

## **NORTH KOREA’S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND THE SIX PARTY TALKS**

**GRADES:** 10<sup>th</sup>

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**TOPIC/THEME:** World History, International Security, Nuclear Proliferation and Diplomacy

**TIME REQUIRED:** One 80 minute block or two 40 minute class periods

### **BACKGROUND:**

This lesson explores the international climate surrounding North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. In 2002, the same year that President George W. Bush included North Korea in his “Axis of Evil” speech, North Korea admitted that it had been enriching uranium in hopes of developing nuclear weapons. Since August 2003, several rounds of “six party talks” have been held regarding North Korea’s nuclear program. The six countries involved are North and South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States. While the talks made some progress, they have also hit major roadblocks. During the 2005 talks, North Korea agreed to give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons in exchange for energy and economic aid. Just one year later, North Korea conducted its first official nuclear weapons test, thus becoming the world’s eighth acknowledged nuclear power. Negotiations resumed, but again fell apart in 2009 when North Korea announced that it had conducted another nuclear test. This test came just months after North Korea launched what it claimed to be a communications satellite, but was believed by many to have been a long-range missile, over Japan. In November, 2010, North Korea fired artillery shells at a South Korean island and South Korea retaliated by firing back, resulting in tensions that alarmed the world. Meanwhile, in August 2011, during visits to Russia and China, North Korean president Kim Jong-il began advocating for the resumption of the Six Party Talks. This lesson focuses on the objectives and strategies of each of the six nations potentially involved in the talks should they resume.

The lesson also introduces students to the complex relationships each nation involved in the talks has with North Korea. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and China both supplied North Korea with economic and military aid. Now, China remains an ally and a major trading partner of North Korea, but its priorities have shifted. Russia has maintained less of a relationship with North Korea since the fall of the Soviet Union, but has recently begun talks about building a major gas pipeline through North Korea. The United States has had a very tense relationship with North Korea since the Korean War and has a strong military presence in South Korea. Meanwhile, Japan’s tense relations with both North and South Korea stem from its colonization of the Korean Peninsula prior to World War II, as well as its geographic proximity and non-nuclear status. Finally, South Korea has a paradoxical relationship with its northern neighbor. On one hand, the two nations share a common history, culture, and language; on the other, they have been divided both geographically and ideologically for the last fifty years. More detail about these relationships is available in the country delegate instructions (handout 2). Great background

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTION:**

This lesson is part of the final unit of a world history class aligned with the California state standards for 10<sup>th</sup> grade social studies. The unit examines contemporary politics in the

aftermath of the Cold War. Students should have already learned about the nuclear arms race during the Cold War. They should already have a basic understanding of North Korea's relationships with the five other nations involved in the talks, as well as of the United Nations' role in international relations. It could also be used in a course on US history, foreign policy, or government.

### **CONNECTION TO STUDENTS' LIVES:**

The North Korean nuclear question is one of the key international issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its outcome will have economic, security, and political impacts on both Asia and the world. As students prepare to enter college, vote in national elections, and potentially become policy makers themselves, it is essential that they understand the complexities of resolving this issue.

### **OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS:**

1. Students will analyze the strategic perspectives and potential outcomes of the six-party talks regarding North Korea's nuclear program.

**NCSS Standard:** Theme IX: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and independence.

**CA Social Studies Standard:** 10.9 Students analyze the international developments in the post–World War II world.

**Common Core Standards:** SL 1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions; SL 4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically

### **MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

- Student computers with Internet access OR copies of handout 1 (survey)
- Copies of country delegate instructions (handout 2)
- Copies of the discussion procedures (handout 3)
- Computer and an LCD projector if available
- [http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv\\_en/news\\_china/2011-08-29/kim-jong-il-visits-china-pushing-to-resume-six-party-nuclear-talks.html](http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv_en/news_china/2011-08-29/kim-jong-il-visits-china-pushing-to-resume-six-party-nuclear-talks.html)

### **INTRODUCTION and EXPLORATION:**

- Begin class with a think-pair-share discussion related to the overarching themes of this lesson. In the think-pair-share discussion format, the teacher presents students with a discussion prompt or question. Students first have about 15-30 seconds to think or quietly write about the prompt. Then, they discuss the question with a partner or small group. Finally, the teacher calls on students to share with the class. Potential questions to discuss include:
  - Should any weapons or technology be banned worldwide?
  - Should nations with nuclear weapons capabilities prevent non-nuclear nations from developing similar technology?

- How can a sovereign nation be required, pressured, or convinced by other nations to cease nuclear weapons development or to dismantle existing technology?
- Very interesting questions

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **THE DELIVERY OF THE CONTENT:**

1. After the think-pair-share activity, explain that this class will be devoted to the question of North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Distribute the pre-knowledge survey (handout 1) for students to complete in pairs or small groups. If the technology is available, the survey may also be entered into Blackboard, survey monkey, or a similar online program. Once students have completed the survey, review the answers and any relevant questions that arise. The answers are on the second page of the handout.
2. Introduce the issues surrounding North Korea's nuclear program and the six party talks by showing a relevant news clip. A recommended news clip from is available at: [http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv\\_en/news\\_china/2011-08-29/kim-jong-il-visits-china-pushing-to-resume-six-party-nuclear-talks.html](http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv_en/news_china/2011-08-29/kim-jong-il-visits-china-pushing-to-resume-six-party-nuclear-talks.html)
3. Now, begin the six-party talk simulation, which takes a jig-saw activity format, as explained below.
4. Break the students into six groups. Explain that each group will be representing one of the countries involved in the six party talks. The countries include: Japan, South Korea, North Korea, China, Russia, and the United States.
5. Give each group a set of delegate instructions (handout 2) for its assigned country. Each member of the group should get a copy as the groups will be rearranged during the application portion of the lesson. Emphasize that the delegate instructions offer the perspective of the country involved. Particularly in the case of North Korea, the information in the handout may differ from what they have read in their textbook or seen on the news.
6. Give the students time to read their delegate instructions. Each country group should then prioritize the possible objectives and strategies at the bottom of their instruction sheet. If this activity is being used in a 40 minute class rather than an 80 minute block, this is a good stopping point. The lesson would resume next class with a brief recap at the beginning.

### **THE APPLICATION OF THE CONTENT:**

1. After all groups have prioritized their objectives and strategies, redistribute the students into new groups, having them keep their completed delegate instruction sheets. Each new group should include at least one student from each of the original six country groups. For example, a class of thirty students would have five groups of six while a class of twenty-four students would have four groups of six. In classes without even multiples of six students or with students who will need more support, some groups may have two students representing one country.
2. Explain to the new groups that they will now be simulating another round of six party talks. They should follow the discussion procedures outlined in handout 3.
3. After the groups have completed their six party talk simulations, instruct them to step out of their delegate roles and discuss the negotiation experience with their group members.

They might analyze the following: What hindered or helped the process of reaching an agreement? Which countries seemed most likely to compromise? How might this simulation be different or similar to the actual talks?

**ASSESSMENT:**

1. As a closure to the class, each group should summarize its experience for the rest of the class, explaining whether an agreement was reached and what happened during their negotiations.
2. For homework, each student should write a reflection about what he or she thinks should be done about North Korea's nuclear program. If Blackboard or another online forum is available, this reflection may be completed as a discussion board post, allowing for further student interaction and discussion.

**RESOURCES:**

- Bajoria, Jayshree, and Carin Zissis. "The Six-Party Talks on North Korea's Nuclear Program." Council on Foreign Relations. Last modified July 1, 2009. <http://www.cfr.org/proliferation/six-party-talks-north-koreas-nuclear-program/p13593>.
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- "Social Indicators." United Nations Statistics Division. Last modified June 2011. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/socind/inc-eco.htm>.

## **HANDOUT 1: NORTH KOREA SURVEY**

*Directions: Answer the questions below as accurately as you can.*

- 1) Which country colonized Korea before World War II?
  
- 2) Which two countries are separated by a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that crosses the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel?
  
- 3) What type of political system does North Korea have?
  
- 4) What type of economic system does North Korea have?
  
- 5) Who is the current leader of North Korea?
  
- 6) Which influential nations were allies of North Korea during the Cold War?
  
- 7) What is the capital of North Korea?
  
- 8) What is the capital of South Korea?
  
- 9) What do DPRK and ROK stand for?
  
- 10) Who was the first leader of North Korea?

Answers: 1) Japan; 2) North and South Korea; 3) totalitarian or dictatorship; 4) communist; 5) Kim Jong-il; 6) China and the Soviet Union; 7) Pyongyang; 8) Seoul; 9) Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Republic of Korea (South Korea); 10) Kim Il-sung

## HANDOUT 2: DELEGATE INSTRUCTIONS

### Instructions for the Japanese Delegation

**Background:** Japan has a historically tense relationship with both Koreas. Japan invaded the Korean peninsula twice in the fifteenth century. From 1910 until Korea was divided into two nations after World War II, the peninsula was under Japanese colonial rule. During Japan's rule over Korea, the Korean language was strictly suppressed and Koreans were trafficked for factory labor and sexual slavery. Resentment amongst Koreans for these past wrongs is still common.

After World War II, the Korean Peninsula was divided into two nations: North Korea (DPRK) and South Korea (ROK). These two Koreas had very different governments, but shared a common language and culture. Prior to the division, both had been under Japanese colonial rule. While the division was originally supposed to be temporary, it was made official by the UN in 1948 and continues until this day.

Since World War II, Japan's constitution has prevented it from maintaining any military force beyond a domestic defense force. While Japan has a nuclear energy program, it does not have a nuclear weapons program. Japan's proximity to both North and South Korea means that a nuclear North Korean state poses a clear threat to Japan. Meanwhile Japan continues to have territorial disputes with South Korea, which, like Japan, does not currently have nuclear weapons.

North Korea launched what appeared to be a non-nuclear long-range missile over Japan in 2009. In the same year, the North Korean government claimed to have conducted underground nuclear tests, despite having agreed during earlier six party talks to cease its nuclear program in exchange for energy assistance. Given these recent events and the historical context, the Japanese government does not generally trust the intentions and promises of North Korea's government.

*Given these circumstances, prioritize the objectives of the Japanese delegation, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.*

- prevent North Korea from further expanding its nuclear program
- promote the economic growth of North Korea
- ensure the security and protection of Japan
- disassemble or end any existing nuclear presence in North Korea
- promote stability in the Korean peninsula

*From the Japanese Delegation's perspective, prioritize possible means of reaching these objectives, with 1 being the most appealing and 5 the least appealing.*

- increase economic sanctions to put immediate pressure on North Korea
- provide economic and/or energy aid to North Korea
- improve defenses against future North Korean aggression
- allow North Korea to develop some non-military nuclear capabilities
- gain military support from key allies when pressuring North Korea



## Instructions for the South Korean (Republic of Korea) Delegation

**Background:** After World War II, the Korean Peninsula was divided into two nations: North Korea (DPRK) and South Korea (ROK). These two Koreas had very different governments, but shared a common language and culture. Prior to the division, both had been under Japanese colonial rule. While the division was originally supposed to be temporary, it was made official by the UN in 1948 and continues until this day.

In 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea, violating UN charter and triggering what we now refer to as the Korean War. Sixteen UN nations, including the United States, sent troops to support South Korea. Meanwhile, China sent troops to aid North Korea. After three years of fighting, an armistice was signed and fighting ended, leaving the border between North and South Korea at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. On a number of occasions since the division, both sides have expressed a desire for reunification, however, they do not agree about what would happen to the government and economy if the country were reunited.

Despite common cultural and ancestral ties, North and South Korea are now quite different. North Korea is a dictatorship with a highly controlled, communist economy. South Korea is a democracy with a rapidly growing capitalist economy. According to the UN, the per capita GDP of South Korea was over 34 times larger than that of North Korea in 2009. Recently, South Korean politicians have focused more on increasing economic cooperation between the north and south and preventing North Korean military aggression than on promoting reunification.

As South Korea's capital, Seoul, is less than 30 miles from the border, a nuclear North Korea presents a very immediate threat. In 2010, the UN twice condemned North Korean acts of military aggression against South Korea, the first involving the sinking of a South Korean warship and the second the shelling of a South Korean island. North Korea's active duty military is twice the size of South Korea's. Since the Korean War, the US has maintained a strong military presence in South Korea. This presence is shrinking, however, both because of changing US interests and South Korean nationalism.

*Given these circumstances, prioritize the objectives of the South Korean delegation, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.*

- prevent North Korea from further expanding its nuclear program
- promote the economic growth of North Korea
- ensure the security of the border
- disassemble or end any existing nuclear presence in North Korea
- promote reunification of the two Koreas

*From the South Korean Delegation's perspective, prioritize possible means of reaching these objectives, with 1 being the most appealing and 5 the least appealing.*

- increase economic sanctions to put immediate pressure on North Korea
- provide economic and/or energy aid to North Korea
- improve defenses against future North Korean aggression
- encourage investment in North Korea
- leverage the help of other nations, including the US and China

### Instructions for the Russian Delegation:

**Background:** After World War II, the Korean Peninsula was divided into two nations: North Korea (DPRK) and South Korea (ROK). Originally, the division was intended to be temporary, with the Soviet Union overseeing the north and the United States overseeing the south until an agreement could be reached about the country's future. After the Korean War, however, the division became permanent. While both North and South Korea were independent, their leaders remained under the influence of the Soviet and American governments, respectively, throughout the Cold War.

During the Cold War era, both China and the Soviet Union provided economic and military assistance to North Korea, often in competition with one another for the most influence in the communist world. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, breaking apart into many nations, the largest of which was Russia. After this collapse, economic aid to North Korea diminished and North Korea became increasingly dependent on trade with China.

Now, Russia would like to build a pipeline through North Korea so that it can pump natural gas to South Korea and possibly Japan. Although North Korea has turned down the proposal in the past, its leader Kim Jong-il traveled to Moscow in August 2011 to begin talks with the Soviets regarding the pipeline. The project could provide a significant and desperately needed cash flow to North Korea. It also seems that the North Korean leader may now be willing to open up international negotiations about its nuclear program.

If Russia's energy project proposals prompt North Korea to make compromises regarding its nuclear program, Russia will enhance its image abroad. The building of the pipeline also presents an appealing opportunity for the Russian energy industry. It is therefore in Russia's economic and political interests to promote cooperation and stability on the Korean peninsula.

*Given these circumstances, prioritize the objectives of the Russian delegation, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.*

- \_\_\_ convince North Korea to make compromises regarding its nuclear program
- \_\_\_ promote the economic growth of North Korea
- \_\_\_ improve Russia's image in the world
- \_\_\_ secure the pipeline project
- \_\_\_ promote stability on the Korean peninsula

*From the Russian Delegation's perspective, prioritize possible means of reaching these objectives, with 1 being the most appealing and 5 the least appealing.*

- \_\_\_ increase economic sanctions to put immediate pressure on North Korea
- \_\_\_ provide economic and/or energy aid to North Korea
- \_\_\_ increase investment in North Korea
- \_\_\_ allow North Korea to develop some non-military nuclear capabilities
- \_\_\_ place diplomatic pressure on North Korea

## Instructions for the Chinese Delegation:

**Background:** After World War II, the Korean Peninsula was divided into two nations: North Korea (DPRK) and South Korea (ROK). In 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea, triggering what we now refer to as the Korean War. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers from China, a neighboring communist country, joined the fighting in support of North Korea's mission to unify Korea as one communist nation. Meanwhile, sixteen UN nations sent troops to support South Korea, with the US providing the largest number of troops. After three years of fighting, an armistice was signed and fighting ended, leaving the border between North and South Korea at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Since the Korean War, China has been North Korea's strongest economic and political ally.

Throughout the Cold War era, both China and the Soviet Union provided economic and military assistance to North Korea, often in competition with one another for the most influence in the communist world. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, China has continued to maintain close ties with North Korea. These ties have become weaker than it was during the Cold War though, particularly since China recognized South Korea as a legitimate nation in 1992.

China has the potential to be one of the world's next superpowers. China wants to leverage its position as a country with unique influence on North Korea. At the same time, China wants to maintain and improve its world image. Recent actions by North Korea, such as country's 2009 nuclear tests, that have clearly violated UN charters have resulted in more willingness on the part of China to put strong pressure on North Korea to halt its nuclear program.

While North Korea's strong military presence does not pose an immediate threat to China, instability in North Korea does. China fears the economic repercussions of a collapse of North Korea's government followed by thousands of refugees rushing into China. Meanwhile, China wants to prevent North Korea from provoking a war, as this would also destabilize the region and pose a huge cost to China. Trade between the two nations is currently strong and it is in China's best interest to promote a thriving North Korean economy.

*Given these circumstances, prioritize the objectives of the Chinese delegation, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.*

- \_\_\_ prevent North Korea from further expanding its nuclear program
- \_\_\_ promote the economic growth of North Korea
- \_\_\_ play a visible diplomatic role in the negotiations so that China looks strong and influential
- \_\_\_ prevent future North Korean aggression toward the US, Japan, or South Korea
- \_\_\_ promote stability on the Korean peninsula

*From the Chinese Delegation's perspective, prioritize possible means of reaching these objectives, with 1 being the most appealing and 5 the least appealing.*

- \_\_\_ increase economic sanctions to put immediate pressure on North Korea
- \_\_\_ provide economic and/or energy aid to North Korea
- \_\_\_ increase investment in North Korea
- \_\_\_ allow North Korea to develop some non-military nuclear capabilities
- \_\_\_ place diplomatic pressure on North Korea

## Instructions for the American Delegation

**Background:** After World War II, the Korean Peninsula was divided into two nations: North Korea (DPRK) and South Korea (ROK). In 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea, triggering what we now refer to as the Korean War. Sixteen UN nations sent troops to support South Korea, with the US providing the largest number of troops. After three years of fighting, an armistice was signed and fighting ended, leaving the border between North and South Korea at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Since the Korean War, the US has had a significant military presence in South Korea.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, the US has begun efforts to reduce its military presence in South Korea and shift security responsibilities to the South Korean military. This reduction is generally supported by the South Korean people. American troops in South Korea were reduced to 28,000 as of 2008 and several major American military bases are scheduled to be transferred to South Korean control by 2016.

Despite these reductions, North Korean acts of aggression against South Korea could potentially be seen as acts of war against the United States, particularly should an American target or soldier be hit. Meanwhile, the United States also has military bases in Japan, over which North Korea fired a long-range missile in 2009. There are also reports that North Korea may be working toward designing a missile that could hit the United States.

Since 2007, domestic concerns about the American economy as well as frustration with the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq overshadowed Americans' concern about the North Korean nuclear question. The United States military is currently fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, conflicts which have become increasingly unpopular with the American public. Entering into an armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula would be a highly unpopular and costly endeavor for the American military. While the US opposes North Korea's nuclear program and supports the reunification of Korea, these are not the most important items on its politicians' agendas, particularly with the approach of an election year in 2012.

*Given these circumstances, prioritize the objectives of the American delegation, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.*

- \_\_\_ prevent North Korea from further expanding its nuclear program
- \_\_\_ promote the economic growth of North Korea
- \_\_\_ play a diplomatic role in the negotiations
- \_\_\_ keep peace on the Korean peninsula
- \_\_\_ promote reunification of the two Koreas

*From the American Delegation's perspective, prioritize possible means of reaching these objectives, with 1 being the most appealing and 5 the least appealing.*

- \_\_\_ increase economic sanctions to put immediate pressure on North Korea
- \_\_\_ provide economic and/or energy aid to North Korea
- \_\_\_ strengthen military defenses against future North Korean aggression
- \_\_\_ launch a pre-emptive military strike against North Korea
- \_\_\_ wait patiently for North Korea to give in to international pressure while you focus on other issues

## Instructions for the North Korean (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) Delegation

**Background:** The Korean people have long fought against imperialism. North Korea's first president, Kim Il-sung, was a communist revolutionary during the Japanese occupation. After Japan's defeat in World War II, the US and the Soviet Union divided Korea. This led to "the Great War for the Liberation of the Motherland," also known as the Korean War. With the help of China, North Korea fought to free South Korea from US occupation. When the Americans and their UN puppets admitted defeat, unable to occupy North Korea, they signed an armistice.

During the Cold War, North Korea received economic and military aid from China and the Soviet Union. By the early 1990s, North Korea was believed to have 1-2 nuclear weapons. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, cutting off a major source of trade and military aid. One year later, to North Korea's dismay, China recognized South Korea as a legitimate nation.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the US tried to interfere in North Korea's nuclear program. After the CIA discovered nuclear reactors in North Korea in 1994, the US pressured North Korea into signing an agreement to stop the nuclear program. The US again tried to punish North Korea in 2003 for developing nuclear technology necessary for its own defense. North Korea then participated in six party talks regarding its nuclear program. During these talks, the US rejected North Korea's requests for a bilateral non-aggression pact. North Korea signed a denuclearization agreement in exchange for economic and energy aid. The US, Japan and South Korea then used propaganda to make it appear that North Korea had violated the agreement.

While the six party talks have temporarily ended, North Korea is willing to reenter negotiations in part because of its economic and security interests. Maintaining a good relationship with China, North Korea's largest trading partner, is important. Meanwhile, North Korea also recognizes that Russia's proposed natural gas pipeline project through North Korea to South Korea could provide significant revenue and energy supplies to North Korea. Kim Jong-il recently traveled to Russia to discuss this project and strengthen diplomatic ties.

*Given these circumstances, prioritize the objectives of the North Korean delegation, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.*

- maintain good relations with China and Russia
- sign a non-aggression pact with the United States
- keep existing nuclear programs or technology
- secure energy and/or cash resources
- promote reunification of the two Koreas

*From the North Korean Delegation's perspective, prioritize possible means of reaching these objectives, with 1 being the most appealing and 5 the least appealing.*

- sign an agreement to end future nuclear development
- give in to some demands in return for economic and/or energy aid to North Korea
- allow outside weapons experts to inspect and dismantle existing nuclear technology
- give into some requests made by China and/or Russia
- refuse to sign any agreement until there is a bilateral nonaggression pact with the US

## **HANDOUT 3: DISCUSSION PROCEDURES**

### **Six Party Talks Protocol**

1. Designate a responsible timekeeper.
2. Each country's delegate has one minute to summarize his or her country's position. Please do not read the delegate instructions sheet, but rather present key points and objectives. If there are two delegates representing one country, these delegates have one minute total.
3. After delegates from all countries have shared, the talk will move to 10 minutes of open discussion with the goal of reaching at least one agreement that all countries will be willing to sign.
4. If an agreement is reached, write your agreement on a piece of paper and have each delegate sign it. If no agreement is reached, be prepared to share the reasons why.