

North Korea shakes up the world

North Korea conducted its first nuclear test on Oct. 9, 2006. The blast was smaller than expected. But that little blast was enough to shake up governments around the world.

The Kid decided to learn about Korea.

Korea is located on a peninsula along the east coast of Asia. Its neighbors are China, Russia and Japan. The mountainous peninsula has a rainy season in the summer and cold winters.

It is now divided into two countries, North Korea and South Korea. But it wasn't always divided.

Mongol tribes migrated from central Asia to Korea over 3,000 years ago. The people developed their own language and culture. Traditional religions are Buddhism and Confucianism.

About 400 BC, some Koreans established villages on the Japanese Islands. Most of today's Japanese people are descended from these Korean settlers.

Ancient Korea had three kingdoms. In 668 AD, they were united as one kingdom. Traditional Korea ended when Japan took control of the country in 1905.

When Japan surrendered at the end of World War II, Korea was divided. The Soviet Union took control of the area north of the 38th parallel. The United States took control of the south. Two separate governments were established.

Many Koreans were not happy that the country was divided. In 1950, the North Korean army invaded the south to unite the country under communist rule.

The United States and other democratic countries fought for the South. The Soviet Union and China supported the North.

After three years, the war ended in a stalemate. A protective zone was set up along the original border.

North Korea has about 23 million people in an area the size of the state of Mississippi. The country is a communist dictatorship. The leader is Kim Jong Il.

North Korea spends billions of dollars on its military and developing weapons. However, it suffers from food shortages. It depends on aid to feed its people.

South Korea is smaller. About 49 million people live in an area the size of Indiana. It is a democracy with a free-market economy. Roh Moo-hyun is the president.

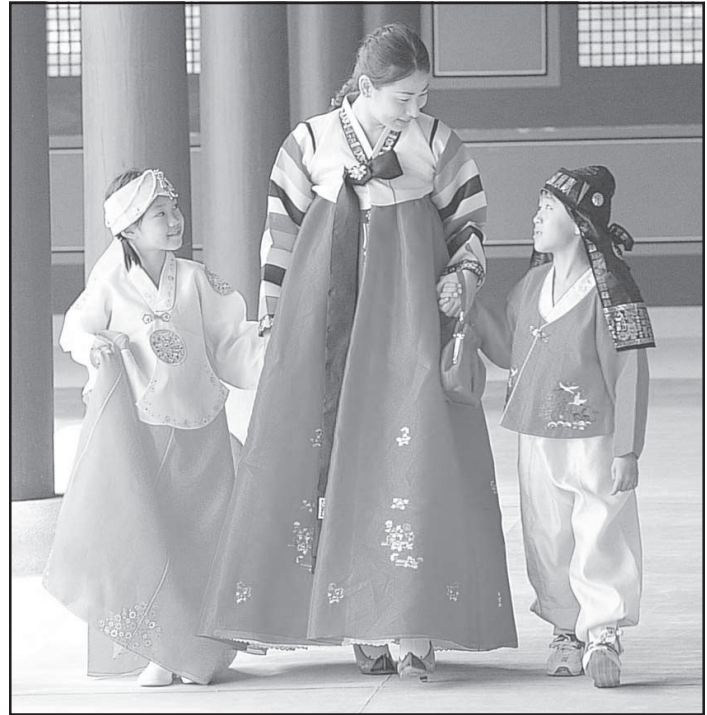
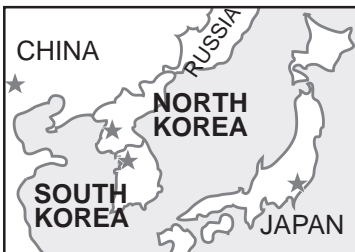


Photo by Korea National Tourism Organization

Traditional Korean clothing uses beautiful, bright colored fabrics. These costumes contain a modern element: the athletic shoes worn by the boy.

In addition to agriculture, the country manufactures high-tech electronics, telecommunications and automobiles. South Koreans earn 14 times more than North Koreans.

Most Koreans hope that the country can be reunited. However, there are many political and economic differences. North Korea's nuclear tests add one more challenge.

Asian Capitals

Match these countries in Asia with their capitals.

JAPAN	P'YONGYANG
SOUTH KOREA	BEIJING
CHINA	SEOUL
NORTH KOREA	TOKYO
VIETNAM	NEW DELHI
INDIA	HANOI



Newspaper in Education activity

- South Korea makes products such as Hyundai and Kia automobiles and Samsung and LG electronics. Look through your newspaper for any products made in Korea. Check with your classmates to see if any of you own products made in Korea.
- Ask your grandparents or parents if any of them served in the Korean War or protecting the zone between the North and South.