Rivalry Across Borders

Local goals and global power in the Cold War

WH.6.6 "Explain the causes and consequences of the Cold War, and describe the role it played in ethnic or nationalistic conflicts in various parts of the world."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two reasons the Cold War began, circle one local political goal in Korea and one in Vietnam, and number two consequences of the rivalry in those conflicts.

When a Global Rivalry Reached Local Wars

1. When World War II ended in 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union had defeated a common enemy but disagreed about Europe's future. Soviet leaders feared another invasion and backed communist governments in Eastern Europe. U.S. leaders saw this expansion as a threat to countries choosing their own governments. Both powers built weapons and sought allies, creating a global rivalry called the Cold War. They avoided direct war with each other, partly because nuclear weapons made such a war terrifying. Instead, each side tried to limit the other's influence through aid, threats, and support for other countries.

2. Korea shows how this rivalry entered a struggle over national unity. After Japanese rule ended in 1945, Soviet forces occupied the north and U.S. forces occupied the south. Two rival Korean governments formed, and each claimed the right to govern the whole peninsula. In 1950, North Korean troops invaded the south. The United States and other United Nations members defended South Korea; China later sent troops to support North Korea, which received Soviet equipment and advice. Fighting ended with a 1953 armistice, not a peace treaty. Korea remained divided, and millions of people were killed or separated from family members.

3. Vietnam reveals a different local goal: independence from colonial rule. Vietnamese forces led by Ho Chi Minh fought France, which had controlled the region. After France's defeat in 1954, Vietnam was temporarily divided, with a communist-led government in the north and an anticommunist government in the south. Leaders on both sides sought to shape Vietnam's future. Fearing communist expansion, the United States sent troops and funds to support South Vietnam. The Soviet Union and China supplied North Vietnam. In 1975, northern forces captured Saigon, and Vietnam was reunified under communist rule. The war killed millions and drove many people from their homes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Soviet actions in Eastern Europe and U.S. fears help cause the Cold War?

2. How did Korea's struggle over national unity become part of the Cold War?

3. How did Vietnam's fight over its future become part of the Cold War?

4. How did the political outcomes of the wars in Korea and Vietnam differ?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A podcast calls the wars in Korea and Vietnam “only battles between superpowers.” Write a five-sentence response that describes a local goal or decision in each conflict, explains why outside powers became involved, and argues why the podcast's claim is incomplete.

ANSWER KEY

Rivalry Across Borders

HIGH SCHOOL · WH.6.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons the Cold War began, circle one local political goal in Korea and one in Vietnam, and number two consequences of the rivalry in those conflicts. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Soviet actions in Eastern Europe and U.S. fears help cause the Cold War?	**The Soviets backed communist governments in Eastern Europe, while U.S. leaders saw that expansion as a threat. Their opposing aims helped create a global rivalry.**
2	How did Korea's struggle over national unity become part of the Cold War?	**Both Korean governments claimed the whole peninsula. The United States and other UN members defended South Korea, while China and the Soviet Union supported North Korea.**
3	How did Vietnam's fight over its future become part of the Cold War?	**Vietnamese fighters first sought independence from France. Later, the United States supported South Vietnam to oppose communist expansion, while the Soviet Union and China supplied North Vietnam.**
4	How did the political outcomes of the wars in Korea and Vietnam differ?	**Korea remained divided after the 1953 armistice. Vietnam was reunified under communist rule after northern forces captured Saigon in 1975.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Calling Korea and Vietnam only battles between superpowers ignores choices made by people living there. Rival Korean governments each claimed the whole peninsula, and North Korea invaded the south in 1950. Vietnamese fighters sought independence from France before the United States sent troops to oppose communist expansion. Soviet support for North Korea and Soviet and Chinese supplies for North Vietnam made local struggles part of a wider rivalry. Outside powers shaped both wars, but the conflicts also grew from goals held by people in Korea and Vietnam.

Accept responses that distinguish local goals from outside involvement and explain how both shaped the conflicts. Students may cite the division of Korea or Vietnam's reunification as a consequence.