

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Lesson Title – To Declare or not to Declare?

- An evaluation of Presidential requests for military actions
at home and abroad
From Jarrid Clifton*

Grade – 11 - Academic Level 2 (Out of 4 - AP, 1, 2, 3)

Length of class period – 2-3 48 Minute class periods

Inquiry – What is necessary for a President to ask Congress to declare war?

When are Presidential military actions needed?

When have Presidential military missions been unwarranted?

Was the United States ready for war in 1812?

Was President Obama justified in authorizing U.S. military strikes in Libya?

What will be necessary for U.S. involvement in a possible upcoming Iran conflict?

Objectives -

1. Students will read three Presidential speeches requesting or justifying war or a military action.
2. Students will evaluate the reasons why each President asked for, or justified military action.
3. Students will act as a member of Congress from Connecticut and give their opinion on President Madison's request to declare war in 1812.
4. Students will also act as a member of Congress and give their opinion on President Obama's decision to allow U.S. military strikes in Libya in 2011.

Materials -

Worksheets Attached

- Roosevelt's "Infamy" speech as a guide
- Madison's Request for War
 - o Analysis & opinion sheet
- Obama's speech justifying military action in Libya
 - o Analysis & opinion sheet

Activities -

1. (Optional) Students will read aloud President F.D. Roosevelt's "Infamy" speech as an example of reasons given to Congress why it should declare War.
 - a. Students will evaluate the reasons given and take a show of hands vote on who would back President Roosevelt's request for War.
 - b. Wordle for visual analysis located at :
http://www.wordle.net/show/wrdl/4077678/Pearl_Harbor_RHAM
 - c. Wordle for use as a handout of speech is attached at end of file.
2. Students will read the summary of the state of affairs of the U.S. in 1812 and will read President Madison's request for War with Great Britain.
 - a. Students should work in pairs to come up with reasons for declaring war or abstaining from war with Great Britain.

- b. Wordle for visual analysis located at :
http://www.wordle.net/show/wrdl/5497664/Madison_War_Message
 - c. Wordle for use as a handout of entire speech is attached at end of file.
3. Students will read President Obama's speech justifying U.S. military actions in Libya.
 - a. Students should work in pairs again to come up with reasons why the U.S. aided in NATO attacks in Libya
 - b. Wordle for visual analysis located at:
http://www.wordle.net/show/wrdl/5497852/Obama_Libya
 - c. Wordle for use as a handout of entire speech is attached at end of file.
4. Student pairs will then write an opinion on each President's decision to authorize military action. As a member of Congress, do you support or reject President Madison's / Obama's decision to involve the United States in a military action?

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

- During the lesson, the teacher should circulate throughout the room answering questions or offering guidance on what to concentrate on in each speech.
- During the lesson, student discussion on the speeches can generate a class participation grade to assess their ability to work towards a group goal.
- A class work grade can accompany the worksheets and opinions of each student as well.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

Standard 1.1

- o 3. Trace the changing role of U.S. participation in world affairs
- o 6. Compare and contrast various American beliefs, values, and political ideologies
- o 7. Analyze the influence of nationalism on American society

Standard 1.3

- o 23. Analyze nationalism's impact on world events

Standard 1.9

- o 43. Give examples of how individuals or groups have worked to expand or limit citizen's rights in the United States and other nations
- o 44. Analyze the tension between the need for national security and protecting individual rights

Standard 2.1

- o 1. Find relevant and accurate information from a variety of sources to answer a history/social studies question

Standard 2.2

- o 3. Cite evidence from a source to determine an author's purpose and intended audience

Standard 3.1

- o 1. Use evidence to develop an interpretation of a historical event

***Although the "Infamy" speech stands alone as it was written in 1941, both the Madison and Obama speech have been adapted and shortened for reading levels appropriate to the class and for use in the allotted time period. Feel free to debate the authenticity of the primary or secondary nature of each speech in the lesson. I feel that the spirit and intention of the original author are still present and the historical significance remains evident.

**If you would like to offer a comment or suggestion, feel free to contact me at cliftonjar@reg8.k12.ct.us

Summary of event, adapted from the National Archives:

Early in the afternoon of December 7, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his chief foreign policy aide, Harry Hopkins, were interrupted by a telephone call from Secretary of War Henry Stimson and told that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. At about 5:00 p.m., following meetings with his military advisers, the President calmly and decisively dictated to his secretary, Grace Tully, a request to Congress for a declaration of war. He had composed the speech in his head after deciding on a brief, uncomplicated appeal to the people of the United States rather than a thorough reading of Japanese betrayals, as Secretary of State Cordell Hull had urged.

President Roosevelt then revised the typed draft—marking it up, updating military information, and selecting alternative wordings that strengthened the tone of the speech. He made the most significant change in the critical first line, which originally read, "a date which will live in world history." Grace Tully then prepared the final reading copy, which Roosevelt subsequently altered in three more places.

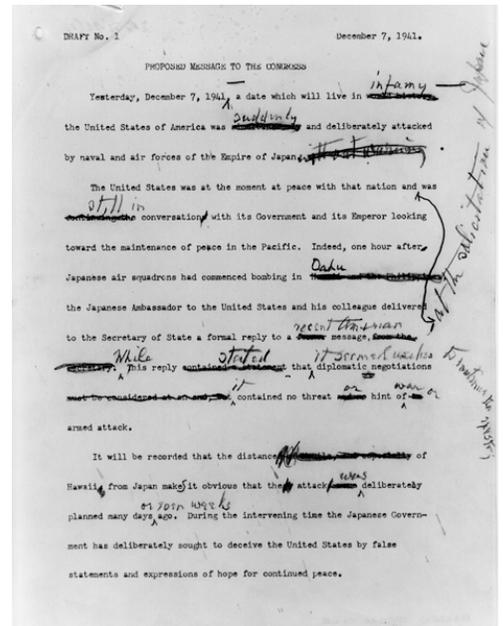
On December 8, at 12:30 p.m., Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress and the Nation via radio. The Senate responded with a unanimous vote in support of war; only Montana pacifist Jeanette Rankin dissented in the House. At 4:00 p.m. that same afternoon, President Roosevelt signed the declaration of war.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's Infamy Speech

December 8, 1941

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.



It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya.
Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.
Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.
Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.
Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island.
This morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation. As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces - with the unbounded determination of our people - we will gain the inevitable triumph - so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire."

What reasons did President Roosevelt give to Congress to justify a Declaration of War?

If you were a Congressperson in 1941, how would you have voted on the Declaration of War? Y/N

Why? _____

Summary of events leading up to Madison's request for war:

Following the American War for Independence from Great Britain, the new United States had struggled under early attempts of government in the Articles of Confederation. Now under a new Constitution, the United States leadership had wavered over the military status of the young nation. President Washington understood the need for national defense and the value of a standing militia, army and navy. Under Washington's administration, the United States desperately attempted to stay neutral in European affairs, which carried over into the administration of John Adams. President Adams advocated the need of an American navy to defend American commerce abroad and created the Department of the Navy.

However, the administration of President Thomas Jefferson (who distrusted the influence of a standing army and navy) levied widespread cuts to the army and navy in order to create a more streamlined government and increased Treasury. Jefferson attempted to maintain American neutrality as Washington and Adams had, but was drawn into an agreement with the French government to purchase the Louisiana territory.

All the while, an Anglo(English)-French state of war had existed between the European powers that were attacking and confiscating American commercial vessels and sailors. Advocates for war, the War Hawks, asked for an end to losses caused by Great Britain. Doves, those against the war, cited that the treasury was empty and that the United States was still too young a nation to win another war with Great Britain. The fourth President, James Madison, was left to make the decision on how to deal with the growing concerns about the British. His request for Declaration of war was granted by Congress and signed by President Madison on June 18th, 1812.

Adapted from: Special Message to Congress on the Foreign Policy Crisis -- War Message (June 1, 1812)

James Madison

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

I communicate to Congress certain documents, being a continuation of those heretofore laid before them on the subject of our affairs with Great Britain.

Without going back beyond the renewal in 1803 of the war in which Great Britain is engaged, and omitting unrepaired wrongs of inferior magnitude, the conduct of her Government presents a series of acts hostile to the United States as an independent and neutral nation.

British cruisers have been in the continued practice of violating the American flag on the great highway of nations, and of seizing and carrying off persons sailing under it.... British jurisdiction is thus extended to neutral vessels in a situation where no laws can operate but the law of nations and the laws of the country to which the vessels belong....

...under the pretext of searching for these (British subjects), thousands of American citizens, under the safeguard of public law and of their national flag, have been torn from their country and from everything dear to them; have been dragged on board ships of war of a foreign nation ...to risk their lives in the battles of their oppressors....

British cruisers have been in the practice also of violating the rights and the peace of our coasts.

They hover over and harass our entering and departing commerce...and have wantonly spilt American blood... our commerce has been plundered in every sea, the great staples of our country have been cut off from their legitimate markets, and a destructive blow aimed at our agricultural and maritime interests....

...Great Britain...formally avowed (declared) a determination to persist in them (insults to American maritime rights) against the United States until the markets of her enemy (Britain's enemy, France) should be laid open to British products, thus asserting an obligation on a neutral power (the U.S.) to require one belligerent (combatant in a war) to encourage by its internal regulations the trade of another belligerent

In reviewing the conduct of Great Britain toward the United States our attention is necessarily drawn to the warfare just renewed by the savages (Native Americans) on one of our extensive frontiers — a warfare which is known to spare neither age nor sex and to be distinguished by features peculiarly shocking to humanity. It is difficult to account for...their hostility...without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interpositions (British intrigues with the Indians).... We behold, in fine, on the side of Great Britain, a state of war against the United States, and on the side of the United States a state of peace toward Great Britain.

Whether the United States shall continue passive (not to take any action)...or, opposing force to force in defense of their national rights, shall commit a just cause into the hands of the Almighty Disposer of Events...is a solemn question which the Constitution wisely confides to the legislative department of the Government. In recommending it to their early deliberations I am happy in the assurance that the decision will be worthy the enlightened and patriotic councils of a virtuous, a free, and a powerful nation.

...the communications last made to Congress on the subject of our relations with France will have shown that since the revocation of her decrees, as they violated the neutral rights of the United States, her Government has authorized illegal captures by its privateers and public ships, and that other outrages have been practiced on our vessels and our citizens.... I abstain (refrain) at this time from recommending to the consideration of Congress definitive measures with respect to that nation (France), in the expectation that the result of ...discussions between our minister...at Paris and the French Government will speedily enable Congress to decide with greater advantage on the course due to the rights, the interests, and the honor of our country.

President Madison's "War Message" Evaluation sheet

What reasons does President Madison give for justification of a Declaration of War against Great Britain?

Reason (in your own words)	Proof (Quote) from the Document
1.	
2.	
3.	

If you were a Congressman from Connecticut in 1812, would you have been a Hawk (for the war) or a Dove (against the war)? _____

Why would you have taken that position?

Write a short paragraph response to President Madison outlining your reasons to support or deny his request for a Declaration of War against Great Britain.

Summary of events leading up to Obama's address on Libya:

Following the terrorist attacks by al Qaeda on September 11th, 2001, the United States embarked on the international "War on Terror" enacted by President George W. Bush. The War on Terror resulted in the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the Invasion of Iraq in 2003, as well as operation in other nations throughout the region, such as in Yemen and Pakistan. Both invasions in the Middle East wrapped the United States in a new role as a nation-builder following the collapse or regime-changing actions against the Taliban in Afghanistan or Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The international War on Terror has a reported cost of \$3.2 to \$4 trillion over the past ten years.

The United States, among NATO and Coalition forces, instituted democratic governments in both countries and maintained a military presence in each nation since 2001 and 2003. President Obama promised a removal of combat troops in Iraq that ended in late 2011 and a timeline for removal of troops from Afghanistan by 2014.

During the "Arab Spring" of 2010 and 2011, Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt and Tunisia launched revolutions against long-standing governments and alleged dictators. Libya began its revolution in 2011 and met with resistance from government forces led by military dictator-president Muammar Qaddafi. The United States pledged moral support but refrained from military action. However, President Obama eventually authorized air assaults by U.S. forces on March 18th, 2011.

**Adapted from: Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya
(March 28, 2011)**

Barack H. Obama

Tonight, I'd like to update the American people on the international effort that we have led in Libya — what we've done, what we plan to do, and why this matters to us.

For generations, the United States of America has played a unique role as an anchor of global security and as an advocate for human freedom. Mindful of the risks and costs of military action, we are naturally reluctant to use force to solve the world's many challenges. But when our interests and values are at stake, we have a responsibility to act. That's what happened in Libya over the course of these last six weeks.

For more than four decades, the Libyan people have been ruled by a tyrant — Muammar Qaddafi. He has denied his people freedom, exploited their wealth, murdered opponents at home and abroad, and terrorized innocent people around the world — including Americans who were killed by Libyan agents. Last month, Qaddafi's grip of fear appeared to give way to the promise of freedom. In cities and towns across the country, Libyans took to the streets to claim their basic human rights. As one Libyan said, "For the first time we finally have hope that our nightmare of 40 years will soon be over."

Faced with this opposition, Qaddafi began attacking his people... Joining with other nations at the United Nations Security Council, we broadened our sanctions, imposed an arms embargo, and enabled Qaddafi and those around him to be held accountable for their crimes...

Qaddafi chose to escalate his attacks, launching a military campaign against the Libyan people. Innocent people were targeted for killing. Hospitals and ambulances were attacked. Journalists were arrested, sexually assaulted, and killed. Supplies of food and fuel were choked off. Cities and towns were shelled, mosques were destroyed, and apartment buildings reduced to rubble...

I ordered warships into the Mediterranean...at my direction, America led an effort with our allies at the United Nations Security Council to pass a historic resolution that authorized a no-fly zone to stop the regime's attacks from the air, and further authorized all necessary measures to protect the Libyan people.

In the past, we have seen him hang civilians in the streets, and kill over a thousand people in a single day... If we waited one more day, Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world.

It was not in our national interest to let that happen. I refused to let that happen. And so nine days ago, after consulting the bipartisan leadership of Congress, I authorized military action to stop the killing and enforce U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973.

In this effort, the United States has not acted alone. Instead, we have been joined by a strong and growing coalition. This includes our closest allies — nations like the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey — all of whom have fought by our sides for decades. And it includes Arab partners like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, who have chosen to meet their responsibilities to defend the Libyan people.

To summarize, then: In just one month, the United States has worked with our international partners to mobilize a broad coalition, secure an international mandate to protect civilians, stop an advancing army, prevent a massacre, and establish a no-fly zone with our allies and partners... It took us 31 days... So for those who doubted our capacity to carry out this operation, I want to be clear: The United States of America has done what we said we would do.

To brush aside America's responsibility as a leader and — more profoundly — our responsibilities to our fellow human beings under such circumstances would have been a betrayal of who we are...

The task that I assigned our forces — to protect the Libyan people from immediate danger, and to establish a no-fly zone — carries with it a U.N. mandate and international support... If we tried to overthrow Qaddafi by force, our coalition would splinter. We would likely have to put U.S. troops on the ground to accomplish that mission, or risk killing many civilians from the air. The dangers faced by our men and women in uniform would be far greater. So would the costs and our share of the responsibility for what comes next.

To be blunt, we went down that road in Iraq... regime change there took eight years, thousands of American and Iraqi lives, and nearly a trillion dollars. That is not something we can afford to repeat in Libya.

Let me close by addressing what this action says about the use of America's military power, and America's broader leadership in the world, under my presidency.

As Commander-in-Chief, I have no greater responsibility than keeping this country safe... I've made it clear that I will never hesitate to use our military swiftly, decisively, and unilaterally when necessary to defend our people, our homeland, our allies and our core interests. That's why we're going after al Qaeda wherever they seek a foothold...

Tonight, let us give thanks for the Americans who are serving through these trying times, and the coalition that is carrying our effort forward. And let us look to the future with confidence and hope not only for our own country, but for all those yearning for freedom around the world.

Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.

President Obama's "Address to the Nation on Libya" Evaluation sheet

What reasons does President Obama give justifying U.S. military actions against Libya?

Reason (in your own words)	Proof (Quote) from the Document
1.	
2.	
3.	

If you were a Congressman from Connecticut, would you have supported President Obama's decision to intervene in Libya? _____

Why would you have taken that position?

Write a short paragraph response to President Obama outlining your reasons to support or condemn his actions in attacking Libya.