

The Impact of the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952
(Korean GI Bill)

AUTHOR INFORMATION

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Grade Span: Secondary (9-12)

Targeted Grade Level/Course: American Studies II (1890 to the Present); 11th grade

Estimated Time to Complete Lesson: 45 minutes

FOCUSED QUESTION

How did the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 (Korean GI Bill) impact the Korean War veterans and American society as a whole?

SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

National Standards

Postwar United States (1945 to Early 1970s)

Standard 1: The economic boom and social transformation of the postwar United States.

- **Standard 1A:** The student understands how the social changes of the postwar period affected various Americans.
 - Evaluate the effects of the GI Bill on American society.
 - Examine the rapid growth of secondary and collegiate education and the role of new governmental spending on educational programs.

Maryland State Curriculum

- AS2.30.05** Evaluate the impact of United States containment policies in Asia.
- **AS2.30.05.d** Assess the political consequences of the Korean War.

- AS2.30.07** Evaluate the economic conditions of the United States in the 1950s.
- **AS2.30.07.c** Discuss the economic impact of the GI Bill of Rights.

STUDENT OUTCOMES & LESSON TARGETS

Students will examine primary sources, in the form of veteran testimony, to understand how individuals were impacted by the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 (Korean GI Bill).

Students should be able to understand the impact of the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 (Korean GI Bill) on Korean War veterans and American society as a whole.

LESSON OVERVIEW

The main focus of this lesson is the Korean GI Bill and its effect on Korean War veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides a brief description of the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 in the "VA History in Brief" (page 16):

"The Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952, called the Korean GI Bill, provided unemployment insurance, job placement, home loans and mustering-out benefits similar to those offered World War II veterans. The Korean GI Bill made several changes, however, in education benefits, reducing financial benefits generally and imposing new restrictions. In contrast to the 48 months of education allowed by the 1944 law, the Korean GI Bill permitted a maximum of 36 months. The Korean GI Bill also did not provide tuition payments to the colleges. Instead, veterans were paid subsistence checks, which were also to cover their college expenses. The effect of the changes was that the benefit no longer completely covered the cost of the veteran's education."

Teachers may access this resource at:

https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/archives/docs/history_in_brief.pdf

1. Teachers will provide background information on the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952. Students should already have some familiarity with earlier efforts to provide benefits to American veterans, including the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. This background information could be presented as a reading or a short, pre-recorded lecture. Teachers can find more information at: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/history.asp> and <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Features/story/Article/1727086/75-years-of-the-gi-bill-how-transformative-its-been/>.

2. Following the introduction, teachers will direct students to veteran interviews published on the Korean War Legacy Foundation's website in which veterans explain how their lives were impacted by the GI Bill. Students should select three of the following interview segments to watch:

- **Jerry Kaspen:** <https://koreanwarlegacy.org/interviews/jerry-kaspen/#clip-how-the-war-changed-his-life> (1:17:36 - 1:19:38)
- **George Carson:** <https://koreanwarlegacy.org/interviews/george-carson/#clip-a-degree-after-war> (11:49 - 12:47)
- **John Jefferies:** <https://koreanwarlegacy.org/interviews/john-jefferies/#clip-g-i-bill-benefits> (28:43 - 33:00)
- **Paul Spohn:** <https://koreanwarlegacy.org/interviews/paul-spohn/#clip-living-well-on-the-g-i-bill> (25:45 - 28:08)
- **Robert Greitz:** <https://koreanwarlegacy.org/interviews/robert-greitz/#clip-benefits-of-the-g-i-bill> (8:15 - 10:41)

As students watch the video clips, they should consider the following questions:

- How did Korean War veterans benefit from the Korean GI Bill?
- How did the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 compare to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944? How would these differences have impacted Korean War veterans?
- How did the Korean GI Bill positively impact American society (not just individual veterans)?

3. After students watch the video clips, the teacher can engage the class in a discussion (using a video-conferencing tool) and/or assess student understanding with a short writing assignment. In approximately 200 words, students should respond to the following:

- Describe the main provisions of the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952.
- Explain how the Korean GI Bill impacted the lives of individual veterans as well as American society.
- Use specific details and examples from the veterans' interviews as support.

For further enrichment