

MIRACLE ON THE HAN

GRADE LEVEL: High School

SUBJECT: Social Studies, Economics

TIME REQUIRED: Four to five class periods

OBJECTIVES:

1. Work in small groups to gather information and data on why Korea's industrial revolution might have occurred when it did
2. Analyze the impact of industrialization on Korean economy, society and politics
3. Identify the factors that contribute to "late stage" industrialization and why Korea successfully industrialized

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

Various reference books: encyclopedias, world atlases, world almanacs, histories, periodicals, etc.

BACKGROUND:

By the time students reach high school, they think they know all about the Industrial Revolution: it began in England in the late 1700s, spread not long after to other parts of northwestern Europe, reaching the United States by the early 1820s, and then it was over. The chronological, sequential nature of much of our social studies teaching often makes it difficult for students to understand that the Industrial Revolution represents a continuing global historical process. Indeed, it did begin more than two centuries ago in England, but since then it has bounced across the globe, arriving in South Korea in the early 1960s.

World historians identify three phases of the Industrial Revolution. The first phase, which occurred in England, parts of Western Europe and the United States from the late 1700s to the early 1800s, is the most familiar form of industrialization. The second phase occurred in Russia, Japan, parts of southern, eastern and central Europe, Canada and Australia around the 1880s. The third phase, or what is sometimes referred to as the "late stage industrialization," began in Korea in the 1960s and spread to other parts of the Pacific Rim. But no matter where or when it spread, the Industrial Revolution was accompanied by enormous waves of change in all aspects of human life.

Koreans brought few particular advantages to the process of industrialization. In fact, by the early 1960s, Korea seemed like a most unlikely candidate for an industrial revolution. On the heels of the end of thirty-five years of Japanese colonial oppression, Korea was divided in 1945. Three years of war from 1950-1953 were physically and psychologically devastating. As a result of the war, tens of thousands of people were displaced from their local communities. Nonetheless, industrialization in South Korea moved with great speed and became the keystone of a massive economic, social and political transformation. Looking at Korea in 1945 or 1953 no one would ever have predicted such enormous economic success. Therefore, because of its bewildering speed and the numerous hurdles it had to overcome, Korea's industrial revolution provides students a fascinating exploration into the nature of late stage industrialization.

PROCEDURE:

CLASS PERIOD 1:

1. Have students brainstorm the following questions:
 - a) What do we know about Korea today?
 - b) What is an "Industrial Revolution?"
 - c) What are the characteristics of an industrial society?
2. Explain the reason for studying this lesson (i.e. Korea is an excellent example of "late stage industrialization"). By examining Korea's industrial revolution students will be able to see that industrial revolutions are not inevitable but occur only in those locations where certain preconditions exist. They will also understand why Korea moved to the forefront of the world economy so rapidly.
3. Introduce the following vocabulary: industrialization, light industry, heavy industry, import substitution industrialization (ISI), export-oriented industrialization (EOI), *chaebol* (large-scale industrial conglomerates).
4. Explain that in a jigsaw activity, students are about to explore why, when and how Korea went through its "Industrial Revolution." Explain how the jigsaw cooperative activity will work and remind students of their responsibility to their groups. Student roles in each group include questioners, researchers and recorders.
5. Divide the class into the following expert groups (the size and number of groups depend on the class size; remind students that each group is to examine information from the past that would help explain the reason Korea industrialized when it did):
 - **GEOGRAPHY:** this group will examine Korea's physical features and natural resources to determine the geographic advantages and disadvantages Korea brought to industrialization.
 - **HISTORY:** this group will examine the impact of Japanese colonialism, World War II and the Korean War to determine how these experiences might have affected industrialization.
 - **SOCIETY:** this group will examine the legacy of Confucianism, Korean family life and traditional attitudes towards levels of education to determine how these factors might have affected industrialization.
 - **GOVERNMENT:** this group will examine the nature of Korea's political system and its economic policies to determine how government support might have affected industrialization.
 - **INTERNATIONAL:** this group will examine how the Cold War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Saudi Arabian construction boom of the 1970's affected industrialization.
 - **STATISTICS:** this group will gather data on GNP/GDP growth rates, population growth rates, import/export ratios, etc. to identify patterns of industrial growth in Korea.
 - **BIOGRAPHY:** this group will research some key figures to determine their impact on Korean businesses and industries during this period. Examples include Park Chung Hee and entrepreneurs such as Chung Ju Yung (Hyundai), Lee Byung Chul (Samsung), and Kim Woo Choong (Daewoo).

CLASS PERIODS 2 to 3:

1. Expert groups continue research.
2. When students have completed research, each group prepares a list of key factors on its topic that affected industrialization.
3. Regroup students so that new groups have at least one expert on each of the topics researched. Each student shares its group's findings with other students.

CLASS PERIODS 4 to 5:

1. In their new jigsaw groups, have students prepare two lists: one on the advantages Korea brought to the industrialization and the other on the disadvantages.
2. Groups should also determine what special factors enabled industrialization to proceed so rapidly in Korea.
3. Organize a class discussion on the following topics :
 - a) how Korea's Industrial Revolution was similar to and different from others they have studied
 - b) what factors make "late stage industrialization" different from earlier examples of industrialization.(Students might offer the following: benefits from prior developments in industry and technology, heavy government support, authoritarian political patterns, strong contacts with the West, particularly the USA)
 - c) the impact of industrialization on Korean economy, society and politics.

EVALUATION:

Considering their prior research and discussion, ask students to write and illustrate an article for a news magazine on the topic: "Can Other Countries Mimic the Korean Economic Miracle?"

REFERERENCES:

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- Eckert, Carter J., Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson and Edward W. Wagner. *Korea Old and New: A History*. Cambridge: Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990.
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- Vogel, Ezra F. *The Four Little Dragons: The Spread of Industrialization in East Asia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.