

**WHDE**  
Lesson Plan

One Peninsula, Two Systems: Explaining the Economic Rise of South Korea

**AUTHOR INFORMATION**

**Author:** Matthew Sudnik  
**State:** Virginia

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Lesson Grade Span:** Secondary (11-12)  
**Targeted Grade Level/Course:** 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade/AP Human Geography  
**Estimated Time to Complete Lesson:** (2 80-minute classes).

**FOCUSED QUESTION**

How did North and South Korea develop differently after the Korean War?  
What factors explain South Korea's economic rise?

**STANDARDS (STATE/C3)**

D2.Geo.2.9-12. Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics.

D2.Geo.5.9-12. Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

D2.Geo.8.9-12. Evaluate the impact of economic activities and political decisions on spatial patterns within and among urban, suburban, and rural regions.

D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

**STUDENT & TARGET OUTCOMES**

Students will be able to describe the history of North and South Korea after the Korean War.  
Students will be able to compare the political and economic systems in North and South Korea.  
Students will be able to analyze the reasons for South Korea's economic rise.

### LESSON OVERVIEW

Why do some countries develop rapidly, growing their economies and influence on the world stage while other countries struggle to achieve economic takeoff? This is a central question in Human Geography and an important question in World History. The Korean Peninsula provides a case study for the exploration of this question. This peninsula of a common people with a shared history was divided not only by a civil war but by competing ideologies and foreign alliances. In this lesson students will explore the causes of South Korea's rise and the sharp divisions that remain between the two Koreas.

### PROCEDURES

This lesson comes after a broader class discussion about the concept of economic development. Students should know that development refers to elements such as infrastructure, economic growth, and growth in technology, and social welfare.

Students will be shown a map of the Korean peninsula at night. This famous image shows lights in South Korea, China, and Japan while North Korea is in darkness. Ask students what they see? What does this map tell them about the division between North and South Korea? The instructor will lead students toward the conclusion that North and South Korea experienced different levels of economic development after the Korean War. How did this happen?

The teacher will scaffold questions to the whole class in order to get students to make inferences about how the map highlights a difference in economic development and infrastructure between the two nations.

After generating questions based on the satellite image of the peninsula, the students will be divided into two groups. One group is assigned North Korea and the other group is assigned South Korea. Each group is provided with a specific reading from Charles Armstrong's book *The Koreas* – Chapter 2: South Korea: The Rise to Globalism and Chapter 3: North Korea: The Logic and Limits of "Self-Reliance." Students will be given approximately 20 minutes to skim read these chapters. They are asked to read for evidence to answer the question: What factors explain the economic path of this country?

After 20 minutes of quiet reading, students form their groups. As a group they must summarize the highlights from their reading in five PowerPoint slides. These slides must all answer the question: What factors explain the economic path of North/South Korea? Students will have the remainder of the first class to work on their presentation.

In the second class, students will begin class by presenting their slides. Each group has between five to ten minutes to present. After both groups have presented the class will discuss the following questions:

**WHDE**  
Lesson Plan

How did natural resources play a role in the development of North and South Korea's economies?

What role did foreign alliances play in the North and South Korea's economic development?

What assumptions were challenged by this case study? In other words, how has this activity changed your mind about the Korea specifically and about economic development in general?

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

Finally, students will be asked to write a one-page paper advising a developing country on its development strategy. This paper will answer the question: **What factors led to South Korea's economic development?** Students must use South Korea as a model to advise on how a country might achieve greater economic development. Students must cite at least three factors from the South Korea case study and reading by Charles Armstrong. Students must also consider if the South Korean factors would apply to the developing country of their choice.

**RESOURCE LIST**

Armstrong, C. K. (2014). *The Koreas*. New York: Routledge.

Cumings, B. (2005). *Korea's place in the sun: A modern history*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Demick, B. (2012). *Nothing to envy: Love, life and death in North Korea*. Sydney: Fourth Estate.

Korean Peninsula Seen From Space Station | NASA. (n.d.). Retrieved October 16, 2019, from <https://www.nasa.gov/content/korean-peninsula-seen-from-space-station/>