochina. What resources in Southeast Asia did Japan want?

---

Why did Japan occupy northern French Indochina?

---

v. On The Looming Crisis what did the United States embargo on 16 October 1940?

---

w. Watch the presentation on the globe and answer the following:

Who was the Japanese War Minister?

---

Name two items on the embargo list that the United States would no longer ship to Japan.

---

---

### 3. After the museum visit: (Time Frame: 30 min.):

Below is a list of reasons a nation might go to war. A second list has specific acts of war initiated by Japan. In order to look at this conflict from both sides, have the students first decide how Japan would have categorized this act of war then decide how the nation being attacked by Japan would have categorized this act of war. Use this to facilitate a class discussion or a group or individual project.

- Gain resources (oil, rubber, iron ore, water, etc.)
- Gain territory

- Gain access to the sea
  - Punish another country or people
  - Liberate oppressed people
  - Retaliation to an attack or provocation
  - Settle boundary disputes
  - Aid an ally because of treaty requirements
  - Pre-emptive attack
  - Stop aggression
- 
- Japanese attack on the Dutch East Indies in 1941-1942
  - Japanese attack on China in 1937
  - Japanese attack on the Philippines in 1941-1942
  - Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

You are not limited to these lists and can have the students brainstorm other reasons for going to war.

For example let's look at the Japanese attack on Malaya in 1941-1942.

The Japanese might justify this by saying they were liberating oppressed people from the European colonialists. The Japanese were mainly after the resources (tin, rubber and manganese).

The British would say the Japanese attacked to gain resources and to gain territory.

**Vocabulary:**

chaos    intervention    encroachment    mediate    resentment

incident    quagmire    assassinate    resource    embargo

liberate    access    aggression    pre-empt    retaliate

**Resources:** To locate the areas in the museum relevant to this lesson plan you will need to download the two maps from the TEKS Based Lesson Plans page of this website.

**Materials:** Pencil, paper

**Technology Utilization:** None

**Accommodations:** Students may require a printed copy of questions to answer during the museum visit.