

## Guide to Reading

### Connection

In the previous section, you learned about the Holocaust the Jews faced in Germany. In this section, you will discover how the United States was drawn into the war.

### Main Idea

- Despite the Neutrality Act of 1939, FDR supported the British with a destroyer-for-bases deal. (p. 557)
- In the midst of a debate about whether America should remain neutral, Roosevelt was elected for a third term. (p. 558)
- Roosevelt and Congress continued to support the British through the Lend-Lease Act and the idea of a hemispheric defense zone. (p. 559)

- Angered by American policies that aided the British and an embargo on Japanese goods, the Japanese attacked the naval base at Pearl Harbor, forcing the United States to declare war. (p. 561)

### Content Vocabulary

hemispheric defense zone, strategic materials

### Academic Vocabulary

eliminate, policy, primary

### People and Terms to Identify

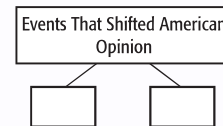
America First Committee, Lend-Lease Act, Atlantic Charter

### Reading Objectives

- **Explain** how Roosevelt helped Britain while maintaining official neutrality.
- **Trace** the events that led to increasing tensions, and ultimately war, between the United States and Japan.

### Reading Strategy

**Organizing** As you read about the efforts of the United States to stay neutral in the war, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by naming two events that shifted American opinion toward helping the Allies.



### Preview of Events



The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

**11.7.1** Examine the origins of American involvement in the war, with an emphasis on the events that precipitated the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**11.7.4** Analyze Roosevelt’s foreign policies during World War II (e.g., Four Freedoms speech).

## The Big Idea

### The fate of nations is forever changed by monumental world events.

While Jews faced the Holocaust in Germany, Americans continued to debate isolationist policy. President Roosevelt declared the United States officially neutral at the beginning of the war, but he supported laws that allowed him to help Great Britain. He was able to make a destroyers-for-bases deal with Britain and pushed through the Lend-Lease Act. To establish safe shipping in the Atlantic, he developed the idea of a hemispheric defense zone. At the same time, Roosevelt began policies to discourage Japan from attacking the British Empire in the Pacific, restricting exports to Japan and extending aid to China. When Japan sent troops to Indochina, the president added further restrictions. Japan responded by attacking the U.S. naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

## FDR Supports England

**Main Idea** Despite the Neutrality Act of 1939, FDR supported the British with a destroyer-for-bases deal.

**Reading Connection** Should presidents be able to work around the decisions of Congress? Read on to learn how Roosevelt followed his own instincts to help Britain.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked the Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii. The attack surprised many Americans. Most people had believed that Germany posed the greatest danger.

### ★ An American Story ★

December 7, 1941, dawned like any other Sunday in Hawaii, where teenager Daniel Inouye lived with his family. Like other Americans who lived through the experience, Inouye would never forget what he was doing the moment American isolationism ended:

“As soon as I finished brushing my teeth and pulled on my trousers, I automatically clicked on the little radio that stood on the shelf above my bed. I remember that I was buttoning my shirt and looking out the window . . . when the hum of the warming set gave way to a frenzied voice. ‘This is no test,’ the voice cried out. ‘Pearl Harbor is being bombed by the Japanese!’”

The Inouye family ran outside and gazed toward the naval base at Pearl Harbor:

“And then we saw the planes. They came zooming up out of that sea of gray smoke, flying north toward where we stood and climbing into the bluest part of the sky, and they came in twos and threes, in neat formations, and if it hadn’t been for that red ball on their wings, the rising sun of the Japanese Empire, you could easily believe that they were Americans, flying over in precise military salute.”

—quoted in *Eyewitness to America*

What Americans did not realize was that the causes of the Japanese attack could be traced back more than 40 years to the tension between the United States and Japan over the Open Door Policy. This tension escalated two years earlier with President Roosevelt’s policies for helping Britain against Germany.

**The Neutrality Act of 1939** President Roosevelt officially proclaimed the United States neutral two days after Britain and France declared war on Germany. Despite this declaration, he was determined to do all he could to help the two countries in their struggle against Hitler. Soon after the war began, Roosevelt called Congress into a special session to revise the neutrality laws.

He asked Congress to **eliminate** the ban on arms sales to nations at war. Public opinion strongly supported the president. Congress passed the new law, but isolationists demanded a price for the revision. Under the Neutrality Act of 1939, warring nations could buy weapons from the United States only if they paid cash and carried the arms on their own ships.

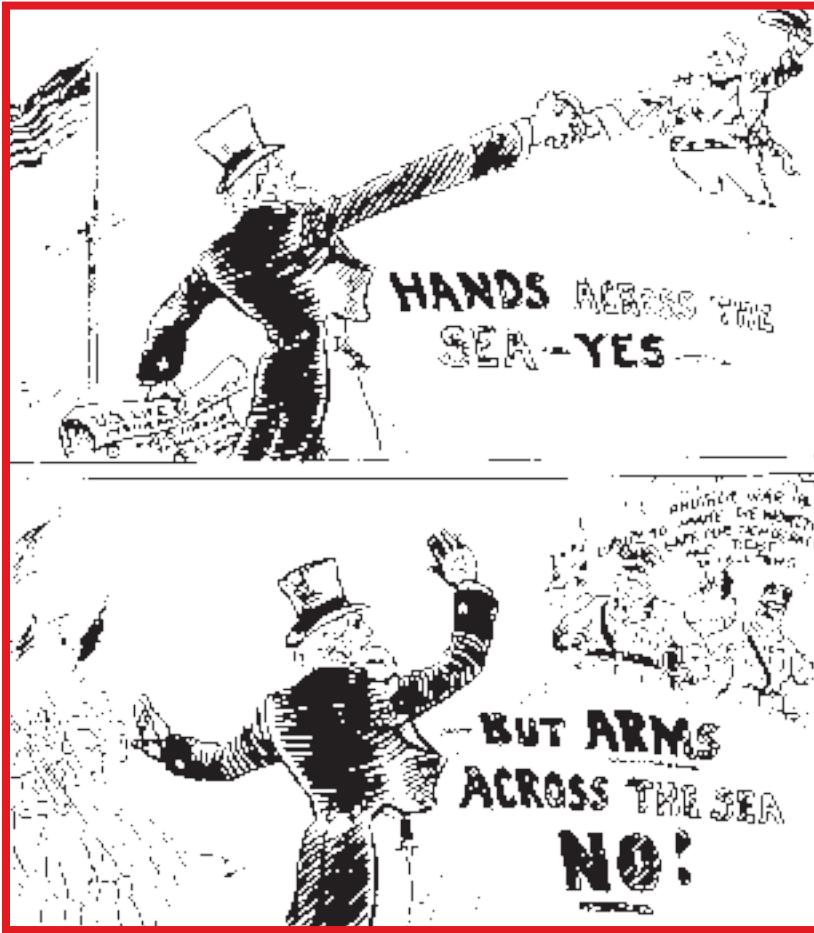
**Destroyers-for-Bases Deal** In the spring of 1940, the United States faced its first test in remaining neutral. In May British Prime Minister Winston Churchill began asking Roosevelt to transfer old American destroyers to Britain. Britain had lost nearly half its destroyers and needed more to protect its cargo ships from German submarines and to block any German attempt to invade Britain.

Determined to give Churchill the destroyers, Roosevelt used a loophole in the provision of the Neutrality Act that required cash for purchases. In exchange for the right to build American bases on British-controlled Newfoundland, Bermuda, and islands in the Caribbean, Roosevelt sent 50 old American destroyers to Britain. Since the deal did not involve an actual sale, the Neutrality Act did not apply. On September 3, 1940, he announced his action to an astonished press.

**Reading Check** **Examining** How were the Neutrality Acts revised?

Daniel Inouye after joining the U.S. Army’s 442nd Infantry ▶





## Analyzing Political Cartoons

**Peace Above All** Many Americans were willing to help European democracies but did not want to sell them arms. **In what ways did the United States assist these nations?**

debate took place between people who wanted greater American involvement in World War II and those who felt that the United States should remain neutral.

At one extreme was the Fight for Freedom Committee, a group which urged the repeal of all neutrality laws and wanted stronger action against Germany. Closer to the center, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, headed by journalist William Allen White, pressed for increased American aid to the Allies but opposed armed intervention.

Roosevelt's destroyers-for-bases deal led to the founding of the **America First Committee** in September of 1940. The America First Committee was a staunchly isolationist group that firmly opposed any American intervention or aid to the Allies. The group had many

famous members, including aviator Charles Lindbergh, former governor Philip LaFollette, and Senator Gerald Nye. The committee attempted to influence elections and public opinion in support of isolationism with speeches and publications.

**The Election of 1940** The heated debate over neutrality took place in the midst of the 1940 presidential election campaign. For several months Americans had wondered whether President Roosevelt would follow long-standing tradition by retiring at the end of his second term. With the United States in a precarious position, many people feared that a change of leaders might not be in the country's best interest. Roosevelt decided to run for an unprecedented third term.

During the campaign, FDR steered a careful course between neutrality and intervention. The Republican nominee, Wendell Willkie, did the same, promising that he too would stay out of the war but assist the Allies. The voters re-elected Roosevelt by a wide margin, preferring to stick with a president they knew during this crisis period.

**Reading Check Analyzing** Why did Roosevelt win an unprecedented third term in office?

## The Isolationist Debate

**Main Idea** In the midst of a debate about whether America should remain neutral, Roosevelt was elected for a third term.

**Reading Connection** Do you believe that holders of public office should be limited in the number of terms they serve? Read on to find out about Roosevelt's decision to break with the traditional two terms of office.

Widespread public acceptance of the destroyers-for-bases deal demonstrated a marked change in American public opinion. Americans were now more open to the idea of assisting the Allies. The shift began after the German invasion of France and the rescue of Allied forces at Dunkirk. By July 1940 most Americans favored offering limited aid to the Allies.


**The Range of Opinion** American opinion was hardly unanimous. While most people were open to aiding the Allies, there were those who believed the United States should not offer even limited assistance. In fact, beginning in the spring of 1940, a spirited



## Edging Toward War

**Main Idea** Roosevelt and Congress continued to support the British through the Lend-Lease Act and the idea of a hemispheric defense zone.

**Reading Connection** How far from its shores should a nation defend its borders? Read on to discover how Roosevelt expanded the area of American defense.

With the election safely over, President Roosevelt was able to expand the nation's role in the war. Britain was fighting for democracy, he said, and the United States had to help Britain in this endeavor. Speaking to Congress, the president listed the "Four Freedoms" for which both the United States and Great Britain stood: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.  (See page 999 for an excerpt from this speech.)

**The Lend-Lease Act** By December 1940, Great Britain had run out of funds to wage its war against Germany. Since Britain was unable to provide the cash needed to purchase weapons, President Roosevelt came up with a way to remove the cash requirement of the Neutrality Act.

With the **Lend-Lease Act**, the United States would be able to lend or lease arms to any country considered "vital to the defense of the United States." This act meant that the United States could send much needed weapons to Britain without cash payment if Britain promised to return or pay rent for them after the war.

The president warned that if Britain fell, an "unholy alliance" of Germany, Japan, and Italy would keep trying to conquer the world, and then "all of us in all the Americas would be living at the point of a gun." The president argued that the United States should become the "great arsenal of democracy" to keep the British fighting and make it unnecessary for Americans to go to war.



### Picturing History

**Neutrality Debate** The America First Committee strongly opposed the increasingly weak neutrality of the United States. Here an American soldier confronts an isolationist marching outside the White House. [How did the Lend-Lease Act further weaken the nation's official neutrality?](#)

The America First Committee disagreed, but Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act by a wide margin. By the time the program ended, the United States had contributed more than \$40 billion in weapons, vehicles, and other supplies to the Allied war effort.

While shipments of supplies to Britain began at once, lend-lease aid eventually went to the Soviet Union as well. After calling off the invasion of Britain, Hitler returned to his original goal of carving out lebensraum for Germany in eastern Europe. In June 1941, in violation of the Nazi-Soviet pact, Hitler launched a massive invasion of the Soviet Union. Although Churchill detested communism and considered Stalin a harsh dictator, he vowed that any person or state “who fights against Nazism will have our aid.” Roosevelt, too, supported this policy.

**The Hemispheric Defense Zone** Congressional approval of the Lend-Lease Act did not solve the problem of how to get American arms and supplies

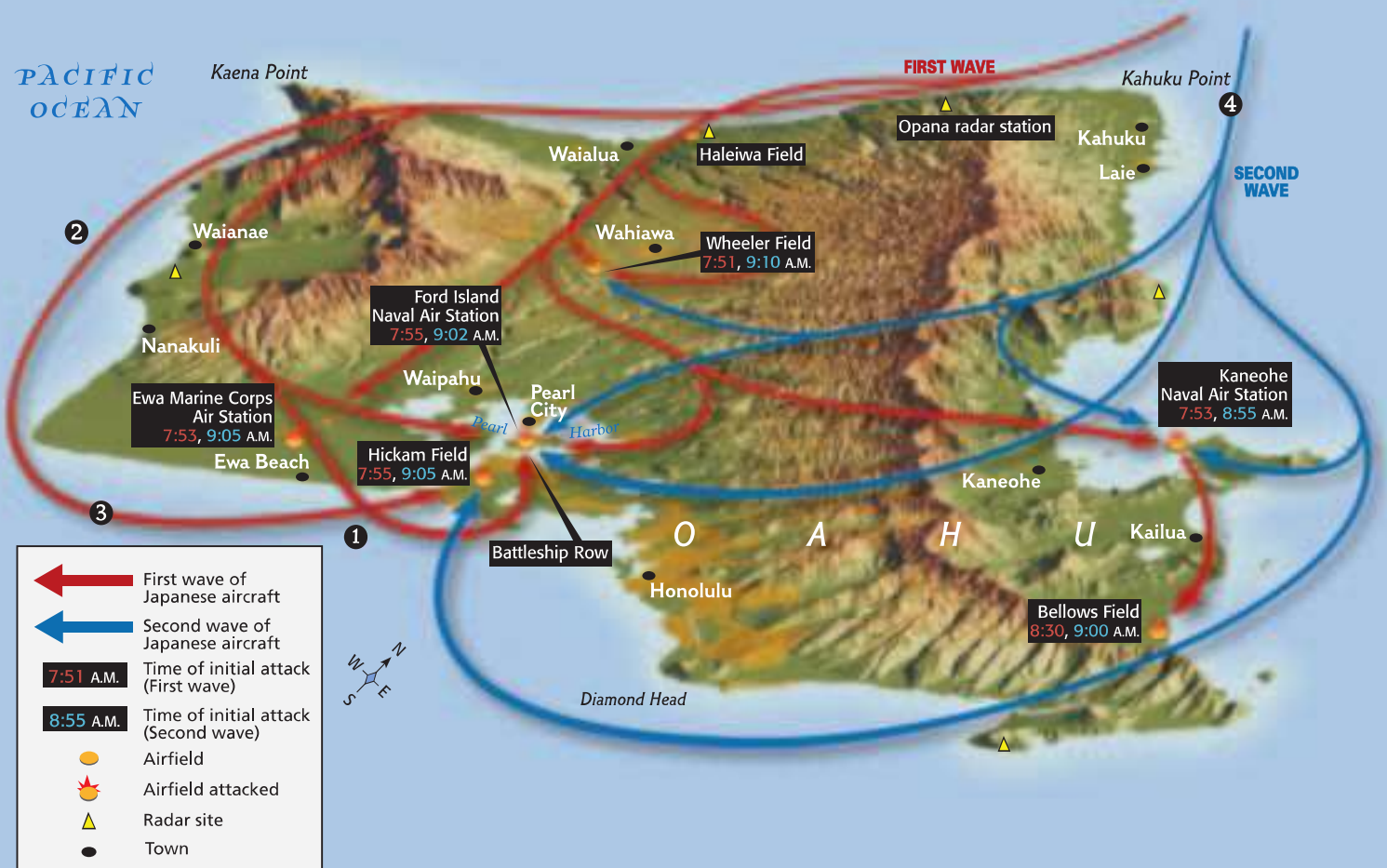
to Britain. German submarines patrolling the Atlantic Ocean were sinking hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping each month, and the British navy simply did not have enough ships in the Atlantic to stop them.

Roosevelt could not simply order the U.S. Navy to protect British cargo ships, since the United States was still technically neutral. Instead, he developed the idea of a **hemispheric defense zone**. Roosevelt declared that the entire western half of the Atlantic was part of the Western Hemisphere and, therefore, neutral. He then ordered the U.S. Navy to patrol the western Atlantic and reveal the locations of German submarines to the British.

**The Atlantic Charter** In August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill met face-to-face onboard American and British warships anchored near Newfoundland. During these meetings, the two men agreed on the text of the **Atlantic Charter**. It committed the two leaders to a postwar world of democracy, nonaggression, free



## Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, December 7, 1941





trade, economic advancement, and freedom of the seas. Churchill later said that FDR pledged to “force an ‘incident’ . . . which would justify him in opening hostilities” with Germany.

An incident quickly presented itself. In early September a German U-boat fired on the American destroyer *Greer*, which had been radioing the U-boat’s position to the British. Roosevelt promptly responded by ordering American ships to follow a “shoot-on-sight” policy toward German submarines.

The Germans escalated hostilities with the United States the following month when they targeted two American destroyers. One of them, the *Reuben James*, broke in two after being torpedoed. It sank into the frigid waters of the North Atlantic, where 115 sailors died. As the end of 1941 grew near, Germany and the United States continued a tense standoff in the North Atlantic.

**Reading Check** **Evaluating** How did the Lend-Lease Act help the Allied war effort?

## Japan Attacks the United States

**Main Idea** **Angered by American policies that aided the British and an embargo on Japanese goods, the Japanese attacked the naval base at Pearl Harbor, forcing the United States to declare war.**

**Reading Connection** Do you know of a situation in which a person became involved in a dispute because a friend or family member was involved? Read on to learn how Japan and its allies were able to draw the United States into a world conflict.

Despite the growing tensions in the Atlantic, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was what finally brought the United States into World War II. Ironically, Japan’s decision to attack the United States was a direct result of Roosevelt’s efforts to help Britain in its war against Germany.



- 1 6:45 A.M.: The destroyer *Ward* sinks a Japanese midget submarine near the entrance to Pearl Harbor.
- 2 7:02 to 7:39 A.M.: Army radar at Opana tracks a cloud of aircraft approaching from the north. An officer at Fort Shafter concludes it is a flight of B-17s due in from California.
- 3 7:49 A.M.: The first wave of 183 Japanese planes is ordered to attack. The force includes 40 torpedo bombers and 49 high-altitude bombers—each armed with a single projectile—bound for Battleship Row. Other bombers and Zero fighters attack airfields.
- 4 8:55 A.M.: The second wave of 167 planes renews the attack on airfields and ships. Oil tanks and most ship-repair facilities are ignored, an omission the Japanese later regret.



*Americans responded heroically to Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor: 16 men received the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest award; 5 were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross; and 69 received the Silver Star. The Navy Cross was awarded to another 51, including Dorie Miller, World War II’s first recognized African American hero, who bravely operated an antiaircraft gun on his ship during the Japanese attack.*

**America Embargoes Japan** Between August 1939 and December 1941, Roosevelt's **primary** goal was to help Britain and its allies defeat Germany. He knew that one of the problems Britain faced was the need to keep much of its navy in Asia to protect British territories there from Japanese attack. As German submarines began sinking British shipping, the British began moving warships from Southeast Asia to the Atlantic, leaving their empire vulnerable. In response, Roosevelt introduced policies to discourage the Japanese from attacking the British Empire.

Roosevelt began by putting economic pressure on Japan. Japan depended on the United States for many key materials, including scrap iron, steel, and especially oil. Approximately 80 percent of Japan's oil came from the United States. In July 1940, Congress passed the Export Control Act, giving Roosevelt the power to restrict the sale of **strategic materials** (materials important for fighting a war) to other nations. Roosevelt immediately blocked the sale of airplane fuel and scrap iron to Japan. Furious, the Japanese signed an alliance with Germany and Italy, formally becoming a member of the Axis.



In 1941 Roosevelt began sending lend-lease aid to China. Japan had invaded China in 1937, and by 1941, it controlled much of the Chinese coast. Roosevelt hoped that lend-lease aid would enable the Chinese to tie down the Japanese and prevent them from attacking elsewhere. Despite assistance with weapons from the United States, the strategy failed. By July 1941, the Japanese had sent troops into southern Indochina, posing a direct threat to the British Empire. Japanese aircraft were now in position to strike British shipping in the Strait of Malacca and bomb Hong Kong and Singapore.

Roosevelt responded very quickly to the Japanese threat against the British Empire. He froze all Japanese assets in the United States, reduced the amount of oil being shipped to Japan, and sent General Douglas MacArthur to the Philippines to build up American defenses there.

Roosevelt made it clear that he would lift the oil embargo against Japan only if Japan withdrew from Indochina and made peace with China. With the war against China now in jeopardy because of a lack of oil and other resources, the Japanese military began

making plans to attack the resource-rich British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia. The Japanese also decided to seize the Philippines and to attack the American fleet at Pearl Harbor. They could not risk leaving the United States with a navy in the Pacific to oppose their plans. While the Japanese prepared for war, negotiations with the United States continued, but neither side would back down. On November 26, 1941, six Japanese aircraft carriers, two battleships, and several other warships set sail for Hawaii.

**Japan Attacks Pearl Harbor** The Japanese government appeared to be continuing negotiations with the United States in good faith. This was part of Japan's strategy to surprise the United States. American intelligence had decoded Japanese communications that made it clear that Japan had no intention of reaching an agreement and, instead, was preparing to go to war against the United States.

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◀ *Attack on Pearl Harbor*

On November 27, American commanders at the Pearl Harbor naval base received a war warning from Washington, but Hawaii was not mentioned as a possible target. It was a great distance from Japan to Hawaii, and Washington officials doubted Japan would try to launch such a long-range attack. This would prove to be a fatal error.

The failure to collect sufficient information and the failure of the branches of the U.S. military to share the available information left Pearl Harbor an open target. The result was devastating. Japan's surprise attack on December 7, 1941, sank or damaged 21 ships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, including 8 battleships, 3 cruisers, 4 destroyers, and 6 other vessels. The attack also destroyed 188 airplanes and killed 2,403 Americans. Another 1,178 were injured.

On the night of the attack, a gray-faced Roosevelt met with his cabinet to tell them the country now faced the most serious crisis since the outbreak of the Civil War. The next day, the president asked Congress to declare war:

“Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by the naval and air forces of Japan. . . 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 we will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again. . . No matter how long it may take us . . . the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.”

—quoted in *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous with Destiny*

Following the president's speech, the Senate voted, unanimously, 82 to 0, and the House 388 to 1 to declare war on Japan.

### Germany Declares War

Although Japan was now at war with the United States, Hitler did not have to declare war on the Americans. The terms of the alliance with Japan specified that Germany only had to come to Japan's aid if Japan was attacked, not if Japan attacked another country. Hitler, however, had grown frustrated with the American navy's attacks on German submarines, and he believed the time had come to declare war on the United States.

Hitler greatly underestimated the strength of the United States, and he expected the Japanese to easily defeat the Americans in the Pacific. He hoped that by helping Japan against the United States, he could count on Japanese support against the Soviet Union once the Americans had been beaten. On December 11, Germany and Italy both declared war on the United States.

**Reading Check** **Examining** What finally caused the United States to become involved in World War II?

**HISTORY**  
*Online*



**Student Web Activity** Visit the *American Vision: Modern Times* Web site at [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Student Web Activities—Chapter 11** for an activity on Pearl Harbor.

**HISTORY**  
*Online*



**Study Central**

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Study Central**.

## SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

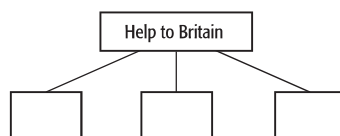
- Vocabulary** Define: eliminate, policy, hemispheric defense zone, primary, strategic materials.
- People and Terms** Identify: America First Committee, Lend-Lease Act, Atlantic Charter.

### Reviewing Big Ideas

- Justifying** After Roosevelt made the destroyers-for-bases deal with Britain, some Americans called him a dictator. Do you think Roosevelt was right or wrong in his actions? Explain your answer.

### Critical Thinking

- Interpreting** Why was the United States unprepared for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor?
- Organizing** Use a graphic organizer to list how Roosevelt helped Britain while maintaining official neutrality.



### Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Maps** Study the map on pages 560-561. Based on the geography of Oahu, why was the location of Pearl Harbor selected for a naval base?

### Writing About History

- Persuasive Writing** Take on the role of an American in 1940. Write a letter to the editor of your newspaper explaining why you think the United States should either remain neutral or become involved in World War II. **CA 11WS1.2**