

Why was General MacArthur dismissed in 1951?

<p>Truman was committed to waging limited war in Korea. Dismissing MacArthur in April 1951 showed that he was serious about pursuing this aim.</p>	<p>In March 1951 Truman made it very clear that no statements should be made about involvement in Asia unless they were cleared by the State Department.</p>	<p>In Spring 1951 MacArthur further violated Truman's wishes by sending a letter to Congress that said that 'there was no substitute for victory' and that failure to act in Korea would result in the spread of Communism.</p>
<p>The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) were angered by MacArthur's letter because they had expressed, in December 1950, that any comments being published about the war needed proper clearance.</p>	<p>In March 1951 MacArthur ignored orders and issued a communique that publicly insulted China.</p>	<p>In the end it was clear that MacArthur wanted all-out fighting in Korea.</p>
<p>In August 1950 MacArthur issued an unauthorised statement on the need for the US to defend Taiwan. This was a very sensitive issue.</p>	<p>In December 1950 MacArthur told journalists that limited war in Asia was wrong because it was the main battleground of the Cold War.</p>	<p>In May 1951 the JCS and MacArthur disagreed about the importance of China. This showed that they were right about his plans to provoke the situation in Asia in order to spark an all-out conflict.</p>

Teaching notes

Students could sort the cards chronologically first and create a living graph to show the relationship between MacArthur and Truman over time.

They could then sort them into categories that they create themselves or into suggested categories: MacArthur's objectives and actions, the role of the JCS, Truman's objectives and actions.

Finally, a hot seating activity could be completed. A confident student (or the teacher!) could take on the role of MacArthur at an imagined employment tribunal. The rest of the group could then interrogate him on his ideas, dismissal and response to it.