

## Failures in the Korean War: A DBQ

<b>About:</b>	This DBQ focuses on some of the things that went wrong with the Korean War. It should be used after students have some background knowledge on the Korean War.
<b>Grade:</b>	6th,7th and 8th grade
<b>Classroom Time:</b>	45 minutes (analyzing documents) or 90 minutes (documents & formal essay)
<b>Instructional Resources:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Digital access or printed copies of the 5 primary source documents</li> <li>● Digital access or printed copies of the DBQ rubric</li> <li>● Digital access or printed copies of graphic organizer and rubric</li> </ul>
<b>Background:</b>	Students will need a basic background on the Korean War. PBS provides a short comprehensive overview that is easy for middle schoolers to understand. <a href="https://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/uncategorized/north-korea-and-the-korean-war-1945-1949-background/1347/">https://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/uncategorized/north-korea-and-the-korean-war-1945-1949-background/1347/</a>
<b>Objectives:</b>	Students will analyze and interpret documents. Students will be able to gather evidence to support their analysis and interpretation of events and situations that happened during the Korean War.
<b>Standards:</b>	<p><b>8.1.5.11.1</b> International political and economic institutions influence world affairs and United States foreign policy.</p> <p><b>8.3.3.7.1</b> The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of the earth's cultures influence human systems (social, economic, and political systems).</p> <p><b>7.4.4.22.1:</b> Post-World War II the United States was shaped by an economic boom, Cold War military engagements, politics and protests, and rights movements to improve the status of racial minorities, women, and America's indigenous peoples. (Post-World War II United States: 1945- 1989)</p>
<b>Lesson:</b>	Students will begin by analyzing the 5 documents (individually, in small groups or as a whole class). It may be beneficial for the instructor to model analyzing the source. Students should start by looking at the source and possibly writing down their initial thoughts, connections to the text, connections to other documents, connections to the world, and connections to themselves. Once the students have analyzed the documents they should answer the questions provided below each document. If your students could use a movement break, it may be helpful to print out a few sets of the documents and hang them around the room/hallway and allow students to get up and walk around while

	<p>looking at the documents.</p> <p>After the students have analyzed the documents, they can work in small groups to discuss the documents OR they can begin to work on their outline of the DBQ. Students could do this independently or in a small group.</p> <p>Once the outline of the DBQ is completed, students may conference with a peer or instructor to solidify their main points. Then students should complete their rough draft of their paragraph/essay, making any necessary edits, and then complete their final draft.</p>
<b>Assessment:</b>	<p>Students can be assessed by their answers on each document's questions, via the in-class/group discussion or if the students are writing the formal essay there is a one-point DBQ rubric (below).</p>
<b>Extension:</b>	<p>Students can find a document, image, video, etc that would add information or interest to the DBQ.</p>
<b>Modifications:</b>	<p>Modifications should happen on a student-to-student basis.</p> <p>Option 1: Students analyze the documents and do not write the accompanying paragraph/essay</p> <p>Option 2: Students use the “jigsaw” method by looking at just one of the five documents and then taking what they learned and sharing it with their classmates who looked at the other four documents. Within a small group, each of the students would have looked at a different document and can share what they have analyzed with the others.</p> <p>Option 3: Using the reader’s apprenticeship “Think Aloud” method, the instructor and students take turns explaining their thoughts on the different documents as they analyze them.</p>

**Document 1: Faulty Intelligence**

General MacArthur understood that if you “control intelligence, you control decision making.”

He had built an intelligence community in his area of command that listened attentively to what he wanted and gave him intelligence that reinforced his already held views. MacArthur wanted total control of the war and its execution. If his Tokyo command headquarters were solely responsible for collecting and assessing intelligence on the enemy, then MacArthur alone could decide how big the enemy threat was and thus what to do about it.

MacArthur's authority put America's relatively new civilian intelligence agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, in an awkward position. It was not permitted to have a representative in Tokyo or participate in preparing intelligence estimates for the Eighth Army. During World War II, MacArthur had done the same thing, excluding the CIA's predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). MacArthur, who never spent a single night during the war in Korea, preferring to sleep in his headquarters in Japan, wanted no outside intelligence challenger. As one historian of the war wrote later, "Only after the great and catastrophic failure on the whereabouts and intentions of China's armies would the CIA finally be allowed into the region."

MacArthur's intelligence chief, or G2, was General Charles Willoughby, who had been with his commander since serving in the Philippines in 1939, before World War II. A self-styled admirer of the general, Willoughby later wrote an adoring biography of MacArthur that was more than a thousand pages long.

In June 1950 Willoughby assured MacArthur that North Korea would not invade the South, despite alarms raised by then-CIA director Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter. In the fall of that year Willoughby's office refused to believe or confirm reports that thousands of CCF troops were in North Korea. Even when Chinese prisoners were captured, Willoughby dismissed them as a few experts or advisers, not as a group of soldiers. The G2 in Tokyo recognized that some Chinese divisions had entered the North, but argued that they were not full-strength combat units. Willoughby "doctored the intelligence in order to permit MacArthur's forces to go where they wanted to go militarily, to the banks of the Yalu," with no contrary or dissenting voices heard in Tokyo or Washington. The Tokyo estimate of the number of CCF forces in Korea was less than one-tenth the reality.

1. Why was MacArthur hesitant to use the CIA?
2. If MacArthur had listened to the CIA's intelligence, what could have happened?

Riedel, Bruce. "Catastrophe on the Yalu: America's Intelligence Failure in Korea." *Brookings*, Brookings, 13 Sept. 2017, [www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/09/13/catastrophe-on-the-yalu-americas-intelligence-failure-in-korea/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/09/13/catastrophe-on-the-yalu-americas-intelligence-failure-in-korea/).

#### Document 2:

On 15 September, US Marines rushed ashore, captured the west coast city of Inchon, and began driving North Korean forces north toward their country. This strategic success was a clear signal that the invasion from

the North had not only failed, but also that the North Korean forces could be destroyed by the US-led UN force. Two days later, a high-ranking Chinese delegation of intelligence and logistics officers arrived in North Korea to evaluate the military situation and prepare the battlefield for Chinese military action.

By late September, China had sent numerous diplomatic signals expressing its concern regarding a US occupation of North Korea. The Acting PLA chief of staff told the Indian Ambassador in Peking that China would never allow US forces to reach Chinese territory. The Indian Foreign Minister conveyed this message to the US Ambassador in New Delhi; in Washington, the British Ambassador passed the same message to the State Department. These private notices were matched by a 22 September public announcement in which the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman issued the statement “We clearly reaffirm that we will always stand on the side of the Korean people...and resolutely oppose the criminal acts of American imperialist aggression against Korea and their intrigues for expanding the war.” Also during this period, communications intercepts continued to identify massive PLA troop movements from southern and central China into the Sino-Korean border areas.

1. Why was China concerned about the US occupation of North Korea?
2. What decisions could have been made to make the negotiations smoother/faster?

Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, *In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1955), pp. 108-9. [Two Strategic Intelligence Mistakes in Korea, 1950](#)

### Document 3: The Firing of General MacArthur



In 1945, the scars of World War II across the world were still fresh. The fear of having to engage in another world war was very real. A mere two years after the end of WWII, the Cold War began. The United Nations, which was formed to provide a forum to prevent future wars, included membership of the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and 57 other countries. The US adopted a firm stance to contain the spread of communism, which was being aggressively promoted by the USSR.

The Korean War began when the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea. Adhering to its policy of containment, the United States could not ignore the threat of communism in Asia, but neither the president nor the public wanted a long, drawn-out war. President Truman hand-selected General Douglas MacArthur to lead the U.S. troops in South Korea. MacArthur arrived at his post a World War II hero, having successfully led multiple troops through the war. Following his victories in WWII, he had become the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan. MacArthur was revered and highly praised in the United States.

The general assured the president that the Korean War would be short-lived and that the American troops would be home by Christmas. MacArthur was initially successful in driving back the North Korean forces over the 38th parallel. He made a controversial move, however, when he continued to push the North Koreans further north and suggested bombing cities in China that were thought to be aiding the North Korean troops. In pushing for a larger conflict, MacArthur downplayed the risk of inciting a massive war in Asia.

President Truman's main concern was saving as many lives as possible, even if that meant signing a ceasefire along the 38th parallel. General MacArthur did not think a ceasefire was an appropriate solution. The two men clashed. For Truman, the war represented an opportunity to stop the spread of communism into South Korea. For MacArthur, the war was an opportunity to liberate the North from communist control, and aggressive action was required.

MacArthur thwarted Truman's attempt to negotiate a ceasefire when the general ordered his troops to invade North Korea and push the NKPA up past the 38th parallel. This was not the first time the general had ignored direct orders from his Commander in Chief. On April 11, 1951, President Truman officially relieved Douglas MacArthur of his command. Word of his firing spread quickly, and the American public found the news upsetting. Truman felt that his decision was just because MacArthur had overstepped his authority, defied direct orders from his superior and interfered with Truman's hope of ending the Korean War quickly.

1. Why was General MacArthur fired?
2. What happened between General MacArthur and President Truman?

“The Firing of MacArthur.” *The Firing of MacArthur | Harry S. Truman*,  
[www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/firing-macarthur](http://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/firing-macarthur).

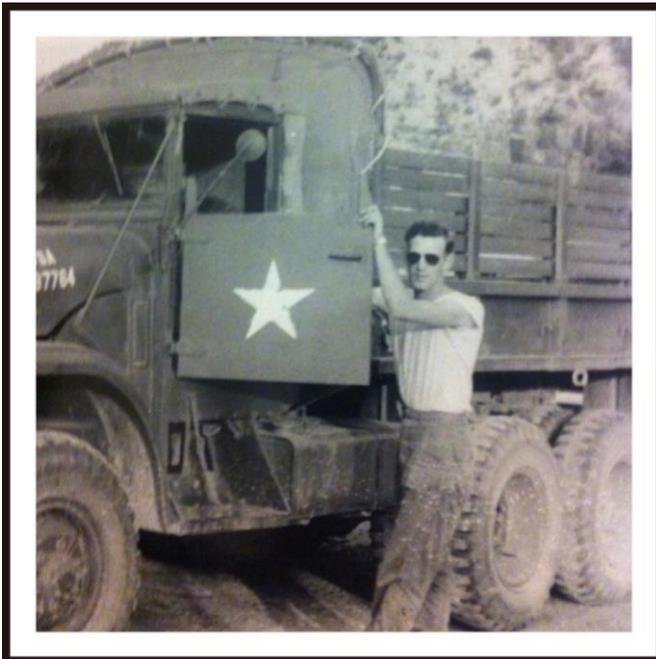
Document 4: Delay and Deadlock: The POW Issue

After mid-1951, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) felt like an armistice would help bolster its international and domestic prestige, but Mao was not prepared to sign an agreement which he felt took advantage of his government’s willingness to negotiate. In a message to Stalin on November 14th, 1951, Mao concluded that the war would be over by the end of the year. Negotiations dragged on for over a year and a half. Why? One reason was that both sides employed military officials as negotiators, soldiers who were more used to ordering others into battle than negotiating peaceful solutions to major conflicts. ANother was that the US negotiating position began to harden and American policy toward the PRC became more aggressive. The American negotiating position was also subject to external pressures which limited the possibilities of making concessions to the communtst stride. In late 1951 and 1952, Senator Robert Taft criticized the Truman Administration for disregarding General MacArthur’s recommendations to bomb airfields in Manchuria.

1. Why did negotiations to end the war take so long?
2. If negotiations had been smoother, what could have happened?

Lee, Steven Hugh. *The Korean War*. Longman, 2001.

Document 5:



LeRoy “Mickey” Bosak was a small-town kid from Wisconsin who served in the Army as a

truck driver during the Korean War. Mickey was in charge of leading a convoy of trucks from Point A to Point B, but he had to make the trip in a specific amount of time. Mickey led the convoy a few times without incident, but on his fifth trip he was pulled over by the military police who said he was driving recklessly by speeding and putting the entire convoy at risk by forcing them to drive so fast. Mickey tried to explain that they were on a tight timeline, but his argument fell on deaf ears. Mickey continued to lead the convoy to the camp, but was scolded for being late when the convoy arrived at their destination. On the next trip the same thing happened, but when Mickey and the convoy arrived at their destination, Mickey was demoted. The next time the convoy was set to leave Mickey was put in charge again and once again he was reprimanded on the way for going too fast and was demoted upon arrival. This happened time and time again (15 times are recorded on his service record). Mickey left the Army at the end of the war, but his need for speed stayed with him. Mickey rode motorcycles until he was 85 years old, and continued to get pulled over by the police for going too fast.

1. Why was Mickey demoted?
2. What does this story tell you about a soldier's experience in the Korean War?

Personal Photograph and Story transcribed by LeRoy's Granddaughter Kathryn Rotunda

**DBQ Outline:**

Hook:	
Thesis:	
Main point using document	
Support using document	
Support using document	
Pull it all together in the Conclusion (can include your opinion).	

**DBQ One Point Rubric:**

Failures of the Korean War DBQ Rubric		
Areas for Improvement	Criteria	Evidence of Standard

	Used 2-3 documents to explain their thesis on how these failures impacted the Korean War	
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### Works Cited

"The Firing of MacArthur." *The Firing of MacArthur | Harry S. Truman*, [www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/firing-macarthur](http://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/firing-macarthur).

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