

## **Syllabus Plan**

By Asha Chloe Johnson

### **Rationale**

**Unit title:** Korean History and Culture: From Myth to Modernity

#### **Course objective and goals:**

This unit introduces Year 7-8 students to Korean history in a structured, age-appropriate way that traces Korea's development from ancient origins to the modern era. The goals are to:

1. Build foundational knowledge of Korea's historical timeline and cultural identity.
2. Develop critical thinking by comparing myths, historical accounts, and modern perspectives..
3. Foster intercultural understanding and engagement with Korea and Koreans through exposure to their history and culture..

#### **Introduction to the course:**

The purpose of this unit is to engage Year 7-8 students in Korean studies by presenting history as a story that unfolds sequentially and provides an engaging and thought-provoking approach to learning. Rather than relying on rote memorisation, students will explore Korea's past through interactive activities, creative responses, and collaborative projects to encourage the engagement. This unit outline is intended for Year 7-8 students in Australian secondary schools, but could be adapted to suit multiple educational settings where cultural studies are

emphasised. No prior knowledge of Korean history is required, and limited to no Korean language knowledge is required as a prerequisite.

### **Contents and readings:**

This unit begins with the founding myth of Tangun and the establishment of Gojoseon, which introduces students to the cultural significance of myths in shaping identity. Lessons then progress through the Three Kingdoms, the role of art in Korean history and the Joseon dynasty (with particular attention to the invention of Hangul), Korean gender and culture, crimes and punishment, the Japanese occupation, the Korean War, and the rise of modern South Korea. Each lesson builds on the previous one, with students adding events to a class timeline by collecting reflections and ‘stamps’ in a “Korean History Passport.” It is important to note the sequential order of oldest history to modern day, as it allows students to connect their learning and make it streamlined for the most effective learning and knowledge acquisition.

### **Pedagogical activities and approach:**

This unit emphasises active learning, where students will be encouraged to engage in skits, choose-your-own adventures, group discussions, and other gamified learning options to make historical content relatable and engaging to the young audience. The sequential timeline activity serves as a visible scaffold for learning, ensuring students can situate new knowledge in relation to what they already know. Creative responses (artwork, digital storytelling, or short skits) allow students to express historical understanding in ways suited to diverse learning styles, while structured class discussions and quizzes encourage collaboration and accountability.

### **Assignments and evaluation:**

Assessment is both formative and summative. Formative tasks include participation in timeline building, quizzes, and short written reflections in the Korean History Passport.

Summative assessment involves a comparative project where students select two eras of Korean history and present their findings in either a written essay, digital presentation, or creative performance. Evaluation criteria include accuracy of historical understanding, clarity of expression, inclusion and accuracy of Korean language use, and demonstration of critical reflection.

### **Measuring success:**

Success will be measured by student engagement, demonstrated growth in historical knowledge, and the ability to connect Korea's past to broader cultural and global contexts. By the end of the unit, students will have both a tangible record of their learning journey and an appreciation for Korea's unique place in world history.

### **General Outline of each week/class:**

#### Lesson 1: Ancient Korea and the Myth of Tangun

- **Focus:** Origins of Korea through the founding of Tangun and the establishment of Gojoseon
- **Activities:** Storytelling, skit re-enactments, and building the first entry on the class and individual timeline.
- **Reading:** [A blog retelling of the Myth of Tangun with interpretive commentary \(symbolism, identity, etc.\)](#) (emulqueeny, 2020)

- **Assessment link:** Short reflection in the Korean History Passport
- **Justification:** Much like the storytelling in Aboriginal studies, now central to the Australian curriculum, Korean history is deeply rooted in myths and legends. Beginning the origin story of the Korean people, therefore, provides a meaningful and culturally authentic introduction to the study of Korean history.

### Lesson 2: The Three Kingdoms Period

- **Focus:** Rivalries and cultural achievements of the three kingdoms.
- **Activities:** Map labelling, group posters on each kingdom, and timeline entry.
- **Reading:** [Short article on the Three Kingdoms from Britannica](#). (Britannica, n.d.-a)
- **Assessment link:** Group presentation of kingdom strengths/legacies
- **Justification:** Integrating geographical knowledge into history helps students visualise how Korea's landscape shaped its development. It also builds foundational understanding for future topics, serving both as a pre-learning tool and a visual aid for those unfamiliar with Korea's location and geography.

### Lesson 3: Korean Art and Its Role in History

- **Focus:** Korean art through the years and its storytelling role
- **Activities:** Artefact analysis and student attempt at recreation
- **Reading:** [Korean art as a historical medium](#) (Best, 1981)
- **Assessment link:** Passport entry comparing art, old and new, with evidence of their attempt to simulate a Korean art style.
- **Justification:** Like Aboriginal and Korean oral traditions, both cultures use art as a medium to depict historical events and values. Exploring the cultural and historical significance of Korean art in its role in historical storytelling helps students

understand how it informs historians' interpretations and reinforces the unit's sequential focus by linking traditional and modern expressions of history.

#### Lesson 4: The Joseon Dynasty and the Creation of Hangeul

- **Focus:** Confucian values, governance, and King Sejong's invention of Hangeul.
- **Activities:** Try writing names in Hangeul, a mini role-play of Sejong's royal court.
- **Reading:** [History and creation of Hangeul](#) (Bosch, 2022)
- **Assessment link:** Short reflection in Passport: 'Why is an alphabet important for identity?'
- **Justification:** Understanding how the creation of Hangeul shaped Korea's national identity is vital to its history. It also offers an engaging introduction that may inspire learning the Korean language, and support comprehension in future readings that include Hangeul.

#### Lesson 5: Culture, gender, and Dress in Joseon Korea

- **Focus:** Social hierarchy, gender roles, and traditional dress (hanbok)
- **Activities:** Students analyse images of hanbok by class and gender; role play 'a day in the life' of different Joseon figures wearing traditional dress (scholar, peasant, noblewoman).
- **Reading:** [An illustrated article on Korean Hanbok and Confucian gender norms.](#) (Kim, n.d.)
- **Assessment link:** Passport sketch of a hanbok with a short explanation of its symbolism.
- **Justification:** Exploring the history of traditional Korean garments, many of which influence modern fashion, offers valuable insight into Korea's cultural identity and

social values. Understanding this helps students connect historical customs to contemporary expressions of behaviour and style.

### Lesson 6: Law, crime, and punishment in Joseon Korea

- **Focus:** Joseon legal system, justice, and punishments
- **Activities:** ‘Crime and punishment matching game’ (students match crimes with their historical punishments); group discussion on fairness.
- **Reading:** [Joseon dynasty punishments summary](#) (Shaffer, 2020)
- **Assessment link:** Reflection in Passport: ‘Was justice in Joseon fair? Why or why not?’
- **Justification:** Similar to the appeal of the British show ‘Horrible Histories’, students at this age are often fascinated by the unusual or gruesome aspects of past laws and punishments. This topic leverages that curiosity to make learning engaging, combining entertainment with meaningful historical understanding.

### Lesson 7: Japanese occupation (1910-1945)

- **Focus:** Life under colonial rule and resistance movements.
- **Activities:** Analyse propaganda posters, diary-entry writing from a Korean perspective
- **Reading:** [Short adapted historical summary of the occupation](#) (Korea Society, n.d.)
- **Assessment link:** Passport entry and reflection on cultural loss/preservation
- **Justification:** This topic covers a sensitive and often-debated period in Korean history. Introducing it helps students develop intercultural awareness and cultural competence, ensuring they approach Korea’s history with understanding and respect as opposed to ignorance.

## Lesson 8: The Korean War (1950-1953)

- **Focus:** Division of Korea, the war's causes and impacts, and the Cold War context.
- **Activities:** Split-class role play (North vs. South perspectives), timeline updates.
- **Reading:** [Simplified article from BBC History or Britannica Kids](#). (Britannica, n.d.-b)
- **Assessment link:** Quick quiz and group discussion on the consequences of division and update Passport
- **Justification:** Given Korea's division into North and South, understanding the historical context is essential to explaining the ongoing tensions and separations. It also reinforces earlier lessons by providing insight into the development of Korean national identity.

## Lesson 9: Modern Korea - Tradition and technology

- **Focus:** Post-war recovery, democracy, K-pop, technology, and cultural exports.
- **Activities:** Compare Korean culture then vs. now (videos, music, photos), class debate: 'How has Korea influenced the world today?'
- **Reading:** [Article on South Korea's global cultural impact](#). (Adams, 2022)
- **Assessment links:** passport reflection and preparation for summative project.
- **Justification:** With the rise of the Hallyu wave, Korean history and culture have become prominent globally through tourism and entertainment. This lesson concludes the unit's chronological sequence with contemporary history, connecting students' to likely prior exposure and daily experiences to the context, making it both relevant and engaging.

## Lesson Plan Mock-up Idea 1: Ancient Korea- The Myth of Tangun

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| <b>Year Level</b>  | Year 7-8   |
| <b>Subject Area</b>  | Korean   |
| <b>Lesson Topic</b>  | Ancient Korea - The Myth of Tangun   |
| <b>Lesson Aims</b><br><br><i>What do you want the students to know and to be able to do by the end of the lesson?</i>  | Students should <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Be able to understand and explain the mythical story made for the creation of the Korean people.</li><li>- Provide a summary of the lesson in a creative format.</li></ul> |
| <b>Background Skills and Understandings</b><br><br><i>What skills and understandings should the students have developed already? Provide the relevant content description(s) from the mathematics curriculum (at or below the year level of your lesson plan).</i> | Students should already know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There are no prerequisites or prior knowledge required.</li></ul>  |

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| <p><b>Subject Area Content</b></p> <p><b>Description(s) Addressed in the Lesson</b></p> | <p>Reflect on and explain how identity is shaped by language(s), culture(s), attitudes, beliefs and values (<a href="#">AC9LK8U04</a>).</p> <p>Interpret information, ideas and opinions in a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts, and respond appropriately to cultural context, purpose and audience (<a href="#">AC9LK8C03</a>).</p> <p>Create and present spoken, written and multimodal, informative and imaginative texts for specific purposes, selecting vocabulary, expressions, grammatical structures, features and conventions appropriate to text type and context (<a href="#">AC9LK8C05</a>).</p> |
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## Lesson Overview Mock-up 1: Ancient Korea - The Myth of Tangun

| Time Allotted | Activities  | Students' Role   | Teacher's Role   |
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| 10-15 mins    | <p><b>Unit synopsis and lesson introduction:</b></p> <p>Introducing the unit outline and the Korean History Passport to be completed throughout the unit</p> <p>The Korean history passport works as follows: Students receive a blank 'passport', each week they have to write a topic heading, 2-3 interesting facts, 1 question and a reflective paragraph.</p> <p>At the end of that class, students will</p> | <p>The student will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Receive an outline of the units' structure, timetable and expectations and note down any noteworthy pieces of information in their school diaries or similar</li> <li>- Receive a blank 'passport' and start with the first topic on 'Ancient Korea: The Myth of Tangun'</li> <li>- Add any previous</li> </ul> | <p>Present a unit synopsis, set expectations of student engagement and conduct, and outline the assessment schedule.</p> <p>Hand out the 'passports' and introduce the concept of the weekly 'assessment'.</p> <p>Introduce the topic of 'Ancient Korea: The birth of Tangun and the Korean People' through priming questions highlighting prior knowledge of Korea and Korean history.</p> <p>After, students create brainstorm and</p> |

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|                   | <p>receive a stamp to illustrate the completion of that week's reflective work.</p> <p>Introduce the topic of the week: The 'birth' of Korea and the Myth of Tangun.</p>   | <p>knowledge to the class discussion and questioning at the week's topic introduction</p>  | <p>mindmaps, outlining prior knowledge on two main topics: Korea and Korean history, then discuss.</p> <p>Outline the topic of the week, using a transition segment, ie. "Today we're going to step back over 4000 years to learn about Korea's very first story: the myth of Tangun (Dangun)."</p> |
| <p>30-35 mins</p> | <p><b>Storytelling and main activity:</b></p> <p>A short narrative video will open this section, outlining the myth of Tangun (Dangun). Example of an age-appropriate resource:</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...</a></p> | <p>Students will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Watch video outlining 'the legend of Tangun (Dangun)'</li> <li>- Ask and answer questions about video</li> <li>- Collaborate with</li> </ul> | <p>Show video outlining the myth of Tangun (Dangun).</p> <p>Ask follow-up questions about what they saw, ie. 'What were the two animals and what did they want?', 'What were they told to do in order to become human?', etc.</p>   |

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|                | <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwtNMrL5Vxk">com/watch?v=kwtNMrL5Vxk</a> (Youtube KCCLA, 2021)</p> <p>The students will then be asked reflection questions about what they just watched.</p> <p>The main activity includes a creative expression of the story of Tangun (Dangun), in the form of a short skit.</p> | <p>peers in small groups to make a short skit about the myth of Tangun (Dangun)</p>   | <p>Facilitate and explain the skit activity. Split students into groups of 4-5, encourage humour and creativity in their performances.</p> <p>Set a 5-minute timer for practice, and a 2-minute timer for presentation of skits.</p> |
| <p>10 mins</p> | <p><b>Reflection and passport:</b></p> <p>Students will complete the first instalment of their ‘passports’.</p> <p>Direct the students to the reading for that week. An example of</p>   | <p>Students will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete the first instalment of their ‘passports’.</li> <li>- Receive feedback and a stamp from the teacher upon completion</li> </ul> | <p>Facilitate students in completing their ‘passports’, ensuring they include all three necessary areas.</p> <p>Provide feedback and take note of the students' completion and work, and provide a ‘stamp’ to</p>                    |

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|  | <p>a reading:</p> <p><a href="https://hojukoreadiaries.wordpress.com/2020/09/13/the-legend-of-dangun/">https://hojukoreadiaries.wordpress.com/2020/09/13/the-legend-of-dangun/</a></p> <p>(emulqueeny, 2020)</p> <p>This reading offers interpretive insights into symbolism and identity, helping students connect these ideas to the unit and understand why Korea still cherishes this myth</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete the post-work reading</li> </ul> | <p>illustrate completion of the work.</p> <p>As a post-class activity and homework, provide a reading for that week on the topic of Tangun. An example can be found in the ‘activity’ column of this row.</p> |
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