

The Korean War

1. What happened to Korea at the end of World War II? (796)
2. What was the 38th Parallel? (796)
3. Why was Truman alarmed by North Korea's invasion? (796)
4. What new world organization did Truman appeal to, and what did they do? (797)
5. Who was in charge of US and UN forces? (797)
6. Describe the initial success. (797)
7. What did Truman and MacArthur want to do next? What was the result? (797)
8. What happened once Chinese Communist forces attacked? (798)

9. When the war became a stalemate, what did General MacArthur want to do? (798)

10. Why did Truman fire MacArthur? (798-799)

11. Who was President when the Korean War ended? (799)

12. What is a demilitarized zone? (799)

13. What were the final results of the Korean War? (799)

- ✓ **GRAPHIC ORGANIZER**
Nations Involved in the Korean War
- ✓ **MAP** Korean War
- ✓ **PRIMARY SOURCE**
General MacArthur Speech



Lesson 3

The Korean War

ESSENTIAL QUESTION *Why does conflict develop?*

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

The Korean War tested how far the United States was willing to go to stop the spread of communism around the world.

Conflict in Korea

GUIDING QUESTION *Why did the U.S. under the United Nations' flag fight the Korean War in the 1950s?*

At the end of World War II, the East Asian country of Korea came under control of the United States and the Soviet Union. The two powers divided Korea at the 38th parallel of latitude. A Communist government took control in North Korea. A U.S.-backed government took over South Korea. Relations between the two Koreas were tense.

Hoping to unite Korea, North Korean troops invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950. By September, the Communists had control over most of the peninsula. The South Korean army held only a small area in the southeast around the port city of Pusan.

The United States Responds

North Korea's invasion alarmed President Truman. He believed the Soviet Union supported the attack. Acting quickly and without a declaration of war, Truman ordered American forces into action. "Korea is the Greece of the Far East," he said. "If we are tough enough now, if we stand up to them like we did in Greece three years ago, they won't take any next steps."

ReadingHELPDESK

Taking Notes: Describing

As you read, use a table like this one to keep track of how key nations were involved in the Korean War.

Country	Role
Soviet Union	
United States	
North Korea	
South Korea	
China	

Content Vocabulary

- demilitarized zone

Truman also asked the United Nations to take action. The UN called on North Korea to remove its forces from South Korea. When North Korea ignored this demand, the UN agreed to send troops.

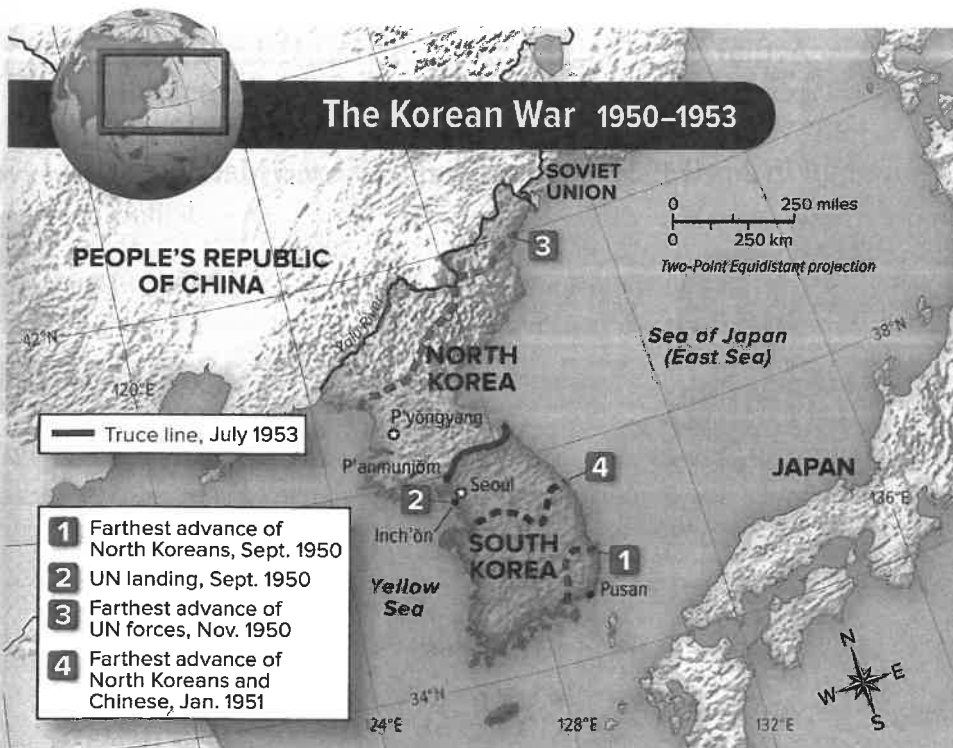
Most of the UN forces came under the command of U.S. general and World War II hero Douglas MacArthur. That September, General MacArthur led the UN forces in a daring landing. They came ashore near the port of Inch' ŏn, well behind enemy lines. MacArthur's forces took that key city. From there they were able to enter the South Korean capital city, Seoul, on September 25. Pushing on from there, they forced the North Koreans back across the 38th parallel. South Korea came under the control of UN forces.

MacArthur Presses the Attack

General MacArthur was encouraged by this success. He urged President Truman to order the invasion of North Korea. General MacArthur **assured** Truman that neither China nor the Soviet Union would enter the war. He also promised to have troops "home by Christmas."

Truman sought UN approval for an invasion of the North. The goal was to unify Korea. In October, the UN approved the advance into North Korea.

With his orders, MacArthur moved north of the 38th parallel. Fighting well, his troops advanced toward the Chinese border. The Chinese Communists saw the advancing troops as a threat.



GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

The battle in Korea went back and forth before finally settling at the truce line.

- 1 **MOVEMENT** Which side had the most success at the start of the war?
- 2 **CRITICAL THINKING**
Explaining Which step on this map explains why the Chinese became concerned and involved in the war?

Academic Vocabulary

assure to promise or to make sure

They replied with force. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops crossed into Korea. They drove the UN forces back to South Korea. By January 1951, the Communists had captured Seoul, South Korea's capital. The capital city would change hands several times during this conflict.

PROGRESS CHECK

Explaining Why did President Truman and the UN send troops to Korea?

American Leadership Splits

GUIDING QUESTION *Why did Truman and MacArthur disagree over how to fight the Korean War?*

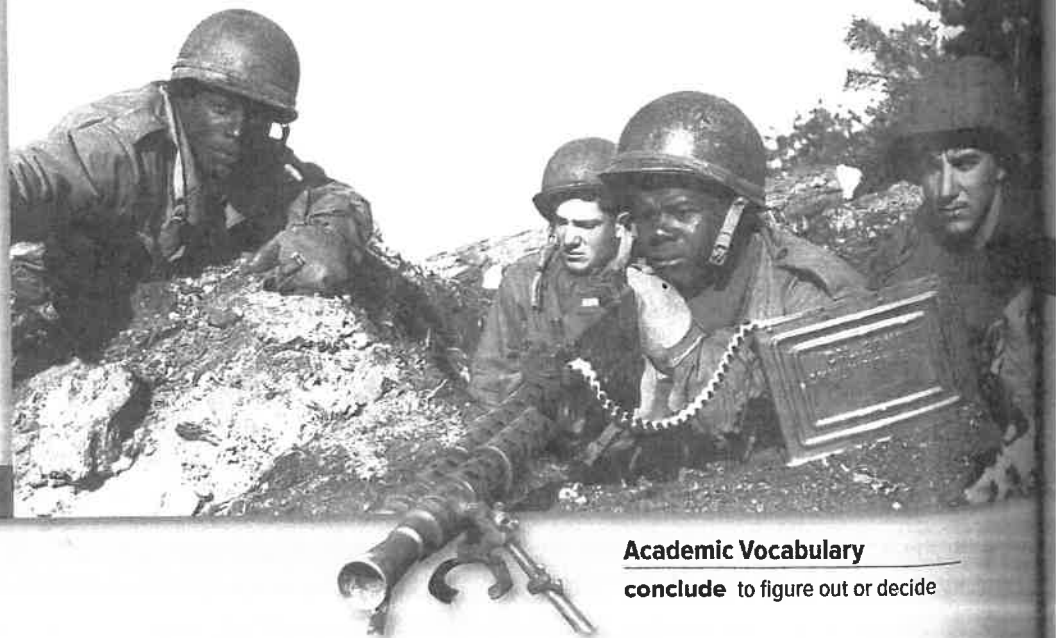
By spring of 1951, UN forces had recovered. Once again, they pushed the Communists across the 38th parallel. At this point, the war became a stalemate, in which neither side was able to gain much ground. The stalemate lasted for almost two years. There was much bitter fighting along the 38th parallel.

Truman and MacArthur

The stalemate dragged. Truman wanted to negotiate an end to the fighting. MacArthur argued that dropping atomic bombs on Chinese bases and supply lines would bring a quick victory. Truman opposed MacArthur's plan. He feared it could lead to a larger war.

MacArthur criticized the president. In a letter to a member of Congress, MacArthur said he was being kept from doing his job. "We must win," he wrote. "There is no substitute for victory." In April 1951, the president removed MacArthur.

A U.S. machine gun crew prepares for combat, November 1950.



Reading HELPDESK

demilitarized zone region where military forces are not allowed

Academic Vocabulary

conclude to figure out or decide

Truman **concluded** that it was the only action he could take and “still be president of the United States.” Truman wrote: “If I allowed him to defy the civil authorities in this manner, I myself would be violating my oath to uphold and defend the Constitution.”

The United States erupted in protest over MacArthur’s firing. The general was popular. Polls showed that most Americans supported him against the president. Also, MacArthur did not go quietly. He returned home to a hero’s welcome and made a dramatic farewell speech before Congress. “Old soldiers never die,” he said; “they just fade away.”

The Fighting Ends

Talks to end the Korean War began in July 1951. Negotiators finally reached a cease-fire agreement in July 1953. This was during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower. The agreement set up a **demilitarized zone** (dee·MIH·luh·tuh·ryzd ZOHN)—a region in which no military forces are allowed. The zone lay between the two Koreas. It stretched along the border near the 38th parallel.

Neither side could claim victory in the Korean War. When it was over, hardly any territory had changed hands. More than 36,000 Americans were dead, and another 103,000 had been wounded. Nearly 2 million Koreans and Chinese were killed.

The United States had shown the Soviets that it was willing to use force to block the spread of communism. At the same time, the lack of a clear victory led to uncertainty at home about the nation’s foreign policy.

PROGRESS CHECK

Summarizing Why did President Truman remove General MacArthur?

General Douglas MacArthur was relieved of his duties after his disagreement with President Truman.



LESSON 3 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. Use the term *demilitarized zone* to write a sentence about the end of the Korean War.

Answer the Guiding Questions

2. **Describing** Describe the conflict that triggered the Korean War.

3. **Summarizing** How was MacArthur’s approach to fighting in Korea different from the approach of President Truman?
4. **Describing** Why were many Americans upset over President Truman’s decision to relieve MacArthur of his command?
5. **INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY** Truman believed he had no choice but to remove MacArthur from his post. Explain Truman’s view in a brief essay.