

Steps Toward War

Trace how Roosevelt guided a shift from neutrality to direct involvement.

11.8a "As situations overseas deteriorated, President Roosevelt's leadership helped to move the nation from a policy of neutrality to a pro-Allied position and, ultimately, direct involvement in the war."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the Neutrality Acts, 1939 cash and carry, Lend-Lease, and Pearl Harbor in sequence. Underline how each changed U.S. involvement.

From Neutrality to War

- ① Memories of World War I and Depression-era hardship strengthened opposition to another overseas war. The Neutrality Acts of 1935–1937 restricted arms sales, loans, and travel involving belligerents. Roosevelt signed the laws but increasingly argued that aggression threatened U.S. security. Americans debated whether avoiding commitments or aiding threatened nations offered greater safety.
- ② After European war began in 1939, Congress allowed arms sales under cash and carry: purchasers paid immediately and transported goods themselves. Though formally available to belligerents, the policy favored Britain and France because they controlled sea routes. Lend-Lease in 1941 went further, supplying countries whose defense Roosevelt considered vital to U.S. security without requiring immediate cash payment. Aid and naval activity moved the country toward the Allies before formal entry into war; legal neutrality did not mean complete noninvolvement.
- ③ Japan's war in China and expansion into French Indochina increased tension. U.S. officials used negotiations and economic pressure, including oil restrictions, to oppose Japanese aggression. Talks failed to resolve the disputes. Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and Congress declared war on Japan the next day. Germany and Italy declared war on the United States on December 11; Congress responded with declarations against them. Roosevelt then led a nation formally at war, following years of contested moves from neutrality toward Allied support.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What concerns helped create support for the Neutrality Acts?

2 How did cash and carry and Lend-Lease each move the United States toward a pro-Allied position?

3 What two methods did Roosevelt use to try to stop Japanese aggression without accepting Japan's demands?

4 How did the attack on Pearl Harbor lead to direct U.S. involvement in the war?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

In four sentences, trace the shift from neutrality to war. Use at least three named milestones and explain how they changed the U.S. role.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Number the Neutrality Acts, 1939 cash and carry, Lend-Lease, and Pearl Harbor in sequence. Underline how each changed U.S. involvement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What concerns helped create support for the Neutrality Acts?	Memories of World War I, the Great Depression, and fighting overseas strengthened isolationist opinion.
2	How did cash and carry and Lend-Lease each move the United States toward a pro-Allied position?	Cash and carry let Britain and France buy U.S. goods while transporting them themselves. Lend-Lease allowed the United States to supply nations whose defense Roosevelt saw as vital to U.S. security.
3	What two methods did Roosevelt use to try to stop Japanese aggression without accepting Japan's demands?	He used negotiations and economic pressure, including restrictions on oil exports.
4	How did the attack on Pearl Harbor lead to direct U.S. involvement in the war?	Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Congress declared war on Japan the next day, and later declared war on Germany and Italy after they declared war on the United States.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Neutrality Acts reflected a public desire to stay out of foreign wars. Cash and carry began a shift because it allowed the United States to sell goods to the Allies while limiting risks to American ships. Lend-Lease expanded this support when Roosevelt treated Britain's defense as important to U.S. security. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Congress declared war, and the United States entered the conflict directly.

Accept accurate sequences and explanations of increasing involvement. Cash and carry and Lend-Lease aided the Allies before formal U.S. entry; neutrality did not mean complete separation from the conflict.