Britain's Supply Lifelines

How three U.S. policies supported Britain before America entered World War II

USH.C.5.1.D "Describe programs initiated to support Great Britain, including Lend-Lease, Destroyers for Bases and Cash and Carry."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what Britain had to do or provide under each policy, and circle how each policy helped Britain. Write 1, 2, and 3 beside the policies in the order they began.

Keeping Supplies Moving

1. In 1939, Britain needed American war supplies, but the United States was still neutral. Earlier neutrality rules had blocked arms sales to nations at war. Congress changed the rules with Cash and Carry: a nation at war could buy U.S. weapons if it paid immediately and carried them away on its own ships. Britain's navy and merchant fleet made it better able than Germany to use this policy. U.S. vessels did not have to deliver weapons into dangerous war zones, which mattered to Americans who wanted to avoid direct involvement. For Britain, the policy opened an important source of arms, as long as it had money and ships.

2. By 1940, German submarines threatened ships carrying supplies across the Atlantic. Britain also needed more vessels to escort those ships. In September, President Franklin Roosevelt agreed to transfer 50 older U.S. destroyers to Britain. In return, the United States received 99-year leases for naval and air base sites in British-controlled territories in the Western Hemisphere, including the Caribbean. The agreement, called Destroyers for Bases, did not require Britain to pay cash for the ships. Britain gained escorts for Atlantic shipping, while the United States gained places to defend sea approaches near the Americas. The deal supported Britain without sending U.S. troops into combat.

3. By early 1941, Britain's ability to keep paying for American weapons was running low. Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act in March 1941, allowing the president to supply defense materials to countries whose defense he judged vital to U.S. security. Britain could receive weapons, food, and other supplies without paying cash up front. The law allowed equipment to be lent or leased under terms set by the president, rather than requiring an immediate sale. U.S. factories could keep supplying Britain's war effort while the United States remained officially out of the fighting. Unlike Cash and Carry, this program did not depend on Britain's ready cash.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Cash and Carry help Britain while keeping U.S. ships out of war zones?

2. How did Destroyers for Bases support Britain, and what did the United States receive in return?

3. How did Lend-Lease support Britain differently from an immediate cash sale?

4. Why was Lend-Lease especially useful to Britain by early 1941 compared with Cash and Carry?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are briefing a U.S. official in spring 1941. Write a short recommendation explaining how all three policies helped Britain, then identify an important difference in what Britain had to provide under them.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.5.1.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what Britain had to do or provide under each policy, and circle how each policy helped Britain. Write 1, 2, and 3 beside the policies in the order they began. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Cash and Carry help Britain while keeping U.S. ships out of war zones?	**Britain could buy U.S. weapons, but it had to pay immediately and carry them on its own ships.**
2	How did Destroyers for Bases support Britain, and what did the United States receive in return?	**Britain received 50 older destroyers to escort Atlantic shipping. The United States received 99-year leases for base sites in British-controlled territories.**
3	How did Lend-Lease support Britain differently from an immediate cash sale?	**It let Britain receive weapons, food, and other supplies without paying cash up front, under terms set by the president.**
4	Why was Lend-Lease especially useful to Britain by early 1941 compared with Cash and Carry?	**Britain was running low on money to pay for weapons. Cash and Carry required immediate payment, but Lend-Lease did not.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I recommend continuing support for Britain through all three policies. Cash and Carry let Britain buy American weapons, but Britain had to pay at once and use its own ships. Destroyers for Bases gave Britain ships to escort supplies in exchange for long-term leases on base sites. Lend-Lease let Britain receive weapons, food, and other supplies without paying cash up front. That difference mattered because Britain was running low on money, yet still needed supplies to keep fighting.

Accept responses that accurately describe how each policy supported Britain and distinguish immediate payment, base-site leases, and no up-front cash. Students need not discuss later U.S. entry into the war.