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Korea  
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## Korea: Government, Economics, and Effects

### Curriculum Alignment:

#### State of Ohio Academic Standards:

Government/Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities

1. Explain how the opportunities for citizens to participate in and influence the political process differ under various systems of government.
2. Compare the rights and responsibilities of citizens living under various systems of government.

#### District Course of Study:

Asia

**Big Idea:** "Students will understand that government affects society, and individuals are impacted."

**Essential Question:** "How do today's practices in Korea play a role in modern-day society and how does that compare to other styles of government?"

### Intended Audience:

Sixth grade reading and social studies students

### Materials Needed:

Non-fiction articles (attached)  
Handout (graphic organizers) to focus instruction/clue in reading skills  
Variety of three colors of "poker-chips"  
Pencil  
Highlighter (optional)

### Time Required (suggested):

If using "reading" instruction to teach reading non-fiction strategies as well as the continent of Asia =90+ minutes

**Background Knowledge (Units by Design set-up):**

This lesson is not intended to be taught in isolation. Prior knowledge of economic factors is required. It is intended to be integrated within an Asia unit encompassing other skills, knowledge, essential questions, and big ideas.

It is also important to understand that this lesson is part of a “Units by Design” plan. Within this plan, students construct “skills” and “knowledge” and are then guided to synthesize information in order to formulate an answer to an “essential question.” Furthermore, students then take that level of understanding to generate a “big idea” that is a transferable thought (a thought that can be applied to other regions/situations).

This lesson is best if it is taught in an integrated classroom. Students should not only participate in this lesson for acquisition of social studies content, but also, to learn active non-fiction reading strategies. Furthermore, learn to use the two together to think critically at a higher level of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

**Procedure:**

1. Anticipatory set: In order to tap into students’ prior knowledge and “hook” them into the lesson:
  - a. begin by giving each table an evenly distributed amount of “resources”... i.e. five red chips, five blue chips, and five green chips.
  - b. Next, explain the symbolism behind the chips. Red symbolizes natural resources, blue symbolizes human resources, and green symbolizes capital goods. Clarify and reiterate what those economical factors are, if needed.
  - c. Then, begin a simulation. “So, each table has the same amount of each type of resource, and each table is a country. How is it possible that some of you will now grow to be developed countries in the future, while others of you will grow to be considered low income or ‘developing’ countries?” Allow discussion time.
  - d. Regroup with kids and discuss the factors they explore. Probe them to understanding that a role, such as government, may play a huge factor, just as much as the resources itself.
  - e. Set the stage for today’s lesson... “How does government impact/influence life for the citizens? How does that differ according to different types of government?”

2. Give explicit directions to the students regarding the objective you would like them to meet, and the steps they need to take in order to help them achieve that objective.
  - a. Objective: Compare and contrast North and South Korea's type of government. Compare and contrast North and South Korea's past and present economy. Create and defend a claim that explains how government affects economy using specific evidence from the two countries."
  - b. Directions:
    - i. Working cooperatively in the group, assign each member a role: reader, recorder, time-keeper, and task-master.
    - ii. Reader will read aloud the provided informational hand-out.
    - iii. All members of the group are to take margin notes
    - iv. Task-master must periodically stop the group to pause for discussion, clarifying that all members of the task understand the passage. Reading strategies must be used: questioning, connections, visualizations, determining importance, etc.
    - v. As the group discusses, the recorder will write down any evidence that the group decides is important info. Either for the objective, or for details to support their claim.
    - vi. After the reading is finished, the students will all fill out the graphic organizers.
    - vii. Next, synthesize each member of the group should independently write down what they feel the claim should be. Once all students have it written, the task-master can ask students of the group to read their claim, one by one. Next, students will vote on which they should use and modify it accordingly.
    - viii. Working together, the students will use the recorder's notes and their margin notes to find evidence to support their claim.
3. Teacher will walk around and observe the productivity of the groups and direct as needed. At this time, informal observation will be conducted as to which groups understand the concepts and clarify misconceptions.
4. Class will regroup.
5. Each group will share their claim and support.
6. Class will reflect upon how similar/different the claims are and come up with a whole-class understanding of the objective.

7. Teacher will close the discussion.
8. Students will fill out an “exit pass” that restates, again, in their own words, what factors influence an economy and how? This shows students have learned a “transferable” knowledge.

**Assessment:**

*Formal:* Students will be evaluated through the accuracy of information on the graphic organizers, the correctness of the exit pass, and through the depth of the claim and support.

*Informal:* observation will be present through-out the lesson and through discussion.



## The Economy

The economy of a nation depends on the characteristics of its people and available natural resources. Korea as a unified nation was blessed with an industrious people and abundant natural resources, though the natural resources were not uniformly distributed. To get a better understanding of the changes that have occurred in the two Koreas since their division, compare the production capabilities of the two sections when they were first separated.

Comparison of Production in North and South Korea, 1945		
Category	South Korea	North Korea
Steel	5%	95%
Hydro-electric Power	10%	90%
Chemicals	15%	85%
Coal	20%	80%
Food	65%	35%
Machinery	65%	35%
Consumer Goods	80%	20%

K. Lee (1984). A New History of Korea. Harvard University Press

So at the time of the partition, North Korea had most of the minerals, energy resources, and heavy industry, while South Korea had most of the light industry and agricultural lands. Most of Korea's industrial and energy facilities were destroyed in the Korean War, so in the mid-fifties, both North and South Korea essentially started rebuilding their respective economies from the ground up.

In 1945, industrial and agricultural methods were still primitive by contemporary western standards. Most of the light industrial products were produced by hand in small shops like this brass factory.

Agriculture in 1945 was also almost entirely done

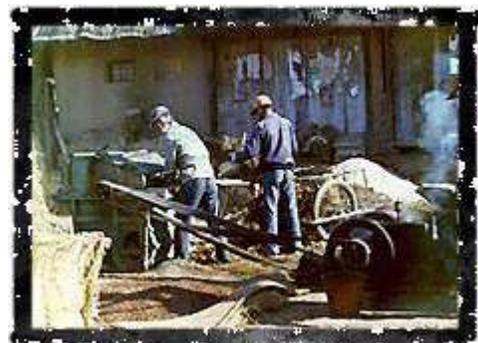


Photo: R.J. Myers

by human and animal power. Although farmland was not destroyed by the War, the lack of industrial capacity to produce heavy farm machinery and fertilizers, as well as the lack of investment capital in the hands of farmers, prevented widespread use of modern farming methods for decades. Even in the 1970's, plowing with draft animals was the rule rather than the exception, as shown in the photo below.



Photo: R.J. Myers

While most of the minerals are still in the North and most of the farmlands are still in the South, the relative size and strength of the respective economies of North and South Korea have changed significantly. The economies in the two Koreas have been rebuilt during the last 40 years according to the different economic philosophies of their respective governments and within different economic communities. How have they fared? For a quick summary, you can visit the sections here on the [South Korean](#) economy and the [North Korean](#) economy. For a more in-depth look, you will need to find references in your library or on the Internet.

<http://www.cotf.edu/ete/modules/korea/keconomy.html>

## The Economy: North Korea

Following communist philosophy, North Korea's industries were nationalized and agricultural production collectivized shortly after the end of World War II. Like South Korea, North Korea strove for economic development through a series of multi-year development plans designed by the central government. An era of considerable growth followed. Emphasis, however, was on developing heavy industry and weapons programs to support a large military establishment at the expense of consumer-related production.



Since North Korea was an important zone of contention between the Communist bloc and the West during the Cold War, it received significant economic support from Communist China and the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the Communist bloc in the early 1990s, North Korea has been left more and more to itself both economically and politically. The Soviet Union was North Korea's biggest economic benefactor and trading partner. As the Soviet Union metamorphosed back into Russia and large chunks of the superpower broke off and became

period of 1989-92, Russia cut off financial aid to North Korea. The economy of North Korea declined sharply following this loss of support, leading to interruptions in industrial production and critical energy shortages. At present, the economy of North Korea is stagnant. The 1994 estimated GDP was about \$21.3 billion, only about 4% as large as South Korea's GDP.

**Energy** North Korea's natural energy resources are greater than those of South Korea, but like South Korea, North Korea has no known oil or gas reserves. Over half of the North's energy production is by abundant hydroelectric power; the rest is generated through the burning of imported fuels. Presently, North Korea's total capacity for electrical energy at any given time is about 9,500 MW. Actual production in 1993 was about 50 billion kWh, or 2,053 kWh per person, comparable to the per capita use in South Korea. However, most of the energy in the North is used by industry and the military, not by consumers.

**Industry** Industrial products in the North include machinery, military products, raw and processed minerals like steel and copper, textiles, and some food processing.

**Agriculture** North Korea has significantly less farmland than South Korea, yet agriculture in North Korea now accounts for about 25% of the GDP and 36% of the work force. This is an interesting change from the Korean War era because now agriculture in North Korea accounts for a larger part of the North's economy than it does in the more richly endowed South. Principal agricultural products of North Korea are similar to those of the South: rice, potatoes, and livestock.



Photo: R.J. Myers

One of the most important food crops in Eastern Asia, including both Koreas, is rice. The photo to the left shows terraced fields and rice paddies in every available spot in the rugged countryside of the central highlands of South Korea. Similar scenes would be found all through North Korea as well. In spite of extensive irrigation, heavy use of fertilizers, and introduction of modern farming techniques, North Korea does not yet produce enough food to feed its own people. Factors contributing to this deficit include limited acreage suitable for agriculture, concentration of governmental support in military and heavy industry, and the general economic depression caused by loss of economic aid from the disintegrating Communist bloc. Harvests have been declining since 1989, but now North Korea is experiencing critical food shortages brought on by natural disasters, on top of the other problems. The heaviest rains of this century fell on

North Korea in the summer of 1995, causing landslides and extensive flooding. More heavy rains caused renewed flooding in the summer of 1996. This flooding two years in a row has contributed to back-to-back poor harvests and the threat of famine. The United Nations and religious and humanitarian groups worldwide are attempting to supply food and aid.

This is a close-up of some rice paddies. The photo, taken in the South Korean highlands, is typical of fields throughout North and South Korea.

<http://www.cof.edu/ete/modules/korea/keconomy3.html>



Photo: R.J. Myers

## The Economy: South Korea

Despite extensive financial aid from the United States in the late fifties, South Korea's economy remained weak. Unemployment was high, production was low, and the population was growing quickly. The poor economic conditions caused civil unrest, which agents from North Korea tried to turn into revolt. This situation led to a takeover by the South Korean military in May 1961. The military exercised not only political control, but took over direction of the economy as well. The first five-year plan, launched in 1962, embodied the new philosophy: emphasis on exports and participation in the world market. Changes in national policies on business, banking, and foreign investment led to an economic explosion. South Korea's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew from \$2.3 billion in 1962 to \$508 billion in 1994 (in constant 1994 dollars). This translates into an annual per capita increase from \$87 to \$6700 over the same period. Much of South Korea's production is in the hands of civilians, so the huge increase in the GDP translates into a similar rise in the standard of living of the average South Korean. South Korea has developed one of the most vigorous and dynamic economies in the world today, growing at a rate of 6-8% per year, far above the world average.



**Energy** Abundant energy is one of the basic requirements for economic development of any nation. South Korea's natural energy resources are limited. There is some coal and some hydroelectric capability, but no known oil or gas reserves. Yet South Korea's energy demands are huge. Consequently, South Korea imports large amounts of oil and liquid natural gas and has developed a nuclear power industry. In 1993, the sources of energy production were nuclear (32%), hydroelectric (10%), petroleum (22%), and coal and other sources (36%). The present total capacity for electrical

energy production at any given time is about 26,940 MW. Actual production in 1993 was about 137 billion kWh, or 2,847 kWh per person.

**Industry** South Korea's industrial production is presently growing at an even faster rate than the general economy, some 12% per year. With a large and educated work force and limited natural resources, South Korea tends to import raw materials and export finished products. Industrial production has gone to high technology in recent years, creating and exporting electronic and electrical equipment, heavy machinery, automobiles, and ships. Light industrial products include textiles, clothing and footwear. Many of these products are familiar to American consumers.

**Agriculture** Agricultural lands are limited in South Korea. For many years after the Korean War, food shortages continued to be a problem. Farming was done mostly by hand and animal power, and the resources to adopt modern techniques were beyond individual farmers.



Photo: R.J. Myers

This Korean farmer is heading off to work with hand tools and a basket for carrying produce. The plowed field behind him is probably a cabbage patch, an important food crop. Government support for agriculture since the 1970s, including price supports, mechanization, and use of modern farming techniques, have made South Korea self-sufficient in nearly all foodstuffs. Important food crops include rice, barley, root crops, vegetables, fruit, and livestock products. Fishing and forestry are also important agricultural activities in South Korea. In particular, South Korea has developed one of the largest fishing fleets in the world. Recent international concerns and regulations governing fishing in the world's oceans have hurt the Korean fishing industry. Agriculture now accounts for about 8% of the GDP and 21% of the work force.

<http://www.cotf.edu/ete/modules/korea/keconomy2.html>

## Current World Relations



**South Korea** Geopolitical realities during the Cold War era caused South Korea to maintain close political and economic ties to the United States and the West after the end of World War II. Even during the '60s and '70s, when the government was essentially a military dictatorship, ties with the West remained strong. With the establishment in the late 1980s of a government again controlled by civilians, international ties became only stronger and broader. International cooperation is

a major diplomatic goal. South Korea even established diplomatic relations with mainland China in 1992.

The outstanding exception to good international relations for South Korea is North Korea. Although there have been periods of political "thaw" between the two nations, the fear of invasion by the North is constant. Negative attitudes toward the North are still prevalent in large segments of South Korea's society.

In order to protect itself, South Korea maintains an armed force of over 600,000 military personnel, distributed through an army, navy, and air force. Equipment and training are kept to the highest modern standards. The fiscal outlay for South Korea's military in 1995 was about \$14 billion, or 3.3% of the GDP. This is a large military establishment for a nation of 46 million people, but considered necessary to ensure survival against the North.

**North Korea** In contrast, North Korea's international relations have shrunk considerably in recent years. Tied by politics and ideology to the Communist bloc after World War II, North Korea developed few ties to the rest of the world. With the collapse of Communism, even North Korea's erstwhile allies began to weaken connections, leaving the country more and more isolated. Even Communist China, its biggest supporter, established diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1992.



In recent years, North Korea has been viewed as a growing threat to peace in the rest of the world. It has established and armed a huge standing military force of over a million soldiers. Annual defense outlays are estimated to be about \$5 billion, an astounding 20-25% of the GDP. North Korea has also developed its own short- and intermediate- range guided missiles. The missiles are primarily for use against South Korea, but they are apparently being sold to other nations like Libya. Some observers believe that North Korea is developing a long-range missile, the Taepo Dong II, that would be capable of carrying a small nuclear warhead to targets in the United States. North Korea has developed its own nuclear weapons program, and some suggest that it already has a small stockpile of warheads.

Shutdown of North Korea's nuclear weapons capability was the objective of a diplomatic mission by former US President Jimmy Carter in June, 1994. Unfortunately, the sudden death of Kim Il Sung in July, 1994 delayed those negotiations. Although North Korea agreed in December 1995 to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for two new nuclear power reactors, Kim's son and designated political heir, Kim Jong Il, lacks the total control exercised by his father, so the political direction North Korea will go in the future is uncertain.