



## ENQUIRY 1

# AN UNPOPULAR WAR? WHY DID BRITAIN GO TO WAR (AGAIN) IN 1950?

A two-lesson enquiry by Jennifer McCullough

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### ENQUIRY OUTLINE

#### SUMMARY

This enquiry has been designed to help teachers of Key Stage 3 integrate the Korean War into a wider scheme of work on the Cold War.

After covering, in outline, the main events of the war and Britain's involvement, it then explores the war as it was perceived in Britain.

It focuses particularly on opposition to the war from a number of individuals, investigating the reasons for that opposition and how their views were received by the media, politicians and the public at large.

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#### KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

- Introductory background knowledge: the causes and the course of the Korean War.
- The British reaction to the outbreak of war in Korea – how it was covered in the news and what this tells us about the British public's knowledge of the situation in Korea.
- Key groups and individuals who opposed the Korean War, the differing reasons for their opposition and the nature of their opposition.
- The way that these individuals and groups were treated by politicians and the media and the influence (or lack thereof) that they had on wider public opinion.
- Reach a judgement about the 'significance' of opposition to the war in Britain.

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#### TARGET AGE RANGE

The lessons are designed for use with Key Stage 3. The opposition theme is also tackled in Enquiry 8 as part of an A-level enquiry.

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#### SCHOLARLY RATIONALE

Lesson 1 offers an overview of the Korean War, principally a focus on the causes of the war. This is rooted in the ongoing debate about how far the Korean War was a civil war between North and South and how far it was a manifestation of international tensions and rivalry. The resource in Lesson 1 is based on the work of Dr Michael Shin (2013).

However, the principal focus of the enquiry is in Lesson 2. This focus emerges from the research of Huxford (2018), which charts a social history of the war in Britain and uses a range of source material including Mass Observation surveys, letters and diaries.

It is traditionally argued that when the Korean War broke out, there was relatively little interest in Britain at the time. Kynaston, for example, notes a diary entry that indicates that the birth of Princess Anne received more attention in the media than the outbreak of the Korean War (Kynaston, 2008). By contrast, Huxford's research shows that there was a significant – if short-lived – anxiety shown by the public on hearing about the outbreak of war, with memories of the Second World War still very much alive. And although this anxiety and interest did subside after the first year, there was nevertheless a certain amount of ongoing controversy surrounding Britain's involvement in the war.

What is particularly striking is Huxford's exploration of opposition to the Korean War in Britain. This is therefore chosen as the basis for this enquiry. This aspect has previously been somewhat overshadowed by opposition to the Vietnam War, which is typically viewed as the most 'controversial' war. Yet Huxford argues that there were absolutely contentious elements to British involvement in Korea, with some British people growing uneasy about how the war was conducted as it progressed. It was also during this period that many people started to adopt an anti-nuclear stance. Huxford highlights some fascinating stories of various individuals, ranging from fully paid-up communists, to journalists, to scientists who bought into rumours of germ warfare. One particularly absorbing story is the case of Monica Felton, a town planner who was sacked from her government position for taking part in a 'fact-finding' trip to North Korea.

Therefore, although 'forgotten' in this way, as well as in many others, the Korean War can be seen as an important turning point in anti-war opposition in Britain.

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## CURRICULAR RATIONALE

Most teachers of Key Stage 3 will cover the Cold War at some point in their scheme of work, and yet the Korean War is rarely a main feature in this coverage. The starring role is usually reserved for Vietnam. Yet as Professor Kathryn Weathersby (2019) has argued, there are a number of important reasons for studying the Korean War:

- The Korean War shaped the international post-war system.
- It was the Korean War that militarised the Cold War.
- The war transformed the communist side in the Cold War.
- It had a profound impact on North East Asia.

Add to this that Britain was the second largest force in the UN contingent, with over 100,000 British troops serving through the course of the war, and there are plenty of reasons why Korea should get a look-in with Key Stage 3 students of history. This enquiry therefore seeks to expose students to this 'forgotten' war, emphasising its links with Britain, while bearing in mind that most teachers will not have space for more than two lessons in their Cold War scheme of work.

The first lesson in the enquiry covers some essential groundwork, introducing students to the nature and causes of the war. It seeks to expose them to the historical debate surrounding the war's origins (as set out in Shin, 2013, and referenced above), as well as to help them place into context people's perceptions of the war back in Britain, ready for their second lesson.

The second lesson draws on the work of Dr Grace Huxford outlined above and investigates reaction to the war back in Britain. It is hoped that students will understand that the outbreak of war did not go unnoticed in Britain, nor was there unquestioning acceptance of Britain's involvement in the war. They are also required to grapple with how we might measure the 'significance' of opposition to the war.

After completing the enquiry, it is anticipated that students will have a better and more well-rounded understanding of the early Cold War period so that their studies of (for example) Cuba or Vietnam will have some broader context.

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## REFERENCES

- Huxford, G. (2018) *The Korean War in Britain: citizenship, selfhood and forgetting*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
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- Shin, M. (2013) 'The Korean War', Historical Association podcast. [www.history.org.uk/podcasts/categories/442/podcast/129/the-korean-war](http://www.history.org.uk/podcasts/categories/442/podcast/129/the-korean-war)
- Weathersby, K. (2019) Presentation at Korean War Legacy Foundation conference on teaching the Korean War in Athens, August 2019.

## SCHEME OF WORK

### OVERVIEW

The enquiry provides two relatively self-standing lessons. We envisage that it would be taught in Year 9, building on earlier work covering the end of the Second World War and the onset of the Cold War (e.g. lessons on Potsdam and the Berlin Blockade).

Lesson 1 establishes an overview of the Korean War. If you have already covered this ground, you might go straight to Lesson 2.

Students examine the historical debate around why conflict erupted in 1950. They find evidence to support two different arguments and come to a judgement. Following that, students build up a basic understanding of the main stages of the war.

Lesson 2 focuses on the perception of the war in Britain. Students analyse a contemporary newsreel on the war's outbreak and infer how the British government persuaded people back home that sending troops to Korea was necessary and worthwhile.

The main focus of the enquiry is on opposition from different groups/individuals, and students consider how we might measure how 'significant' this opposition was.

If you are not using Lesson 1, then Lesson 2 could easily be taught over two separate lessons.

Lesson	Key content
<b>Lesson 1:</b> <b>Why did Britain go to war in 1950?</b>	<p>For obvious reasons we don't start with the enquiry question. We don't even mention Korea. Given that this is a forgotten war, we presume that the students have not even heard of it.</p> <p>In this lesson, students use oral history and photographs from the war to figure out which conflict they are about to examine.</p> <p>They examine two different explanations for the origins of the war and find evidence to support each.</p> <p>They use maps and a timeline to get a sense of the nature and course of the war.</p> <p>To summarise their learning in this lesson, they write a caption for the image.</p>
<b>Lesson 2:</b> <b>How significant was British opposition to the war in Korea?</b>	<p>In this lesson, students use a contemporary source and case studies based on Huxford's research to explore how the war was perceived back in Britain.</p> <p>They use case studies of five groups/individuals who opposed the war to measure the 'significance' of British opposition.</p> <p>Using simplified role cards, they each research one of the five groups/individuals who opposed the war, recording their findings, and then feed back to the rest of the class.</p> <p>They conclude by answering the overarching enquiry question.</p>

## LESSON 1.1 BREAKDOWN: WHY DID BRITAIN GO TO WAR (AGAIN) IN 1950?

### STARTER (SLIDES 1–7)

**NB For obvious reasons, we don't mention Korea at the start of this lesson. We don't even mention it in the enquiry question! Test out whether this is really a 'forgotten war' – have students heard of it?**

**Slide 3:** Play the clip from 1'00" where Captain John Shipster describes how he took his golf clubs and tennis racquet with him to Korea (although Korea itself is not mentioned in this clip).

Students speculate on the questions listed on the slide, perhaps writing their guesses down on whiteboards.

- Shipster's excellent accent should hopefully give it away that he is British!
- Students might also pick up on details such as he mentions going to Japan, and also how he was greeted by a tall, black sergeant (they will probably need help with the phrase 'We've got a right load of Charlies here'!).

Allow them to make their guesses but don't give the game away just yet.

Following this, show/play them Clues 1–5 (on **Slides 3–7**) one at a time and in that order. After examining each one, they should attempt to answer any of the questions on Resource sheet 1.1A (reproduced from **Slide 3**). You are primarily leading them towards finding out where the conflict is, although students should also be able to make other inferences about the fighting conditions, the causes of the war and the troops too:

- Clue 1 might lead them to believe that the war is somewhere very cold (so the eventual answer may surprise them if they do not associate Asia with being cold!), and also reveal the difficulty of the winter conditions.
- Hopefully they will recognise the Aussie accent in Clue 2 (some of them might also pick up on 'napalm' here and perhaps guess Vietnam).
- Clue 3 should narrow down the possible location of the war as Asia.
- You might allow them to look at an atlas to assist with Clue 4, which also gives them a big hint as to US involvement and why the war is being fought.
- And of course, Clue 5 gives the answer if they haven't guessed by then.

This has been a lengthy starter, but now that the secret is out that we are studying the Korean War, you can now overview the rest of the lesson and enquiry using **Slides 8 and 9**.

### ACTIVITY 1: WHY DID WAR BREAK OUT IN KOREA IN 1950? (SLIDES 10–13)

Use **Slide 10** to give some very basic background to the situation in Korea in 1950.

Then explain that historians don't actually agree as to why the war broke out, and use **Slide 11** to introduce them to the two schools of thought:

- that Korea was merely a symptom of Cold War tension between the USSR and the USA
- that its origins lie with internal tension inside Korea

**Slide 12** gives them an explanation grid, also on Resource sheet 1.1B. They colour-code each piece of information to show which of the arguments it supports.

(NB This sheet is based on the summary of the historiography presented in a podcast by Dr Michael Shin of the University of Cambridge, *The Korean War*, which is available on the HA website.)

**Slide 13:** Recap by going through the answers and asking students to decide which statement on the slide they find more convincing. There is also a third option, which links the previous two together.

### BEFORE YOU START

You will need:

- Lesson PowerPoint 1.1
- Resource sheet 1.1A (Questions for Starter 2)
- Resource sheet 1.1B (Explanation grid for colour-coding for Activity 1)
- Resource sheet 1.1C (Timeline of the Korean War for Activity 2 plus maps to sequence on pages 2 and 3)

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### ACTIVITY 2: WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE KOREAN WAR? (SLIDES 14–16)

The intention here is that students gain a basic understanding of the nature and course of the war between 1950 and 1953.

**Slide 14** gives a link to a BBC documentary *20th Century Battlefields: 1951 Korea*, presented by Dan and Peter Snow. At the time of writing, the documentary was accessible on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLV3eonORPc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLV3eonORPc), but if it disappears, a Google search for ‘Dan Snow Peter Snow Korean War’ should work!

You could start at 2’06”. The explanation of the war starts at 4’15” but students might find the preceding two minutes interesting as they describe the border today. Play on until around 9’30”.

This clip should firstly give students a good idea of the strangeness of the current border situation between the North and South, as well as serving as an excellent introduction to the beginning of the war, ending with the arrival of UN troops in South Korea.

Next, students should read through the fuller timeline narrative of the war (**Slide 15** and on Resource sheet 1.1C) and, using this, attempt to place the four maps on page 2 of that sheet in the correct order – sticking them in the space on page 3. These illustrate the main stages in the war. You can then use the animation on **Slide 16** to go through the correct answer.

Students may well ask why the stalemate continued for so long between 1951 and 1953 when it was achieving so little. There is much debate around this.

- Some historians have blamed the American negotiators, who tried to force China and North Korea to accept humiliating terms.
- Other theories include the view that Stalin actually wanted the war to continue because it tied up American resources.
- There is some evidence that Mao was keen to continue fighting because he enjoyed the prestige of matching the Americans and also because Korea was an opportunity to give his troops experience.

These issues are examined in depth in one of the Key Stage 5 enquiries (Enquiry 7).

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### PLENARY (SLIDES 17–18)

**Slide 17** continues the story to the present day and outlines casualty figures.

**Slide 18** shows a photo of the current border crossing between the North and South. It might look neat and ordered but the border (or Joint Security Area) is a symbol of extreme tension between the two countries, who are still technically at war.

Students are invited to reflect on what they have learned about the causes and course of the war, writing a 25- to 50-word caption to go with the photograph.

## LESSON 1.2 BREAKDOWN: HOW SIGNIFICANT WAS BRITISH OPPOSITION TO THE WAR IN KOREA?

### STARTER (SLIDES 1–5)

**Slide 3** displays an image of Monica Felton and invites students to speculate about why she was sacked from her job in 1950. Either give students the eight clue cards relating to her (Resource sheet 1.2A) or drip-feed them in one at a time, starting with the less obvious clues – for example, ‘she missed an important meeting’ may encourage them to guess that she was sacked for not doing her job.

Given some of the clues and the previous lesson’s learning, you may have students who quickly guess that this is related to the Korean War, despite any mention of Korea being deliberately left off the clues. Take that feedback from students but don’t reveal who is correct at this stage.

Explain that the clues were missing one vital piece of information: that Monica Felton’s trip in June 1951 was to Korea. Congratulate any students who made the link and tell them that they will find out more about Monica Felton’s story later in the lesson.

### ACTIVITY 1: HOW DID THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ‘SELL’ THE KOREAN WAR? (SLIDES 6–7)

Briefly recap verbally (or ask students to do this themselves) on last lesson’s learning: why war broke out in Korea in 1950, and how British troops were a key contributor to the UN forces.

Before going into the resources, ask the question of the students: ‘How would you expect the British people to react when war broke out?’

Students then watch the newsreel from September 1950 (we suggest from 2’06” to 9’ 30”) and answer the questions on Resource sheet 1.2B. There are two differentiated versions to choose from, depending on the ability of your students/class: page 1 has open-text response, page 2 has scaffolding in the form of options to choose from.

Take feedback on how the government persuaded British people that sending troops to Korea was necessary and worthwhile.

### ACTIVITY 2: HOW SIGNIFICANT WAS OPPOSITION TO THE WAR? SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA (SLIDE 8)

**Slide 8** introduces students to the study of opposition to the war.

If you are choosing to extend this enquiry across two lessons, there will be scope for students to speculate about why people might oppose the war, perhaps making links to previous knowledge of the suffering of the Second World War, to the first use of the atomic bomb in 1945, or perhaps to more contemporary examples of opposition to war, such as the massive protests against the Iraq War.

Tell students that **they** will examine some case studies of people who opposed the war and that their job will be to measure how ‘significant’ the opposition was. They will need to come up with some criteria to assist in that process – how could or should we measure how significant the opposition was? Give them one or two ideas to get them started and then ask each pair to come up with at least two more ways of measuring it. Take feedback then go through our suggestions on **Slide 8**.

### ACTIVITY 3: HOW SIGNIFICANT WAS OPPOSITION TO THE WAR? CASE STUDIES (SLIDES 9–15)

**Slide 9:** Give each pair of students one of the five different case studies (they are all on **Slides 11–15** and on Resource sheet 1.2C). They need to read the information about their person or group and complete the grid (shown on **Slide 16** and Resource sheet 1.2C (page 1), which asks them to find out:

- why their person/group opposed the war
- the nature of their opposition
- how they were received by others in Britain

### BEFORE YOU START

You will need:

- Lesson 1.2 PowerPoint
- Resource sheet 1.2A (Starter clues)
- Resource sheet 1.2B (Questions for guided listening to newsreel for Activity 1)
- Resource sheet 1.2C (Case study sheets for Activity 3)
- For plenary: A large continuum of significance on the wall – or desk – big enough to have a whole class worth of sticky notes.

Hopefully, armed from Activity 2 with how they might measure 'significance', they will be able to manage column 5 and give their case study person or group a significance rating.

Depending on your group and whether you are extending Lesson 2 over two lessons, you could then either rotate the role cards around, giving the students other rows to fill in, or else invite pairs to feed back verbally to the rest of the class, with you as the teacher filling in the grid on the whiteboard.

### PLENARY (SLIDE 17)

After feedback (in whatever form) on all case studies, students now return to the enquiry question.

To scaffold this, Resource sheet 1.2C (page 7) provides a choice of adjectives (also shown on **Slide 11**) to describe the opposition. Students can circle the word(s) they think best describes it (or come up with their own). They need to write down between one and three pieces of evidence on their sheet to support their choice of words.

Finally, to reflect on what they have concluded, and to judge overall significance, they place their sticky note on a continuum of significance. They should be able to justify their position according to the criteria that they have come up with for the Activity on **Slides 7 and 8**.

## SELECTED LESSON POWERPOINTS

### LESSON 1.1

## Enquiry 1: An unpopular war? Why did Britain go to war (again) in 1950?







Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 1

## Why did Captain John Shipster take his golf clubs to war?

**Starter part 1**

Listen to the one-minute audio clip from an interview with Captain John Shipster.

Then discuss the following questions:

- Which country do you think Captain Shipster is from?
- To which country do you think he was sent to go to war?
- Why do you think he took his golf clubs?
- What might that tell us about his expectations of this war?







Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 2

## Follow the clues to find out more

**Starter part 2**

Now examine the five more clues that will be displayed on the board. On your whiteboard or Resource sheet 1.1A, write down:

- In which country do you think this war might be happening?
- Which countries do you think the soldiers have come from?
- What were the conditions like in the war?
- Why do you think this war might be happening?

Make sure that you can support your answers with evidence from the clues.

### Clue #1

It was really terribly, terribly cold. I remember we went to ground for just twenty minutes and in that time, we froze to the ground and our machine guns froze up. As we tried to get up, our clothes were stuck to the ground with dry ice because it was twenty degrees below zero.

We did have petrol heaters in the huts but sometimes they used to set fire to your sleeping bag... and that wasn't always very funny.

*Captain Alberic Stacpoole, a British Army officer*





Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 3

## Clue #2

Audio clip from Private Patrick Knowles

'They give you a stretcher ...'







Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 4

LESSON 1.1 (continued)

### Clue #3

A British soldier talking with some local children



Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 5

### Clue #4

This peninsula is a symbol to the whole world. If we allow it to fall to Communism, we will have lost another round in our match with the Soviet Union. Our status and the hopes of everyone who places their faith in us will suffer.

*A statement from the government of the USA in 1950. A peninsula is an area of land that is mostly but not completely surrounded by water.*

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 6

### Clue #5

Map of the Korean Peninsula in 1950



Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 7

### Enquiry overview: Why did Britain go to war (again) in 1950?

Lesson 1.1

Why was there a war in Korea and why did Britain join in?

Lesson 1.2

How significant was opposition to the Korean War in Britain?

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 8

### Lesson 1.1 overview

Lesson 1.1

Why was there a war in Korea and why did Britain join in?

**Content covered in the rest of this lesson:**

- Why did war break out in Korea in 1950?
- What happened during the Korean War?

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 9

### Why did war break out in Korea in 1950?

- During the Second World War, Korea was occupied by Japanese troops.
- After the war it was divided.
- The North was led by a communist, Kim Il Sung.
- The South was led by Syngman Rhee. He was not very democratic but he was highly anti-communist.
- The Soviet Union supported the North while the South was under the influence of the USA.



Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 10

### Why did war break out in Korea in 1950?

- On 25 June 1950, the North's Korean People's Army (KPA) invaded South Korea.
- The United Nations was quick to respond and encouraged its members to support the South. Many countries sent troops, including the USA, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa.
- Explanation A:** Some historians believe that the war happened mainly because of **tension between the USSR and the USA, who were using Korea as a 'puppet' in their Cold War.**
- Explanation B:** Other historians believe that the war was more to do with **internal tension inside Korea.**

**Activity 1**  
Read the evidence in your explanation grid on the next slide or on Resource sheet 1.1B. Colour-code each card to show which of the explanations it supports.

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 11

### Why did war break out in Korea in 1950? Explanation grid.

At the end of the Second World War, there were Soviet troops all over Eastern Europe. The Americans saw this as expansion of communism and they determined to stop any further expansion. This policy became known as containment.	China had also become communist in 1949. The Americans had always seen China as their ally and were stung by this. Now, suddenly, a massive new communist state had appeared on the map. China shared a border with Korea.	Korea already had bitter internal divisions in 1945. Peasants made up about 85% of the population and were treated poorly by their landlords. This created tensions within Korean society.	<p><b>Supports Explanation A:</b> Evidence that the war was caused by tension between the USA and the USSR.</p> <p><b>Supports Explanation B:</b> Evidence that the war was caused by tension that already existed within Korea.</p>
Japan had occupied Korea between 1910 and 1945. Many poorer Koreans believed that their landlords and those higher up in society collaborated (aided with the Japanese, betraying them).	American spies reported to the US President Truman that the USSR was providing support and resources to help communists to win power in Malaysia, Indonesia, Burma, the Philippines and Korea.	When Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945, many Koreans wanted to set up a Korean People's Republic to give land back to the peasants. But the US occupiers in the South refused to let this happen. They allowed the undemocratic Syngman Rhee and his supporters to take over.	
There was already widespread violence, uprisings and assassinations across the South under Syngman Rhee before 1950.	There was bitter hostility between the North Korean communist leader, Kim Il Sung, and Syngman Rhee, President of South Korea.	Kim Il Sung was eager to gain more power. North Korea quickly set up strong links with the new communist regime in China. Kim tried to convince both China and the USSR to support a plan to try to take control of the whole Korean Peninsula. They were eventually persuaded.	

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 12

**LESSON 1.1 (continued)**

### Why did war break out in Korea in 1950?

**Activity 1 recap**  
Which of the following statements do you most agree with?

'War broke out in Korea because of **tension between the USSR and the USA**, who were using Korea as a "puppet" in their Cold War.'

'War broke out in Korea because of **internal tension inside Korea**.'

'War broke out because of **local tensions, which were made worse by the tension between the USA and the USSR**.'

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 13

### What happened during the Korean War?

**Activity 2**

- Watch the short video clip, which introduces the war.
- Read the timeline on the next slide, then use Resource sheet 1.1.C to place the four maps in correct date order.



Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 14

### Timeline of the Korean War

**1950**

**25 June 1950** – North Korea invaded South Korea with approximately 100,000 troops. North Korean troops overcame the South's forces. By September 1950, all except a small corner of south-east Korea was under communist control.

**27 June 1950** – The United Nations sent troops to Korea. In 1950, UN and South Korean forces numbered between 80,000 and 100,000, increasing to 240,000 by spring 1951.

**15 September 1950** – United Nations forces stormed ashore at Inchon in September 1950. At the same time, other UN forces and South Korean troops advanced from Pusan. The North Koreans were driven back beyond their original border (the 38th parallel) within weeks.

**20 October 1950** – But the Americans did not stop. Despite warnings from China, the UN approved a plan to advance into North Korea. By October, US forces had taken the North Korean capital Pyongyang and reached the Yalu River and the border with China.

**25 October 1950** – 200,000 Chinese forces entered Korea. As the war progressed, China's involvement increased and eventually rose to around 1 million.

**1951**

**4 January 1951** – Chinese and North Korean forces drove the UN and South Korean forces back again. As the freezing cold winter weather drew in, the Chinese advance continued and they recaptured South Korea's capital Seoul on 4 January 1951.

**March 1951** – In the next few months, the UN and South Korean forces were able to regroup. They retook Seoul in March 1951.

**April 1951** – Chinese and North Koreans launched another offensive in April 1951 along the Imjin River. Fierocious fighting followed, including a famous action by British troops from the Gloucestershire Regiment. There were heavy casualties on all sides but the defences held to the north of Seoul and in the valley of the Imjin River.

**May 1951** – By now, fighting was focused on the 38th parallel, with each side having been pushed back to their own respective area of Korea. What followed was a stalemate, similar to the trench warfare that had been seen on the Western Front in the First World War.

**27 July 1953** – Peace talks had begun in June 1951. There is much debate about why this stalemate continued until July 1953. An armistice was finally signed in July 1953, but the war never officially ended. North Korea remains divided today and the border zone between the two Koreas remains a tense and heavily fortified area.

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 15

### What happened during the Korean War?

**Activity 2 review**






Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 16

### The never-ending war

Over the three years of war, 1950–1953:

- The UN suffered over 30,000 casualties during the war, most of whom were US troops. There were around 500,000 Chinese casualties.
- Britain suffered 1,078 killed in action, 2,674 wounded and 1,060 missing or taken prisoner.
- Korea suffered 1.3 million casualties – with equal numbers from the North and South – and one in ten Korean civilians died.

At the end of the war:

- There was an armistice (ceasefire) in 1953 but no peace treaty – ever! So, technically speaking, the two countries of North Korea and South Korea are still in a state of war.
- Neither North nor South Korea obtained the united Korea that they were both fighting for. The border along the 38th parallel remains today.
- Relationships between the two countries are often very tense.

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 17

### Plenary



Write a 25–50-word caption to go with this photograph. Make sure you include:

- Why you think the war broke out.
- What had happened in Korea by July 1953.

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.1 18

LESSON 1.2

### Enquiry overview: Why did Britain go to war (again) in 1950?

**Lesson 1.1**

Why was there a war in Korea and why did Britain join in?

**Lesson 1.2**

How significant was opposition to the Korean War in Britain?

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.2 1

### Lesson 1.2 Overview

**Lesson 1.2**

How significant was opposition to the Korean War in Britain?

**Content covered in the lesson:**

- How did the British government 'sell' the Korean War to the British people?
- How did British people respond to the war?
- How do we judge the significance of opposition to the war?
- Who opposed the war and why?

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.2 2

### Why was Monica Felton sacked?

**Starter**

This is Monica Felton. In June 1951, she was sacked from her job.

- Read the eight clues you have been given about Monica Felton (Slide 4 and Resource sheet 1.2A).
- With your partner, decide on a theory about why she may have been sacked.



Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.2 3

### Monica Felton starter

**CLUES**

Monica Felton was a town planner. She was a government employee working on the planning of Stevenage in 1951, one of the new towns built in post-war Britain.	Monica Felton was a member of the Labour Party. She described herself as a socialist and a pacifist.
Felton went on a trip in June 1951. Her trip made national headlines in papers such as the <i>Daily Mail</i> .	Many British newspapers and some MPs were calling for Felton to be put on trial for treason (betraying her country).
Felton's trip was debated in Parliament.	Felton missed an important meeting in Westminster in June 1951.
Monica Felton was 45 years old in 1951.	Felton published a book called <i>That's Why I Went</i> in 1954.

Exploring and Teaching the Korean War | Lesson 1.2 4

### Why was Monica Felton sacked?

- Your clues were missing one vital piece of information: whereabouts did Monica Felton go on her trip in June 1951?
- The answer is of course: Korea.
- You will find out more about Monica Felton's story later in the lesson.

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### How did the British government 'sell' the Korean War to the British people?

- You have already studied why war broke out in Korea in 1950, and how 18 countries, including Britain, provided troops or support of some kind to the UN forces fighting North Korea.
- Back in Britain, the majority of the population favoured British involvement in Korea, although some people were concerned that government funding might be diverted from health and welfare towards a war in Asia.
- So how did the government persuade British people that sending British troops to Korea was necessary?

**Activity 1**

Watch this newsreel from September 1950 and answer the questions on Resource sheet 1.2B.



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### How did British people respond to the war?

- Most historians agree that the war produced some significant but short-lived anxiety. Some people even re-dug their Anderson shelters from WWII!
- There continued to be a high level of interest in the war during the first year (as we saw in the newsreel), but by 1952 there was less interest as the war slowed down.
- What we will study today is the people and groups who were **opposed** to British involvement in the war. We are going to measure how significant the opposition was.

**Activity 2**

How could we measure/judge how **significant** opposition was? E.g. *were there more people who supported or opposed the war?*

With your partner, come up with **two more ways** to measure the opposition.

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### How do we judge the significance of opposition? Significance criteria

Were they a majority? Did more people support or oppose the war?

Did their words or actions change anything? Did anybody take any notice?

What was the reaction of the media/Parliament/others to those who opposed the war? Were they alarmed? How did they treat opposers?

How serious was the opposition? E.g. mild criticism of certain aspects? Outright condemnation?

Were the people who opposed the war important individuals?

Was the opposition organised?

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**LESSON 1.2 (continued)**

## Who opposed the war and why?

**Activity 3**

In your pairs, you will receive one role card. It will give you details about one person, group or organisation who opposed the war in Korea.

- Fill in your grid (on the next slide or Resource sheet 1.2C).
- Measure the significance of their opposition by giving it a number from 1 to 5. 1 is insignificant opposition. 5 is highly significant opposition.

You need to be ready to feed back to the rest of the class.

Monica Felton

James Cameron

Joseph Needham

Hewlett Johnson

Harry Pollitt/  
CPGB

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	Why did they oppose the war?	What did they do?	How were they received by other people in Britain?	How significant 1 – 5?
Harry Pollitt/British communists				
War correspondents				
Joseph Needham				
Hewlett Johnson				
Monica Felton				

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### Opposition case study: Communists

**ROLE CARD**

**The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) was led by Harry Pollitt.**

- They were strongly anti-American. They argued that the war was being fought purely to make the USA money and to spread their control over the world. Pollitt wrote that 'British lads were being forced to shoot down other lads in Korea.'
- The CPGB held 7,000 campaign meetings in 1952 alone and also used their newspaper, *The Daily Worker*, to get their message across. They wrote lots about the impact of the war on Korean civilians. They also (falsely) accused the USA of using smallpox germs in Korea.
- Their journalist, Alan Winterton, visited Korea in July 1950 and wrote a leaflet called 'I Saw the Truth in Korea', claiming that the US bombing in Korea was worse than the Nazi bombing of Coventry.

**RESPONSE**

- Most British newspapers and many British people were highly anti-communist. This meant that any ideas of British communists were usually heavily criticised, including their view on Korea, even though most British people were ambivalent about the war. Therefore they failed to gain much sympathy or support.
- Some employees in London firms were sacked for circulating communist peace petitions. There was even one story that a 17-year-old Scout had been dismissed from the Boy Scouts as his communist tendencies went against his oath to the King!
- Nevertheless, the anti-American feeling of the CPGB was shared by others. A mass survey in London in 1951 found that people were talking about the USA trying to 'control the world'.

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### Opposition case study: War correspondents

**ROLE CARD**

**James Cameron and Bert Hardy**

- British journalist James Cameron (right) and photographer Bert Hardy (left) covered the war for *Picture Post*.
- Although Cameron did not disagree with the war on principle, on 16 September 1950, he described the fighting as 'filthy'.
- He wrote about the suffering of the local population.
- He was sacked for trying to publish shocking pictures of POW (prisoner of war) treatment and atrocities committed by South Korean forces.
- After the war, Cameron was a founding member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

- The *Daily Telegraph's* war correspondent documented the impact of war on civilians and drew parallels with Nazi concentration camps.
- The BBC's correspondent, Rene Cutforth, accompanied UN forces in the winter retreat down the Peninsula in 1950-51 and wrote about the plight of Korean refugees on the road. He also criticised the first US use of napalm.

**RESPONSE**

War correspondents had mixed success in exposing the civilian casualties of the war. Cameron's coverage was well known. *Picture Post* was one of the few publications to cover civilian suffering in any great detail. However, in May 1951, the Labour MP Frank Allaun wrote that there were few people willing to 'spare a thought for the thousands killed or horribly wounded in a single day's fighting in Korea last week'.

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### Opposition case study: Joseph Needham

**ROLE CARD**

- The People's Republic of China claimed that the United States had started a campaign of bacteriological warfare. Supposedly, the USA had dropped diseased rodents and insects over China and North Korea for two months from January 1952.
- These allegations turned out to be false propaganda by the PRC. Nevertheless, they were supported by Joseph Needham, a leading scientist.
- Needham was a well-known biochemist who visited China and North Korea in the summer of 1952. While there, he spoke to two captured American airmen who claimed to have been involved in dropping bacteriological weapons on North Korea.
- When he returned to Britain, Needham went on a lecture tour and wrote to *The Times*, urging other scientists to study the claims.

**RESPONSE**

- Other scientists were critical of the evidence and Needham had limited impact, although it did bring Britain's attention back to Korea briefly.
- A meeting of the Trades Union Congress in Margate called for banning of chemical and 'germ' warfare. The British Peace Committee also organised lectures on the dangers of germ warfare across the country.

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### Opposition case study: Hewlett Johnson

**ROLE CARD**

**Hewlett Johnson**

- Johnson was known as the 'Red Dean of Canterbury' because of his support for the USSR.
- Johnson had visited the USSR in the 1930s. He saw socialism and Christianity as allies.
- Johnson visited China in 1952 and became utterly convinced by Chinese claims that the USA was using germ warfare against their troops. (These allegations turned out to be false propaganda by China.)
- He brought back a 350-long petition from Chinese pastors and churches against germ warfare.

**RESPONSE**

- The British press criticised Johnson for his trip and said that it was undermining British troops in Korea.
- In response, Johnson wrote a pamphlet called 'Appeal', where he attempted to defend himself and again criticised the alleged use of germ warfare.
- Johnson sent his pamphlet to all his fellow peers in the House of Lords but received little support from them. One accused him of being a communist and another asked whether legal action against Johnson was possible!
- However, Johnson did receive some support. For example, the socialist historian EP Thompson wrote to him in support, speaking out against the way the press had attacked him.

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### Opposition case study: Monica Felton

**ROLE CARD**

**Monica Felton**

- Felton was a town planner helping to design and build Stevenage, one of the 'new' towns built in post-war Britain. She was a government employee and also a member of the Labour Party.
- She went to Korea in summer 1951 on a 'fact-finding' mission arranged by an international women's organisation.
- She returned to Britain claiming that she had seen refugees and orphans, the destruction of temples and museums, mass graves and evidence of widespread brutality by British and allied soldiers.
- The organisation's report urged people to call for immediate withdrawal of British troops from Korea.

**RESPONSE**

- There was a public outcry. Felton was attacked in the press. She was sacked from her job, given that she was a government employee and had missed an important meeting.
- Sections of the country called for her to be placed on trial for treason. (She wasn't!)
- Felton held a series of meetings in London in June 1951, which attracted hundreds of people. The Press Association reported that women openly wept at her descriptions of violence against Koreans.
- Some individuals did protest over her sacking, and 80 Labour MPs went to hear her speak in 1951.

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## How significant was opposition to the war?

**Plenary**

- On your sheet, circle which of these words you think best describe British opposition to the Korean War.
- Write down one to three pieces of evidence to support your view.
- Now write your name on your sticky note and place it on the continuum on the right to sum up your overall view of the significance of opposition.

half-hearted	intense	isolated
hostile	mild	concentrated
committed	ignored	alarming
unorganised	organised	unimportant
limited	loud	influential
successful	widespread	ineffective

← Insignificant

→ Highly significant

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