

Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies

Sample Lesson: Korean American Unity for Independence (1920 to 1945)

Theme: Strengths of the Koreans United for the Korean Independence Movement

Disciplinary Area: Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies

Ethnic Studies Values and Principles Alignment: 1, 2, 4

Standards Alignment:

HSS Content Standard 11.11.1

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.6–8.1, 6-8.2, 6-8.7, 6-8.10

Facts & Lesson Overview:

Woodrow Wilson's efforts to make peace in Europe during the World War I inspired movements for self-independence around the world. Korean students studying in Japan were among the first to hear about Wilson's Fourteen Points, and contacted their fellow Koreans in China, Japan, Hawaii, Korea, and the United States. By the March of 1919, thousands of Korean nationalists organized public demonstrations against the Japanese rule. Protests were held at numerous occasions where the "Korean Declaration of Independence" was read. Over two million Koreans participated in over 1,500 public demonstrations in Korea within a few weeks. Prominent Korean nationalists around the world, including Syngman Rhee (who completed his degrees at George Washington University, Harvard, Princeton, and later became the first President of South Korea), Phillip Jaisohn, and Gu Kim, sparked the March 1st Movement and intensified demonstrations. These led the Japanese forces to kill over 7,000 people and arrest at least 40,000. However, even the Korean nationalists who were killed had a profound influence on the Korean Independence. One example was a young Korean woman, Gwan Sun Yu, who was tortured and beaten until she died in September 1920 in prison for marching the streets of Seoul, Korea with her peers shouting, "Mansei/Long Live Korea." Her remarks, "Even if my fingernails are torn out, my nose and ears ripped

apart, and my legs and arms are crushed, this physical pain does not compare to the pain of losing my nation. My only remorse is not being able to do more than dedicating my life to my country,” would inspire young and old Koreans for generations.

The Korean Independence Movement achieved the independence of Korea from Japan. The date of the surrender of Japan is an annual holiday even the Korean Americans celebrate, “Gwangbokjeol/Restoration of Light Day.”

This lesson uses videos, book, and online articles to illustrate how the Korean nationalists, including those who studied in America, united to achieve the Korean Independence from Japan.

Key Terms and Concepts: Korean Nationalism, Inspiration, identity, voice, unity, perseverance, influential

Lesson Objectives (Students will be able to...):

1. Identify the influence of Woodrow Wilson and the Korean nationalists that helped to lead to the Korean Independence from Japan
2. Research, discuss and elaborate on the Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points” that presented him with a Noble Peace Prize
3. Research, write, discuss, and create presentations about the Korean Nationalists (ie, Syngman Rhee) who raised voice and identity through organizations and civic activities in America while studying as students that assisted with the Korean Independence.

Essential Questions:

1. How did Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points” influence the Korean Independence Movement that changed South Korea’s history?
2. Why is it important to learn about the Korean nationalists who studied in the USA?

3. What is patriotism and how did the Korean nationalists influence the people of Korea?

Students may generate more essential questions to add.

Lesson Steps/Activities/Ideas:

1. The teacher tells students that they are going to learn about how the USA influenced the Korean Independence Movement. Read essential questions 1–2 aloud and have the students volunteer to generate their own questions.
2. The teacher presents some basic information about the occupation of Korea by Japan in the 1900's.
3. Have students read Chapter 2, pages 42 to 62 from *Korean American History: A Teaching Resource for Educators in California* by Edward J.W. Park and John S.W. Park.

As students read the chapter, give them an annotation chart and direct them to annotate as they read. (Adding a symbol next to a sentence that corresponds to their thinking or feeling about the text – annotation sheet attached.) Tell the students to be ready to answer the question using evidence from the text.

4. Discussion:

The March 1st Movement arose in reaction to the repressive nature of colonial occupation under the de facto military rule of the Japanese Empire following 1910, and was inspired by the "Fourteen Points" outlining the right of national "self-determination", which was proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference in January 1918. (Wikipedia)

The teacher asks students if they have questions about it and writes the questions generated by them on the white board.

The teacher leads a read aloud of the Quick Fact Sheet about Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" and how his principles inspired movements for independence around the world, including in Korea.

The teacher asks which of the essential questions have been answered by the information presented. Go through the questions and answers.

5. The teacher leads a deeper discussion about the Japanese occupation in Korea and the Korean nationalists in America who collaborated for the Korean Independence.

The teacher reads about Syngman Rhee:

Rhee found it impossible to hide his hostility toward Japanese rule, and, after working briefly in a YMCA and as a high-school principal, he emigrated to Hawaii, which was then a U.S. territory. He spent the next 30 years as a spokesman for Korean independence, trying in vain to win international support for his cause. In 1919 he was elected (in absentia) president of the newly established Korean Provisional Government, in Shanghai. Rhee relocated to Shanghai the following year but returned to Hawaii in 1925. He remained president of the Provisional Government for 20 years, eventually being pushed out of the leadership by younger Korean nationalists centred in China. (Rhee had refused to recognize an earlier impeachment, for misuse of his authority, by the Provisional Government in the 1920s.) Rhee moved to Washington, D.C., and spent the World War II years trying to secure Allied promises of Korean independence. (Britannica)

6. KWL Exercise:

Students begin by brainstorming everything they **Know** about how USA influenced the Korean Independence Movement. This information is recorded in the K column of a K-W-L chart. Students then generate a list of questions about what they **Want to Know** about the topic. These questions are listed in the W column of the chart. During or after researching on their own as homework, students answer the questions that are in the W column.

Making Connections to the *History–Social Science Framework*: -

Chapter 12 of the framework includes a section (pages 272-276) on how the U.S. changed post-Civil War Era. During the early 1900s the U.S. population began to shift and grow. The chapter asks “Who came to the United States at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century? Why did they come? What was their experience like when they arrived?” Students will learn about the first Koreans who studied in the U.S. as foreign students.

7. Media:

Show clips from “A Resistance,” a Korean movie about Yu Gwan Sun in Sodaemun Cell Number 8, or “Spirit Of Korea” about Yu Gwan Sun and Yun Bong Gi -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_Bvx8pIIIA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9k4Lo9Tzul>

Assignments:

After watching the media, create a short iMovie or skit about what you may do in USA for an Independent Movement with three of your classmates.

Write a theme song for your presentation. Present to the class.

8. Reflection/Assessments:

Think, Pair, Share:

In this strategy, a problem is posed: Why did the Korean nationalists sacrifice their lives for the Korean Independence? What would you have done as students during that era? Students have time to *think* about it individually, and then they work in *pairs* to solve the problem and *share* their ideas as an assessment by creating a chart, a power-point, or an iMovie to present to the class.

Project-Based Learning activities:

Students compare and contrast Korean independence movement with American or Mexican Independence Movement discussing similarities and differences in groups to present to the class.

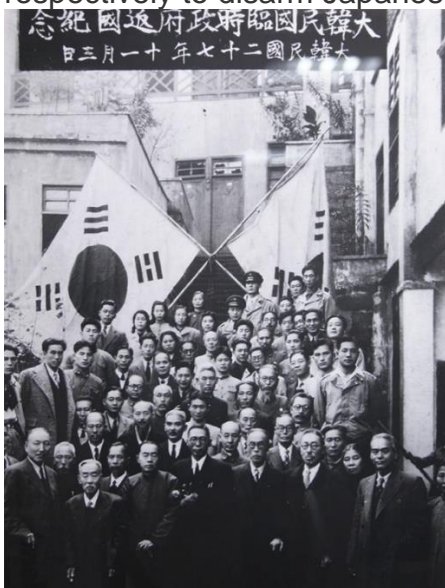
Materials and Resources:

- Park, Edward J.W. and Park, John S.W., *Korean and Korean American History: A Teaching Resource for Educators in California, Published by the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Los Angeles*
- YouTube Videos:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_Bvx8pIIIA
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9k4Lo9Tzul>
- Wikipedia
- Britannica

Quick Fact Sheet about the Korean Independence Movement:

- During the colonial period (1910-1945), the Japanese pillaged Joseon's resources, banned the use of the Korean language - even going so far in 1939 as to require Koreans to change their personal names to Japanese style surnames and given names under the Name Order, and conscripted Koreans into their work force or as uniformed soldiers in the Pacific War.
- Koreans engaged in persistent struggles to regain their independence. They organized clandestine organizations to fight the Japanese within the country. They also established forward bases for the independence movement in China, Russia, and the United States and led unprecedentedly peaceful demonstration.
- In March 1919, Korean leaders announced the Declaration of Independence. Students and ordinary people joined them by staging street demonstrations across the country. These protests continued for 12 months, involving about 2 million people, and were violently suppressed by the Japanese, with many thousands killed and wounded.

- The movement spread to the Koreans resisting in Manchuria, the Maritime Provinces of Siberia, the United States, Europe, and even to Japan.
- Following the March 1919 Independence Movement, organizations representing Koreans were established in Seoul, the Maritime Provinces of Siberia, and Shanghai.
- The Provisional Government of Korea established in Shanghai was the country's first democratic republican government; it was equipped with a modern Constitution and a political system that separated the three basic branches (executive, legislative and judicial) of government.
- **Leaders of the Provisional Government** played a pivotal role in the independence movement between April 1919, when the Provisional Government was established in Shanghai, China, and the country's liberation in August 1945.
- Koreans also carried out armed struggles against the Japanese. In the 1920s, more than thirty Korean independence army units engaged in resistance activities in Manchuria and the Maritime Provinces of Siberia.
- In June 1920, a Korean independence army unit led by Hong Beom-do dealt a devastating blow to Japanese troops in Fengwutung, Jilin Province, China. In October 1920, Korean volunteers led by Kim Jwa-jin won a great victory against Japanese troops in Helongxian, Manchuria. This is known as the Battle of Cheongsalli among Koreans.
- In 1940, the Provisional Government of Korea (PGK) organized the Korean Liberation Army in Chungqing, integrating many scattered volunteer independence fighters in Manchuria. The PGK declared war against Japan and dispatched troops to the front lines in India and Myanmar to fight on the side of the Allied Forces.
- Some young Koreans received special training from a special military unit of the United States to better equip them to attack Japanese forces in Korea.
- On August 15, 1945, Koreans finally received what they had looked forward to for so long: the country's liberation as a result of Japan's surrender in the Pacific War. U.S. and Soviet troops were deployed to the south and north of the 38th parallel, respectively to disarm Japanese troops remaining on the Korean Peninsula.



Source: Korea.net

<http://www.korea.net/AboutKorea/History/Independence-Movement>

- Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points:
In this famous speech before Congress on January 8, 1918, near the end of the First World War, President Wilson laid down fourteen points as the only possible program for world peace. Subsequently these points were used as the basis for peace negotiations.



Source: U.S. Embassy & Consulate in the Republic of Korea

<https://kr.usembassy.gov/education-culture/infopedia-usa/living-documents-american-history-democracy/woodrow-wilson-fourteen-points-speech-1918/#:~:text=In%20this%20famous%20speech%20before,the%20basis%20for%20peace%20negotiations>

- Yu Gwan Sun (December 16, 1902 – September 28, 1920):
Yu Gwansun, was an organizer in what would come to be known as the [March 1st Movement](#) against [Imperial Japanese colonial rule of Korea](#) in [South Chungcheong](#). The March 1st Movement was considered a peaceful demonstration by the Korean people against Japanese rule. Ryu Gwan-sun became one of the most well-known participants in this movement, and eventually, a symbol of Korea's fight for independence.



Source: Wikipedia.org - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryu_Gwansun

- Annotation Chart:

Symbol	Comment/Question/Response	Sample Language Support
?	Questions I have Confusing parts for me	The sentence, "...”is unclear because... I don't understand what is meant when the author says...
+	Ideas/statements I agree with	I agree with the author's statement that...because... Similar to the author, I also believe that...because
-	Ideas/statements I disagree with	I disagree with the author's statement that... because... The author claims that... However, I disagree because...
*	Author's main points Key ideas expressed	One significant idea in this text is... One argument the author makes is that...
!	Shocking statements or parts Surprising details/claims	I was shocked to read that...(further explanation) The part about...made me feel...because...

Symbol	Comment/Question/Response	Sample Language Support
0	<p>Ideas/sections you connect with</p> <p>What this reminds you of</p>	<p>This section reminded me of...</p> <p>I can connect with what the author said because...</p> <p>This experience connects with my own experience in that...</p>

- KWL Chart:

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned

- Project Based Learning:
<https://www.pblworks.org/what-is-pbl#:~:text=Project%20Based%20Learning%20is%20a,question%2C%20problem%2C%20or%20challenge>.