Korea's Wider War

Weigh the causes of an international conflict

SS24.WH.15b "Evaluate the extent to which efforts to contain or spread communism contributed to global conflict."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions meant to contain communism, circle actions meant to spread it, and write 1 beside other causes of the war. Use your marks to weigh how much each cause mattered.

Why the Korean War Grew

1 After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union divided Korea at the 38th parallel. The Soviet Union supported a communist government in the north, while the United States supported a noncommunist government in the south. Both Korean governments claimed the right to rule the whole peninsula, and families were separated by the border. In June 1950, North Korean troops crossed into South Korea, hoping to unite Korea under their government. Soviet weapons and approval helped make the attack possible. The invasion began a war rooted in both rival political systems and Korea's unresolved division.

2 The United States saw the invasion as a test of its policy of containing communism. A United Nations force, led by the United States, fought to defend South Korea. After pushing North Korean troops back, UN forces crossed the 38th parallel and advanced toward China's border. This move went beyond defending the south and raised the stakes of the war. China then sent troops into Korea. Chinese leaders feared a US-led army near their border and wanted to protect North Korea, a communist ally. Fighting drew in soldiers from several countries and killed large numbers of civilians.

3 By 1953, the fighting had moved back near the 38th parallel. An armistice stopped the shooting, but it did not create a peace treaty or unite Korea. North and South Korea remained under different governments. Efforts to spread or contain communism had helped turn a conflict over Korea's division into an international war. Yet ideology alone cannot explain its course: Korean leaders sought reunification, and China faced a security threat at its border. The war shows how a struggle over political systems could intensify older disputes, even when neither side gained control of the whole peninsula.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How much does North Korea's invasion support the claim that efforts to spread communism caused the war? Explain one limit to that claim.

2. How did the UN force's actions change the conflict from containing an invasion to something larger?

3. Was China's entry into the war only an effort to protect a communist ally? Weigh the reasons given in the passage.

4. Does the war's outcome suggest that either side fully achieved its goal of spreading or containing communism? Explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph of 75 to 100 words arguing how strongly efforts to contain or spread communism contributed to the Korean War's expansion. Use two specific details from the passage and explain one other cause that complicates your claim.

ANSWER KEY

Korea's Wider War

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.15b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions meant to contain communism, circle actions meant to spread it, and write 1 beside other causes of the war. Use your marks to weigh how much each cause mattered. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How much does North Korea's invasion support the claim that efforts to spread communism caused the war? Explain one limit to that claim.	**The invasion strongly supports the claim because North Korea tried to unite the peninsula under its government, with Soviet help. But both Korean governments claimed the whole peninsula, so the dispute over division also mattered.**
2	How did the UN force's actions change the conflict from containing an invasion to something larger?	**The US-led UN force first defended South Korea, but it then crossed the 38th parallel and advanced toward China's border. That advance raised the stakes and helped draw China into the war.**
3	Was China's entry into the war only an effort to protect a communist ally? Weigh the reasons given in the passage.	**No. China wanted to protect North Korea, a communist ally, but its leaders also feared a US-led army near their border.**
4	Does the war's outcome suggest that either side fully achieved its goal of spreading or containing communism? Explain.	**Neither side gained the whole peninsula. Korea remained divided under different governments, and the armistice stopped the fighting without creating a peace treaty.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Efforts to contain and spread communism strongly contributed to the Korean War's expansion, but they were not the only cause. North Korea invaded the south hoping to unite the peninsula under its government, and Soviet weapons and approval helped it attack. In response, a US-led UN force fought to defend South Korea and then advanced toward China's border. That advance helped draw Chinese troops into the war. Still, the rival Korean governments both claimed the whole peninsula, and China feared an enemy army near its border. Those goals and fears also shaped the fighting.

Accept different judgments about the extent of ideology's role if students support them with passage evidence and account for another cause. For Question 4, students may note that South Korea remained noncommunist, even though neither side gained the whole peninsula.