**Aim:**

**Topic: The Korean War (1950-1953)**

**Document #1 – Start of the Korean War**

After Korea was liberated from World War II, it was split into two countries along the 38th parallel line of latitude. The northern country known as **The Democratic People’s republic of Korea (or North Korea)** was under the influence of the Soviet Union and became a communist dictatorship. The Southern country known as **The Republic of Korea (or South Korea)** was under the influence of America. On June 25, 1950, encouraged and heavily supplied (both in weapons and money) by the Soviet Union and Communist China, North Korea invaded the South to try to conquer and unite both countries. The newly created United Nations led by United States generals and mostly United States soldiers quickly came to the aid of South Korea. This became the first **proxy (third-party) war** of the Cold War.

*"In my generation, this was not the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak….Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall, Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores.” –*

* *President Harry S. Truman*

**1) How was the peninsula of Korea divided? Why was it divided as such?**

**2) What does the quote by President Harry S. Truman mean?**

**3) Why was the Korean War known as a “proxy war” of the Cold War?**

**4) Do you agree or disagree with America sending soldiers to Korea? Explain.**

**Document #2 – Escalation and controversy**

With the help of Chinese supplies, North Korea quickly overpowered South Korea and U.S. and U.N. forces to the bottom of the Peninsula. However, General Douglas MacArthur created a brilliant plan launching an amphibious assault (landing men from the sea) at the North Korean city of Inchon behind the North Korean army, and turned the tide of the war. The U.S., U.N. and South Korean forces soon began pushing the North Korean army all the way up to the border of China and the Yangtze River. The first controversy came when General MacArthur wanted to invade China and strike first. However, President Truman said the objectives of the war were just to save South Korea and he worried that this might start a world war (with Russia possibly entering to help China). The U.S. did not invade China, but instead, China sent 100,00’s of soldiers to help North Korea, and these new soldiers pushed the Allied forces back down to around the 38th parallel. The second controversy came when General Douglas MacArthur wanted President Truman to use the atomic bomb on China to stop China and win the war. When Truman refused, MacArthur went public with his demands and began insulting Truman. Truman then fired MacArthur. The war turned into trench warfare along the 38th parallel and came to a draw.

**1) Do you think that the United States should have invaded China? Why? Why not?**

**2) Do you think the United States should have used the atomic bomb on China? Why/why not?**

**Document #3 – Controversy of a “Limited War”**

 One of the great controversies that came from the Korean War was this new idea of “limited war.” America did not enter the war to defeat North Korea, but instead to achieve a **limited goal** – just to preserve the 38th parallel and to stop North Korea. This was called a **Limited War** – not fighting the war to completely defeat the enemy, but to only fight the war to a certain point (or limit) – to fight to achieve certain goals. General MacArthur disagreed with this philosophy of war stating, “It is fatal to enter any war without the will to win it.” However, this became the policy of America, and would be used again in future wars.

**1) What is a “limited war”?**

**2) Why was the Korean War considered a “limited war?”**

**3) Do you agree or disagree with the concept of “limited war?” Why/why not?**

**4) Should the Korean War be seen as a win, loss or tie for America?**