

## **Try Your Hand at Han'geul**

Korean Lesson Plan  
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Deborah W. Robinson

### **Purpose:**

The Korean writing system known as Han'geul enables both Koreans and foreigners to learn to read and write Korean with relative ease.

### **Essential Questions:**

1. What is Han'geul and how did it come to be?
2. How has Han'geul been perceived through the years?
3. How many letters of Han'geul can you recognize, reproduce, and read?

### **Rationale:**

According to the Modern Language Association, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, only one percent of students study critical languages, such as Arabic, Korean, and Farsi/Persian in K-16 programs. Yet, these languages are invaluable to our economic strength and national security. If students are exposed to the relatively easy writing system of Han'geul, perhaps they will entertain studying Korean in addition to or in lieu of a more commonly taught language, such as Spanish.

### **Materials:**

1. Sample newspaper page (See Power Point slide that accompanies this lesson or do your own search for a newspaper online.)
2. Summary on the history of Han'geul
3. Summary on the Han'geul Alphabet
4. Annotated bibliography on Web sites on Han'geul
5. Assessment Reading Activity

Please note: This lesson is best accomplished with access to the Internet in order to properly see the Han'geul letters. You may need to enable the proper scripts to read Korean if you want to work from the Word document.

### **Activities:**

Show the sample Korean newspaper on a color transparency or through a multimedia projector. Ask students to guess what language it is. Once they have guessed correctly, point out similar letters in the writing or have students come up and point to similar letters. Encourage students by telling them that there are only 24 basic letters to learn to read and write Korean.

Introduce the history of the Han'geul writing system by using the handout provided or assign groups of students different links on the annotated bibliography of Web sites on Han'geul to do their own research on the subject. Lead a class discussion about its

origins, how it has been perceived through the years, and its current status once students have completed their research.

Next, introduce the origins of the alphabet using the handout provided. Then, have students access one of the Web sites in the annotated list to make flashcards of each letter, with the pronunciation on the back, as a learning tool. Familiarity, not mastery, is the intent.

Have students increase their abilities to recognize, reproduce, and read the letters by practicing through the Web links in the annotated bibliography. You may wish to provide students with copies of the stroke production pages from <http://www.lifeinkorea.com/Language/korean.cfm>. Work through letters as a class or let students go at their own pace.

To move to oral production and reading, use <http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/hello/korean.html>. They will find just two phrases, with a button to click for the correct pronunciation. This will give students the motivation to keep learning the writing system.

Once they are fairly confident with most of the letters, have students work at their own pace through the various expressions on <http://langintro.com/kintro/>.

Because full mastery is not the intent of this lesson, conduct the assessment as a game. Have students move between learning stations where they monitor each other and try to recognize, reproduce, and read Han'geul.

### **Assessment:**

Have students move between three learning stations to test their knowledge of Han'geul. As pairs are moving through the stations, let other pairs stay at their seats until it is their turn, practicing with their flashcards and stroke production worksheets.

At the first station, place a list of student names, a timer, and flashcards of the consonants and vowels, with the pronunciation on the back. In pairs, have students set the timer for one minute and see how many of the letters they can recognize (pronounce). One partner keeps track of the right and wrong cards by placing them in separate piles. When the minute is up, the partners switch roles. Partners record their number right on the class list.

At the second station, place a list of student names, a stroke production worksheet with five or six of the letters, and an answer sheet showing the correct stroke production for each. One student monitors his or her partner. They switch roles and record how many letters they each reproduced (wrote) correctly. NOTE: You will probably need to copy off several sheets from the "Life in Korea" Web site for each letter you choose and have students reproduce the letter just once on each of the five or six sheets.

At the third station, place a list of student names and two envelopes with four words each written in Han'geul and answer sheets with the correct pronunciation of the words from

the opposite list. Label one envelope Partner A and label the second Partner B. Have one partner read the first sheet (Partner A Reading Challenge) while his/her partner checks pronunciation (Partner B Answers). Then, have the second partner use the second list (Partner B Reading Challenge) and have the first partner check his/her pronunciation (Partner A Answers). Have students record the number of words each reads correctly.

You may wish to have students review, then repeat the assessment to see if they can best their initial results.

**Grade Adaptation:**

This lesson targets Grade Seven.

For high school students who have studied another language other than English, encourage them to take an online Korean class or to enroll in a college course through Ohio's Postsecondary Education Options program.

**State Standards:**

**Social Studies**

**Standard:** People in Societies

**Benchmark C:** Explain how contact between different cultures impacts the diffusion of belief systems, art, science, technology, language and forms of government.

**Indicator 3:** Give examples of contacts among different cultures that led to the changes in belief systems, art, science, technology, language or systems of government.

## Han'geul History

The fourth monarch of the Yi Period, King Sejong (1418-1450), was said to be a benevolent king who was saddened by the inability of most of his people to read and write. Only the male children of the nobility could read and write Hanja. That writing system was based on Chinese characters incapable of capturing the words and meanings of Korean thoughts and spoken language. In 1446, the king released the native Korean writing system known as Han'geul in a document called Hunmin Jeong-eum (correct sounds for the education of people). There was, of course, opposition by the literate elite for this “women’s and children’s script,” so named for its ease of learning.

In the early 1500s, another Yi king banned Han'geul documents. It was not widely accepted again until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Han'geul was seen as a national symbol when Japan tried to cut Korea from China’s influence. When Japan annexed Korea in 1910, Han'geul was banned from being taught in Korean schools, but it was studied in secret until Korea’s independence from Japan in 1945.

Over the last several decades, Hanja writing has diminished in both North and South Korea as Han'geul has gained in popularity. Yet, school children must still learn between 1800-2000 Hanja characters before the end of high school.

Because of the ease of learning Han'geul, illiteracy is virtually nonexistent in Korea. And it is not uncommon for foreigner students of Korean to come away with a working knowledge of the writing system after only a few hours of intensive study. SO, try YOUR hand Han'geul!

## The Han'geul Alphabet

Han'geul has 24 *jamo* or letters. Fourteen are consonants and 10 are vowels. Unlike our English alphabet, the consonants and vowels are separated.

The shape of some of the main consonants relates to the shape of the tongue, palette, teeth, and lips as we make the sound for each. Other consonants were created by adding extra lines to the basic shapes.

The vowels, however, were created in the image of the sky (formerly represented by a circle, now represented as a short line ' ), land (flatness — ), and man (person standing | ). Additional vowels were also formed by adding strokes to the basic shape. This explanation may help you categorize the letters to learn them.

### Sounds of Consonants      Sounds of Vowels

k/g (cow)	ah (father)
n (not)	yah (yatch)
t/d (Thomas)	aw (faucet)
r/l (remote, label)	yoh (ya'll)
m (mama)	oo (pool)
p/b (box)	oh (yo yo)
s/sh (sole)	u (truth)
ng (sing)	yu (you)
ch/j (jockey)	ew (move)
ch'(chop)	ee (see)
k' (cop)	
t'(top)	
p'(pot)	
h (hot)	

NOTE: You may not be able to see the bottom of this sheet when you print. If you have difficulties, access the alphabet online at one of the Web sites in the annotated list.

Consonants:

ㄱ (k), ㄴ (n), ㄷ (t), ㄹ (r or l), ㅁ (m), ㅂ (p), ㅅ (s or sh),  
ㅇ (voiceless), ㅈ (ch), ㅊ (ch'), ㅋ (k'), ㅌ (t'), ㅍ (p'), ㅎ (h)

Vowels:

ㅏ (a), ㅑ (ya), ㅓ (o), ㅕ (yo), ㅗ (o), ㅛ (yo), ㅜ (u), ㅠ (yu), ㅡ (u), ㅣ (i)

The basic letters when the alphabet was first created were the consonants " ㄱ , ㄴ , ㄷ , ㅁ , ㅇ " and the vowels ' , " — , and | " .

Nine additional letter were made by adding strokes to the five basic consonants based on the strength of the sounds, as follows.:

ㄱ - ㅋ  
ㄴ - ㄷ, ㅌ  
ㅁ - ㅂ, ㅃ  
ㅇ - ㅈ, ㅉ  
ㅇ - ㅎ

However, 'ㅇ' is no longer used.

## **Annotated Bibliography of Web Sites on Han'geul**

<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Pagoda/1876/hangul.htm>

I know the URL looks weird for a site about Korean language, but it leads to a very nice history of Han'geul and how it has been viewed through the ages. It is written at a simple level of complexity for middle school age students.

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/korean.htm>

Use the "Origin of Writing" section here. This site gives a concise review of how Han'geul came to be and how it has been viewed through the ages. It's just one page of history. Gifted students may enjoy more detail on the following sites: <http://www.declan-software.com/korean.htm#Hangul> or <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hangul>.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_language)

The introductory section on where the language is used and how many people speak it is very useful. This site has an easy section on sounds. Have students view the consonants and vowels section.

<http://www.lifeinkorea.com/Language/korean.cfm>

This link provides an introductory history to Han'geul and very clear information on consonants and vowels. Have students click on link to Joseon for a bit more history about how the alphabet came to be. Have students click on the practice writing link to show how the strokes for letter production are made. They can print out and practice letter combinations. Although there is a vocabulary link to many themes, there is no pronunciation practice associated with this link. Use the next two Web sites for reading with oral production practice. There is a link on this site to find practice partners. You may wish to locate appropriate keypals yourself and limit students' access unless they are over 18. Or, seek parental permission to have students select practice partners themselves.

<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/hello/korean.html>

This site provides just two phrases to learn. It does give the phonetic pronunciation and lets students hear the words. This would be a good site to use prior to the next, more extensive site that allows more oral language production.

<http://langintro.com/kintro/>

This link provides an easy to follow way to learn to speak Korean based on Han'geul. There is little written text on each page. Learners can click on the speaker icon to hear the phrase or word and repeat it as often as they wish. Topics include the Korean alphabet, basic conversational phrases, parts of the body, members of the family, vocabulary, numbers, asking for directions, and two sections on grammar. Because there is no phonetic spelling, this site should be used only after students have at least minimal abilities to read Han'geul.

Partner A Reading Challenge	Partner B Answers
라면	ramyeon (noodles)
가족	gajok (family)
어머니	eomeoni      Mother
홍콩	Hong Kong

Partner B Reading Challenge	Partner A Answers
통닭	tongdak (chicken)
아버지	abeoji (father)
감자탕	gamja-tang (potato soup)
뉴욕	New York