

## Korean War Lecture Notes

- These are the notes on the Korean War. They are meant to be used as a guide. The teacher should include additional details they feel are relevant for student understanding.
- I. The Korean War
  - A. Japan had occupied Korea since 1945.
  - B. After WW II the Russians freed occupied Korea above the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and the U.S. freed below it.
  - C. Elections were to take place in 1949 and reunite the nation, however, the Soviets prevented this from happening in the north.
  - D. Leader of N. Korea: Kim Il-sung
  - E. Leader of S. Korea: Syngman Rhee
  - F. On June 25, 1950, North Korea invaded the South.
    - 1. What did the U.N. do about the North Korean invasion?  
(students fill in information).
    - 2. The Soviet Union did not veto the U.N. action. They were not present because they wanted Communist China recognized as the representative at the Security Council, not Taiwan.
  - G. General MacArthur now led the U.S. and 18 other countries to fight in Korea.
  - H. Inchon invasion help split the Koreans in half
  - I. Then MacArthur crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel; the Chinese then warned McArthur to stop.
  - J. MacArthur wanted to attack China.
  - K. MacArthur continued to be disrespectful and insubordinate to Truman. Truman fired him.

Armistice: Temporary agreement to stop fighting. Takes place July 27, 1953. Still in effect today!

The following information is from history.com

After three years of a bloody and frustrating war, the [United States](#), the People's Republic of China, North Korea, and South Korea agree to an armistice, bringing the [Korean War](#) to an end. The armistice ended America's first experiment with the [Cold War](#) concept of "limited war."

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, when communist North Korea invaded South Korea. Almost immediately, the United States secured a resolution from the United Nations calling for the military defense of South Korea against the North Korean aggression. In a matter of days, U.S. land,

air, and sea forces had joined the battle. The U.S. intervention turned the tide of the war, and soon the U.S. and South Korean forces were pushing into North Korea and toward that nation's border with China. In November and December 1951, hundreds of thousands of troops from the People's Republic of China began heavy assaults against the American and South Korea forces. The war eventually bogged down into a battle of attrition. In the U.S. presidential election of 1952, Republican candidate [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#) strongly criticized President Harry S. Truman's handling of the war. After his victory, Eisenhower adhered to his promise to "go to Korea." His trip convinced him that something new was needed to break the diplomatic logjam at the peace talks that had begun in July 1951. Eisenhower began to publicly hint that the United States might make use of its nuclear arsenal to break the military stalemate in Korea. He allowed the Nationalist Chinese government on Taiwan to begin harassing air raids on mainland China. The president also put pressure on his South Korean ally to drop some of its demands in order to speed the peace process.

Whether or not Eisenhower's threats of nuclear attacks helped, by July 1953 all sides involved in the conflict were ready to sign an agreement ending the bloodshed. The armistice, signed on July 27, established a committee of representatives from neutral countries to decide the fate of the thousands of prisoners of war on both sides. It was eventually decided that the POWs could choose their own fate--stay where they were or return to their homelands. A new border between North and South Korea was drawn, which gave South Korea some additional territory and demilitarized the zone between the two nations. The war cost the lives of millions of Koreans and Chinese, as well as over 50,000 Americans. It had been a frustrating war for Americans, who were used to forcing the unconditional surrender of their enemies. Many also could not understand why the United States had not expanded the war into China or used its nuclear arsenal. As government officials were well aware, however, such actions would likely have prompted World War III.