

PRIMARY SOURCE COMPARISON

DRAFT vs. FINAL SPEECHES

★ ROOSEVELT SPEECHES AFTER PEARL HARBOR ★



Grade Levels: 8-12
Time: 45-60 minutes

Historical Thinking Skills:

- Primary Source Analysis
- Sourcing
- Close Reading
- Historical Contextualization
- Argumentation
- Comparing Perspectives

Essential Questions:

- How do revisions to speeches reveal a leader's goals, priorities, and intended audience?
- How do audience and purpose influence the words a leader chooses during a crisis?
- How do changes in wording affect the tone and impact of a speech?

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

- Analyze draft and final versions of historical speeches
- Identify revisions, additions, and omissions made during the writing process
- Explain how language can influence public opinion during times of crisis
- Compare how Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt addressed Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor

Background:

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, drawing the United States into World War II.

Within hours, President Franklin D. Roosevelt began preparing the address he would deliver to Congress the following day, known today as the "Day of Infamy" Speech. Numerous handwritten edits transformed an early draft into one of the most recognizable speeches in American history.

That same evening, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt delivered a national radio address. Speaking directly to American families, she acknowledged fear and uncertainty while encouraging citizens to remain calm, support one another, and continue their daily responsibilities. Like President Roosevelt's speech, her remarks also underwent revisions before being broadcast.

Together, these documents provide a unique opportunity to examine how language, audience, tone, and purpose shaped America's response during one of its most pivotal moments.

Lesson: Primary Source Analysis

Materials

Students should have access to:

- Early draft of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Infamy Speech
 - Final version of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Infamy Speech
 - Early draft of Eleanor Roosevelt's December 7th radio address
 - Final transcript of Eleanor Roosevelt's radio address
 - Student comparison worksheet
 - Writing utensil
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Activity 1: Spot the Changes

Divide students into small groups.

Provide each group with the draft and final version of one speech at a time.

Students should:

- Highlight words or phrases that changed
 - Circle words that were removed
 - Underline language that was added
 - Record at least five significant revisions
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Discussion Questions

For each change, ask students:

- Why might this change have been made?
 - How does the revision change the effectiveness, tone, or impact of the speech?
 - Does it sound more reassuring or more urgent?
 - Does it make the speaker sound more confident?
 - What reaction might the speaker hope to inspire?
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Activity 2: Compare the Speakers

Once the groups finish analyzing both speeches, bring the class together.

Discuss similarities and differences between Franklin Roosevelt's and Eleanor Roosevelt's approaches.

Students should consider:

- Audience
- Tone
- Call to action
- Purpose
- Emotional appeals

Lesson: Primary Source Analysis

Possible guiding questions:

- Who is each speaker talking to?
 - How do they define patriotism?
 - How does each acknowledge fear?
 - How do their responsibilities differ?
 - What role does each believe ordinary Americans should play?
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Activity 3: Thinking Like an Editor

Choose several revisions from both speeches.

Ask students:

“If you were the editor, would you have kept the original wording or revised the wording? Why?”

Students should support their answer using evidence from the documents.

Reflection

Have students respond in writing:

Imagine you are an American listening to both speeches in December 1941. What unique role did each speech play in helping the nation respond to the attack on Pearl Harbor?

Use evidence from both speeches to support your answer.

Extension Activity

Ask the students to imagine they are advising a national leader immediately following a modern crisis.

They should write a brief speech (250-300 words) that:

- Acknowledges public fears
- Provides reassurance
- Encourages civic responsibility
- Considers the audience they are addressing

After completing their speech, students should revise it by making at least five intentional edits. They should then explain how each revision improved the message.

Teacher Notes

- Primary sources are not static documents; they often exist in multiple forms that reveal the decision-making process behind history.
- Point out that both speeches were written quickly in a time of crisis, which helps explain some of the revisions.
- Remind students to consider the speaker's audience and purpose when analyzing changes in language.
- Encourage students to use specific evidence from the drafts and final versions to support their ideas.
- Depending on time and class needs, you may choose to focus on one speech in depth or divide the work between groups.



“The only thing
we have to fear
is fear itself.”

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

*First Inaugural Address
March 4, 1933*



TEACHING TIP

Consider asking students to keep a running list of patterns they notice across both speeches, such as:

- ✓ More specific or vivid language
- ✓ Shifts in tone (reassuring vs. urgent)
- ✓ Stronger emotional appeals
- ✓ Clearer calls to action
- ✓ Changes that better fit the audience

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**NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF THE PACIFIC WAR**
FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

DIRECTIONS: Compare the draft and final versions of each speech. Record at least five changes. Then, analyze the purpose, audience, and tone of each final speech.

1. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT – ADDRESS TO CONGRESS (DECEMBER 8, 1941)

CHANGES: DRAFT → FINAL <i>List at least five changes.</i>	WHY MIGHT THIS CHANGE HAVE BEEN MADE? <i>Consider purpose, audience, and tone.</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

2. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT – RADIO ADDRESS TO THE NATION (DECEMBER 7, 1941)

CHANGES: DRAFT → FINAL <i>List at least five changes.</i>	WHY MIGHT THIS CHANGE HAVE BEEN MADE? <i>Consider purpose, audience, and tone.</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

3. COMPARE THE FINAL SPEECHES

CATEGORY	FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT <i>(Final Speech)</i>	ELEANOR ROOSEVELT <i>(Final Speech)</i>
 AUDIENCE Who was the speaker trying to reach?		
 PURPOSE What was the speaker trying to accomplish?		
 TONE How does the speaker's language and tone sound?		
 EMOTIONAL APPEALS What feelings or ideas does the speaker appeal to?		
 CALL(S) TO ACTION What does the speaker ask the audience to do?		



4. REFLECTION

Both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt spoke to the American people after the attack on Pearl Harbor, but they had different audiences and different purposes.

How did each speaker tailor their message to meet the needs of their audience?

Which speech do you think was most effective in accomplishing its purpose?

Support your response with evidence from both speeches.

DRAFT No. 1

December 7, 1941.

PROPOSED MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS

Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in ^{infamy} ~~world history~~
the United States of America was ^{suddenly} ~~simultaneously~~ and deliberately attacked
by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan, ~~with out warning~~.

The United States was at the moment at peace with that nation and was
^{still in} ~~continuing~~ the conversations 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} ~~Hawaii~~ and the Philippines.

The Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered
to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a ^{recent American} ~~former~~ message, ~~from the~~

^{While} ~~secretary~~. This reply ^{stated} ~~contained~~ a statement that diplomatic negotiations
~~must be considered at an end, it~~ contained no threat ^{or} ~~and~~ hint of ^{war or} ~~an~~
armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distances ^{of Manila, and especially} ~~of Manila, and especially~~ of
Hawaii, from Japan make ^{it} ~~it~~ obvious that these attacks ^{were} ~~were~~ deliberately
planned many days ^{or even weeks} ~~ago~~. During the intervening time the Japanese Govern-
ment has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false
statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Day of Infamy" Speech Draft with Handwritten Revisions, December 8, 1941. Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. National Archives and Records Administration.

125. *The President Requests War Declaration*

125 ("December 7, 1941 — A Date Which Will Live in Infamy" — Address to the Congress Asking That a State of War Be Declared Between the United States and Japan. December 8, 1941

Mr. Vice President, and Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives:

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 the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of 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. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

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125. *The President Requests War Declaration*

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.

And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today 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.

But always will our whole Nation 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 that 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 it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

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 unbounding 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 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

NOTE: Less than 24 hours after the foregoing message to a joint session of the first news of the session of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The President spoke grimly for six and a half minutes.

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Citation: Roosevelt, Franklin D. Speech by Franklin D. Roosevelt, New York Transcript, 1941. Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/afccal000483/>.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I am speaking to you tonight at a very serious moment in our history. The Cabinet is convening, and the leaders in Congress are meeting with the President. The State Department and Army and Navy officials have been with the President all afternoon. In fact the Japanese Ambassador was talking to the President at the very time that Japan's airships were bombing our citizens in Hawaii and the Phillipines and ^{San Diego} ~~getting~~ ^{loaded with bombs} one of our transports on its way ~~from San Francisco~~ to Hawaii.

By tomorrow morning, the members of Congress will have a full report and be ready for action. In the meantime we, the people, are already prepared for action. For months ^{that} now the knowledge ~~of~~ something of this kind might happen has been hanging over our heads and yet it seemed impossible to believe, impossible to drop ^{the} everyday things of life and feel that there was only one thing which was important, and ~~was~~ ~~was~~ preparation to meet an enemy, no matter where he struck.

That is all over now and there is no more uncertainty. We know what we have to face and we know that we are ready to face it.

I should like to say just a word to the women in the country tonight. I have a boy at sea on a Destroyer. For all I know he may be on his way to the Pacific. Two of my children are in coast cities on the Pacific. Many of you all over this country have boys in the services who ~~are~~ will now be called upon to go into action. You have friends and families in what has suddenly become danger zones. You

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can not escape anxiety, you can not escape a clutch of fear
at your heart and yet I hope that the certainty of what we
have to meet will make you rise above these fears. and will
~~make you~~ ^{we must} go about ^{known} your daily business more determined to
do the ordinary things as well as ^{known} you can and when ^{you} find
a way to do anything more in ^{id} your community to help others,
to build morale, to give a feeling of security ^{we must do it.} because
whatever is asked, ^{of ad I can} you ^{are} sure ^{we} you can accomplish it, ^{we are the free &}
To the young people of the nation I ^{must speak to you} can only say ^{unconquerable} people of the
~~that they~~ ^{from} are going to have a great opportunity -high
moments in which ^{your} their strength and ^{you} their ability will be
tested. I have faith in ^{you!} them. I have faith in all of my ^{but at this I have standing about upon}
~~fellow citizens~~ and now we will go back to the program which ^{look to my}
we had arranged for tonight and as ^{just to} a few weeks ago I spoke ^{my fellow}
to you on the subject of army morale ^{citizens.}

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Eleanor Roosevelt Radio Address, December 7, 1941 (Attack on Pearl Harbor)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I am speaking to you tonight at a very serious moment in our history. The Cabinet is convening and the leaders in Congress are meeting with the President. The State Department and Army and Navy officials have been with the President all afternoon. In fact, the Japanese ambassador was talking to the president at the very time that Japan's airships were bombing our citizens in Hawaii and the Philippines and sinking one of our transports loaded with lumber on its way to Hawaii.

By tomorrow morning the members of Congress will have a full report and be ready for action.

In the meantime, we the people are already prepared for action. For months now the knowledge that something of this kind might happen has been hanging over our heads and yet it seemed impossible to believe, impossible to drop the everyday things of life and feel that there was only one thing which was important - preparation to meet an enemy no matter where he struck. That is all over now and there is no more uncertainty.

We know what we have to face and we know that we are ready to face it.

I should like to say just a word to the women in the country tonight. I have a boy at sea on a destroyer, for all I know he may be on his way to the Pacific. Two of my children are in coast cities on the Pacific. Many of you all over the country have boys in the services who will now be called upon to go into action. You have friends and families in what has suddenly become a danger zone. You cannot escape anxiety. You cannot escape a clutch of fear at your heart and yet I hope that the certainty of what we have to meet will make you rise above these fears.

We must go about our daily business more determined than ever to do the ordinary things as well as we can and when we find a way to do anything more in our communities to help others, to build morale, to give a feeling of security, we must do it. Whatever is asked of us I am sure we can accomplish it. We are the free and unconquerable people of the United States of America.

To the young people of the nation, I must speak a word tonight. You are going to have a great opportunity. There will be high moments in which your strength and your ability will be tested. I have faith in you. I feel as though I was standing upon a rock and that rock is my faith in my fellow citizens.

Now we will go back to the program we had arranged...

Eleanor Roosevelt Papers. Columbian College of Arts & Sciences