

Joy Vargo Painter  
West Geauga High School  
Chesterland, Ohio

## **North Korea – A True Totalitarian Government?**

**(Kim Jong Il - dictator or benevolent father?)**

**Purpose:** To analyze the differences among various forms of government to determine how power is acquired and used.

**Grade Level and Subject:** Grade 9, Government, Benchmark B, Systems of Government 2.e.

Lesson will also enhance students' knowledge of Geography and People and Societies.

**Commentary:** Lesson plan was designed for secondary students with cognitive disabilities, since they relate well to history taught through the experiences of children their own age or the age of their siblings. However, it can easily be modified for regular education students.

**Note** - The students this lesson was designed for have strong background knowledge regarding the rise of totalitarian governments after The Great War and the reasons for Adolph Hitler's anger over the vindictiveness of the Treaty of Versailles.

**Length of Lesson:** Because of the students' special needs, four to five - 42 minute periods.

### **Methods:**

1. Visual - videos
2. Small-group discussion
3. Use of maps and graphic organizers

### **Essential Questions:**

- What is a totalitarian government?
- Where is Korea located in relationship to the other countries in the Pacific?
- What type of land mass is it?
- What do we know about Korea's history and specifically North Korea's?

- How did Kim Seong Ju come to power? And his son?
- What is daily life like for Korean children and their families?
- How does it compare to the daily routine of students?
- What type of country is North Korea – industrial, agricultural, service?
- What problems does North Korea face?
- How do the people and their country deal with those problems?
- How do North Koreans show their pride both personally and nationally?
- How do Americans show their pride?
- Why does North Korea fear America?
- Why do Americans fear North Korea?
- Which nation has more to fear?
- What humanitarian actions have the American people taken to help the people of North Korea?
- Is Kim a true dictator or is he a ruler wanting the best for his people?
- Why it is important to look beyond “labels” to understand a foreign leader and/or nation?

**Materials:**

1. Current event news stories about U.S. and Korea
2. A map of S.E. Asia (possibly one for students to color)
3. Use of atlas – physical map
4. Documentaries (it may be necessary to read/paraphrase subtitles for students)

*North Korea: A Day in the Life*  
*A State of Mind*

## Teacher Resources:

Cumings, Bruce. *Korea's Place in the Sun*. W. W. Norton & Company.  
Cumings, Bruce. *North Korea: Another Country*. New Press.  
Ebey, Patricia Buckley. *Cambridge Illustrated History of China*.  
Cambridge University Press.  
Lee, Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*. Harvard University Press.  
Wikipedia

**Activities:** Daily begin with any relevant current event

### Day One: Introduction

1. Review vocabulary – i.e. totalitarian, peninsula, etc.
2. Discuss students' background knowledge of Korea
  - a. write their initial impressions and compare with their knowledge at completion of the unit
3. Locate Korean Peninsula on a map
4. Discuss division and the nations around it
3. Begin documentary
  - a. may show entire video or selected parts
4. Leave time for discussion of students' reactions

**Days Two – Four:** A quick summary of previous day's class, answer any questions

1. Continue documentary
2. Discuss students' reactions
  - a. Use Venn Diagrams to visually represent comparisons
  - b. Use cause and effect format to discuss tensions between the US and North Korea

**Homework:** This needs to be modified for regular education students.

With the cognitively impaired students, homework is rarely assigned because it becomes in-school work since the aid and/or teacher need to help students due to their low reading levels, writing and spelling deficiencies and no one at home to work with them.

## Assessments:

**Pre-assessment:** Determine students' background knowledge of Korea

**On going assessment:** Conduct ongoing assessment throughout the video, allowing students the opportunity for observations and/or reflections.

**Post-assessment:** Discussion of what students learned