Teaching history from
DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

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7th Grade Lesson Plan on
The Korean War

Georgia Social Studies Standards

SS7H3 Analyze continuity and change in Southern and Eastern Asia.
e. Explain the reasons for foreign involvement in Korea and Vietnam in terms of containment of communism.

The origins of the Korean War trace back to the early twentieth century, when **Japan colonized Korea (1910–1945)**. During Japanese rule, many Koreans fought for independence but differed over what kind of nation should emerge after liberation. Some supported a communist government, while others favored a capitalist democracy

When Japan surrendered at the end of World War II in 1945, Korea expected to regain its independence. Instead, the **United States** and the **Soviet Union** divided the peninsula along the 38th parallel as a temporary measure. The Soviet Union occupied the North, while the United States occupied the South. By 1948, two separate governments had been established: communist **North Korea** and capitalist **South Korea**.





Both governments claimed to represent all of Korea and sought reunification under their own political system. Border clashes escalated into full-scale war on **June 25, 1950**, when North Korea invaded South Korea. The **United Nations**, led primarily by the United States, intervened in support of South Korea, while **China** entered the war on behalf of North Korea. After three years of intense fighting, an armistice was signed in 1953 by the United Nations Command, North Korea, and China. South Korea did not sign the agreement, and no formal peace treaty has ever been reached. As a result, Korea remains divided, and the United States maintains a significant military presence in South Korea to this day.



The Korean War began as a conflict over Korea's future after Japanese colonial rule but quickly became a major Cold War confrontation involving the United States, the newly established People's Republic of China, and the Soviet Union.
Different countries remember the war in different ways. In the United States and South Korea, it has often been portrayed as a defense against communist aggression. In North Korea, it is presented as resistance to American invasion, while China describes it as a successful effort to defend its borders and ally.





Historians increasingly emphasize that the war had **multiple causes and shared responsibilities**, challenging simple national narratives. They also highlight the experiences of civilians, including events such as the **No Gun Ri massacre** and the widespread destruction caused by bombing campaigns. Examining these perspectives helps students understand how history is shaped by different viewpoints and why historical events are often more complex than a single national story suggests.



Complete Article and Lesson Plan

Photo Credit:
(Top to Bottom, Left to Right)

1. Korean Peninsula and the Demilitarized Zone, via Encyclopedia Britannica
2. National Archives and Records Administration. 2024. "Korean War Records."National Archives. Last reviewed August 13, 2024.https://www.archives.gov/research/military/korean-war.
3. Xu Ling, "The Chinese people absolutely cannot tolerate the invasion of other countries, and cannot allow Imperialists to wantonly invade its own neighbours without acting," c. 1950, International Institute of Social History
4. Douglas MacArthur and Syngman Rhee at Kimpo Air Force Base, National Archives and Records Administration. NARA FILE#: 111-SC-306875

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History is the context of "**now**", "**why**", and "**how**".

Teach interwoven history.



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