

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Author: Heidi Pasternak

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lesson Grade Span: 9 - 12

Targeted Grade Level: 11

Targeted Course: AP Modern World History

Estimated Time to Complete Lesson: each lesson should take one full class period. The extensions should take about half a class period. The lessons have optional sections and are created in components so the teacher can use the pieces they would prefer.

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

I was inspired by language and its role with the Korean elites, both historically following the invention of Hangul by King Sajong and prior to the rise of Korean Nationalism under Japanese colonialism. Places inspiring me included the Jikji Museum, the photo of a Hangul newspaper in the National Museum of Contemporary Korean History and the massive statue of King Sajong in Seoul.

FOCUS QUESTION

How did elites in Korea use language and the tributary relationship with China to maintain their power during the Joseon era?

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

AP World Modern Standards:

3.2 GOV - Explain how rulers used a variety of methods to legitimize and consolidate their power in land-based empires from 1450 to 1750.

- Hist. Dev. - Recruitment and use of bureaucratic elites, as well as the development of military professionals, became more common among rulers who wanted to maintain centralized control over their populations and resources.
- Hist. Dev. - Rulers continued to use religious ideas, art, and monumental architecture to legitimize their rule.

4.7 SOC - Explain how social categories, roles, and practices have been maintained or have changed over time

- Hist. Dev. - The power of existing political and economic elites fluctuated as the elites confronted new challenges to their ability to affect the policies of the increasingly powerful monarchs and leaders.

LEARNING TARGETS/OBJECTIVES

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

Students will be able to explain how the Korean elites took advantage of the Chinese tributary system to maintain their power within Korea.
Students will be able to reflect on the varying roles of language and literacy as a means to maintain an empire.

LESSON SUMMARY (brief paragraph)

The early Chosun (Joseon) Dynasty established themselves 1392 and lasted until 1912. Within the context of East Asia, the Korean peninsula had established itself as a tributary state as far back as the 4th century CE. This relationship had far reaching effects on Korean society and its internal power structure.

This lesson has two components plus some extensions.

1) Students will learn about the Tributary relationship between China and Korea and how the elites (yangban) maintained power through their adoption of Neo-Confucianism. Students will analyze primary sources to practice those skills and will use secondary sources to find evidence demonstrating the importance of Neo-Confucianism in the Joseon court.

2) Day 2 explores the role of language as a tool of maintaining power. Students will explore King Sejong's creation of Hunminjeongeum (later called Hangul) as a way of educating the people and will also explore the role of the elites in suppressing the expansion of Hangul. The day includes students creating arguments for either the expansion or suppression of Hangul as well as counter-arguments to help practice the skill of using evidence to analyze.

Extensions: There are 2 extensions in case the teacher wants to explore the AP skills of Comparison and the AP skills of CCOT. Extension 1 asks students to compare the role of language and the elites across empires in the period 1450 - 1740. Extension 2 has students explore the role of language and culture across time as it explores the resurgence of Hangul in the 19th and 20th centuries in relation to the development of ideas of Korean independence in the face of Chinese and Japanese control.

LESSON PROCEDURES (step by step teacher instructions)

Day 1: Tributary State of Korea and Neo-Confucianism with the Elites

Day 1 OBJECTIVES:

Students will analyze the impact of the Tributary state relationship between China and Korea. They will show the Joseon Dynasty's elite class, the yangban, maintained power through Neo-Confucian principles.

Students will practice using the HAPP-Y method to analyze sources.

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

Day 1 AP World Objectives:

3.2 GOV - Explain how rulers used a variety of methods to legitimize and consolidate their power in land-based empires from 1450 to 1750.

(Hist. Dev. - Recruitment and use of bureaucratic elites, as well as the development of military professionals, became more common among rulers who wanted to maintain centralized control over their populations and resources.)

(Hist Dev. - Rulers continued to use religious ideas, art, and monumental architecture to legitimize their rule.)

4.7 SOC - Explain how social categories, roles, and practices have been maintained or have changed over time

1. Discuss the tributary state relationship between China and Korea (and Vietnam if you want.) This can be a mini-lecture or you can have students each read the Britannica article (Doc 1 -1) and in pairs discuss.
 - a. Discussion Questions: What is a tributary state? How did this relationship benefit both Korea and China? Discuss the implications of this system on Korea's political and social structures.
 - b. Primary Document Analysis: Joseon Tribute (Doc. 1-2):
 - i. Students read document in pairs and S-HAPP-Y it
 1. Summarize
 2. Historical Situation
 3. Audience
 4. Point of View
 5. Purpose
 - ii. AP Practice - pick ONE of the HAPP with a textual example and explain WHY it is important.
 - c. Optional Task - Students to create a mind map linking concepts of tributary state, Chinese Middle Kingdom ideology, and implications of this system on the vassal state, specifically Korea
2. Role of the Elites in Korea in maintaining this system.
 - a. Show and Discuss Context Slide:

New Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910)

Established to rejuvenate the country and distance from the former Goryeo court.

- **Curtailment of Buddhism:** Buddhism, associated with the fall of the Goryeo dynasty, faced severe repression, leading to a decline in Buddhist adherents and the production of related art.
- **Embrace of Neo-Confucianism:** Neo-Confucianism became the official state ideology, replacing Buddhism.
- **Yangban (Literati Class):** The newly influential yangban class, educated in Neo-Confucianism, dominated both the civil and military branches of government.

- b. Discuss the slide in pairs:
 - i. What Continuity do you see? What changes? Why?

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

ii. How do Elites (Yangban) incorporate Neo-Confucian ideals?

c. Show the following slide summarizing Korean Neo-Confucianism.

Neo-Confucianism in *Gyeongguk Daejeon* (1485), legal code of Joseon Dynasty.

- Established Hierarchical structure of society,
- Roles and responsibilities of government officials
 - Includes procedures for civil service exams (based on Confucian texts),
- Moral and ethical standards expected of the populace.
 - Importance of rituals and filial piety
 - Codifies social hierarchy, and the moral obligations of both rulers and subjects.

d. Share the source "Confucian rituals and the royal education system". (Doc. 1 -

3) Assign one of the following to each group to look at:

1. Textual examples in the reading of the importance of government officials and civil service exams
2. Textual examples in the reading of the importance of rituals,
3. Textual examples in the reading of the importance of filial piety
4. Textual examples in the reading of the importance of the moral obligations of both rulers and subjects.

e. Group Discussion (or student quick write): How did these rituals reinforce the hierarchy and power of the elites?

f. Ticket To Leave: Either mini discussion OR student quick write: How did the Joseon rulers use a variety of methods to legitimize and consolidate their power in land-based empires from 1450 to 1750? Be sure to include the following terms in such a way that it is clear you understand the terms: A) tributary system, B) China, C) Neo-Confucianism D) civil service exam

Day 2: Role of Literacy in Maintaining Elites in Joseon Korea

Day 2 OBJECTIVE: Students will understand the reasons behind the yangban elite's suppress of Hangeul, analyze sources reflecting this resistance, and explore the broader implications of language control in maintaining social hierarchies.

Day 2 AP World Objectives:

3.2 GOV - Explain how rulers used a variety of methods to legitimize and consolidate their power in land-based empires from 1450 to 1750.

(Hist. Dev. - Recruitment and use of bureaucratic elites, as well as the development of military professionals, became more common among rulers who wanted to maintain centralized control over their populations and resources.)

(Hist Dev. - Rulers continued to use religious ideas, art, and monumental architecture to legitimize their rule.)

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

4.7 SOC - Explain how social categories, roles, and practices have been maintained or have changed over time

1. Warm-Up: How important is the role of writing a language in a society (relative to speaking?)
 - a. OPTION: Do 3-corners activity: Do you think writing a language is as / less / more important to speaking in a society?
 - b. Discuss: Who might benefit from being able to write / read a language rather than speak it only?
2. Teacher-led Class Discussion:
 - a. Literacy before Period 2 (1450 - 1750). Who could read and write? Who could not?
 - b. Today we will look at an example of literacy in Korea. (Reminder of Day 1 lesson applicable) and how the Joseon Dynasty connected to China and the Neoconfucian values.
 - c. Video or reading to provide a brief overview of King Sejong's creation of Hunminjeongeum, emphasizing its purpose to increase literacy among commoners by providing an easier writing system than Chinese characters.
 - d. Talk to your neighbor: predict what will happen because of this innovation? How will it impact the government?
 - e. Show quote from "**Hangul: Korea's Unique Alphabet**" by Lee Ki-Moon and S. Robert Ramsey. Ask what students notice about what was written in Hangul and what was not?
"While the 'Hunminjeongeum Haerye' served as the foundational document for the new script, its application in official records was minimal. Instead, Hangul found its place in literature, religious texts, and educational materials. The 'Yongbieocheonga' and the 'Worinseokbo' are among the most notable early examples, reflecting King Sejong's original intent to provide a script accessible to all Koreans. Nevertheless, the widespread use of Hangul in official documents did not materialize until the 20th century."
 - f. Send students off to explore the document set to answer WHY Hangul was not widespread in official documents for so long. Here are some comprehension questions if needed to scaffold their reading:
 - i. Analyze the language used in these documents to identify the key arguments against Hangul.
 - ii. Discuss how these documents reflect the broader societal values of the yangban class.
 - iii. Identify any underlying fears or concerns about social change that these texts reveal.
 - g. Creating the Argument: Divide class into 2 groups.
 - i. **Yangban Group:** Craft arguments (3 - 4 points) against the adoption of Hangul. (if needed, give prompts about emphasizing tradition, the sanctity of Chinese characters, and concerns about social disorder.)
 - ii. **Pro-Hangul Group:** Craft arguments (3 - 4 points) in favor of more widespread use of Hangul. (If needed, prompt students to highlight the

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

benefits of widespread literacy, cultural independence, and social mobility.)

- h. Pair students up to share both sides. Students should then create a counterargument to share.
- i. Class Wrap-Up Discussion: (Could be assigned for homework). Why the yangban elite resisted the use of Hangul, favoring Chinese characters (Hanja) for maintaining their status and power. Discuss the social and political reasons behind the delayed widespread adoption of Hangul

EXTENSION 1: Compare and Contrast (AP World) Language and Power

Ext 1 OBJECTIVE:

Students will compare the use of language as a means of maintaining power.

Ext 1 - AP World Objectives:

3.4 - Compare the methods by which various empires increased their influence from 1450 to 1750.

1. Compare the suppression of Hangul with other historical instances where elites controlled language to maintain power.
2. Groups should do a quick search on how the clergy and elites used the following languages in this timeframe:
 - a. Latin in Medieval Europe: (Clergy and educated elite used Latin to conduct religious services and scholarly work, limiting access to knowledge among the laity.)
 - b. Arabic in the Ottoman Empire: (Ottoman Turkish, written in a complex Arabic script, was the language of administration and literature, inaccessible to many commoners.)
3. Create a Venn Diagram showing similarities and differences between suppression of Hangul and these cases

EXTENSION 2: Exploring CHANGE OVER TIME:

Ext. 2 OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to understand the role of language and culture as a tool of nationalism. Students will explore and practice analysis to demonstrate Continuity and Change over Time

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

Ext 2 - AP World Objectives:

4.7: Changing Social Hierarchies from 1450 to 1750 Explain how social categories, roles, and practices have been maintained or have changed over time.

5.1 The Enlightenment. (Hist Dev: Nationalism also became a major force shaping the historical development of states and empires.)

5.2: Nationalism and Revolutions in the Period from 1750 to 1900

(Hist Dev: People around the world developed a new sense of commonality based on language, religion, social customs, and territory. This was sometimes harnessed by governments to foster a sense of unity.

1. Share: Hangul was banned in 1504 and only fully reinstated in schools in 1895.
2. Student Activity: Look at the following 3 documents
 - a. Timeline (Doc 2E-1) (Optional: annotate with what you have already learned in the unit.)
 - b. Photo of The Independent (Doc 2E-2). The first Hangul-only newspaper was called The Independent. (It was actually ALSO printed in English.)
3. Group Discussion: What is the value of Hangul in this time? Why, after 500 years of inconsistent usage, does the Korean government push for Hangul as the Korean alphabet?
4. Share Document from Minjung Hur about Hangul. (Doc 2E-3)
5. Show students [video](#) about the celebration of Hangul Day (celebrated in South Korea on October 8 and in North Korea on January 15)
6. Divide the class in two. Students should write a claim with 2 pieces of evidence and analysis for ONE of the following questions:
 - a. To what extent is language a tool of power for elites?
 - b. To what extent is language a tool of national identity?

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

DOCUMENTS FOR LESSON

Document 1-1 - What is the Tribute System?

Munez, E.. "tributary system." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, April 18, 2023.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/tributary-system>.

The tributary system served primarily as a way for China to establish and dominate foreign relations with neighboring powers, but it also served to legitimize the rulers of tributary states

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

through their relationship with China. The Chinese elite held the concept that China was the Middle Kingdom (Mandarin: zhongguo)—a name that implied China's superior or central role in civilization—and that its cultural practices should be the universal norm. Powers that China considered more civilized than others, such as Korea, Vietnam, and sometimes Japan, were more involved in the tributary system than other states. Powers that China considered less civilized tended to include the tribal peoples near China's continental borders.

The tributary system was a ritualized process that put China in a central position. Foreign powers sent their emissaries to China, the language used during exchange was Chinese, and emissaries performed the kowtow (a ritual involving complete prostration and knocking of the head on the ground) to the Chinese emperor's throne to show reverence and deference to him. Gifts that foreign emissaries bestowed on the emperor as tribute were often products that were native to their lands. In return, the Chinese emperor gave the emissaries items that signified the power and wealth of China, such as cloth, silk, and gold, which often exceeded the value of the emissaries' gifts. China also often provided foreign emissaries with an imperial letter of patent, a seal of rank, and the Chinese calendar, which signified that tributary relations had been established. Tributary states typically received China's protection as well as economic benefits, such as the right to trade with China.

Until the founding of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), tribute trade was largely symbolic, often constituting an insignificant portion of China's total foreign trade. However, that dynasty's founder, the Hongwu emperor (reigned 1368–98), instituted measures to expand tributary relations and make the tributary system China's primary form of foreign trade. The motives behind this expansion were to maintain Confucian hierarchical values and to attain stability and peace along China's continental borders, most notably with the Mongols. For these reasons, maritime navigation and private trade were limited, while tributary trade was emphasized. During this expansion, tributary envoys from China's continental neighbors were received and entertained by local and provincial governments in China's frontier zones.

Document 1-2: Primary Source Document: Joseon (CHOSUN) TRIBUTE by King Sajon

"The King bows to the memorial to China for expressing gratitude for imperial benevolence"
Accession Year (1418), Month 9, Day 8, Entry 5

Wearing his ceremonial attire, the King led all the officials in bowing to the memorial to China for expressing gratitude for imperial benevolence according to protocol.

The memorial to the Emperor of Ming China read:

Your Imperial Majesty's grace is expansive and vast to specially bestow your imperial edict upon your subject, and your illustrious envoy finally came to Joseon. Such grace will be forever engraved in your subject's heart, and it would be difficult for your subject to repay it even if he does everything in his power to do so.....

.....This is undoubtedly because your subjects have been humbly graced by Your Imperial Majesty's heart which is sincere in nurturing your inferiors, and your vast magnanimity which embraces the border areas. Consequently the country of where the sun rises (Joseon) will

World History Digital Education

Lesson Plan

benefit from heaven's favor for generations. Your subject will reverently pray to the North Star constantly wishing for Your Imperial Majesty's health and longevity. Handing down this pledge to his sons and grandsons, your subject will all the more devote himself to Your Imperial Majesty from the eastern border.

The memorial for presenting local products to the Emperor of Ming China read:

The imperial envoy finally came to this land, and your subject specially received the generous imperial grace. Your subject presents these local products, though they are meager, merely to express his gratitude. Your subject respectfully prepared 2 saddles, 30 pil of yellow fine ramie cloth, 30 pil of white fine ramie cloth, 90 pil of black fine hemp cloth, 40 rush mats with yellow chrysanthemum patterns, 20 rush mats fully patterned with flowers, 20 rush sitting mats fully patterned with flowers, 20 rush mats with multicolored floral patterns, 200 geun of ginseng, 200 geun of pine nuts, and 26 horses of various colors. The workmanship of the aforementioned articles is crude, and they are too few in number and variety. Nevertheless, your subject hopes Your Imperial Majesty will deign to accept the presents out of consideration that these are heartfelt pledges.

Document 1-3: Confucian Rituals and Royal Parades outside the Palace

Kim, Dong-uk. 2016. "An Overview of Korea's Palaces." In *2016 InfoKorea*. magazine. <https://www.aks.ac.kr/ikorea/cms/usr/wap/selectAplctnData.do?siteAplctnId=koreaReferenceCiaEng&referenceSeq=100040&menuNo=&lang=eng>.

Munmyo was a hall for worshipping the ancient Chinese sage-philosopher Confucius (as well as the general name for Confucian shrines) located at the back of Changgyeonggung Palace in the northeastern area of the capital. It included Seonggyungwan, the state-run Neoconfucian academy. Here, future high-ranking official hopefuls studied books for the civil service examinations. With every change of the seasons, the king visited Munmyo Shrine and bowed to the progenitor of Confucianism as a sign of respect.

A ceremony to celebrate the crown prince's first day of school was also held at Munmyo Shrine. At the ceremony, a prominent scholar, having been picked out as the future teacher of the prince, had a question-and-answer session with the prince on learning. The education of the prince had a special meaning because Joseon's state ideology of Neo-Confucianism emphasized the Confucian classics that formed the foundation of politics for government officials. Therefore, the ritual for the prince's entrance to school was one of the biggest events for the royal family. When the prince came back to the palace after the entrance ceremony, the king would throw a party for the government officials to celebrate the event. The king showed the utmost respect to the teacher of the prince. When the prince grew up and ascended the throne, his master usually took up an important government post.

Being a subsidiary organization of Munmyo Shrine, Seonggyungwan was the nation's highest standard academy. Seonggyungwan students were given a chance to work as the future leaders of the nation.

(Kyonggi University 2016)

Document Set (2-1 -

A. Choe Malli's Memorial to King Sejong (1444)

Excerpt:

"Our country uses Chinese characters, which are the script of the noble and the wise. Now, Your Majesty has created 28 letters, intending to teach them to the people. But if the people learn these letters, they will neglect the Chinese characters, leading to a decay in the learning and morals that have been passed down through the ages. This is not in accordance with the way of the sages."

Source: The memorial is historically documented in the "Sejong Sillok," or the "Annals of King Sejong," which are part of the "Joseon Wangjo Sillok" (The Annals of the Joseon Dynasty).

B. Government Edicts or Records: Limited Use of Hangul in Official Documents

Context: During the Joseon Dynasty, despite the creation of Hangul, the use of Chinese characters (Hanja) continued to dominate official documents, legal texts, and scholarly writings. Hangul was often relegated to informal contexts, women's writings, and folk literature.

Excerpt Example: In legal and diplomatic documents, Hanja was often the prescribed script. For example, official royal decrees would often begin with statements like:

"In accordance with the traditions of the great sages, this decree is issued in the noble script (Hanja) that has been passed down from ancient times."

Source: This kind of documentation is typically found in the "Gukjo-orye-ui," the records of state rituals, and various legal codes of the Joseon period.

C. Excerpts from Confucian Scholars: Superiority of Chinese Characters (Hanja)

Excerpt from Yi Hwang (Toegye), a prominent Confucian scholar:

"The wisdom of the ancients is inscribed in the characters of the Middle Kingdom. To abandon these characters in favor of a new script is to turn away from the teachings of the sages."

Excerpt from Seong Hon (Ugye), another Confucian scholar:

"The learning of our land is rooted in the classical texts of Confucius, written in the language of the noble. This new script is but a tool for the unlearned and unrefined."

D. Secondary Source - "Korea 1400 - 1600 A.D."

From: "Korea, 1400–1600 A.D." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/?period=o8®ion=eak> (October 2002)

During the reigns of Taejo (Yi Sŏng-gye; r. 1392–98), founder of the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), and his fifth son, Taejong (Yi Pang-wŏn; r. 1400–1418), increasingly stringent restrictions are placed on the Buddhist church and many of its properties are confiscated as well. These measures effectively undercut the societal influence of both the Buddhist hierarchy and the old aristocracy, thereby clearing the way for the new hereditary elite that will dominate Korea socially, culturally, and politically throughout the half-millennium of Joseon rule. This new elite—known collectively as yangban (officials of the “two orders”)—consists of the literati, or educated, class that over time is able to monopolize civil and military posts in the national bureaucracy. Success in the civil service examinations constitutes the primary gateway to the bureaucracy and, as in contemporary China, requires strict adherence to a Neo-Confucian perspective on the part of the candidate. Official position within the bureaucracy, especially the civil order, which is more highly regarded than the military order, confers prestige and financial security within Joseon society. Since yangban families are exempt from the corvée as well as from the payment of taxes, their male children have greater opportunity to obtain the thorough Neo-Confucian education necessary for success in the civil service examinations, which are nominally open to all freeborn males. In all aspects of their life, the yangban cultivate such Confucian virtues as simplicity and frugality. This restraint is expressed, for example, in the furnishings and implements of the sarangbang, or study, the domain of the male head of a yangban household. Objects in the sarangbang—such as writing implements, ceramics, calligraphy, and paintings—exemplify the scholar’s social and political status as well as his moral standards and refined aesthetic sensibilities.

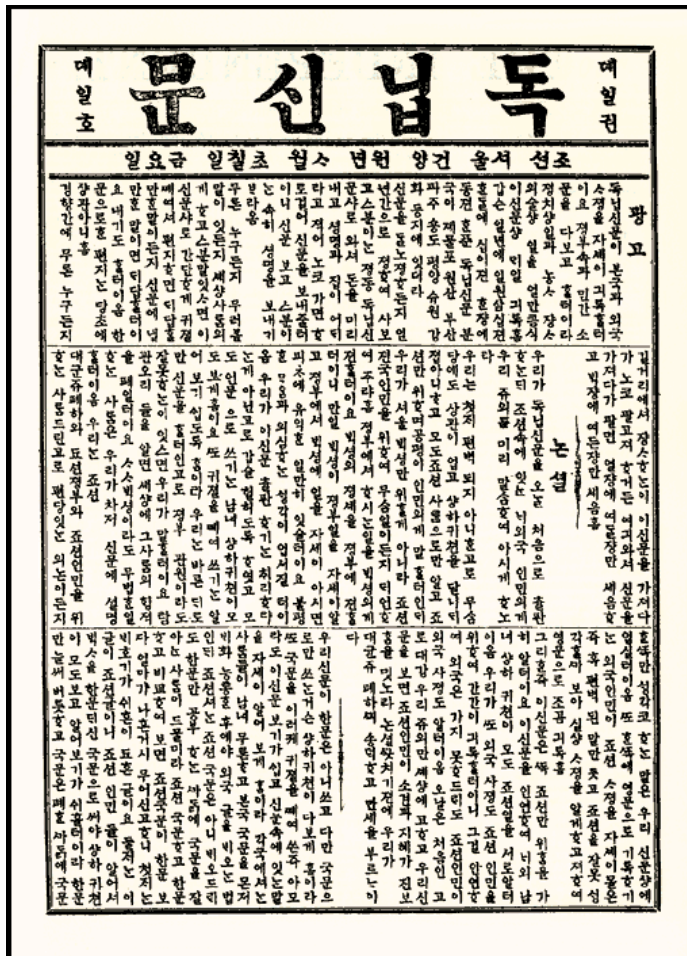
Document 2E - 1

TIMELINE of Korea

- 1800s - Rise of nationalism in Europe
- 1800s - Rise of industrialization starts in Europe.
- 1839–1842: China loses Opium War. Korea still tributary state to the Qing
- 1854: Japan was forced to open itself to Westerners.
- 1868 - Meiji Restoration in Japan begins and leads to rapid growth for Japan and a rise in Japanese power.
- 1876 - Treaty of Kanghai between Japan and Korea gave Japan special trading rights and other privileges in Korea that were not reciprocated for Koreans in Japan. The United States and major European countries soon followed with their own treaties of trade and diplomacy with Korea.

- 1894–1896: The Gabo Reforms and the Donghak Peasant Revolution lead to the brief but rapid period of social reform and modernization.
- 1894–1895: Japan and China went to war over Korea. Japan wins. Korea no longer under the influence of Qing China.
- 1904–1905: Japan and Russia went to war over Korea. Japan wins.
- 1905: The Korean Empire signed a protectorate treaty.
- 1910: Japan annexed Korea as a colony, ending the Choson dynasty after more than 500 years of independent rule.
- 1926 Hanguk Day first celebrated.
- 1910 - 1945: Japanese colonization led to the declaration of Japanese as the official language of Korea. In 1938, Japan enforced a program of assimilation and outlawed all aspects of Korean culture.
- 2012 Hanguk Day was adapted as a national holiday in Korea, as a day off.

Document 2E - 2



This is the first page of the newspaper, *Tongnip Sinmun* (Korean: 독립신문) or The Independent (English version). Published in July 1896 - Dec. 1898), this newspaper was the first to be published fully in Hanguk.