

Voices of Pearl Harbor: A Day That Changed the World

Hi Atlanta! Get ready to step back in time to a very important day in history: December 7, 1941. We're going to explore what happened at Pearl Harbor, who was there, and how this event changed the world. This is the first part of our semester-long journey into World War II, focusing on how this surprise attack brought the United States into the global conflict.

Lesson Kick-off: Setting the Scene (Approx. 15 minutes)

Imagine it's a sunny Sunday morning in Hawaii. What do you think people were doing? Suddenly, everything changes. Let's find out how.

- **Watch:** A short, age-appropriate video overview of the Pearl Harbor attack. (Search for "Pearl Harbor for kids" or "Pearl Harbor animation" on YouTube. Your parent can help you find a good one. Look for one that is around 5-7 minutes long.)
- **Discuss:** After watching, talk about: What surprised you the most? How do you think people felt?

Activity 1: The Story Unfolds - What Happened? (Approx. 30-45 minutes)

Now that you have a general idea, let's dig a bit deeper into the events of that day.

- **Read:** Read an age-appropriate article or a chapter from a book about the attack on Pearl Harbor. Focus on:
 - When did the attack happen (date and time)?
 - Who attacked Pearl Harbor?
 - Why was Pearl Harbor attacked (the broader context of Japanese expansion and U.S. embargoes)?
 - What were the main targets?
 - What was the immediate result (casualties, ships damaged/sunk)?
- **Map It:** Find Hawaii on a world map. Then, find Japan. Discuss the distance and why a surprise naval attack was such a logistical feat (and a shock!). You can use an online map or an atlas.

Activity 2: Eyewitness to History - Voices from the Past (Approx. 45-60 minutes)

History isn't just about dates and facts; it's about people's experiences. Let's explore different perspectives of the Pearl Harbor attack.

We'll look for stories from:

- **A U.S. Sailor or Soldier:** Imagine being on a ship or at an airfield that morning.
- **A Civilian in Hawaii (e.g., a child, a local resident):** How would this attack impact their everyday life?
- *(Optional Challenge)* **A Japanese Pilot:** What might their motivations and feelings have been (from a historical perspective, understanding their role in their nation's military strategy)?

How to find these stories:

- Search online for "Pearl Harbor survivor stories for students" or "Pearl Harbor eyewitness

accounts." Many museums and historical societies have archives.

- Look for short, age-appropriate excerpts. Focus on their feelings, what they saw, and how their day changed.
- Take notes in your journal about what stands out from each perspective.

Activity 3: Your Creative Response - Living History (Approx. 30-45 minutes)

Now it's your turn to process what you've learned in a creative way!

Choose ONE of the following:

- **Timeline of the Attack:** Create a detailed timeline of the morning of December 7, 1941. Include key moments like the first wave, second wave, specific ships being hit (e.g., USS Arizona), and when the attack ended. Illustrate it if you like!
- **Diary Entry:** Write a diary entry (about 1-2 pages) from the perspective of someone who experienced the attack. This could be a U.S. sailor, a nurse, a child living near Pearl Harbor, or even a (fictionalized, empathetic) young Japanese pilot on their mission (focusing on the tension and orders, not glorifying). Try to include emotions, sights, and sounds based on your research.

Make sure your creation reflects the historical information you've learned.

Wrapping Up: The Aftermath and Looking Ahead (Approx. 15 minutes)

- **Discussion:**
 - How did the attack on Pearl Harbor change the United States? (Hint: Think about "a date which will live in infamy" and the U.S. entering WWII).
 - Why is it important to learn about events like Pearl Harbor today?
- **Preview:** Next time, we'll explore how the U.S. mobilized for war and the immediate impact on American society. Our semester-long study will uncover many more stories and aspects of WWII!

Extension Ideas (For this lesson or future exploration this semester):

- Build a model of a ship that was at Pearl Harbor.
- Research the USS Arizona Memorial and its significance.
- Learn about the role of women or different ethnic groups in Hawaii during this time.
- Read a historical fiction book set during the Pearl Harbor attack.
- Explore the concept of "propaganda" and how it was used after Pearl Harbor.