



## Simple Past tense

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**1. Why did Japan attack the United States during World War Two?**

- a.) Because the United States had a weaker economy
- b.) Because Japan wanted to control the oil fields from European colonial powers
- c.) Because the United States stopped selling oil to Japan unless it withdrew its forces from China and Indochina

**3. Why did the Chinese public become outraged by Japanese expansion in 1937?**

- a.) Due to the Japanese seizure of some Chinese cities
- b.) Due to the Chinese military's weakness
- c.) Due to the Japanese capture of Nanjing

**5. Why did Japan want to neutralize China by attacking its economy?**

- a.) To prevent China from sourcing war materials from abroad
- b.) To weaken the Chinese army
- c.) To reduce the Japanese garrison in China

**7. What was the goal of the Chinese major counter offensive launched in late 1939?**

- a.) To occupy the Japanese war industry
- b.) To retake Wuhan
- c.) To improve defensive positions in North China

**2. What event led to the Japanese military deciding to continue enlarging Japan's territory?**

- a.) The Japanese occupation of Manchuria
- b.) The Chinese attack in Shanghai
- c.) The Japanese capture of Nanjing

**4. What was the outcome of the Chinese attack in Shanghai?**

- a.) The Chinese successfully recaptured the territories
- b.) The Japanese forces were thrown into disarray
- c.) The Japanese captured the city of Nanjing

**6. What strategy did the Chinese use to slow down the Japanese advance along the Yangtze river?**

- a.) Attacking the Japanese forces in the North
- b.) Outflanking the Japanese defences
- c.) Deploying their troops on the path of the Japanese attack

**8. What event led to the United States stopping oil sales to Japan?**

- a.) Japan's move into Indochina
- b.) Japan's attack on the United States
- c.) Japan's occupation of Manchuria

**9. Why did Japan consider attacking the United States despite its greater power?**

- a.) To control the European colonial powers' oil fields
- b.) To prevent the United States from controlling its oil supply
- c.) To weaken the Chinese army

**10. What was the only acceptable way out of the situation for Japan after the United States embargo?**

- a.) Attacking China
- b.) Surrendering to the United States
- c.) Attacking the United States

## Transcript

Have you ever wondered why did Japan attack the United States of America during World War Two? The United States had a much stronger economy and Japan did not have many chances of winning. The answer lies in the Second Sino-Japanese war.

It all began ten years ago. China had been in relative stagnation for a long time, while Japan had started its modernization half a century ago and had a strong military. This had allowed Japan to make some expansion. Seeing China in a weak state, the Japanese military decided to continue with enlarging Japan's territory and occupied the Chinese province of Manchuria. China did not have a strong army and could not offer much resistance.

The Japanese proceeded with expansion and took over Chinese territories bit by bit. In 1937, the Japanese seized some Chinese cities. By that time the Chinese public had become outraged by Japanese expansion and demanded resistance. The Chinese military was too weak to recapture the territories. The Chinese decided to capture the weakly defended Japanese possession in Shanghai. Then they could possibly trade it back to Japan for the return of the territories in the North.

The Chinese attacked in Shanghai. They expected to finish the operation quickly, but they were unable to overcome the Japanese defenses. Both sides brought reinforcements and the fighting grew larger. Japan wanted to end the conflict by inflicting a major defeat on China. It deployed 200,000 men in North China to go on the offensive and destroy the Chinese forces.

The Chinese knew of their weakness. They did not allow themselves to be drawn into a decisive battle and offered major resistance only in the western mountains. Japan was unable to destroy the Chinese forces. But it still could do so in Shanghai. Japan landed around 300,000 men in Shanghai and went on a counterattack. The Chinese made a mistake by holding Shanghai for as long as possible and the Japanese landed another force behind their lines. The Chinese were unable to properly react to the landings and their forces were thrown into disarray. Without encountering much resistance, the Japanese now headed towards the Chinese capital at Nanjing. The Japanese captured it and a large part of the city's civilian population perished in the following weeks during the Nanjing massacre.

Japan had inflicted a major defeat on China and now offered peace on harsh terms. Although the Japanese military had proven to be stronger than the Chinese, Japan had other weaknesses. It was a much smaller country than China and had difficulties sustaining a large army. Also, Japan was threatened by other powers and if they would move against Japan, it would find itself in great difficulties. So China expected Japan to become weaker as time passed and it decided not to make peace with Japan for as long as possible.

Japan could not force China to surrender so it decided to neutralize it by attacking China's economy. The Chinese war industry and its best agricultural lands were in the central part of the country. Japan believed that if it occupied them, then the Chinese army would become much weaker. Then Japan would not need to sustain a large force in China and could reduce its garrison. The Japanese first wanted to connect their armies in the North and South of China.

While most of their armies were reorganizing, they launched the attack with weaker forces. In the South, the Chinese brought up reinforcements and stopped the Japanese on a river line. Then they regrouped their units in the North and deployed a strong force against the Japanese northern attack, which halted their offensive. This left a lot of Chinese troops situated between the two Japanese armies and Japan set out to encircle them. The Chinese were ready for that and withdrew their forces from the encirclement. The Japanese then continued to advance west, but the Chinese destroyed the dykes on the Yellow river, which flooded the area between the two armies and the Japanese had to stop their advance.

The Japanese now set out to capture the lands around the Yangtze river and the city of Wuhan. The floods closed the northern route and the Japanese chose to advance along the Yangtze river. The Chinese had 800,000 men, while the Japanese attacking force had only 200,000. The Chinese deployed their troops on the path of the Japanese attack and slowed down their advance. The Japanese then attacked the weak Chinese forces in the North and outflanked the Chinese defenses. This helped the Japanese to overcome the Chinese on the Yangtze and they now approached Wuhan. The Chinese abandoned the city to the enemy. The Japanese proceeded with securing their position. They expanded their territory to the east and west. Then they set out to destroy the Chinese armies. They dispersed the Chinese forces in the North and returned to their positions. They then launched an attack against the Chinese in the South.

Japan had achieved its goal of occupying the Chinese war industry. In order to prevent China circumventing the Japanese strategy by buying war materials from overseas, Japan also occupied China's major ports. Japan had deployed 850,000 soldiers to carry out the conquest and it could now start withdrawing them back to Japan to cut down the expense of the occupation. But the Chinese still had formidable forces. They decided to launch a major counteroffensive. Its goal was to retake Wuhan and to achieve smaller gains in several places.

The offensive was launched in late 1939. But the Japanese strategy had proven to be effective. Without proper equipment, the Chinese were unable to breach the Japanese defenses. Nevertheless, they stopped an attack in South China and disrupted the Japanese positions near Wuhan. The Japanese wanted to restore the security around Wuhan. They dispersed some Chinese units and then extended their territory to the West.

The Japanese were able to recover from the Chinese offensive, but then the Chinese Communists launched a series of attacks behind the Japanese lines known as the Hundred Regiments Offensive. The Japanese suppressed the offensive and in 1941, they cleared their occupied areas from most of the Communist forces and improved their defensive positions in North China. In central China, they launched several offensives to weaken the Chinese forces. By this time the Chinese had adapted themselves to Japanese tactics and avoided large-scale battles and as a result, the Japanese could not completely destroy them.

Japan had another problem. China had established land routes to the ports of the European colonial powers and was sourcing war materials from abroad. After France had been defeated in World War Two, Japan occupied French Indochina and closed one of the routes. Remember that Japan could become embargoed by the United States? Well, the United States was opposed to Japanese expansion. The move into Indochina was the last straw and the United States stopped selling oil to Japan unless it withdrew its forces from China and Indochina.

Japan got almost all of its oil from the United States, and without a new source, its military would become inefficient in a couple of years. For Japan, withdrawing from China was unacceptable. It also realized that, until the United States controlled its oil supply, it could make Japan do whatever it wanted. So Japan badly needed its own

source of oil. For this, it could capture the oil fields from the European colonial powers. This would mean war with the United States, a country much more powerful than Japan, but the risk was considered worth it.

To answer the question from the beginning of the video: Japan went into war with China, but China did not surrender. So Japan had to escalate the war more and more. Eventually, this caused the United States to embargo Japan and the only acceptable way out of this situation for Japan was attacking the United States. Would Japan going to war with America finally turn the war in China's favor? Well... it is a long story. One, which we hope to tell in a separate video.