

## **Korea: Education on Both Sides of the DMZ**

### **Lesson Summary:**

Students will compare and contrast North Korea and South Korea through a classroom simulation. Each half of the class will compile a fact file for one country while learning about the structure and curriculum of its educational system. Then, students will compare and contrast their information with a counterpart from “the other side.” Through a class discussion, students will summarize the similarities and differences of North and South Korea. Videos, photos, articles, and blogs from journalists who have visited North Korea will offer students a glimpse into the schools and life of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

As an alternative, the teacher could present a lesson in a simulated South Korean classroom on one day and a North Korean classroom the next. Students would then discuss their experiences on a third day, generating a list of similarities and differences and reaching conclusions about the educational systems of Korea.

### **Ohio 2010 Academic Content Standards Addressed**

#### **Grade Six Social Studies: *Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere***

##### **Geography Strand**

###### ***Topic: Human Systems***

**Content Statements:** **7.** Political, environmental, social and economic factors cause people, products and ideas to move from place to place in the Eastern Hemisphere in the past and today. **8.** Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion.

##### **Government Strand**

###### ***Topic: Civic Participation and Skills***

**Content Statement:** **9.** Different perspectives on a topic can be obtained from a variety of historic and contemporary sources. Sources can be examined for accuracy.

###### ***Topic: Roles and Systems of Government***

**Content Statement:** **10.** Governments can be categorized as monarchies, theocracies, dictatorships or democracies, but categories may overlap and labels may not accurately represent how governments function. The extent of citizens' liberties and responsibilities varies according to limits on governmental authority.

## Lesson requirements:

**Time:** 2-3 days

### Materials needed:

- Korea: Life on Both Sides of the DMZ handout (front and back pages are attached)
- Two decks of fact cards for North Korea and South Korea (masters are attached)
- Flags and portraits of current leaders (attached)
- Maps of North Korea and South Korea
- Korea Society handouts—from “An Elementary School Day in Korea”, by William Fitzhugh, and "Examination Day", by Elisa Joy Holland. (South Korea)
- Play currency for each country (examples are included)
- Library books on North and South Korea (see the resources listed at the end of the lesson.)
- Books by and about Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, or props to represent them.

**Room preparation:** Simulate the two Koreas in your classroom, or in two adjoining rooms. On the North Korea side, post portraits of Kim Il Sung, the “Great Leader,” and Kim Jong Il, the “Dear Leader,” and the national flag of North Korea. Remove or cover computers, electronic devices, the American flag, and any books but those about Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il from this side. The South Korean setting will include the national flag, portraits of the president and prime minister, computers, and a wide variety of books about North Korea and South Korea. Items of popular culture, such as music CD’s, DVD’s can also be displayed. NOTE: I was able to use an adjacent empty classroom for the North Korean setting, but one side of the room with the portraits of the Dear Leader and the Great Leader would suffice. If available, a folding screen or movable wall could be used to separate the two Koreas in one classroom.

For more creative ideas about simulating a North Korean classroom, see the NCTA lesson plan, “Korea vs. Korea: The Cultural Divide” (Lesson J), written by Carrie Bray and Penny Harris. In their plan, the teacher confiscates cell phones and has every student wear a badge of the Great Leader. (I have attached a page of badges. It works well to print these in color, laminate, and cut out. We attached them with masking tape.) Bray and Harris also plan a “blackout” toward the end of the presentation due to the shortage of electricity in North Korea.

**Teacher preparation:** North Korea is one of the world's most isolated countries, and one which restricts the flow of information to and from the nation. It is important that the teacher review websites and texts prior to student use, as students may be misled by blogs, articles, and videos they find on the Internet. After research and consultation, I recommend the websites in this document's list of resources. As a means of comparison, the teacher could share the websites of the DPRK and/or the North Korean News Agency to read the propaganda of the North Korean government. These sites are also listed with the resources.

## Lesson Plan:

### DAY 1:

**1)** Divide the students into North Korea and South Korea along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel (an imaginary or taped line in the classroom). Separate the two groups of students while recounting the story of the separation of Korea after World War II and the defeat of the Japanese. If using an additional room or space, escort the students studying North Korea to their desks.

**2)** Give each student one fact card. (These pages are included at the end of the lesson plan. One deck has the North Korean flag on the back; the other has the flag of South Korea. Copy, cut out, and laminate these cards.) Tell the class to interview their fellow citizens one by one to discover several pieces of information about their own country. The teacher may choose to have students pass their cards to neighboring students, rather than move about the room. Students will record facts on a chart (attached). If time allows, students may also consult the library books or internet (in South Korea) for additional information. The Korea Society handouts at the end of this document also provide information for South Korea.

**3)** Monitor the two groups as they interact and collect facts. Be prepared in case a student should travel to the other side—perhaps to retrieve a pencil, or simply to see what the other students are doing. This unauthorized visitor could be detained, politely interrogated, or assimilated into the group.

**4)** At the end of the class period, collect the fact cards and escort the "North Koreans" back to their original desks to retrieve their school supplies. Tell the class that they will interact with their counterpart from "the other side" the next day at a diplomatic conference.

### DAY 2:

**1)** Pair up the students for Part 2 of the Korea lesson. Assign each pair a category from the information charts to compare and contrast. Give the students time to discuss the similarities and differences between North and South Korea in their category (about 15 minutes). They should summarize their discussion on the back of their chart and respond to the following question: Would these differences make it difficult to reunite North and South Korea into a single country? Why or why not?

**2)** As a whole class, summarize the similarities and differences they found and talk about the ones that might hinder an effort to reunite Korea. Give every student a complete fact page for the country they did NOT research.

**3)** Give students a rare look inside North Korea by showing them the following articles and videos, as time allows.

Sawyer, Diane. "Diane Sawyer Tours North Korean School - ABC News." *ABCNews.com: Breaking News, Politics, World News, Good Morning America, Exclusive Interviews - ABC News*. 19 Oct. 2006. Web. 03 Apr. 2011. <<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=2585361&page=1>>.

NOTE: The printed article is cited above; the video can be now found at <http://video.au.msn.com/watch/video/inside-north-korea/xn7b2v6>

Murdock, Ryan. "Inside the North Korean School System - Ryan Murdock." *Ryan Murdock's Road Wisdom*. 2 Nov. 2009. Web. 25 Apr. 2011.

[http://abytesgen01.securesites.net/ryan\\_murdock/2009/11/inside-the-north-korean-school.html](http://abytesgen01.securesites.net/ryan_murdock/2009/11/inside-the-north-korean-school.html)

Lloyd-Roberts, Sue. "BBC News - Newsnight - Life inside the North Korean Bubble." *BBC News - Home*. 1 June 2010. Web. 21 Apr. 2011.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/8701959.stm>

### Extension Activities

- 4) If another class period is available, consider showing the National Geographic special, *Inside North Korea*. This program is available on DVD, as listed in the resources below, or on *YouTube*.
- 5) Give the students copies of the contemporary news articles listed below to read and discuss as a class or small group.

## Resources

### Books:

#### Library books for use in the classroom by students and teachers

Hill, Valerie. *Korea*. Broomall, PA: Mason Crest, 2003. Print.

Kummer, Patricia K. *North Korea*. New York: Children's, 2008. Print.

Kummer, Patricia K. *South Korea*. New York: Children's, 2008. Print.

Kwek, Karen, Johanna Masse, Melvin Neo, and Dorothy L. Gibbs. *Welcome to South Korea*. Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens Pub., 2003. Print.

McMahon, Patricia, and Michael F. O'Brien. *Chi-Hoon: a Korean Girl*. Honesdale, Penn.: Boyds Mills, 1993. Print.

Miller, Debra A. *North Korea*. San Diego: Lucent, 2004. Print

Miller, Jennifer A. *South Korea*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2010.

Walters, Tara. *North Korea*. New York: Children's, 2008. Print.

Walters, Tara. *South Korea*. New York: Children's, 2008. Print.

#### Library and trade books to be used by the teacher for background information and selected readings

Demick, Barbara. *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2009. Print.

Kang, Hyok, Philippe Grangereau, and Shaun Whiteside. *This Is Paradise!: My North Korean Childhood*. London: Abacus, 2007. Print.

### Video:

*Inside North Korea*. By Peter Yost and Lisa Ling. Pangloss Films; National Geographic Television & Film; Warner Home Video, 2007. DVD.

## Websites:

"38 North: Informed Analysis of North Korea." *38 North: Informed Analysis of North Korea*. Web. <http://38north.org/>.

"DailyNK - Brightening the Future of Korea." *DailyNK*. Web. [http://www.dailynk.com/english/sub\\_list.php?catald=nk00100](http://www.dailynk.com/english/sub_list.php?catald=nk00100).

*The Korea Society - Dedicated to the Promotion of Greater Understanding and Cooperation between the US and Korea*. 2009. Web. <http://www.koreasociety.org/>.

*Korea.net*. The Republic of Korea. Web. <http://www.korea.net>.

"Korea, South." *U.S. Department of State*. Web. <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/ci/ks/>.

"NK News." *NK News*. 09 Apr. 2012. Web. <http://nknews.org/>.

"North Korea." *U.S. Department of State*. Web. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2792.htm>.

*The Official Webpage of The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)*. Web. <http://www.korea-dpr.com/>.

"Resources." *U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS*. Web. <http://uskoreainstitute.org/resources/>.

## Contemporary News Articles for class discussion

Kang Mi Jin. "Summer Vacation Brings Another Burden to Children." *The Daily NK*. DailyNK, 22 July 2011. Web. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?catald=nk01300&num=7976>.

Ripley, Amanda. "Teacher, Leave Those Kids Alone." *Time*. Time, 25 Sept. 2011. Web. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2094427,00.html>.

"South Korea's 'Education Fever'" *PBS*. PBS, 24 Jan. 2011. Web. [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/video/blog/2011/01/south\\_koreas\\_education\\_fever-print.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/video/blog/2011/01/south_koreas_education_fever-print.html).

**Student handouts are on the following pages.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Korea: Education on both sides of the DMZ

### Simulation:

**PART 1:** You are a citizen of Korea. Due to the division of the Koreas after World War II, you may live in North Korea or South Korea. Your first task is to learn about your own country by interviewing other citizens and asking good questions. You may also learn by observing the classroom. You must follow these rules:

- Speak with only one person at a time.
- Share your own piece of information when asked a specific question.
- Record the information you discover on this page. When you have written down all 12 pieces of information, take your seat.
- You may also explore the books in the “library” of your classroom for additional information.

<b>Official Name:</b>  <b>Capital City:</b>	<b>Type of Government:</b>	<b>Current leader(s):</b>
<b>Primary Education:</b>	<b>Secondary Education:</b>	<b>University:</b>
<b>Military:</b>	<b>Economy:</b>	<b>Media/Internet:</b>
<b>Currency:</b>	<b>Food/agriculture:</b>	<b>Relationship with the U.S.:</b>

## Korea: Life on both sides of the DMZ

**PART 2:** You are part of a delegation that will meet to discuss the reunification of Korea. You will be paired with a citizen from the other side of the DMZ and asked to compare and contrast one area of Korean life. On the lines below, summarize your discussion. Your leaders are particularly interested in knowing whether you think the differences between North Korea and South Korea might make it difficult to reunify these two countries. Thank you for your participation in this conference.

**Topic of Discussion:** Korea's \_\_\_\_\_

I learned that in **North Korea** \_\_\_\_\_

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However, in **South Korea**, \_\_\_\_\_

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Would these differences make it difficult to reunite North and South Korea into a single country? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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<p><b>Official Name:</b></p> <p>The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, or (DPRK).</p> <p><b>Capital City:</b>  <b>Pyongyang</b> is home to over 3 million people, who have a special permit to live there.</p>	<p><b>Type of Government:</b></p> <p>Communist state,  One-man dictatorship</p> 	<p><b>Leader(s) of the country:</b></p> <p><b>Kim Jong Un</b>—current leader, the “Supreme Leader,” and third son of Kim Jong Il.  <b>Kim Jong Il</b>--the “Dear Leader,” who died in December, 2011.  <b>Kim Il Sung</b>--the “Great Leader,” Kim Jong Il's father, who led North Korea from 1948-1994.</p>
<p><b>Primary Education:</b>  = 4 years of primary school.  Children wear uniforms and are taught about the life and ideas of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il throughout their subjects. Textbooks and dictionaries include many references to Kim Il Sung. Some students have to contribute rabbit fur, scrap iron, or other items to advance to the next level. (DailyNK)</p>	<p><b>Secondary Education:</b>  = 6 years of secondary school, also called senior middle school. Students’ studies include math, science, Communist Morality, and English. A high emphasis is placed on Kim Il-Sung as the source of all wisdom.</p> <p><b>The new school year starts in early April.</b></p>	<p><b>University:</b></p> <p>Students must be nominated and approved by committees before attending college, university, medical school, teacher’s colleges, or military colleges. Kim Il Sung University in Pyongyang is very elite.</p>
<p><b>Military:</b></p> <p><b>North Korea has built up one of the largest armies in the world,</b> up to 1.2 million personnel. Almost ¼ of the country's GNP is spent on the military. (U.S. State Department) Young men are required to serve seven years in the military at age 16. Women may be made to serve, as well.</p>	<p><b>Economy:</b></p> <p><b>The economy began to decline in the 1960's and continues to have chronic problems.</b> North Korea spends a large amount on its military, but little on consumer goods. Fridges, washing machines, and bicycles are hard to get. (BBC) Shortages of electricity are common.</p>	<p><b>Media/Internet:</b></p> <p><b>Information is censored and controlled by the government.</b> Radios and television sets are pretuned to government channels. Outside stations are forbidden. Only high government officials can access the Internet and make international phone calls, which are against the law for all other citizens. (U.S. State Department)</p>
<p><b>Currency: the won</b></p> <p><b>In 2011, \$1 in U.S. dollars =145 won officially, but much more in real life.</b> (CIA World Factbook) The official exchange rate is set by the DPRK government. In November 2009, North Korea redenominated its currency at a rate of 100 to 1 (U.S. State Department), which caused food shortages, panic, and protests.</p>	<p><b>Food / Agriculture:</b></p> <p><b>In the 1990's, floods, droughts, and poor management</b> led to a major famine, where between 500,000 and 2 million people may have died. Most still suffer a daily shortage of food. (BBC)</p> <p><b>The national dish is kimchi,</b> which is pickled vegetables.</p>	<p><b>Relationship with the U.S.:</b></p> <p><b>Relations are tense.</b> The U.S. has supported South Korea since the peninsula was divided in 1945. On April 12, 2012, North Korea launched a rocket which failed, but which the U.S. government denounced.</p>

<p><b>Official Name:</b>  <b>The Republic of Korea.</b> Its citizens call it simply, Korea.</p> <p><b>Capital City:</b>  <b>Seoul</b>, host of the 1988 Summer Olympics, has over 10 million people. It's the largest city on the Korean Peninsula.</p>	<p><b>Type of Government:</b></p> <p>Representative democracy since 1987, the first year South Koreans had free elections with real choices.</p> 	<p><b>Current leader(s):</b></p> <p><b>President Lee Myung-bak</b>, since February 25, 2008.  <b>Prime Minister Kim Hwang-sik</b></p> <p>The president of South Korea lives and works in the Blue House—a building in Seoul with a blue tile roof.</p>
<p><b>Primary and Middle School Education:</b></p> <p><b>required through 9th grade</b>  6 years primary school &amp; 3 years middle school. Students study Korean, English, social studies, math, science, physical education, music, fine arts, and moral education. Many students attend private classes after school to learn art, music, or English.</p>	<p><b>Secondary Education:</b></p> <p><b>3 years high school</b>—general high schools; vocational schools; and special schools that teach foreign languages, art, and sciences to gifted students. <b>School year</b> is March-July and September-February. Many students work after school with private tutors in academies called hagwon.</p>	<p><b>University:</b>  4 years college</p> <p>Students spend much time and effort preparing for difficult <b>national college entrance examinations</b>, which are required to attend university. Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University are the most prestigious.</p>
<p><b>Military:</b></p> <p>Young men are required to serve two years in the military. Most attend two years of college, serve in the military, and then finish their last two years of college.</p>	<p><b>Economy:</b></p> <p><b>South Korea has a high-tech industrialized economy</b>, the 15th largest in the world. Well-known South Korean companies are Samsung, Hyundai, Kia, and LG.</p>	<p><b>Media/Internet:</b></p> <p>Citizens have full access to information in print and on the internet. Modern computer and mobile phone technology is available.</p>
<p><b>Currency: the won.</b></p> <p>Paper money is printed in 1,000; 5,000; and 10,000 won. <b>In 2011, \$1 U.S. = 1107 won.</b> The bills' designs include landscapes, plants, and important people in Korea's past.</p>	<p><b>Food / Agriculture:</b></p> <p>rice, root crops, barley, vegetables, fruit; cattle, pigs, chickens, milk, eggs; fish (cia.gov)</p> <p>The national dish is kimchi, or pickled vegetables. It is eaten at every meal.</p>	<p><b>Relationship with the U.S.:</b></p> <p><b>We are trading partners and allies.</b> The United States provides aid and support to South Korea. The U.S. has supported the South since the peninsula was divided in 1945.</p>



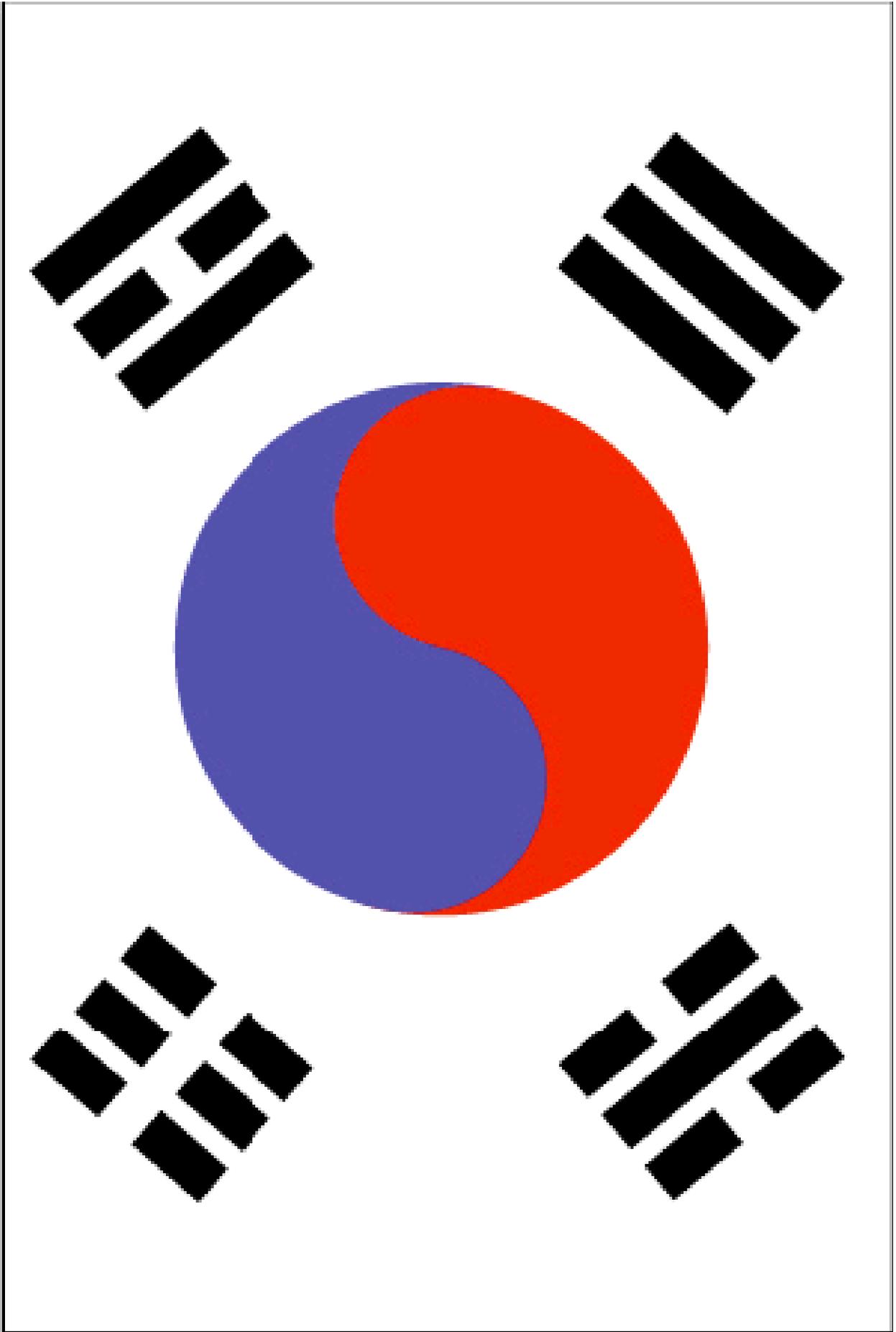














North Korean currency



South Korean currency



## **AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DAY IN KOREA**

By William Fitzhugh, The Korea Society

There are 800 students attending Ch'ongju Elementary School. All of the children walk to school. No one rides a bus. Even in the coldest weather there is always school. School is never closed because of the weather. Students go to school six days a week. Korean school children have a longer school year. They attend school for 220 days each year. Their summer vacation is much shorter than ours is. The school day is from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

In third grade students are always busy. There are 36 children in each classroom. The homeroom teacher teaches all subjects. The teacher is with the students all day long. There are nine subject areas. Students study Korean language, which includes reading, writing and language arts. They study math, social studies, science, and moral education. We might refer to moral education by another name. Sometimes it is called value education or citizenship education. Learning to work together is an important goal for all Korean children. Each homeroom has its own set of rules to follow.

There are other classes too. Students study music, fine arts, practical arts, computer skills, and physical education. Fine arts are painting, drawing, and sculpting. Practical arts include sewing and cooking. This school has two computer labs. Each lab has 36 computers. Students can use the lab in order to practice skills or conduct research. Korean children are proud of playing team sports. The baseball team of Ch'ongju Elementary has won the Ch'ongju City championship this year! Many students are involved in after school activities. Students have busy days.

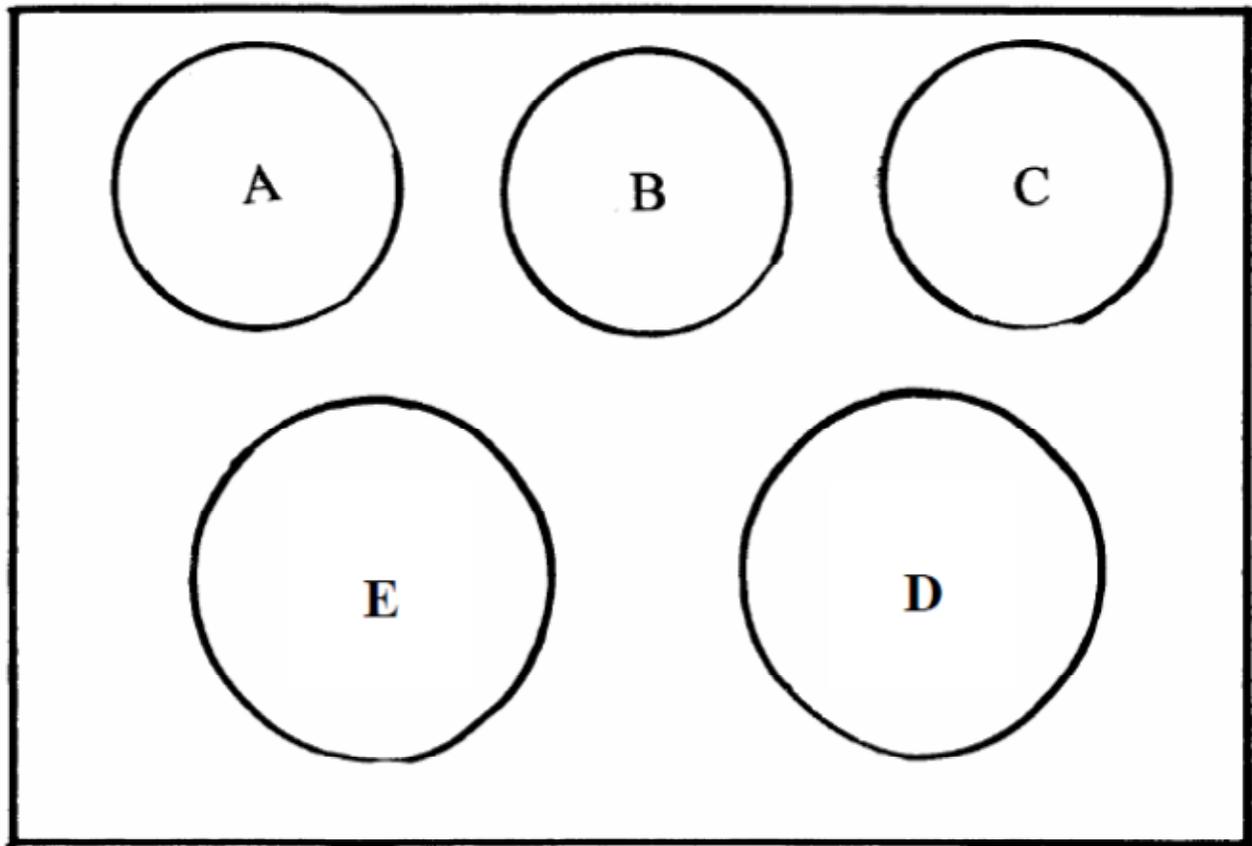
## **SCHOOL LUNCH IN SOUTH KOREA**

by William Fitzhugh, The Korea Society

The school cafeteria is a separate building. All students eat with their homerooms. Their classroom teacher eats with them. Lunchtime is a long time. After eating the children have outside playtime. No one rushes through lunch however. The entire class goes out to play at the same time. No one brings lunch from home. Students receive discounted or free lunch. The Korean government thinks a good lunch is important for all growing children to have. Lunch is served on an aluminum tray. There are five bowl-like compartments. Children eat with metal chopsticks. They also use a spoon to drink soup and eat rice. Water is served in aluminum glasses. Children help themselves to water. Children in the fifth and sixth grades receive milk with their lunch. Today's lunch is delicious. It consists of 2 sliced tomato wedges, 2 chicken nuggets, seaweed soup with potatoes, kimchi, and squid and vegetables served over rice. Kimchi is the national dish of Korea. It's a little like pickled vegetables, especially radish. It can be bland or very spicy. Everyone loves kimchi! Most moms have their own treasured family recipe for homemade kimchi. Koreans eat a lot of seafood. Squid is high in protein. It helps children grow. There is no dessert served with this lunch. No snack foods are available for sale in the cafeteria. After lunch the entire class goes outside for playtime with their teacher.

# LUNCH IN A KOREAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Aluminum Tray



### TODAY'S MENU

A Chicken nuggets

B Kimchi

C Tomato wedges

D Seaweed soup with potatoes

E Squid and vegetables served over rice

# EXAMINATION DAY

by Elisa Joy Holland

In Korea, the college entrance examination is very important. Most high school students prepare for their examination for three years, and some prepare longer. Many prepare so intensely that they cannot enjoy their life fully during this period.

## Structure of the Examination

Students who want to enter university all take the same, big examination, conducted by the government. This examination, known as the college entrance exam, is administered just once each year, usually during late fall.

The first section of the examination is “Korean Language.” It is divided into two subsections. In the first subsection, “Listening Comprehension,” students hear a dialogue, article or other short piece, and then answer questions based on what they have heard. In the second subsection, “Reading Comprehension,” students read poetry, ancient writings or articles, then answer questions related to what they have read. They are allowed 90 minutes to complete the Korean language section, which is worth 120 points.

The second section is “Mathematical Comprehension.” Students are not allowed to use calculators. They have 60 minutes to calculate all of the answers in their heads. The math section is worth 80 points.

The third section, “Mathematical Comprehension II,” weaves together different fields and topics. The first of its two subsections is “Science,” which includes biology, earth science, chemistry, and physical science. The second subsection, “Social Studies,” includes domestic science, world history, Korean history and ethics. This broad-ranging section of the examination lasts for 90 minutes, and is worth 120 points.

“English Language” is the fourth section of the examination. The English language section is structured similarly to the Korean language section. It is taken for 60 minutes, and is worth 80 points.

Today, there are new sections for second languages, such as Japanese, French, Chinese, and German.

## Examination Day

All schools are closed across the country on Examination Day. The examination begins at 9:00 AM sharp. It is administered in students’ usual school buildings.

If there is too much traffic, students can be delayed or miss their once-a-year chance to take the test. To ease the usual traffic congestion, businesses typically open one or two hours late. Police will sometimes escort late-comers to the examination sites.

Planes are prohibited from flying during the examination, because their sound could disrupt student concentration during the listening components. Students at any school near an airport would be grateful.

In the early morning, many students, parents, and teachers congregate in front of the school to rally for and encourage the exam-takers. Junior students prepare tea, coffee, rice cake, and wheat gluten for their senior schoolmates. Rice cakes and wheat gluten are symbolic, suggesting success in the examination, while the warm beverages help to prepare the students mentally. Some parents may pray for their children, and some will stay outside the school all day, until the examination is finished.

The examination concludes at 5:00 PM. Most students head home for a rest. Later in the evening, a special television program comes on that reviews the day's examination.

## **College Entrance**

Most universities have their own standards for selecting freshmen. Throughout the year, universities recruit freshmen without college entrance exam results. Students can apply to their favorite university, which evaluates them according to its own standards. Later, the university will review the student's college entrance exam results. This type of college entrance can happen at any time during the year.

One month after the examination, students receive their scores. Students submit their exam results and school records as they apply to universities. The universities evaluate the students based on their submissions, though some may administer their own written examinations (usually on current events) or conduct interviews (an English interview, for example). As opposed to the "anytime" method, this type of entrance is scheduled, based on the receipt of examination scores.

The examination system changes slightly every year. The current system has shown numerous problems. A downward trend in students' achievement (suggested by declining examination scores) has led universities to demand the right to screen entrants, and so many universities now use their own examinations, in addition to the government-administered college entrance exam, to screen students. But some people think that the national examination does a poor job of representing students' abilities. Also, the additional costs of *hagwon* tuition are burdensome to many families and produce questionable results. Many feel that, under the current system, students endure too much stress and pressure to study.