

THROUGH STUDENTS' EYES: IMAGES AND SYMBOLS OF KOREA

GRADE LEVEL: Middle School

SUBJECT: Social Studies

TIME REQUIRED: One to two class periods

OBJECTIVES:

1. Examine and analyze Korean national symbols and American national symbols.
2. Explore Korean history and contemporary Korea through the use of symbols.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Handout: Through Student Eyes: Images and Symbols of Korea
- Internet access (If internet access is not available in class, you can still run off the Korean images and the image of the great seal and do this lesson in class. See www.campus.ccsd.k12.co.us/ss/korean_students_eyes/koreanstudents.htm.)

BACKGROUND:

The illustrations included in this lesson, which are to be accessed over the internet, were drawn by students at Dae-il (Taeil) Foreign Language High School in Seoul, Korea, on June 30, 2000.

PROCEDURE:

The handout can be used to guide the students throughout the entire lesson.

1. Direct students to the internet site with the Great Seal of the U.S. or provide a handout or overhead of it in class. Discuss the meaning of the seal and its symbolism. Discuss other symbols students might use to depict the culture and values of the U.S.
2. Direct students to the internet site for the images in “Through Students' Eyes” or provide your own handout if in-class computer use is not available. Have students look over the images. Then provide the handout included below to help them with their analysis. Have them answer the questions provided in Activity One.
3. Have a class discussion comparing U.S. and Korean symbols and what, based on these, we can deduce about the different cultures.

ENRICHMENT:

Have students do further research and write an essay on one of these symbols, as indicated in Activity Two.

Handout
THROUGH STUDENTS' EYES:
IMAGES AND SYMBOLS OF KOREA

A Note to Students: In this lesson you will examine and analyze national symbols and images drawn by Korean high school students. They were asked to illustrate symbols and images of their nation that they considered important for their American counterparts to know about Korea. To begin this lesson you will need some background information about the symbols and ideals expressed in the Great Seal of the United States. Then you will visit some Internet sites to learn some important information about historical and contemporary Korea.

The Great Seal of the United States: (go visit <http://www.greatseal.com>). The Great Seal appears on all documents signed by the president, cabinet officers, and ambassadors. It is used on medals and currency. It is also displayed above the entrance to U.S. embassies throughout the world. The design for our Great Seal was adopted by Congress in 1782. What does the eagle with outstretched wings represent? What does the shield with six red stripes and seven white stripes show? What is the meaning of the phrase "E pluribus unum?"

Locating Korea in the World: Find Korea on a map of Asia (go visit http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/middle_east_and_asia).

Why Two Koreas?

Do you know why there are two Koreas—North and South? After World War II and the defeat of the Axis powers, in 1945 the Allied powers decided to divide Korea at about the 38th parallel, or line of latitude. The Soviet Union would administer the northern part, and American troops would administer the southern part of Korea.

Elections were held in South Korea, and in 1948, the Republic of Korea was established. Shortly after North Koreans officially established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a Communist state. Within a year, both the United States and the U.S.S.R. withdrew their occupying forces.

The Korean War (go visit <http://korea50.army.mil/cobblestone/cobblestone.html>) began in June 1950 when the North Korean Army invaded the South. The United States and fifteen other United Nations member nations committed troops for this "U.N. Police Action." One and a half million Korean civilians perished in this war, and several million more became refugees. Almost 54,000 U.S. troops lost their lives (go visit <http://www.nps.gov/kwvm/home.htm>). The truce that ended fighting in 1953 left Korea a divided nation, once again at the 38th parallel. Today the border that divides the Korean peninsula—the DMZ or demilitarized zone is among the most guarded borders in the world. Technically, this war stopped at a stalemate with no official peace treaty.

Thousands of U.S. troops are still stationed in South Korea.

Hopes for Reunification: Family members that ended up on opposite sides of the border when war broke out in June 1950 have been completely shut off from one another. About 7.6 million South Koreans are believed to have family in the North. Young people today—many of them your age—would like to see a unified Korea. In the summer of 2000, many Koreans who desire reunification were given much hope as the leaders of the North and South held summit talks and arranged for family reunions to take place simultaneously in Seoul, South Korea, and in P'yongyang, North Korea. Finally in August 2000, 100 South Koreans and 100 North Koreans chosen by lottery flew to each other's capital for four-day reunions. Many on both sides of the border believe that this event was an important step toward eventual reunification of the Korean Peninsula. To find out the latest news on this important issue, visit one of the following Korean newspapers: the *Korea Herald* (<http://www.koreaherald.co.kr>), the *Korea Times* (<http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/times.htm>), or the *Chosun Ilbo* (<http://english.chosun.com>).

Through Students' Eyes: National Symbols and Images: Examine the illustrations of national symbols developed by Korean students from Dae-il Foreign Language High School (visit www.campus.ccsd.k12.co.us/ss/korean_students_eyes/koreanstudents.htm). Their illustrations provide us with a glimpse into the values, history, culture, customs, and hopes of young Koreans.

Activity One: On a separate sheet of paper or by creating your own word-processed document, identify the specific student illustrations that:

- Represent Korea's rising prominence in an increasingly interdependent world.
- Display the recent hopes for reunification between North and South Korea.
- Convey national pride in being selected to host an international athletic event.
- Show an animal native to Korea and familiar to Korean students through legends and folk tales.
- Illustrate the Korean symbol known as T'aeguk.
- Show some of the religious heritage of the Korean people.
- Display pride in Korea's language and history.
- Illustrate traditions of the Korean people.
- Demonstrate the respect for nature that many Koreans share.
- Depict a traditional Korean self-defense martial art often referred to as the national sport of Korea.
- Show the Korean symbol for harmony between heaven, man and earth.

You should be able to provide reasons for your selections.

Activity Two: Examine the illustrations again and select a favorite one from the following topics:

- Reunification of the Koreas
- Korean traditions
- Korean Buddhism

- *Han'gul*, the Korean writing script
- Korean folktales and legends
- Korea's importance in the global economy
- The 2002 World Cup championships
- Tae Kwon Do
- Korean *T'aeguk* or *T'aegukki*
- Cultural values important to Koreans

Copy the illustration you have chosen to a word-processing document. Then on the same page write a short essay in which you hypothesize about the meaning of the illustration. Use the internet and print resources to find more information about Korea and the symbols used in the illustration you have chosen, and include this information in your essay. Make sure you correctly cite your sources and give your essay a title.