

Teacher Tool 220: The Korean War Program

1 Study Guide

Study Guide for US History 18: History in the First Person: The Korean War Program 1

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HEC-TV Live! Presents
History in the First Person: The Korean War

Original Air Date: April 11, 2013

Grade Levels: 7-12

Program Description:

In July 1953, the Korean War ended. An armistice was signed. A demilitarized zone was created. And one Asian peninsula and its people were divided in half. Sixty years later the Korean peninsula remains divided. Despite some movement toward increased communication and collaboration between North and South Korea over the years, a demilitarized zone still exists. And now a new North Korean leader has ratcheted up the tension on the peninsula yet again.

What was it like to live in post-World War II America? To be faced with the realities of the nuclear age? To worry about the spread of Communism? To have a hard-earned peace so longed for after World War II suddenly be broken five years later when North Korean forces invaded South Korea? Go back to those times as you meet and learn from men and women who lived the answer to those questions and more as they served during the Korean War. Learn what it was like to fight in combat, face the physical and psychological conditions of action on the peninsula, and then return home from the war.

Our focus in this program is not on exploring the historic details of the Korean War, a specific battle in that war, or the current events of rising tension on the Korean peninsula, but our focus is to provide students the rare and important opportunity to learn directly from those who served our country during the Korean War as they offer their perspective on life during those times and offer their reactions to what has been the reality of America's relationship with North and South Korea since that time.

Program Objectives:

1. The participant will gain a greater understanding of what it means to live and fight in wartime.
2. The participant will learn from individuals providing primary source accounts of recent world events.
3. The participant will meet people and hear stories from diverse perspectives.

Program Format:

Time codes are provided in blue to help you find specific segments in the program.

1. Welcome and Introduction—Student groups and experts are introduced and welcomed to the program. The program begins with images of President Truman and a recording of Truman’s announcement to the nation of the decision to send troops to Korea. We then meet Sarah Colvin of the James S. McDonnell USO where we held the program. She shares information and a video showing the work of the USO. Korean War veterans joining us for this program are Walter O’Kaiser and Jack Steinke. Short biographies of Mr. O’Kaiser and Mr. Steinke are included in the KoreaGuests.pdf located on the Program Materials page for this program archive. **(00:00 to 05:16)**

2. Life in America Post World War II—During this segment our guests share what their life was like in America in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s post World War II and prior to America’s entry into the Korean War. In addition to hearing their stories, audience questions are also included in the segment. **(05:17 to 09:25)**

1. America after World War II
2. Living as a young person in late 1940’s America

Audience questions in this segment:

Can you tell us if most of the men going to war then were right out of high school or if they’d gone to technical school or college first?

3. Fighting in the Korean War—During this segment our guests share their experiences serving in the U.S. military during the Korean War. Major events of the war are interwoven as our guests tell their stories. We hear our guests’ reactions to these events as well. Students also see newsreel footage of the war along with maps and other images, including pictures from our guests. **(09:26 to 17:56 for sub points A and B)**

- A. Why they chose to join the military
- B. The beginning of the war and early events in the war (Summer and Fall 1950)

Images and Videos in this segment:

Map showing Korea’s location in the world

Map showing 38th Parallel and major cities on the Korean peninsula

Newsreel footage of the invasion at Inchon

Audience questions in this segment:

How important, and what kind of 1950's technology was used in preparing for the landing at Inchon?

What was the general attitude towards the war from the Americans on the homefront? Did they view communism as a dire threat to the US?

C. Mr. O’Kaiser goes to Korea (spring 1951) **(17:57 to 40:19 for sub points C, D, and E)**

1. His job in the military as an infantryman
2. Traveling to Korea on a transport ship
3. His location in Korea

- D. Events in the war during the Winter of 1950-51 and the spring of 1951
1. General McArthur's desire to go into China
 2. China's entry into the conflict
 3. General McArthur relieved of command and General Ridgway takes over
1. Mr. Steinke goes to Korea (May 1952)
1. His location near Panmunjom
 2. His work as a reconnaissance soldier

Images and Videos in this segment:

Pictures of General McArthur, President Truman, North Korean leader Kim Il-sung, South Korean leader Syngman Rhee

Map of the area showing Korea's relationship to China

Picture of General Matthew Ridgway

Newsreel footage of winter conditions while fighting in Korea

Picture of Mr. Steinke during the war

Image of Korean peninsula showing Panmunjom

Newsreel footage of soldiers in combat

Audience questions in this segment:

How do the problems we have with North Korea today relate to the lack of a decisive victory and a peace treaty after the Korean War?

Why do you think General McArthur jeopardized his position by operating in such a secretive and disobedient manner? Could his or should his actions have been foreseen?

What comforts of home were missed most as you were fighting in Korea?

Did you have news from places outside where you were stationed? Did you hear from home?

Do you think the easier access troops today have to home and news is better or worse for morale than what you experienced?

What advice would you have for young people going into the Armed Forces?

When you were overseas and not taking part in military affairs, what sorts of things did you do for entertainment?

Were there always fresh supplies? Did you ever go hungry?

Do you think China would step in if North Korea fired a missile today?

4. Life After the Korean War—During this segment our guests share what it was like to come back to the United States after the war and live as a civilian in 1950's America and also offer some overview thoughts on their service in the war. Students also see newsreel footage of the time along with artifacts brought by our guests. **(40:20 to 54:56)**

1. The end of the war
2. Returning from the war and reception received
3. Overview of their service
 1. Medals and ribbons received during the war
 2. Overall time spent and ranks achieved

3. Interaction with Korean civilians
4. Life after the war

Images and Videos in this segment:

Newsreel footage of the end of the war, establishing of the cease-fire, and transfer of POWs

Newsreel footage of troops returning from the war

Newsreel footage of civilian life in Korea during the war

Newsreel footage of bomber planes in action

Audience questions in this segment:

What type of welcome did you receive once you got home and what was the first thing you did once you got back on American soil?

What can we do for returning veterans so they don't face the kind of indifference that you faced?

Do you think the movies/newsreels were actually accurate to what happened?

Did you join the VFW when you returned? Should current returning soldiers join?

What was the first thing you did when you got back home?

How long were you in the military?

Were there any women in your units?

Were there any long-term effects you had after going to war?

5. Closing Segment—Final questions from the audience, final comments from our guests, and closing credits. **(54:57 to 58:03)**

Audience questions in this segment:

Did you serve with Chesty Puller during the war?

Program-Related Activity Suggestions:

1. Familiarize your students with basic information about the Korean War. When did it occur? Why did it occur? What type of warfare was involved? Why did America choose to get involved? What were conditions like? How did the war end? A wide variety of web resources are available, and a few are highlighted below if you do not have resources of your own to refer to.

<http://www.history.com/topics/korean-war>--History.com website on the Korean War

http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/index.php--Truman Presidential Museum and Library resources related to the Korean War

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/peoplevents/pandeAMEX58.html>--PBS website on the Korean War

<http://www.koreanwararchives.com/>--Website of the Center for the Study of the Korean War

2. Have students compare their previous understanding of what they thought it would mean to fight in a war with their view of that situation after participating in the program. What surprised them the most? What reinforced what they already believed? What new insights did they gain into the military and wartime experience? Have students share their thoughts in class discussion, journal entries, or written reports.

3. More programs from HEC-TV highlighting veterans and their service to our country can also be found on our Educate.Today website. These programs include interviews with veterans of the conflicts America has been involved in from World War II to the present. Encourage your students to view any of these programs to learn more about what it means to serve in our nation's military and to learn more about the specific conflicts the veterans were involved in. To find the videos, just type in the word "Military" in the keyword line on our website homepage, <http://educate.today>.

4. Have students research to see if there are any Korean War veterans in their own area and see if they can locate a guest speaker to come to your class and share their story. Consider sharing segments from the archived program with the guest speaker to get their reaction to similar events shared by the guests in the program or newsreel footage included in the program.

Supplemental Resources:

More information about the Korean War can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.history.com/topics/korean-war>--History.com website on the Korean War

http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/index.php--Truman Presidential Museum and Library resources related to the Korean War

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/peoplevents/pandeAMEX58.html>--PBS website on the Korean War

<http://www.koreanwararchives.com/>--Website of the Center for the Study of the Korean War

Featured National Standards (History):

Grades 5-12:

Historical Thinking Standards

2. Historical Comprehension

B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.

C. Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.

F. Appreciate historical perspectives--(a) describing the past on its own terms, through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, artifacts, and the like; (b) considering the historical context in which the event unfolded--the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place; and (c) avoiding “present-mindedness,” judging the past solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

4. Historical Research Capabilities

A. Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

B. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and the like; documentary films, oral testimony from living witnesses, censuses, tax records, city directories, statistical compilations, and economic indicators.

5. Historical Issues—Analysis and Decision-Making

A. Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.