The Road to War

Trace how events abroad changed decisions at home.

USH.5.1 "Identify and explain key events at home and abroad from Versailles to Pearl Harbor that resulted in the United States' entry into World War II."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline events abroad and circle U.S. decisions in the passage. Number three developments that connect in a chain leading to U.S. entry into the war.

From Keeping Distance to Entering War

1 At the end of World War I, the Treaty of Versailles punished Germany, but the United States Senate refused to join the League of Nations created by the peace settlement. Many senators feared that membership could pull the country into another European war. During the 1930s, Congress passed Neutrality Acts that limited arms sales and loans to countries at war. These laws reflected a wish to avoid the kind of entanglements Americans associated with World War I. Yet Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939 started a new European war. The distance Americans hoped to keep was becoming harder to maintain.

2 When Germany defeated France in 1940, Britain stood against Nazi Germany without a major European ally. President Franklin Roosevelt argued that British survival mattered to American security. In 1940, the United States traded old destroyers to Britain for rights to use British bases in the Atlantic. Congress passed Lend-Lease in March 1941, allowing the United States to supply countries whose defense was vital to its own. American ships then helped protect supply routes in the Atlantic, where German submarines threatened shipping. The country was not yet at war, but its policy had shifted from avoiding involvement to actively aiding Britain's fight.

3 Across the Pacific, Japan expanded its empire, occupying Manchuria in 1931 and launching a wider war in China in 1937. After Japanese forces moved into southern French Indochina in 1941, the United States froze Japanese assets and stopped oil exports to Japan. Japan's leaders saw the loss of American oil as a threat to their military plans. They chose to attack the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, hoping to prevent American interference in their expansion. The attack killed more than 2,400 Americans. On December 8, Congress declared war on Japan, ending the debate over whether the United States would enter the war.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Senate's response to the League of Nations and the Neutrality Acts reflect the same goal?

2. How did Germany's defeat of France help change U.S. policy toward Britain?

3. How did Japan's move into southern French Indochina contribute to the attack on Pearl Harbor?

4. What event turned growing U.S. involvement into a formal declaration of war, and how?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75- to 95-word museum caption tracing a path from avoiding war to entering it. In your own words, connect one U.S. policy, one development in Europe, and one development in the Pacific, then end with Congress's decision.

ANSWER KEY

The Road to War

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.5.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline events abroad and circle U.S. decisions in the passage. Number three developments that connect in a chain leading to U.S. entry into the war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Senate's response to the League of Nations and the Neutrality Acts reflect the same goal?	**Both reflected a desire to keep the United States out of another foreign war.**
2	How did Germany's defeat of France help change U.S. policy toward Britain?	**With Britain left without a major European ally, the United States traded it destroyers and later supplied it through Lend-Lease because British survival was seen as important to American security.**
3	How did Japan's move into southern French Indochina contribute to the attack on Pearl Harbor?	**The United States froze Japanese assets and stopped oil exports after the move. Japan's leaders viewed the oil loss as a threat and attacked Pearl Harbor to prevent American interference with their expansion.**
4	What event turned growing U.S. involvement into a formal declaration of war, and how?	**Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, led Congress to declare war on Japan the next day.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After World War I, the Senate rejected League of Nations membership, showing how strongly many Americans wanted to avoid another European war. Neutrality laws kept the country at a distance. Germany's conquest of France in 1940 made Britain vulnerable, so the United States sent destroyers and later supplied Britain through Lend-Lease. In the Pacific, Japan's move into southern French Indochina prompted a U.S. oil cutoff. Japan attacked Pearl Harbor as it pursued expansion. Congress declared war on Japan the next day.

Accept other accurate chains that connect a U.S. policy, events in Europe and the Pacific, and the declaration of war on Japan. Look for explanations of how developments influenced decisions, not just a list of dates.