

EDUCATION

GRADE LEVEL: Middle School

SUBJECT: Social Studies

TIME REQUIRED: One to two class periods

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

1. List the types of schools that Korean children attend.
2. Compare and contrast the school system in Korea with the school system in the United States.
3. Describe the nature of education in Korean society.

MATERIALS:

Handouts accompanying this lesson include: Korean Education Today, Elementary School in Korea, Junior High School Curriculum and Hours, High School Curriculum and Hours

PROCEDURES:

1. Have students write on a piece of paper what a typical school day would be if they were to describe it to someone from another country. Tell them to include the things that they think are most important about the school they attend.
2. Distribute copies or read aloud handout "Elementary School in Korea". Ask students to listen to the reading or to read the article one paragraph at a time. Each reading should be directed by a purpose, such as reading the first paragraph and listening for similarities to your school experience; or read to find out if parents are involved in the daily school experience of Korean children.
3. Using handout "Korean Education Today," list the different types of schools that Korean children attend during their school career. Have students describe the U.S. counterparts to these Korean institutions.
4. Have students read over the charts on junior high and high school curriculum and hours. Have them compare these to their own experience in terms of subjects studied, hours school is attended and nature of the school day. Ask them who is being better prepared for the 21st century and why.
5. Tell students that Korean people have a near 100% literacy rate. Ask students to brainstorm why they think Korean people enjoy such a high literacy rate.

ENRICHMENT:

Find out the literacy rates of the major industrialized countries in the world today. What factors contribute to a country's literacy rate? How important is it that people be literate? Develop an essay or panel discussion to explore opinions on these questions.

KOREAN EDUCATION TODAY:

The period from 1945 to 1970 witnessed a dramatic expansion of education in Korea. In spite of the widespread destruction of facilities and economic suffering brought about by the Korean War (1950-1953), Korea succeeded in virtually eliminating illiteracy. Today, every child of elementary school age is offered a free education in accordance with the compulsory education system.

SCHOOL SYSTEM:

The general school system in Korea comprises primary, lower secondary, higher secondary, and higher education. These correspond to elementary school, middle school, high school, junior college, college and university in the United States. Elementary school provides six years of compulsory education to children between the ages of six and 11, and will be discussed in the another handout. Middle school offers three years of lower secondary education to children aged 12 to 14. High school offers three years of higher secondary education to students aged 15 to 17. High school graduates can choose a two-year junior college or a four-year college or university to receive higher education.

SCHOOL EDUCATION:**ELEMENTARY EDUCATION:**

See handout 15.2

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Upon completing elementary school, children in the 12-14 age bracket are allowed to enter middle school for the seventh through ninth grade courses.

Admission to middle school has been made through a lottery assignment administered on a zone basis since the abolition of entrance examinations in 1969. This equalizing measure eradicated distinctions between so-called inferior and superior schools so that all elementary school graduates could have equal accessibility to all middle schools located in their respective zones.

The middle school curriculum is composed of 12 basic or required subjects, elective subjects, and extracurricular activities. Technical and vocational courses are included in the elective subjects to ensure a productive relationship between education and occupation.

HIGH SCHOOL:

The high school entrance examination system was to effect a lottery assignment on a zone basis for applicants who have passed the qualifying state examination. High schools are largely divided into two categories: academic and vocational.

In academic high schools, the revised high school entrance examination system was implemented in five major cities on an experimental basis and applied later to all schools across Korea. One of the most notable results was a drastic increase in the number of students enrolling in academic high schools.

The curriculum consists of 27 subjects to be taught over a three-year period, allowing the principal of each school extensive latitude in deciding elective subjects.

Those completing middle school may proceed to vocational high schools. These schools provide a more specialized program of vocational training.

Schools in this category include seven major types: agriculture, technical, commercial, trade, marine, comprehensive and arts. Applicants for vocational high schools must take a preliminary examination administered at the provincial level. Those who pass this examination are tested again by the individual schools and those failing this main test are given a chance to enter academic high schools through the lottery system without taking another examination.

The curriculum of these schools are of various types, usually consisting of 30-percent general education and 70-percent vocational courses with equal emphasis on theory and practice. In general, the first year is devoted to learning general subjects, while vocational subjects occupy greater proportions of the proceeding years. Before graduating, all students are required to complete an apprenticeship.

HIGHER EDUCATION:

About 80-percent of all Korean institutes of higher education are private and all institutes of higher education, whether private or public, come under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The ministry exercises control over such matters as student quotas, qualifications of teaching staff, curriculum and degree requirements and general education courses.

Institutes of higher education have a high degree of autonomy in organizing courses. One legal stipulation, however, is that studies should include a general and liberal education program consisting of such basic subjects as Korean language, at least two foreign languages, introduction to philosophy, cultural history, general theory of science and physical education.

GRADUATE SCHOOL :

The Education Law stipulates that a university must have at least one graduate school offering in-depth, research-oriented courses for graduate students who aspire to pursue academic or professional careers.

The minimum requirement for a Master's degree is 24 credits, normally achieved in four semesters by day students and five semesters by night students. The minimum requirement for a Doctorate is 36 credits, which usually takes three years to earn. Proficiency tests in two foreign languages are additionally given to Ph.D. candidates.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN KOREA

Elementary schools in Korea are in session Monday through Saturday. Most schools begin with homeroom at 8:30 in the morning and have their first class period at 9:00. Every Monday morning the entire school gathers for an assembly. All the classes stand in rows behind their teachers, while the principal lectures and makes announcements of the week. On other days students go directly to homeroom. Homeroom in Korea is different from homeroom in the U.S; in Korea a homeroom has about 55 students who all study together, and most of the subjects are taught with the same group by the homeroom teacher.

Each class period is 40 minutes long with a ten minute break between classes. The standard subjects of study in Korea are: language; moral education; social studies; arithmetic; science; physical education; music; and art. The students are also allowed an extracurricular activity for one period each week. The most popular classes are computer study, gymnastics, calligraphy, and marching band. Students also attend a class meeting each week to discuss events affecting their classes. Each class has an elected leader. The leader is responsible for helping the teacher grade tests and for delegating responsibilities to other students. In Korea, students are responsible for cleaning up their classrooms, restrooms and school grounds.

Many Korean schools now offer hot lunches to students, but, most students bring their lunch from home. Students eat lunch at their desks and are then encouraged to go out to the playground and be active during a recess period.

Korean students spend an average of two to three hours every night on homework. Most of the homework is in Korean language class and arithmetic. In Korean language class, students keep daily diaries and practice letter writing. When students have difficulty with an assignment, they usually ask older siblings or parents for help. Often, students gather together and study at one student's home.

Every spring and fall the older students take weekend trips to historic sites and the younger children have picnics. Parents are invited to the picnics and bring food for their families

and their child's teacher. Every year there is an all-day athletic meet in which parents are encouraged to participate with their children. The entire school is divided into two teams. The two teams compete in contests that are team-oriented rather than individual events. The last event is a relay race in which all team members come together in a display of team spirit and cooperation.

Junior High School (7-9th grade) Curriculum and Hours in Korea

Classification	7th Grade hrs*/yr* * (hrs/wk) * * *	8th Grade hrs/yr (hrs/wk)	9th Grade hrs/yr (hrs/wk)
Moral Education	68 (2)	68 (2)	68 (2)
Korean Language	136 (4)	170 (5)	170 (5)
Korean History		68 (2)	68 (2)
Social Studies	102(3)	68-102 (2-3)	68-102 (2-3)
Mathematics	136 (4)	102-136 (3-4)	136-170 (4-5)
Natural Sciences	136 (4)	102-136 (3-4)	136-170 (4-5)
Physical Education	102 (3)	102 (3)	102 (3)
Music	68 (2)	68 (2)	14-68 (1-2)
Fine Arts	68 (2)	68 (2)	34-68 (1-2)
Classical Chinese	34 (1)	34-68 (1-2)	45-68 (1-2)
English	136 (4)	102-170 (3-5)	102-170 (3-5)
Vocational Skills (Boys)	Se 1 * * * *	Se 1	Se 1
Home Economics (Girls)	102 (3)	136-204 (4-6)	136-204 (4-6)
Other Electives* * * * *	0-68 (0-2)	0-68 (0-2)	0-68 (0-2)
Extracurricular Activities	68 (2)	68 (2)	68 (2)
Grand Total	1156 - 1224	1156 - 1224	1156 - 1224
<p>* One teaching hour in this table represents 45 minutes</p> <p>* *The hours shown on this table represent the minimum school hours allotted for 34 weeks per year.</p> <p>* * * figures in the parentheses are hours taught per week.</p> <p>****Se: Select</p> <p>*****Elective is principal's optional subjects.</p>			

High School (10-12th grade) Curriculum and Hours in Korea*

Classification	Subjects	Subject Units** 10th	Humanities 11th-12th	Science 11th-12th	Vocational 11th-12th
Moral Education	Moral Education	6			
Korean	Korean Literature Composition Grammar	10	8 6 4	8 4	4
Korean History	Korean History		6		
Social Studies	Political Science Geography World History Anthropology	6 4 4 4		4	4
Mathematics	Mathematics (1) *** Mathematics (2)****	8	4 10	10 18	6
Science	Science (1-2) Physics Chemistry Biology Earth Science	10	8 6	8 8 Se 6	4 1
Physical Education	Physical Education	6		8	4
Military Training(Boys)	Military Training	12	8		
Music	Music	4		2	
Fine Arts	Fine Arts	4	2		
Classical	Classical	8	4	4	
Foreign Language I	English	8	12	12	8
Foreign language II	German, French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese		Se 1, (10)	Se1,(10)	6
Industrial Arts (Boys) & Home Economics	Agriculture Technology Commerce		Se 1, (8)	Se 1, (8)	
Other Electives			2	2	2
Extracurricular		12			

* 11th grade students must select 1 of the 3 following majors: Humanities, Science, or Technical curriculum in Vocational major is selected from 50 to 100 Se: Select

** 1 unit a period of 50 minutes per week during one term (17

*** (1) means required subjects.

**** (2) means the elective subjects by course and program.

Question 1: What subjects in the Korean middle and or secondary school are different from the United States?

Question 2: Are Korean or American students better educated for the 21st century?