

**U.S. Textbook Account of the Korean War**

**Gist (summary of what happened)**

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Once controlled by Japan, Korea had been divided into two independent countries by the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II. The dividing line was set at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel of latitude. In North Korea, the Soviets installed a communist government and equipped its armed forces. The United States provided smaller amounts of aid to non-communist South Korea....

On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces attacked across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The 90,000 North Korean troops were armed with powerful tanks and other Soviet weapons. Within days, the northerners overtook the South Korean capital city of Seoul and set out after the retreating South Korean army.

President Truman remembered how the policy of appeasement [giving in to one's enemy in order to keep the peace] had failed to check the German aggression that sparked World War II. Determined that history would not repeat itself, he announced that the United States would aid South Korea.

*Source: United States History (2008), Prentice Hall, page 855.*

**History talk (analysis: what is the significance?)**

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What kinds of questions or comments about history did you include in your history talk annotations?

Cause and Effect ☐ Turning Points ☐ Using the Past ☐  
Change and Continuity ☐ Through Their Eyes ☐

## **Korean Textbook A**

Upset by the fast and astonishing growth of the power of the Republic, the American invaders hastened [rushed] the preparation of an aggressive war in order to destroy it in its infancy....The American imperialists furiously carried out the war project in 1950....The American invaders who had been preparing the war for a long time, alongside their puppets, finally initiated the war on June 25th of the 39th year of the Juche calendar. That dawn, the enemies unexpectedly attacked the North half of the Republic, and the war clouds hung over the once peaceful country, accompanied by the echoing roar of cannons.

Having passed the 38th parallel, the enemies crawled deeper and deeper into the North half of the Republic...the invading forces of the enemies had to be eliminated and the threatened fate of our country and our people had to be saved.

## **Korean Textbook B**

When the overthrow of the South Korean government through social confusion became too difficult, the North Korean communists switched to a stick-and-carrot strategy: seeming to offer peaceful negotiations, they were instead analyzing the right moment of attack and preparing themselves for it.

The North Korean communists prepared themselves for war. Kim Il-sung secretly visited the Soviet Union and was promised the alliance of the Soviets and China in case of war. Finally, at dawn on June 25th, 1950 the North began their southward aggression along the 38th parallel. Taken by surprise at these unexpected attacks, the army of the Republic of Korea [South Korea] fought courageously to defend the liberty of the country.... The armed provocation of the North Korean communists brought the UN Security Council around the table. A decree [declaration] denounced the North Korean military action as illegal and as a threat to peace, and a decision was made to help the South. The UN army constituted the armies of 16 countries—among them, the United States, Great Britain and France—joined the South Korean forces in the battle against the North.