

Korean War Film Review

Introduction: In this activity, students will critique a film and evaluate its usefulness in studying the Korean War. This activity is best done after students have begun to study the Korean War so they are familiar with it.

Grade level:

High school

Illinois Learning Standards Addressed:

16.A.5a Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).

16.A.4b Compare competing historical interpretations of an event.

16.A.3c Identify the differences between historical fact and interpretation.

16.B.5b (W) Describe how tensions in the modern world are affected by different political ideologies including democracy and totalitarianism.

16.C.4b (W) Compare socialism and communism in Europe, America, Asia and Africa after 1815 CE.

Activity:

Students choose a film about the Korean War from the list given. (List from Appendix C of *Korean War Filmography*.)

1. *Battle Hymn*
2. *The Bridges of Toko-Ri*
3. *Cease Fire*
4. *Chattahoochee*
5. *Collision Course: Truman vs. MacArthur* (TV movie)
6. *The Eternal Sea*
7. *The Great Impostor*
8. *Hold Back the Night*
9. *MacArthur* (aka *MacArthur, the Rebel General*)
10. *The McConnell Story*
11. *Men of the Fighting Lady*
12. *Pork Chop Hill**
13. *Retreat, Hell!**
14. *Take the High Ground!*
15. *Toward the Unknown*
16. *Truman* (Cable TV movie starring Gary Sinise)
17. *Underwater Warrior*
18. *The Walking Major*

(* Pritzker Military Library has this title.)

Students view the film and write a film review addressing the following questions:

1. When was the film made?
2. Was the film you viewed accurate? Were the events, dates, locations, and people true or made up for entertainment purposes?
3. What was the tone of the movie? Was it sad, serious, comedic, patriotic, or any other tone you can think of?
4. Who were the main characters? How were they portrayed?
5. Did you enjoy the film? Would you recommend it to others as a tool for studying the Korean War or should the film be viewed for entertainment? Thumbs up or thumbs down?
6. What would make this film better, if anything?
7. Did watching the movie help you to understand the Korean War better?

Questions for further discussion:

1. How accurate can a film about war really be? Keep in mind the passage of time, people's selective memories (how does the brain work?), people's memories under stress, differing viewpoints of the same event.
2. Is it wrong to take "liberties" with the truth in order to show a richer picture of what happened in war?
3. Is war entertaining? Why are there so many movies made about it?

Note: Other war movies can be used for this activity.

Resources at the Pritzker Military Library, also available through interlibrary loan:

Lentz, Robert J. *Korean War Filmography*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers. 2003.
Call number: DS 918.16.L46 2003

West, Philip. *Remembering the "Forgotten War": the Korean War through Literature and Art*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. 2001.
Call number: PL957.5 .K67 R46 2001