

How did the USA become involved in WWII?

<p>September 1940</p> <p>Japan, Germany and Italy signed the 'tripartite pact'. This was a treaty which said they would help each other in war.</p>	<p>22 November 1941</p> <p>The USA picked up a Japanese radio signal that said 'something is going to happen if the USA doesn't lift the ban on oil'.</p>	<p>March 1941</p> <p>The USA started the 'lend-lease' programme with Britain. It lent Britain the weapons and supplies which were needed to fight Germany.</p>	<p>11 December 1941</p> <p>Germany declared war on the USA. The war was now a world war.</p>	<p>July 1941</p> <p>Japan (now an ally of Germany) invaded part of China. The USA didn't like this, so they stopped selling oil to Japan. Japan depended on the USA for 80% of its oil.</p>
<p>November 1941</p> <p>The USA demanded that Japan withdraw from China and end its alliance with Germany and Italy. If they agreed, the USA would start to sell oil to Japan again. Japan saw this as a threat of war.</p>	<p>7 December 1941</p> <p>Japanese planes attacked Pearl Harbour, an American Naval base in Hawaii. Over 2300 American soldiers and sailors were killed.</p>	<p>August 1941</p> <p>British prime minister Churchill and American president Roosevelt created the Atlantic Charter. It decided what they would do once Germany was defeated.</p>	<p>8 December 1941</p> <p>The USA and Britain declared war on Japan.</p>	<p>September 1939</p> <p>When the war began, the USA, led by President Roosevelt, did not join in. The British asked for help, but the USA didn't want to be involved. This was known as a policy of 'isolationism'.</p>
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Interventionism / high tension

1939

1941

Isolationism / low tension

Teaching notes

This is a quick activity to familiarise students with the events which led to America's entry to WWII in 1941. Before starting the tasks below, students might be asked to consider America's reasons for isolationism in the 1930s (including, perhaps, the Great Depression, memories of WWI, a geographic sense of security, and distaste for intervening in European conflicts).

Tasks

1. The cards on p.1 could be enlarged to fit one per A4 sheet, and given to ten students. (NB: there are two identical versions of the cards printed on p.1 for ease of printing the small versions). The selected students could then arrange themselves into chronological order at the front of the room, and read their cards aloud to become familiar with the sequence.
2. Working individually, or in pairs students could then cut out smaller versions of the cards and arrange them on the axes on p.2. This should reveal a growing trend toward intervention as time passed. They can then be stuck down for future reference.
3. Students could then be asked to identify any turning points in the build up to US entry. Was it ever inevitability? Why was it easier for Roosevelt to justify war by late 1941?