

SENATE HEARING: MacARTHUR AND THE KOREAN WAR

A re-creation of a Senate hearing, examining whether or not
President Truman was justified in firing General MacArthur

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Why did Truman's firing of MacArthur create such a controversy in 1951?

This historical re-creation has students taking part as senators, military leaders and their aides, and observers/participants in the 1951 congressional hearings concerning President Harry S. Truman's firing of five-star General-of-the-Army Douglas A. MacArthur. The specific purpose of the hearings was to look into the firing of the general by the president. The action taken by the president was deemed unpopular and controversial, to say the least. As your students get deeply involved in the many issues surrounding President Truman's bold action, they will experience the following:

Knowledge

1. Realizing that opinion regarding the president's decision to fire General MacArthur was definitely not unanimous. Strong arguments were advanced by both sides favoring and opposing the act.
2. Understanding that the decision to "fire" the general was brought about by the president's belief that World War III must be prevented.
3. Learning that the move to fire General MacArthur was a move to make clear the powers of the president, as civilian commander and chief, over the military.
4. Realizing that the growth of a nation is a long, slow process characterized by continual challenge and change.

Attitudes

1. Recognizing the difficulty in deciding a course of action when two powerful points of view are in conflict.
2. Appreciating the democratic process available for reacting to a problem troubling our nation.
3. Becoming aware of the vast scope of the Truman-MacArthur controversy as it pertained to national security, foreign policy, and presidential powers.

Skills

1. Organizing and presenting information clearly and accurately.
2. Working effectively with others in planning, executing, and evaluating a group activity.
3. Using various types of information and contrary points of view as sources for a specific purpose.

OVERVIEW



*Interact's re-creations
take only a few hours
of class time.*

Four class periods—or days—are needed for this re-creation of Truman vs. MacArthur.

Day 1

In the first hour students are given background information concerning events of this historical period. Students are divided into three groups: a) four military generals and their aides, who will give testimony to a congressional committee; b) five senators, members of a special Senate committee, who will conduct an investigative hearing on the dismissal of General MacArthur by President Truman; and c) the remainder of the class who are observers/participants in the Senate hearing. With the aid of general and specific information provided, these groups meet and prepare to give and take testimony in relationship to four argument concerns which will be presented during the second and third hours. An overnight assignment is also provided.

Days 2-3

During the second and third hours, the classroom is divided. The observers/participants observe the five senators questioning the four generals separately. The testimony is concerned with the four arguments outlined in the Student Guide and given in further depth in the separate handouts provided for each senator and general. Observers/participants record the testimony on their note-taking sheets. After all testimony has been heard, a vote is taken. An overnight assignment is provided for the debriefing the next day.

Day 4

The class is again divided in the final hour for an optional UNIT TEST or a Debriefing on the historical aftermath. Emphasis is placed on the historical importance of President Truman's decision to dismiss General MacArthur.

SETUP DIRECTIONS



Note: You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for *Interact* has provided different colored handouts for students playing these roles. If you choose to give the UNIT TEST—an optional activity—you will have to duplicate it. All other items necessary for the re-creation are in the Student Guide.

1. **Decision about time** This re-creation was written to function within four class periods—one for preparation, two for the re-creation, and one for the Debriefing. However, after carefully studying the Student Guide pages and the various Teacher Guide handouts, you may want to alter it significantly because of your students' abilities, the materials on hand, and the time pressure you feel.
2. **Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
 - SENATOR RICHARD RUSSELL (one: two pages, back to back)
 - SENATOR HENRY CABOT LODGE JR (one: two pages, back to back)
 - SENATOR WAYNE MORSE (one: two pages, back to back)
 - SENATOR LYNDON JOHNSON (one: two pages, back to back)
 - SENATOR BRIEN MacMAHON (one: two pages, back to back)
 - GENERAL DOUGLAS A. MacARTHUR (two: one for MacArthur and one for his aide, eight pages, back to back)
 - GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL (two: one for Marshall and one for his aide, four pages, back to back)
 - GENERAL OMAR BRADLEY (two: one for Bradley and one for his aide, five pages, back to back)
 - GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER (two: one for Wedemeyer and one for his aide, three pages, back to back)
 - GENERAL'S RESPONSE MODEL OUTLINE (eight: one for each general and one for each aide—see the handouts, two of each general's color—one page)

Optional:

- * UNIT TEST (class set: one page)

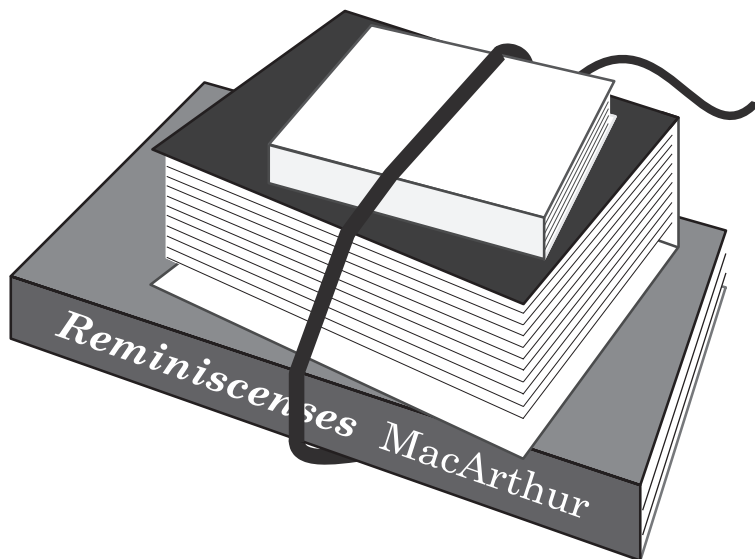
3. **Establishing roles** The five senators' and four generals' roles require capable students. Their questioning and testimony are vital to the success of the re-creation. The generals' aides also need to be reliable students since they may have to step in for the general in case he/she is absent.

BIBLIOGRAPHY



Consider speaking to your friendly librarian. Ask him/her to set up a special MacARTHUR AND THE KOREAN WAR RESERVE bookshelf so that your capable students can check out books early in order to “flesh out” their identities.

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- Whitney, Courtney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History*, Knopf, 1956.
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DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



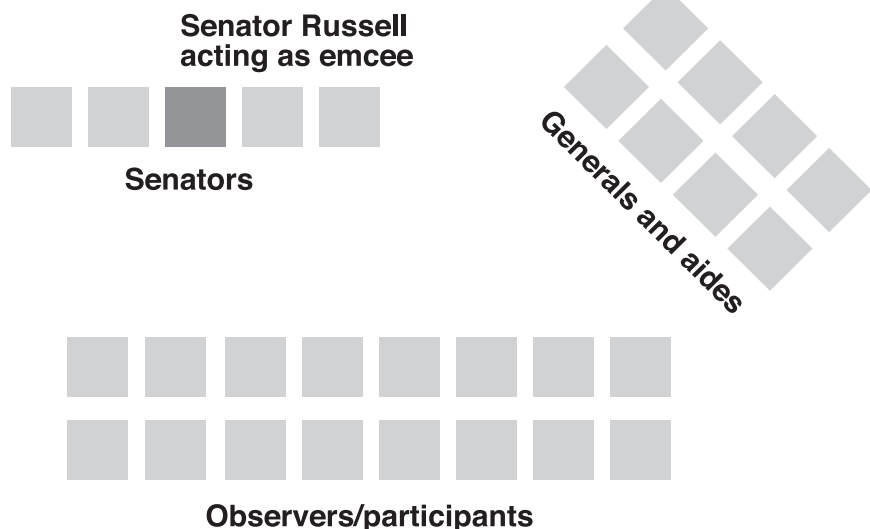
Also assign your students to read the chapter(s) in their textbook covering the Korean War and the firing of General MacArthur...

Before Day 1 Be sure you have thoroughly examined the Teacher Guide, the Student Guide, and the various handouts.

Day 1

1. Pass out the Student Guides. Read aloud to your students the Purpose on page 1. It is vital for you to establish interest in this period of history and the re-creation your students are about to enter. You can do this with a lecture and/or an audio-visual presentation (filmstrip, movie, or video tape) and reinforce this introduction with a reading of the Background Essay.
2. Have students read the Background Essay in the Student Guide. This essay will give each student the same background information to begin the re-creation. Next, refer students to the Procedure section, Day 1, Assignment, on page 4 of the Student Guide.
3. Divide the class into three groups: a) four generals, who will give testimony; b) five senators, who will question the generals; and c) the remainder of the class as note-taking observers/participants. Allow each of the generals to pick one aide from the latter group.
4. Give the four generals (also a copy to each of their aides) and the five senators their individual handouts. No student receives any handout except for the role he/she is playing. Students role-playing observers/participants will record testimony they hear on their note sheets. The instructions

During this mini-unit your students will meet occasionally in separate cooperative learning groups.



DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



Encourage your students to practice giving their speeches and asking their questions—aloud! Above all, insure that they do not simply read their material from the handouts you have given them.

for such note-taking are located in the Student Guide on page 5 under Procedure, Day 1, #6. Students may refer to the Arguments Outline in their Student Guides for an overall picture of both sides positions. Encourage students to study these arguments in advance.

5. Allow students to meet or prepare.
 - a. Observers/participants meet individually or in small groups to prepare their note sheets and go over the Arguments Outlines on page 7 in the Student Guide.
 - b. The five students role-playing the senators meet, elect a chairperson (Senator Russell), establish an order of how the questioning will take place, go over their handouts, and study the Arguments Outlines in the Student Guide.
 - c. The four students role-playing generals meet with their aides to review the testimony they will give about each of the four key questions and to fill out the GENERAL'S RESPONSE MODEL OUTLINE.
6. As an overnight assignment have the students playing the major roles continue with their preparation. Have the students who are observers/participants write responses to the statements in the Student Guide on page 5, under #7 overnight assignment.

Days 2-3

1. Arrange students in the room with the five senators facing the four generals and their aides with a wide space containing two empty chairs or desks between the groups. Have the note-taking observers/participants sit perpendicular to the senators and generals in rows in the rear half of the room.
2. The student role-playing Senator Russell, the committee chairperson, is responsible for keeping the hearing orderly. Be sure this student understands his/her function and follows directions on the handout.
3. The chairperson calls General MacArthur to the stand first. He is questioned by each senator alternately, the chairperson refraining from questioning. Each senator asks General MacArthur questions about each of the four argument areas. When all four argument areas have been covered, the chairperson calls for final comments or questions. The chairperson then moves on to the second witness, General Marshall; then on to the third, General Bradley; and, lastly, Lt. General Wedemeyer. Allow at least 15 minutes for questioning each general. Each general may

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3

Tally the votes



pause occasionally to consult with his/her aide before responding.

4. At the end of the hearing, allow each senator, including the chairperson, to make a final statement.
5. The chairperson now asks for a show of hands from the observers/participants and indicates this represents a poll of concerned citizens. Prior to this voting, the chairperson may allow the observers/participants to meet in small groups or as individuals to review their notes. After the vote, the chairperson calls the roll of the senators, including himself/herself, and announces the result from the tally. (Of course, it is only the senators' vote which counts, but they likely will be influenced by the public opinion poll referred to above.)
6. After the vote, give students an overnight assignment such as that found in the Student Guide. Note: If you plan to give students the UNIT TEST, refer them to the Testing section on page 8 in their Student Guides.

Final Day

1. *Optional:* Pass out the UNIT TEST and have students complete the objective part of the exam and/or the essay questions. (Key to Part 1 of the UNIT TEST: 1. 0, 2. +, 3. 0, 4. 0, 5. +, 6. 0, 7. +, 8. 0, 9. +, 10. +.)
2. If you plan to present the Debriefing activity, have students turn to page 8 in their Student Guides. Be sure you are familiar with the debriefing situation before you present it. The debriefing situation is a response to the committee hearing.
3. Divide the class into five groups of students with one of the five senators as the spokesperson for each group. Each group then discusses the five "conclusions" published by the 11 Republicans who supported MacArthur rather than Truman. Individual students should respond *true* or *false* to each of these five "conclusions." Then a tally should be taken and the results reported back to the large group for evaluation and discussion. Allow enough time to answer the discussion questions provided in the Student Guide. If you run out of time, you may give these questions as an overnight assignment.
4. You may wish to do the Debriefing in one hour and the UNIT TEST the following day.

SENATOR RICHARD RUSSELL - 1



While role-playing Senator Richard Russell, a Democrat from Georgia, you will be chairperson of the Senate committee conducting an inquiry into the situation in the Far East. You will examine the facts surrounding the relief of General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur from his assignment in the Korean War. Your major responsibility is to keep the hearing well organized with questions and answers flowing smoothly. Follow the instructions provided for you below. Be sure you understand them before you begin the hearing.

Instructions

1. **Classroom arrangement** Make sure the classroom has been set up properly. Refer to Procedure, Days 2-3, #2 Setup, on page 6 of your Student Guide.
2. **Getting started** Call the hearing to order. Then, using a serious tone of voice, slowly read aloud the following statement which Senator Russell actually made at the opening of the 1951 hearings.

“Gentlemen of the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations, today we are opening hearings on momentous questions. These questions affect not only the lives of every citizen, but they are vital to the security of our country and the maintenance of our institutions of free government

“General-of-the-Army Douglas MacArthur has consented to be the first witness at these hearings. I am sure it is unnecessary for me to attempt to recount in detail the deeds and services which have endeared General MacArthur to the American people.

“On the permanent pages of our history are inscribed his achievements as one of the great captains of history through three armed conflicts; but he is not only a great military leader. His broad understanding and knowledge of the science of politics have enabled him to restore and stabilize a conquered country (Japan) and to win for himself and for his country the respect and affection of a people who were once our bitterest enemies.

“The general is here today to counsel with our committees and to help us in the fulfillment of our legislative responsibilities.

“The guiding light here today ... must be the national interest, for the national interest transcends, in importance, the fortunes of any individual or group of individuals.”

3. **Questioning** Follow the exact order of questioning as provided in numbers 4, 5, 6, and 7 on page 9. Encourage all senators to ask the questions provided for them on their role sheets. *Although the senators may read the questions exactly as the questions are written, encourage them to put the questions in their own words.* If the senators use their own words, they will sound more real. Of course, the senators may also ask questions not provided—but only as long as those questions fall within one of the four argument areas.



*Speak slowly...
deliberately...
confidently...*

*Look the senators
right in the eye as
you speak.*

Note:

Once the questioning begins, you should allow each senator about five to six minutes to question a general within one argument area. Since all four senators get to question each general, expect each general to testify for at least 20-25 minutes.