

# UCF Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials



**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration



**Department  
of History**



Lesson Title	Understanding the Korean War
Grade(s)	10-12
Time (Minutes/ Days)	100 minutes/2 days-4-5 days prior to this lesson, ask students to save a cereal box for day 2 activity

## Lesson Overview

Day 1 of the lesson will involve notetaking and labeling an outline map of Korea. Day 2 will be the creation of a cereal box “domino” that represents the domino theory regarding the Korean War.

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The Korean War has been called *The Forgotten War* because it happened due to it being overshadowed by WWII. Most people refer to the TV sitcom M\*A\*S\*H as their point of reference for the Korean War which is not a good depiction and does not provide the background information as to why the United States became involved in a conflict that was thousands of miles away from the United States.

The lesson will provide historical context about the war and why the United States government thought it was necessary to travel so far to protect democracy.

### *Basic Cold War Historical Context Notes*

The Korean War was one of the proxy wars of the Cold War. For the students to fully understand this war, background knowledge of the Cold War is necessary.

Explain to the students that after World War II, there were increased tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union that were exacerbated by their ideological differences (namely the Communism vs. Democracy fight.) It's called the “Cold War” because there was never actually any direct fighting between the US and the USSR; instead, the war was fought through “proxy wars” in parts of South America, Asia, and Africa. Proxy wars were fought between smaller countries that were backed by the superpowers of the US and USSR.

There was increasing fear amongst the democratic powers of the “Domino Theory” which was the idea that if one country fell to

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communism, neighboring countries would follow, thus causing a chain reaction like dominoes leading to a feared communist takeover.

## *Korean War-Specific Historical Context Notes*

The US and the USSR decided to divide Korea along the 38th parallel. The Soviets wanted to preserve communism in the peninsula while the Americans wanted to maintain democracy. On June 25, 1950, North Korea attacked South Korea. The North Koreans wanted to unify Korea under the communist North Korean government.

The US officially entered the war on June 27, 1950. The American government sought to stop the spread of Communism into the southern part of the peninsula. There was a concern that China and the Soviets were encouraging the aggression of North Korea. The US was not the only country to help South Korea. The United Nations voted to help them as well, and several countries assisted them. However; the US provided the most help, and President Truman sent air, ground, and naval forces to assist.

In October 1950, the UN approved the movement of the UN forces to cross the border of the 38th parallel in hopes of uniting the country under a non-communist government. As the UN's forces approached Manchuria, the Chinese joined the war, and went on the offensive, launching a full-scale attack in late November and pushing the forces back south of the 38th parallel. By early 1951, the US and UN forces pushed the fighting back to the 38th parallel. Starting in July 1951, both sides faced a stalemate. On July 27, 1953, President Eisenhower signed an armistice ending the fighting and keeping Korea divided along the 38th parallel, where it is still split today.

## Essential Questions

1. Where in the world is the Korean peninsula?
2. Why did the United States get involved in Korea?
3. Who were the major world leaders in the world in 1950?
4. What is the Domino Theory and how is it significant to the Korean War?

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## Florida State Standards

- **SS.912.W.8.2:** Describe characteristics of the early Cold War.
- **SS.912.W.8.4:** Summarize the causes and effects of the arms race and proxy wars in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.
- **SS.912.A.6.10:** Examine causes, course, and consequences of the early years of the Cold War (Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, NATO, Warsaw Pact).
- **SS.912.A.6.12:** Examine causes, course, and consequences of the Korean War.
- **SS.912.A.6.15:** Examine key events and peoples in Florida history as they relate to United States history.
- **SS.912.A.1.2** Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.

## Required Materials

- Computer
- Paper
- Markers
- [UCF VLP Korea Mini-Themed Tour of SANC](#)
- Cereal box (these will be your dominos so try to keep the size uniform if possible)
- Cereal Box Instructions (See Below)
- Outline Map of the Korean Peninsula (See Below)

## Learning Objectives

### *Key Terms Students Need to Know*

- Cold War
- Proxy War
- Communism
- Democracy
- 38th Parallel
- Domino Theory
- Containment

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1. Students will be able to locate Korea on a map and identify capital cities, the 38th parallel, and major boundary countries.
2. Students will be able to describe and explain the events leading to the Korean War and how it relates to the Cold War.
3. Students will be able to analyze and explain how the role of the Domino Theory resulted in the involvement of the United States in the Korean War.

## Procedure

### Day 1: (50 minutes)

1. The Teacher will share a brief PowerPoint presentation with historical context for the Korean War which will include the key terms that students will need to know at the end of the lesson. There will also be slides that include the geography, topography, and climate in North and South Korea. Students will take notes in the preferred format of the teacher. The teacher will show the UCF VLP slideshow about the Korean War and provide the link to the students for their research. Students will use these notes on Day 2 when they create their "domino."
  - a. [UCF VLP Korea Mini-Themed Tour of SANC](#)
  - b. Use slides 4-12 for the historical context and geography of Korea
2. Following the PowerPoint presentation, students will each receive a blank outline map of the Korean peninsula.
3. Students will be allowed to use digital resources to label their maps.
4. Students will be given markers and are expected to label:
  - a. North Korea
  - b. South Korea
  - c. 38th parallel
  - d. Capital cities of North and South Korea
  - e. Mountain ranges
  - f. Major bodies of water including rivers and seas (Amnok aka Yalu, Tuman, Taedong, Nakdong, Yellow Sea, Sea of Japan)

\*Students will need to save their maps for day 2. The teacher should collect the maps for safekeeping and redistribute them on day 2 of the

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lesson.

## Day 2

1. Include a bell ringer that will help to recap the previous day's lesson.
  - a. You could use a quick journal entry such as, "Why did the United States get involved in a war that was so far away on a different continent?"
2. Ask for 3-4 students to share their responses to the bell ringer question.
3. As a quick review, have students return to their notes from the previous day and tell them to underline key places, draw a box around key terms, and put question marks where they need more information. (5 minutes)
4. The culminating project is going to be the creation of a "domino" that represents the domino theory. The domino will be created using a cereal box.

### Korean War Domino Theory Project

You will create a cereal box that summarizes the Korean War including geography, world leaders, key terms, and types of government involved.

1. Using your class notes about the Korean War and the UCF Veterans Legacy Program website, you will identify key elements of the war, who was involved, and what was at stake.
2. You will create a cereal box that will serve as your domino representing the Domino Theory which is the rationale for why the United States got involved in the war.
  - a. Front – Use your map of Korea from day 1 of this lesson and attach it to the front of your box
  - b. Side 1 – ingredients – "Defending Democracy" – Identify and explain the major types of government and their leaders involved in the Korean War. Research the governments of China, the USSR, the United States, and North and South Korea.
  - c. Side 2 – Facts and History about the Korean War
  - d. Back – Korean War Veteran Highlight plus one fun game, puzzle, more history, etc.
    - i. Choose a Veteran who fought in Korea using the [UCF VLP Korea Mini-Themed Tour of SANC](#) and summarize their

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story and involvement

- e. Describe a “prize” that could be in your cereal related to the Korean War and include it in your artwork on the box

## Optional Activities:

1. You may choose to have students present their projects to the class.
2. To demonstrate the Domino Theory, take your class to an open space (cafeteria, outdoor shelter, school sidewalk). Have them line up their domino boxes in a line. Give them a quick review of the Domino Theory and then push the first domino and watch the reaction of all of the dominoes falling. Wrap up the activity by explaining that the fear was that each box they created would represent a small, independent country that could fall to communism causing the loss of their individual choices and freedom.

Grading will be based on the following: (100 points)

Clear labeling and identification of the map of Korea – 15 points

Design Layout (colors, images) – 15 points

Inclusion of types of governments and their leaders during the war (ingredients) – 20 points

Accuracy – 50 points

Prize/Reward – creative, relevant (extra credit)

\*\*Please keep your artwork school-appropriate



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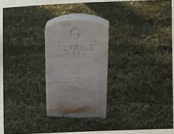


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## Teacher Sample

### Back of Domino-Veteran Highlight



Korean War Veteran Highlight  
Clark Rake  
9/26/1924 - 9/29/1952

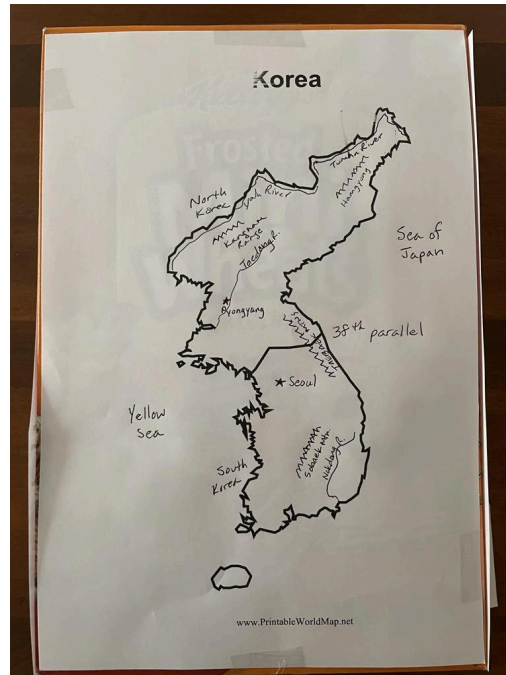
Clark Rake was born in St. Augustine, FL and he had 5 siblings. His father was a clam digger and his mother stayed home to raise her family. Rake enlisted in the US Army during World War II and then served in the Korean War as part of the Armor, Cavalry. He served in the Tanks of Dog Company of the 6<sup>th</sup> Medium Tank Battalion. He survived the "Massacre Valley" in Korea which resulted in the loss of life to many soldiers. He died from a brain injury suffered in a traffic accident. He is buried in the St. Augustine National Cemetery.

Activity

Name the 6 Korean War Veterans buried in the St. Augustine National Cemetery

1. Clark Rake	4. Bazzle Rice
2. Theodore Wengert	5. William Cooper
3. Leonard Boltch	6. Adolph Guidi

### Front of Domino-Korea Map



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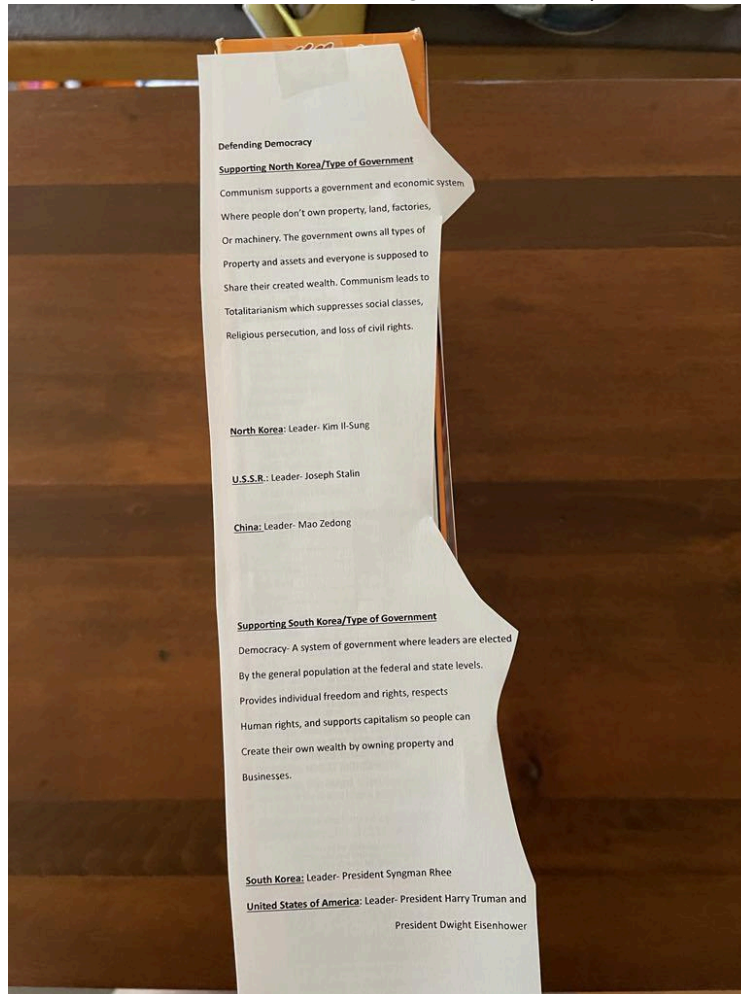
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## Side 1- Defending Democracy





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## Side 2: Facts about the Korean War

**Korean War Facts**

**Major Players:**

Communism Supporters:

China  
U.S.S.R.  
North Korea

Democracy Supporters:

United States of America  
South Korea

**Dates**

1950-1953

**Reason for U.S. Involvement**

The US became involved with this Conflict to defend democracy in The world. The fear was that if North Korea successfully invaded South Korea and changed their Government to communism, that Many other smaller countries would Also fall to communism through The support of China and the USSR. The US referred to this as the Domino Theory.

**Firsts**

- \*Fully integrated military from the US for The first time in our history
- \*First for jet fighters in combat
- \*First war with land, sea, and air being Fully supported
- \*First time helicopters were used for medical evacuations

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## Bibliography for Further Reading/Teacher/Student Use

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## Korean War Domino Theory Cereal Box Instructions

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### Grading Criteria - Rubric (100 Points)

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