

UNDERSTANDING SOUTH KOREA'S CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

GRADES: 9-10

AUTHOR: Robert Stafford

SUBJECT: Geography/Global Studies

TIME REQUIRED: One to two class periods

OBJECTIVES:

1. Interpret demographic data and graphs about South Korea.
2. Analyze primary source documents regarding South Korea's changing demographics.
3. Explain causes and effects of South Korea's demographic changes.

STANDARDS:

Common Core:

RH 1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources

RH 2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source

RH 3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events

RH 9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event

SL 1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

WHST 1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Handout 1: South Korea Population Pyramids
- Handout 2: South Korea Demographic Documents and Document-Based Essay

BACKGROUND:

South Korea has experienced rapid economic growth and social change since 1953. Modernization and industrialization created a powerful economy and greatly improved the standard of living. However, South Korea's modernization has also caused significant demographic changes, including a declining birth rate, progressively ageing population, and increased ethnic diversity. Many of these changes are also occurring in other countries. Analyzing data and primary sources reveals the demographic changes and challenges South Korea faces.

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by discussing and/or reviewing population changes associated with modernization and industrialization in the United States and other countries.
2. Distribute Handout 1: South Korea Population Pyramids and discuss directions. Students record changes they observe in the three population pyramids.
3. Students share their findings with the class and class discusses South Korea's changing demographics based on the population pyramids.
4. Distribute Handout 2: South Korea Demographic Documents and Essay and discuss directions.
5. Have students work in groups of about 4 to analyze the documents and short-answer questions about each document.
6. Students write essay explaining the causes and effects of South Korea's demographic changes using evidence from the documents to support.

EVALUATION:

Students' ability to explain causes and effects of demographic changes in South Korea will be assessed in their essays, short-answer questions, and classroom discussion.

RESOURCES:

Bae, Ji-sook, "Low Birthrate Serious, Education Cost to Blame," *The Korea Herald*, January 17, 2012, accessed August 20, 2012,

<http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120117001010&cpv=0>

Eun, Jae-ho, "Korea Ready to Embrace Multicultural Society," *The Korea Times*, May 19, 2010, accessed August 20, 2012,

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/biz/2012/08/291_66147.html

Hopfner, Jonathan, "Insight: South Korea Stares Down Demographic Dilemma," *Reuters*, October 3, 2011, accessed August 20, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/03/us-korea-demographics-idUSTRE79105Q20111003>

Kim, Kyung-ho, "Korean Society Ambivalent about Foreign Labor," *The Korea Herald*, April 17, 2012, accessed August 20, 2012,

<http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20120417001007&cpv=0>

Korea National Statistical Office. *Population Projection for Korea: 2010-2060*. December 7, 2011.

<http://kostat.go.kr/portal/english/news/1/9/index.board?bmode=read&bSeq=&aSeq=253456&pageNo=2&rowNum=10&navCount=10&currPg=&sTarget=title&sTxt>

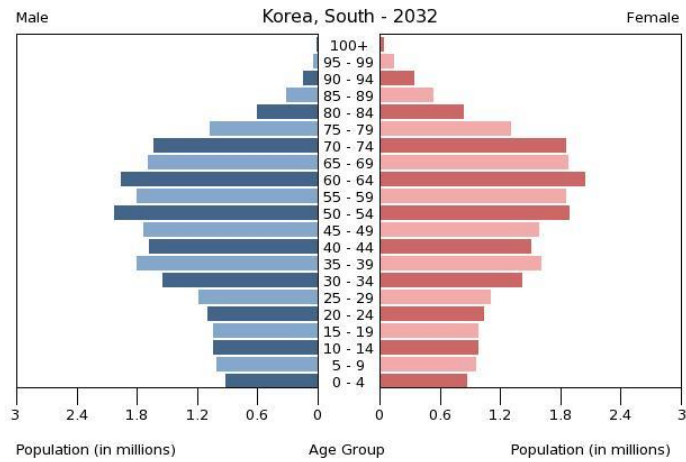
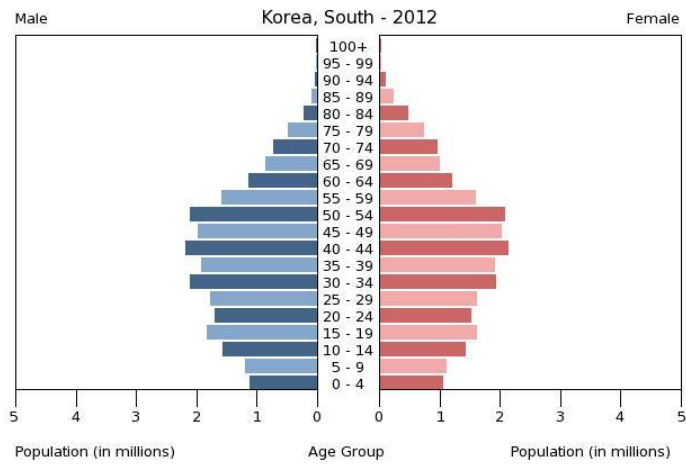
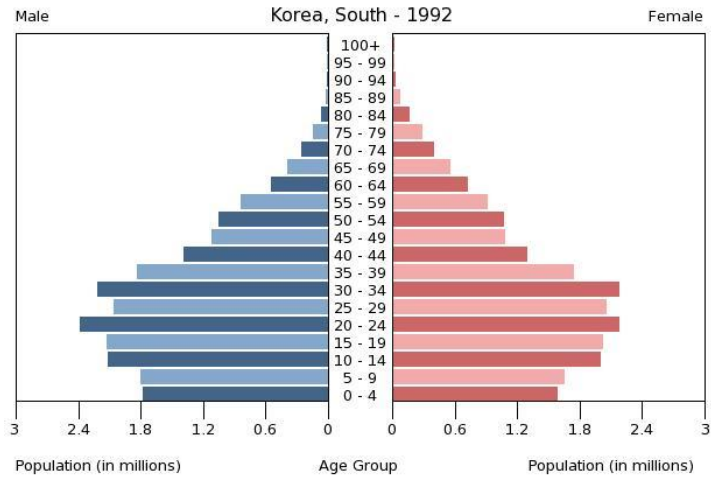
Korea National Statistical Office. *Population Trends of the World and Korea*. July 22, 2005.
<http://kostat.go.kr/portal/english/news/1/8/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=67213>

Korea National Statistical Office. *Women's Lives Through Statistics in 2009*. July 9, 2009.
<http://kostat.go.kr/portal/english/news/1/8/index.board?bmode=read&aSeq=66253>

U.S. Census Bureau. International Database.
<http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/informationGateway.php>

HANDOUT 1: SOUTH KOREA POPULATION PYRAMIDS

Analyze the population pyramids below to answer the questions that follow.



(Source: U.S. Census Bureau International Database)

Based on the population pyramids, how did South Korea's population change between 1992 and 2012?

What are possible causes for the demographic changes in South Korea between 1992 and 2012?

Based on the population pyramids, how is South Korea's population expected to change between 2012 and 2032?

What are possible issues that may arise in South Korea if demographics change as expected?

HANDOUT 2: SOUTH KOREA DEMOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTS AND DOCUMENT-BASED ESSAY

Part 1: Short-Answer Questions

After analyzing population pyramids, you are aware that South Korea's demographics have changed significantly in the recent decades. Now you will analyze document to determine the causes and effects of these changes. Answer the short answer questions based on the evidence in each document.

Document 1:

Total Fertility Rates in South Korea						
Year	1970	1977	1983	1990	2002	2008
Total Fertility Rate	4.53	3.02	2.08	1.59	1.17	1.19

Note: Total fertility rate is the average number of children born to a female during her lifetime
(Source: Korea National Statistics Office, Population Trends of the World and Korea, 2005 and Women's Lives Through Statistics, 2009)

How did fertility rates change between 1970 and 2008?

Document 2:

<p>The fact that childrearing puts too heavy a financial burden on parents made people reluctant to have kids. The respondents wanted to have an average of 2.58 children but believed it was more appropriate to keep the number down, to an average of less than two. They said education costs including private education fees was the most burdensome expense, and also cited job insecurity as one of the major hurdles to childbearing. They found it hard to balance family and work.</p> <p>(Source: Bae, Ji-sook, "Low Birthrate Serious, Education Cost to Blame," The Korea Herald, January 17, 2012)</p>

Why have many people in South Korea decided to have fewer children?

Document 3:

(Source: Korea National Statistical Office, Population Projections for Korea: 2010-2060)

[Table 3] Median age by sex, 1960-2060

Medium-growth		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
Median age (year)	Total	19.0	18.5	21.8	27.0	31.8	37.9	43.4	48.5	52.6	55.9	57.9
	Males	18.2	17.9	21.2	26.3	30.8	36.8	41.9	46.8	50.7	54.4	56.2
	Females	19.8	19.2	22.4	27.7	32.7	39.0	45.0	50.1	54.7	57.6	59.6

What has happened to the average age in South Korea since 1960 and what is projected for the future?

Document 4:

By 2050 almost 40 percent of South Koreans will be senior citizens, likely the highest proportion in the world. It has stark implications for South Korea's healthy state finances. A report released by the Ministry of Strategy and Finance in July warned the national debt would jump to 138 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2050 as pension and health insurance expenditures skyrocket, from around 34 percent last year. The consequences for the country's manufacturing-intensive, export-led growth model may be even deeper.

(Source: Hopfner, Jonathan, "Insight: South Korea Stares Down Demographic Dilemma," Reuters, October 3, 2011)

What problems could an ageing population cause in South Korea?

Document 5:

Korea began importing foreign labor in 1993 when it introduced the industrial trainee system, which was criticized for many loopholes and reinvented into the employment permit scheme in 2004. Under the current system, 15 countries, including China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Mongolia and Sri Lanka, send workers, who are allowed to work for an additional 22 months after finishing the initial employment period of three years.

The measure has led to a steep increase in the expatriate population in Korea.

The number of foreign nationals here rose from about 500,000 in the early 2000s to around 1.39 million last year, accounting for 2.9 percent of the total population, according to figures from the Justice Ministry.



(Source: Kim, Kyung-ho, "Korean Society Ambivalent about Foreign Labor," The Korea Herald, April 17, 2012)

Why has the number of foreign nationals in South Korea increased? How is this trend related to fertility rates and increased median age?

Document 6:

Since 2000, some 2,000 people have acquired Korean citizenship annually. The ratio of interracial marriages is now over 10 percent. As of 2009, foreign residents in Korea were over 1.1 million people. A report estimates that by 2050, one out of every 10 people in Korea will be a foreign resident. Korea used to be the "Land of the Morning Calm," but it is not a land of hermits anymore.

Now multi-ethnic families constitute a sizable portion of Korean families.

The trend is still geographically concentrated in agricultural villages, showing that the horizontal expansion of the multicultural structure can be mainly explained by economic reasons. Among all the interracial marriages, some 40 percent took place in the countryside. As agricultural villages went through rapid industrialization, young men in the areas had difficulty finding brides, and turned their eyes to spouses from nearby countries. Korea is no longer a racially homogeneous state. The constitution of multiethnic families can accelerate the multi-culturalization of Korean society because it is far different in its effect from the immigration of workers who hope to return one day to their home country.

(Source: Eun, Jae-ho, "Korea Ready to Embrace Multicultural Society," The Korea Times, May 19, 2010)

How are ethnic demographics changing in South Korea? What effects might these changes have on South Korea in the future?

Part 2: Document-Based Essay

Write a well-organized essay that includes a thesis statement and several paragraphs addressing the prompt below. Use evidence from the documents provided to support your thesis. You may use more paper if needed.

Prompt: Explain the causes and effects of South Korea’s changing demographics.

Horizontal lines for writing an essay.