

# KOREA'S TRANSFORMATION

**GRADES:** 8-10

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**SUBJECT:** History

**TIME REQUIRED:** One class period

## **OBJECTIVES & STANDARDS:**

1. Understand and analyze factors and reasons for the growth and the rise of South Korea post 1960.
2. Explain and evaluate if these factors can be used as a model for other less developed countries.
3. Evaluate the strengths and potential of South Korea.

## **National Council of Social Studies:**

- 2 Time, Continuity, and Change
- 5 Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- 6 Power, Authority, and Governance
- 7 Production, Distribution, and Consumption

## **Common Core Standards:**

- RH 2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source
- RH 7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis with qualitative analysis in print or digital text
- SL 1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

## **MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

- Handout 1: Student worksheet
- Handout 2: Station #1 document: Statistics of the Labor Force and Occupational Distribution
- Handout 3: Station #2 images and trade statistics
- Handout 4: Station #3 document on education
- Handout 5: Station #4 document on government
- Handout 6: Reflection article
- Markers or colored pencils for Station #4 (optional)

## **BACKGROUND or INTRODUCTION:**

After the Korean War, South Korea was devastated and was one of the poorest countries in the world. In the 1960's South Korea's national wealth was on par with Afghanistan's and today is one of the world's richest nations. In August 2010 Newsweek ranked South Korea as the 15<sup>th</sup> best country in the world.

**PROCEDURE:**

This lesson is designed to function as learning stations. Four “stations” or groups are set up in the room and students rotate through each station. Students may work together to answer questions, analyze information and make conclusions.

The documents for each of the four stations should be copied in order for each student to view when they arrive and move to a station. Every student should receive a student worksheet. The worksheet can be expanded to leave room for student responses. Station number two requires students to analyze visual images. These would be viewed best as a PowerPoint but the images can be printed. Station four requests a visual interpretation of the document but this can also be changed if written answers are preferred. The average amount of time at each station is approximately 8-10 minutes.

After all rotations are complete, the information should be reviewed and clarified through a teacher led class discussion. Following this, students should complete the final reflection section and this can also be shared in a class discussion or be used as a follow up assignment.

**EVALUATION or ASSESSMENT:**

The oral discussion serves as the evaluation. The reflection questions can be discussed in class or expanded into a homework or larger research assignment.

**RESOURCES:**

Clark, Donald N. *Culture and Customs of Korea*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008.

Kim, Hyuk-Rae. “The Contour of Modern Korean Society: National Projects and Revolving Axes.” Presentation, Korean Studies Workshop, Seoul, Korea, July 7 2010.

Kim, Hyungkee. “Economic Development of Korea.” Presentation, Korean Studies Workshop, Seoul, Korea, July 17,2010.

“Obama Lauds Korea’s Education of Children”. Korea Times. 11 March, 2009.  
[http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/01/113\\_41066.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/01/113_41066.html)

“Politics in Korea”. AsianInfo. <http://asianinfo.org/asianinfo/korea/politics.htm>

“The Best Countries in the World”. *Newsweek*, August 23,2010

## **Handout 1: Student Worksheet**

### **Station #1: Statistics of Labor Force and Occupational Distribution**

Review and analyze the two tables. List three specific changes that occurred and three points you find surprising.

### **Station #2: Images and Trade Statistics**

Review and analyze the pictures. List and explain at least three impressions of Korea.

Analyze the overview of the Korean Economy. Pick two points that impress you.

### **Station #3: Education**

Read the document on education. List the similarities and differences between Korean education and American education.

### **Station #4: Government**

Read the summary on Korea's government. Draw your interpretation of the Korean government.

What type of economic policies would this government support?

### **Reflection:**

What are the strengths of South Korea?

What lessons can other least developed countries learn from Korea's transformation?

Read the article and comments by President Obama. Why is he praising the Korean educational system and what other current issues may have prompted him to look to Korea as a model for the US?

## Handout 2: Station 1: Statistics of Labor Force and Occupational Distribution

Table 5: The Distribution of the Labor Force by Industry, 1958 – 2008 (in %)

Industry	1958	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2008
Agriculture & Fishery	81.6	58.6	50.4	45.7	34.0	25.0	18.0	12.4	10.9	7.9
Manufacturing & Mining	4.6	10.3	14.3	19.1	22.5	24.4	27.5	23.6	20.2	17.2
Commerce & Services	13.8	31.0	35.3	35.2	43.5	50.6	54.4	64.0	68.9	74.9
Total Labor Force (in million)	6.3	8.2	9.6	11.7	13.7	14.97	18.1	20.4	21.1	23.9

Source: Economic Planning Board, *Annual Report on the Economically Active Population*, 1972, 1985; National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea*, various years.

Table 6: Occupational Distribution of the Employed Persons, 1965-2000 (%)

	Professional Managerial	Clerical, White-Collar	Sales Workers	Service Workers	Agricultural, Fishery	Production, Transportation Operatives	
1966	3.1	4.7	11.8	5.6	58.1	16.7	
1970	4.8	6.0	12.4	6.4	50.2	20.2	
1975	3.6	6.4	13.0	7.1	45.8	24.1	
1980	5.3	9.3	14.5	7.9	34.0	29.0	
1985	7.3	11.5	15.5	10.8	24.6	30.3	
1990	8.7	13.0	14.5	11.1	18.1	34.8	
1992	10.0	14.4	14.9	11.5	15.6	33.6	
	Top Managerial	Professional, Semi-Prof.	Clerical Workers	Service, Sales	Agricultural, Fishery	Craft, Operative	Simple Laborers
1993	2.7	12.3	12.5	20.9	13.2	27.3	11.0
1997	2.5	15.1	12.2	23.1	10.5	25.3	11.2
2000	2.3	16.1	11.4	26.1	10.2	23.5	10.3

Source: National Statistical Office, *Social Indicators in Korea*, 1990, 1995, 1998, 2001. This table is a revised and updated version of Table 3.2 in Koo (2007).

## Handout 3: Station #2: Images and Trade Statistics

Seoul



Busan Port



Hyundai





Samsung



Olympics 1988





## **An Overview of the Korean Economy**

Korea's gross domestic product (GDP) was \$1.3 billion in 1953, but reached \$1344.4 billion ranking 13th largest in the world.

Korea has set a miracle in the history of world economics.

Per capita GDP of the Korean Economy will be number two in 2050 in the world (Goldman Sachs Estimation)

### Major Economic Indicators

- GNI per capita: 27,839(2008) US \$ (No. 21 in the world)
- Export: 373.6 billion US \$ (2009)
- Import: 317.5 billion US \$ (2009)
- Top shipbuilder (the country's shipbuilders produced about 35.2 percent of all container ships built worldwide in 2005).
- Top memory chip producer in the world.
- One of the top producers of cell phones and LCD TVs.
- The country also manufactured 3.7 million cars in 2005, ranking as the fifth largest carmaker in the world. And there were 15 million cars registered as of 2005, meaning that nine out of ten families have a car
- Korean goods account for 2.7% of total goods sold annually throughout the world.
- There are only 10 countries that have surpassed this landmark.



#### Handout 4: Station #3 Education

Today, the South Korean educational system is based on a 1968 charter that defines the government's mission of educating every Korean child for citizenship and participation in modern life. Educational policy is set by the Ministry of Education, which determines curriculum, commissions and approves textbooks, and enforces uniform standards for all levels of schooling throughout the country. The system consists of elementary schools (six years), middle schools (three years), and high schools (three years). Elementary schooling is free and compulsory. Fees are charged in the middle and high schools, but 90 percent of the children go on to middle school and 88 percent of those continue into high school. The school year begins in March, and to make the 220-day annual requirement, students go to class five and a half days a week, with Saturday afternoons and Sundays off.

South Korea's educational plan sets forth several main purposes for elementary school. The first is literacy—the ability to read and write Korean. Others include scientific knowledge, arithmetic, social studies, physical education, acquisition of an appreciation for art and music, and the development of moral knowledge. "Moral knowledge" includes a sense of social responsibility, the ability to share and seek justice, practicing self-reliance, and respecting the country's laws and institutions.

In middle school, students continue studying the same subjects and add a certain amount of vocational training, including knowledge of simple mechanics and home economics. They study their own Korean heritage but they also study world history and they begin English, which is the required second language for all Korean students. Their teachers watch them and evaluate their aptitudes and play a role in helping them decide whether or not to go on to high school. If they are among the majority of those who do continue, they are steered toward "general" or "vocational" high schools. They also take achievement tests that aid in identifying their aptitudes for the "general" (i.e., college-bound) or "vocational" tracks.

The basic routine of South Korea's high school students involves going to regular classes from 8 A.M. until midafternoon, with time after that devoted to athletics, extracurricular activities, and study sessions. Their subjects include advanced versions of what they studied in middle school including English and mathematics (normally including calculus). They may also study

an additional language such as Chinese or German, and in vocational schools they may study agriculture, engineering, and home economics. Many of the boys go into ROTC, hoping to serve as officers when they fulfill their required military service, normally at around age twenty.

Many Korean high school students get up early to study before school. A large number attend after-school "cram classes" to help them master topics for the all-important college entrance examinations that have to be taken in the senior year. Families put a lot of pressure on Korean students to excel, both for the family's reputation and for the students' own future. This pressure drives students to work long hours in the evening at the cram schools and at home doing homework. Few students have outside jobs or much of a social life outside of school, even on the weekends. Nevertheless, during breaks in their daily routine, Korea's high school students manage to squeeze in a little time for fun at fast-food restaurants, video game parlors, and tea-rooms.

Korea's parents and grandparents used to drive their children to do well in school because they could remember when education by itself was desirable as the guarantee of a successful future. Today, things have changed. Although Korea has plenty of public and private schools and numerous colleges and universities, mass education has created tremendous competition. There are so many college graduates, in fact, that unemployment or underemployment is a serious problem for them. Settling for a high school diploma is sure to limit a student's opportunities but mere possession of a college degree is no guarantee of a bright future, either. Colleges and universities vary in their reputations, and it is important to get into a top school and graduate with others who are similarly educated to move into the society's important professions and positions. High school students therefore bear the heavy burden of competing for freshman class slots at the very best national institutions. Their performance on the entrance exams determines whether or not they will be accepted. The competition provides useful motivation for most students but for some others it is too much and leads to a sense of failure and depression even before they get through secondary school.

## **Handout 5: Station #4: Government**

### **Korea's Government**

The year 1998 marks the fiftieth anniversary of both the adoption of the Constitution and the establishment of the Republic of Korea. As a constitutionally based, democratic government is still relatively young, debates regarding major government changes, like the adoption of a parliamentary system, are still ongoing. Prior to the establishment of the Republic in 1948, Korea experienced thirty-five year of Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945) followed by three years of American military rule (1945-1948). The Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910 placed Korea under a foreign rule for the first time in its history.

Since its transformation into a republic, the Korean government, except for a brief period between August 1960 and July 1961 when a parliamentary system was in place, has maintained a presidential system, wherein the President is the head of state and chief executive. Under the present system, government power is shared principally by three branches: the legislative, judicial and executive. In addition, two other constitutionally-based institutions, the Constitutional Court and the National Election Commission, also perform governing functions.

The legislature consists of a single-house National Assembly, whose 299 members serve four-year terms. The organizational components of the National Assembly are: the individual members, the presiding officers (the Speaker and two Vice Speakers), the plenary, the committees (16 standing committees as well as special ad hoc committees), the negotiation groups, and the supporting administrative organs. Besides deliberating bills concerning general legislation, government budget, and ratification of international treaties, the National Assembly is also empowered to inspect and audit the administration, and to approve the appointments of the Prime Minister and the Director of the Board of Inspection and Audit. The National Assembly may, according to law, impeach public officials, and may adopt motions recommending to the President the removal of executive officials, including the Prime Minister.

The judiciary consists of three tiers of courts: the Supreme Court; the high courts or appellate courts; the district courts. Currently, the judiciary is exclusively a central government function; no provincial or local government may establish its own court or prosecution system. The Supreme Court consists of thirteen Justices and a Chief Justice. High courts are placed in five locations which serve as regional centers. Besides the three-tier court system, the judiciary also operates a family court, an administrative court and a patent court.

The executive branch, headed by the President, consists of the Prime Minister, the State Council, seventeen executive ministries, seventeen independent agencies, the Board of Inspection and Audit, and the National Intelligence Service. The President, elected by popular vote for a single five-year term, has absolute power needed for operating the

executive branch and leading the country. The Prime Minister, appointed by the President with the approval of the National Assembly, supervises the ministries and independent agencies. The Prime Minister performs this function under the supervision of the President, and in this sense he/she is the chief assistant to the President.

Local governments are considered part of the executive branch and thus are controlled by the central government. (Here "local governments" refers broadly to all sub-national governments.) However, some degree of local autonomy has been given to the 16 higher-level (provincial) governments and 34 lower level (municipal) governments. This autonomy resumed, after a time lapse of more than thirty years, on July 1, 1995 - a date marking a return to direct, popular elections for local chief executives. Prior to this, local governments had been simply local branches of the central government, with the latter appointing and dispatching the chiefs. Despite the change, the autonomous power of local governments at this point remains quite limited. Virtually all major policies, including those specifying local government functions, taxation, resident welfare and services, and personnel management, are determined by the central government.

<http://asianinfo.org/asianinfo/korea/politics.htm>

## Handout 6: Reflection Article

### Obama Lauds Korea's Education of Children

U.S. President Barack Obama

Tuesday called for the United States to look to South Korea in adopting longer school days and after-school programs for American children to help them survive in an era of keen global competition, according to Yonhap News Agency Wednesday.

"Our children \_ listen to this \_ our children spend over a month less in school than children in South Korea every year," Obama told a gathering at the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce here. "That's no way to prepare them for a 21st-century economy."

Obama made the remarks while emphasizing the need for sweeping reform of the U.S. education system for which he earmarked \$41 billion out of the \$787 billion stimulus package to cope with the worst recession in decades.

"We can no longer afford an academic calendar designed for when America was a nation of farmers who needed their children at home plowing the land at the end of each day," he said. "That calendar may have once made sense, but today it puts us at a competitive disadvantage."

The U.S. president called for Americans "not only to expand effective after-school programs but to rethink the school day to incorporate more time, whether it's during the summer or through expanded-day programs for children who need it."



[http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/01/113\\_41066.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/01/113_41066.html)