

The Korean War, 1950-53


Should the USA get involved in Korea?

Background and Significance

The Korean War was **significant** for three main reasons:

- (a) It was the first "Hot" spot of the "Cold" War (in other words, the first real military confrontation).
- (b) It was the first real test for the new United Nations.
- (c) It was the first time that the Cold War had spread outside of Europe.

Task 1: Complete this timeline using the notes you made in the interactive newsfeed activity at www.activehistory.co.uk.

	1945	
	1947	
	1948	
	1949	
	1950	
	1950	

There were several reasons why President Truman decided to call for military action against North Korea.

- His "**Truman Doctrine**" had promised help to free peoples resisting communism. If he failed to act, he would look weak.
- His "**Domino Theory**" argued that failing to stand up to aggression would lead to other countries falling to communism.
- Politically, Senator **Joseph McCarthy** was criticising him for being "soft on communism" (e.g. handling of the Berlin Airlift)
- Militarily, his top General, **Douglas MacArthur** assured him that victory over the communists was likely.

Task 2. List three reasons why Truman's decision to take military action could be seen as a BAD idea.





a. Politically,...

b. Militarily,...

c. Economically,...

d. Socially,...

Task 3: Jot down a few key points about each of the following men.

Americans		Koreans	
			
Douglas MacArthur	Harry Truman	Syngman Rhee	Kim Il Sung