

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

AUTHOR INFORMATION

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Grade Span: 9th -10th

Targeted Grade Level: 9th

Targeted Course: World History

Estimated Time to Complete Lesson: 75-90 minutes

Brief explanation of content connection and/or inspiration of lesson from Discover Korea Research

Fellowship: I did not know very much about the Joseon Dynasty until traveling to Korea in June 2024.

Early in the visit, we enjoyed a lecture regarding the perspective of the Joseon on international affairs, especially regarding Western imperialism in Asia.

FOCUS QUESTION

Why is Joseon Korea known as the Hermit Kingdom?

NATIONAL STANDARDS, STATE STANDARDS, AND/OR AP CED EKS

National Council for the Social Studies Themes:

CULTURE;

TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE;

POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; and

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

LEARNING TARGETS/OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- Understand the major external influences on Korea during the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897).

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

- Identify key moments of foreign relations and their impacts on Korea's political, cultural, and economic systems.
- Analyze how the Joseon Dynasty navigated external pressures while maintaining Confucian governance and social structure.
- Discuss how Korea's foreign policies influenced its isolationist reputation and eventual engagement with the world.

LESSON SUMMARY (brief paragraph)

This lesson explores how the **Joseon Dynasty** of Korea responded to external influences over its 500-year history. Students will examine key moments such as the tributary relationship with China, the Japanese invasions during the Imjin War, and the pressures of Western imperialism in the 19th century. Through primary and secondary source analysis and group discussions, students will understand how Korea balanced foreign relations with its Confucian values and isolationist policies, shaping its identity as the "Hermit Kingdom." The lesson concludes by considering the lasting impact of these external interactions on Korean society.

LESSON PROCEDURES (step-by-step teacher instructions)

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

1. Introduction (10-15 minutes)

- Hook: Show a map of Korea during the Joseon Dynasty and its neighboring powers (China, Japan, and later Western powers).
 - Discussion Prompt: Ask students, "Why do you think Korea, as a relatively small country, has maintained its sovereignty for so long?"
- Overview: Provide a brief introduction to the Joseon Dynasty:
 - Timeframe: 1392-1897.
 - Founding: Explain the Confucian foundation of the dynasty and its close relationship with China.
 - Main Ideas: Introduce the concepts of Neo-Confucianism and the dynasty's adherence to social hierarchy and isolationism.

2. Group Research, Analysis, and Presentations (45-50 minutes)

Divide the students into small groups and assign each group one of the key periods. Each group will complete the graphic organizer, providing necessary details about their time period and answer the following questions:

- How did the Joseon Dynasty respond to this external influence?
- What were the consequences (positive or negative) for Korea?
- How did Korea maintain its identity or adapt in response to these pressures?

Each group must find at least one primary source document (letter, royal decree, treaty). Students must use the library databases for research, and all cite sources in Chicago style using Noodletools. Share your project with Mr. Hedgepeth's Dropbox called "Joseon Dynasty Group Project (2024)."

Group 1: Ming Dynasty Influence and Tribute System (Early Joseon):

- Explain Korea's tributary relationship with China and its cultural and political dependency.
- Discuss the role of Confucianism imported from China in shaping Joseon society.
- Helpful [source](#)
- Another helpful [source](#)

Group 2: Japanese Invasions (1592-1598) and the Imjin War (Middle Joseon):

- Discuss the role of Admiral Yi Sun-sin and Korea's naval defense (Turtle Ships).
- Helpful [source](#).
- Another helpful [source](#).

Group 3: Western Encroachment and Isolationism (Late Joseon):

- Discuss the growing pressure from Western countries in the 19th century and how the Joseon government maintained its policy of isolation (e.g., "Hermit Kingdom").
- Mention key events like the French expedition in 1866, the U.S. expedition in 1871, and the eventual signing of unequal treaties (e.g., Treaty of Ganghwa, 1876).
- Helpful [source](#).
- Another helpful [source](#).

After 30-35 minutes, have each group present a short 5-minute summary of their findings to the class. Students complete the graphic organizer (below) while listening to their peers present.

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

4. Conclusion (10-15 minutes)

Whole-class discussion:

- Pose the question: "Why do you think Korea became known as the 'Hermit Kingdom'? Was this strategy effective in preserving its independence and culture?"
- Discuss how the Joseon Dynasty's policies shaped modern Korean identity, leading to a complex legacy of isolationism, Confucian tradition, and eventual openness in the late 19th century.

5. Possible Extension/Homework: Ask students to write a short paragraph answering the question: "Which external influence do you think had the most lasting impact on Korea and why?"

SUPPORTING MATERIALS (links, resources, handouts, etc.)

- [Notes Sliddeck](#)
- Maps of East Asia during the Joseon period
 - [Joseon Korea](#)
 - [World Map at 1600 C.E.](#)
- Video: [How Did The Joseon Dynasty Reign In Korea For 500 Years? | The Mark Of Empire \(Full Episode\)](#)
- Student handouts (graphic organizer attached)

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

STUDENT HANDOUT - GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

TOPIC & DETAILS	How did the Joseon Dynasty respond to this external influence?	What were the consequences (positive or negative) for Korea?	How did Korea maintain its identity or adapt in response to these pressures?
Early Joseon and China <i>DETAILS:</i>			
Japanese Invasions <i>DETAILS:</i>			
Western Pressures and Treaties <i>DETAILS:</i>			