# Lesson 1: Korean War Background

## Overview
This lesson utilized the articles found at [www.kwvdm.org](http://www.kwvdm.org) to introduce students to the politics leading up to the Korean War.

## Teacher Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Students will be able to explain why the United States became involved in the war in Korea. Identify on a world map foreign countries associated with the Korean War. Identify key terms and individuals associated with the Korean War. Interpret primary sources using <a href="http://www.kwvdm.org">www.kwvdm.org</a>.</th>
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</table>

### Information/Activating Prior Knowledge

Pre-teaching activity: Teacher will ask students to brainstorm the prior knowledge vocab terms. Teacher will write these on board. Vocabulary to activate prior knowledge—out loud (World War II, Allied Countries, Enemy Countries).

### Activity 1

1. Teacher will give guided reading to students with important concepts highlighted.
2. Vocabulary is at the end of reading. Teachers will review and discuss vocabulary upon completion.
3. Teacher will give students a blank map of Korea for completion. Directions will be provided.

### Activity 2

1. Intro activity: Teacher will show the video clip describing the 38th parallel.
2. Teachers will direct students to [www.kwvdm.org](http://www.kwvdm.org) with links to 4 artifacts. Teachers will demonstrate expectations of assignment using a 5th artifact as an example. Students will work in pairs.

### Summary

Teacher will ask students to come back together as a whole class and share their artifact summaries.

### Extension

Teacher can show a video clip of an oral history (brief) using [www.kwvdm.org](http://www.kwvdm.org). This demonstrates the commitment of veterans. Students can write a short letter to a Veteran (no name needed); only Sir or Madam for their service and sacrifice for our country.

## Materials

- History of the Korean War Textbook
- Map/Directions
- Internet access for website
- Artifact worksheet
- Colored Pencils

## Resources

- [www.kwvdm.org](http://www.kwvdm.org)
- [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

## Notes

There are more tips and links at the bottom of the lesson plan page ([www.kwdhproject.org](http://www.kwdhproject.org)).
A History of the Korean War
On this page you will find a brief overview of the Korean War.

What We Already Know: Define terms together – World War II, Allied Countries, and Enemy Countries

Background Times were prosperous after World War II, yet there was a lingering hint of fear in the air. Many people believed the United States was filled with 1) communists. Indeed, some communist spies were discovered here, the 2) Rosenberg case being the most infamous example. There was also the question of the 3) atomic bomb. The U.S. discovered it was no longer alone in this area when Russia tested an atomic bomb soon after the war. China was another threat. Before World War II a civil war had broken out in that country with two groups fighting for control. During World War II they joined forces to fight their common enemy, Japan, but once the war ended they went back to fighting each other, with the communists eventually winning.

War Events At the end of World War II, Korea was divided in two at latitude 38 degrees north (also known as the 4) 38th parallel) with the intention of bringing the two together. Promised free elections were never allowed, and in 1950 5) Kim Il Sung, the leader of 6) North Korea, sent his powerful army into 7) South Korea. The 8) United Nations responded quickly, imposing military sanctions. The U.S. and 19 other nations committed troops to this 9) “police action.” Despite initial heavy losses, the combined UN forces finally began to win. Then the situation changed when 10) General Douglas MacArthur, the commander of UN troops in Korea, disobeyed orders to stay in South Korea. Going beyond the 38th parallel into North Korea brought communist China’s well-trained and well-equipped army into the war. When the fighting finally ended in 1953, no one was truly victorious. The 38th parallel dividing line remained intact.

Home Front Back on the home front, the American people worried that communism would take over the United States and dominate the world. 11) Senator Joseph McCarthy spearheaded a communist hunt fueled by these fears throughout the U.S. His television appearances infected the nation with 12) anticommunist hysteria that ruined numerous lives from politicians to actors and writers.

Assignment: Define the 12 vocab terms below using your textbook or other source.

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Map Activity

Go to this website to complete your map activity: [http://kwvdm.org/detail_artifact.php?no=1687](http://kwvdm.org/detail_artifact.php?no=1687)

Using your map, label the following important areas below. Use this link to access your map.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Cities</th>
<th>Large Cities</th>
<th>Important Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Inchon (South Korea)</td>
<td>Line of Demarcation (38th parallel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Pusan (South Korea)</td>
<td>Yellow Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wonsan (North Korea)</td>
<td>Korean Bay</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kaesong (North Korea)</td>
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Artifact and Summary Questions

Using the website www.kwvdm.org, click on the following links below and follow the directions for each artifact. You may work in pairs.

1) http://kwvdm.org/detail_artifact.php?no=26

Describe the picture __________________________________________________________.

Why do you think soldiers were on the front line Christmas Day? ____________________________

What is the meaning to you, the viewer, of this artifact? ____________________________

2) http://kwvdm.org/detail_artifact.php?no=35

Describe the picture __________________________________________________________.

Why do you think the children were at the garbage dump? ____________________________

What is the meaning to you, the viewer, of this artifact? ____________________________

3) http://kwvdm.org/detail_artifact.php?no=786

Describe the picture __________________________________________________________.

Why do you think this sign exists for all to see at that time? ____________________________

What is the meaning to you, the viewer, of this artifact? ____________________________

4) http://kwvdm.org/detail_artifact.php?no=622

What are the bold words in the article? ____________________________

What does the man NOT want the reader to forget? ____________________________

What is the meaning to you, the viewer, of this artifact? ____________________________