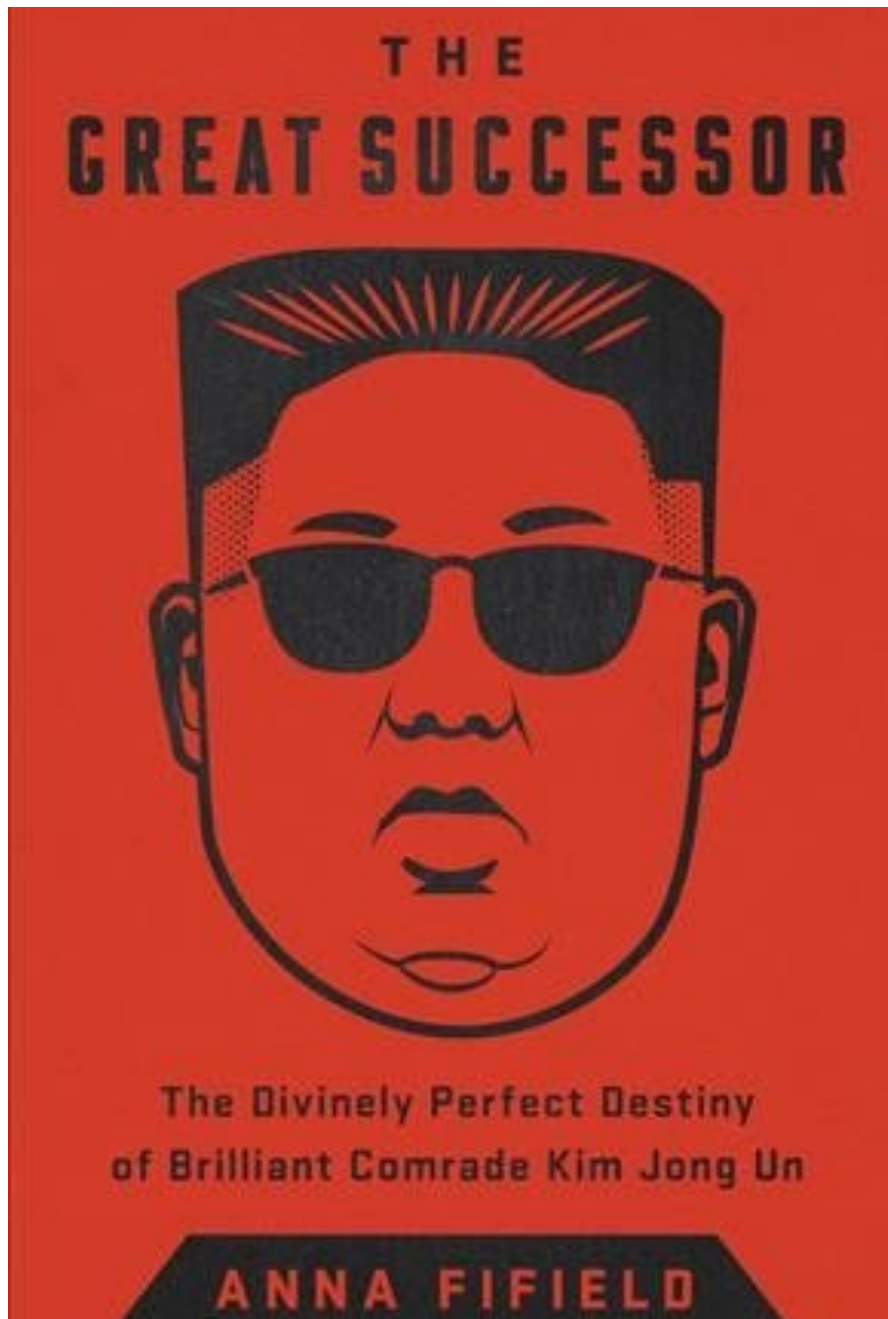


# EAST ASIA RESOURCE CENTER

HENRY M. JACKSON SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



## North Korea Book Club Resources

Compiled by Tese Wintz Neighbor, Ryan Hauck & Silvia De Cassan  
December 2019



# North Korea Book Club

## Teachers' Resources

### December 2019



[http://english.freemap.jp/blankmap\\_dl.php?area=asia\\_e&country=korea&file\\_name=2.gif](http://english.freemap.jp/blankmap_dl.php?area=asia_e&country=korea&file_name=2.gif)

## NORTH KOREA AT A GLANCE



### Area

Total: 120,538 sq km Land: 120,408 sq km Water: 130 sq km  
(About the size of Mississippi)

### Terrain

About 80% of land area is moderately high mountains separated by deep, narrow valleys and small, cultivated plains. The remainder is lowland plains covering small, scattered areas.

### Cities

Capital--Pyongyang. Other cities--Hamhung, Chongjin, Wonsan, Nampo, and Kaesong.

### Climate

Temperate, with rainfall concentrated in summer; long, bitter winters

### Population

25.4 million (July 2018 est.)

### Population Growth

0.82% (2018 est.)

### Ethnicity

Racially homogeneous; there is a small Chinese community and a few ethnic Japanese

### Natural Resources

Coal, iron ore, limestone, magnesite, graphite, copper, zinc,

### Economic Overview

One of the world's most centrally directed and least open economies; faces stagnation, underinvestment, and chronic shortages, largely as a result of large-scale missile and nuclear programs

### GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)

\$40 billion (2015 est.)

### GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity)

\$1,700 (2015 est.)

### Exports

\$45.82 billion (2017 est.)

partners: China 86.3% (2017)

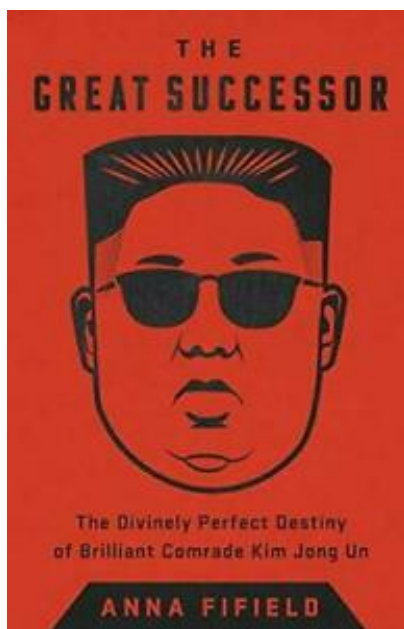
### Imports

\$43.75 billion (2018 est.) partners: China 91.9% (2017)

### North Korea FactBook:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/attachments/summaries/KN-summary.pdf>

**Lesson Activity for Students:** Using data provided by two or more sources, compare the economies of North and South Korea. What do you notice? How would you explain the differences in the two economies? What does information tell us about the standard of living in each country? Have students work in pairs to answer these questions and then share their analysis in large group discussion.



## Book Related Reviews and Author Interviews

### NPR Book Review (6/11/19)

'The Great Successor' Aims To Fill In Blanks On The Life Of North Korea's Kim Jong Un (6/11/19)

<https://www.npr.org/2019/06/11/731262785/the-great-successor-aims-to-fill-in-blanks-on-the-life-of-north-koreas-kim-jong>

What emerges is a portrait of Kim fully in charge and consciously channeling his grandfather, North Korean founder Kim Il Sung, to bolster his legitimacy. Contrary to prevailing stereotypes, in this story Kim is anything but a madman. Cold-blooded for sure, but playing a calculated defensive strategy aimed at standing up his rule.

### The Guardian Book Review (7/20/19)

The Great Successor by Anna Fifield review – The Secrets of Kim Jong-un

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jul/20/the-great-successor-anna-fifield-review-kim-jong-un-biography-north-korean-tyrant>

Anna Fifield's *The Great Successor* is elegantly written and exhaustively researched. Fifield tracks down everyone outside North Korea who has met Kim, from school friends to servants to family members in hiding under false names. She has been reporting on the Korean peninsula since 2004, making a total of 14 trips to the world's most reclusive state.

### Washington Post Book Review (6/13/19)

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/inside-the-hidden-life-of-kim-jong-un/2019/06/13/0aee892c-8621-11e9-a491-25df61c78dc4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/inside-the-hidden-life-of-kim-jong-un/2019/06/13/0aee892c-8621-11e9-a491-25df61c78dc4_story.html)

Washington Post review of Fifield's book and a quote: "The Great Successor" is essential reading for anyone seeking insight on one of the world's least-understood leaders. Though he may be young, Kim has forced South Korea, China and the United States to take him seriously. The book makes a convincing argument that with Kim at the helm, North Korea is painfully forging its way toward a more prosperous, stable future, whether or not the West likes it."

### Fresh Air Interview with Author (6/11/19)

<https://www.npr.org/2019/06/11/731602037/the-great-successor-ventures-inside-kim-jong-un-s-north-korea>

Audio (37 minutes) and transcript

### China Connection - Edited excerpt from *The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un*, by Anna Fifield

<https://sinocism.com/p/excerpt-from-the-great-successor/>

North Korea's relationship with China is a constant throughout the book. This excerpt deals with Kim's uncle, Jang Song Thaek, the man who was in charge of economic dealings with China and who was viewed by Beijing as someone who could lead North Korea on a "reform and opening" type course. That may have been part of the reason that Kim Jong Un had Jang killed.

NYT: These Sure Are Photos of Kim Jong-un on a Horse (10/19/19)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/16/world/asia/kim-jong-un-horse.html>



**North Korea newspaper editorial: Let Us Advance Forward with Confidence in Sure Victory Following Horseback March of Great Brilliant Commander of Mt Paektu (10/18/19)** *The recent journey to Mt Paektu made by the Supreme Leader on a steed was a declaration which showed his faith to carry out to the last the revolutionary cause of Juche pioneered on Mt Paektu, and an expression of his will to certainly build the most powerful country looked up by the world on this land.*

*The sound of horse's hooves made by the Supreme Leader on the top of Mt Paektu serves as a source which instills into the hearts of the people the confidence and optimism about sure victory and which makes the whole country brim with the zeal for revolution, struggle and creation.*

*The beaming image of the peerlessly great man who looked far into the advance of a powerful socialist country on the top of sacred Mt Paektu is the spirit of the DPRK that staunchly advances, meeting all foul winds with blizzards of Paektu, and it represents the tremendous vitality of Korean-style socialism which makes a leap forward with dynamism.*



<https://www.pe.com/2019/07/01/the-long-and-winding-road-political-cartoons/>

## Accessing North Korea In the News (Geopolitics)

### **[North Korea's Nuclear Program - The New York Times](#)**

<https://www.nytimes.com › topic › subject › north-koreas-nuclear-program>

News about North Korea's nuclear program, including commentary and archival articles published in The New York Times.

### **38 North**

<https://www.38north.org/>

38 North is a program of the Stimson Center dedicated to providing the best possible analysis of events in and around North Korea. The Stimson Center is a nonpartisan policy research center working to protect people, preserve the planet, and promote security & prosperity.

### **Council on Foreign Relations: Denuclearization in North Korea, 90-second video (4/23/19)**

<https://youtu.be/ef4c-4UonWQ>

Short video that explores the various meanings of “denuclearization.”

### **Short Commentary: The Value of a Cooperative Approach to Denuclearization with North Korea (11/6/19)**

<https://www.38north.org/2019/11/rjohnson110619/>

A consideration of how a Cooperative Threat Reduction program would impact negotiations.

### **Voice of America, Experts: US, North Korea Must Agree on Terms of Denuclearization at Talks, 10/9/19**

<https://www.voakorea.com/a/5107203.html>

If nuclear talks are to be successful, Washington and Pyongyang need to compromise their positions to agree on a shared definition and process of denuclearization, experts say.

### **80-page report: Building Security Through Cooperation: Report of the NTI Working Group on Cooperative Threat Reduction with North Korea**

[https://media.nti.org/documents/NTI\\_DPRK2019\\_RPT\\_FNL.pdf](https://media.nti.org/documents/NTI_DPRK2019_RPT_FNL.pdf)

Washington, DC: Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2019.

### **Nuclear Threat Initiative**

<https://www.nti.org/>

The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization founded in 2001 by former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn and philanthropist Ted Turner in the United States, which works to prevent catastrophic attacks and accidents with weapons of mass destruction and disruption.

### **The Guardian – News on North Korea**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/north-korea>

The Guardian’s North Korea news page, which features up-to-date articles and resources related to the country.

### **Voice of America (VOA) Broadcasting in North Korea**

<https://www.insidevoa.com/p/6438.html>

VOA Korean reaches elites in North Korea, who represent 10–15 percent of the population, via radio and the Internet with uncensored news and information that is unavailable to North Koreans through state-controlled North Korean media.

### **VOA Reports in English**

<https://www.voakorea.com/z/3549>

News on US-North Korea relations.

### **Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)**

<http://www.kcna.kp/kcna.user.home.retrieveHomeInfoList.kcmsf;jsessionid=8A89F69978A7CB4DD187FE2E846460FC>

Founded in 1946, KCNA is the only news agency in North Korea. It daily reports news for all the news organizations in the country including newspapers, radio and television broadcasts. Access in English daily top stories, Supreme leader’s activities, North-South Relations, Sports. Etc.

### **Rodong Simmun (daily North Korea newspaper)**

<http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/>

There are a dozen major newspapers published in North Korea. Rodong Simmun is one of the most important; it is published by the Worker’s Party The English-language version of *Rodong Simmun* was launched in January 2012.

### **Podcasts: Center for Strategic and International Studies Podcasts on North Korea “The Impossible State”**

<https://www.csis.org/podcasts/impossible-state>

Download one of ten (25-minute long) 2019 podcasts from the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

**Have students analyze the following political cartoon and discuss as a class.**



<https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-north-korea-denuclearization-deal-south-korea-1126986>

## North Korea In the News (Human Rights)

### World Report 2019: North Korea | Human Rights Watch

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/north-korea>

An overview from Human Rights Watch of the state of human rights in North Korea.

### The National Committee on North Korea (NCNK)

<https://www.ncnk.org>

The National Committee on North Korea was founded by Mercy Corps, a global humanitarian and development organization, in 2004. NCKN is dedicated to fostering mutual understanding and trust between the governments and peoples of the U.S. and DPRK, facilitating engagement and cooperation, reducing tension, and promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula through education, information-sharing, and relationship-building. See **NCNK's Issue Briefs**

<https://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers>

### The People Who Left the People's Republic: A History of the North Korean Diaspora

<https://www.asianstudies.org/ea/the-people-who-left-the-peoples-republic-a-history-of-the-north-korean-diaspora/>

The downloadable PDF on this page considers the history of the North Korea Diaspora and how it has changed in the last 40 years.

### Human Rights Advocate Describes Her Escape From North Korea

<https://www.thejustice.org/article/2019/11/human-rights-advocate-describes-her-escape-from-north-korea-brandeis>

The difficult story of a North Korean escapee and her struggle to get out of the country is captured in this article from The Justice.

### UN Investigator: 11 Million North Koreans are Undernourished

<https://time.com/5708152/united-nations-north-korea-food-shortages/>

TIME article which considers the extent of food insecurity in North Korea, as determined by the U.N. independent investigator on human rights in the country.

### North Korea's Human Rights: What's not being talked about

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44234505>

A recent BBC article which discusses North Korean human rights violations and the extent to which they are being ignored in the current talks with the US.

### North Korea 2017/2018

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/north-korea/report-korea-democratic-peoples-republic-of/>

The Amnesty International Report on human rights in North Korea in 2017/2018. Concludes that, though the government took some positive steps to engage with international human rights mechanisms, the situation failed to show real progress.



## North Korean Human Rights in 2018 and 2019 State of the Union Addresses – What a Difference a Year Makes

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/north-korean-human-rights-2018-and-2019-state-union-addresses-what-difference-year-makes>

This commentary considers the difference between Trump’s 2018 State of the Union Address and his 2019 one through the lens of North Korean human rights violations. Whilst a substantial portion of the 2018 Address was devoted to North Korean human rights abuses, they were not mentioned in the 2019 Address.

## Human Rights Violation in North Korea

<https://www.thoughtco.com/human-rights-in-north-korea-721493>

A thorough consideration of human rights violations in North Korea and how they be improved.

**Lesson Idea:** What role does propaganda play in society? Why and how has the North Korean regime utilized propaganda? Look at the following image and brainstorm ideas for its purpose and messaging in North Korea. Discuss ideas as a class.



<https://www.vox.com/world/2018/1/9/16773364/trump-kim-summit-sign-agreement-denuclearization-propaganda>

Our primary questions are: Who are people leaving the People’s Republic? When did they leave? How did they leave? Why did they leave?

## Organizations that Support North Korean Refugees

### **Borgen Project**

<https://borgenproject.org/support-north-korean-refugees/>

The level of human rights violations in North Korea has not received the amount of attention it deserves, and further education is necessary to address these issues in a rational and effective way.

### **Liberty in North Korea**

<https://www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/rescue-refugees/>

This organization helps North Koreans escape using calculated courses through China and Southeast Asia. To accomplish this, Liberty in North Korea leverages on-ground relationships and donor funding. The organization also has very systematic resettlement programs available to support North Korean refugees including translation, healthcare, integration and counseling services. Additionally, Liberty in North Korea educates, mobilizes and encourages others to support North Korean refugees via events and fundraisers. The organization has a thorough breakdown of how funds are distributed throughout the escape and resettlement process, and it claims that \$3,000 will save and resettle one North Korean refugee.

### **North Korean Freedom Coalition**

<http://www.nkfreedom.org/>

This organization partners with political leaders to support North Korean victims of human rights violations. It also hosts the annual North Korean Freedom Week, which raises awareness of the North Korean atrocities and gains support for the freedom of North Korean prisoners being unjustly held. This is a collaboration of several public and private members, including several different independent charities.

### **Helping Hands Korea (HHK)**

<https://www.helpinghandskorea.org/>

This is a non-denominational Christian organization that provides food and basic necessities to North Koreans based on the level of support each requires. HHK also assists with the transport of refugees through Asia to safety. Although the spread of Christianity is not the primary goal of HHK, the organization provides each refugee a Bible and a message of hope.

**Lesson Idea:** The following websites provide helpful lesson plans for teaching about refugees locally and globally. You may want to look at refugee issues from a comparative perspective by examining the North Korea with other contexts.

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/education/59d354967/main-curriculum-refugees-asylum-migration.html>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees provides strategies for teaching about refugees.

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2017/toolkit-for-immigrant-and-refugee-children-a-guide-for-educators-and-school>

This Teaching Tolerance website offers easy to use lessons on educating students on refugee issues.

## North Korea in the News (Society and Culture)

### **Pyongyang's Retro Sci-Fi Architecture (10/26/19)**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/26/opinion/sunday/architecture-north-korea-pyongyang.html>

The world's most repressive city is also home to a bizarre array of museums, halls and skyscrapers.

### **Interview: Photography of North Korea, 50 minutes (3/7/19)**

<https://www.koreasociety.org/viewpoint1/podcasts-videos/item/1238>

AP's lead North Korea photographer Wong Maye-E shares images of North Korea and its people, in conversation with Society senior director Stephen Noerper.

### **Pop Culture Revolution in North Korea? (2/17/19)**

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/pop-culture-revolution-in-north-korea-/4788232.html>

## North Korea (Documentaries & Films)

### **Documentary: North Korea's Deadly Dictators, 54 minutes 10/4/17**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6idnnGcAzw>

Who killed Kim Jong-un's half brother, Kim Jong-nam?

What does the murder reveal about the North Korean leader and his regime? As nuclear tensions grow, FRONTLINE examines claims that Kim Jong-un ordered the assassination of his half brother, and sheds light on his broader intentions.

See PBS website for more documentaries

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/category/episodes/by-geography/asia/>

### **Documentary: Under the Sun, 46 minutes (2016)**

<https://youtu.be/vAblZ3deTGc>

### **NPR Review: The Making of a Propaganda Film in "Under the Sun" (7/8/16)**

*Under the Sun* is a documentary about the making of a "documentary" — a government-sanctioned propaganda film in which ordinary North Koreans play fictional roles. Mansky doesn't explain what he originally agreed to do or exactly how he wound up making something quite different.

### **NYT Review: In 'Under the Sun,' a Documentary Masked and Unmasked (7/3/16)**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/movies/under-the-sun-documentary-north-korea.html>

North Korea thought it had persuaded Vitaly Mansky to make a film that was a carefully curated illusion. But Mr. Mansky had other ideas.

### **Documentary: I am Sun Mu, 80 minutes (2015)**

North Korean defector Sun Mu creates political pop art based on his life, homeland, and hope for a future united Korea (available on Netflix)

**Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHeK9XNjL9o>

**I am Sun Mu Film Review (3/30/16)**

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-i-am-sun-mu>

The film chronicles the activist efforts of former North Korean propaganda artist turned cultural conscience Sun Mu as he readies for an exhibition of his work on the authoritarian nation. His work is shrewd and provocative, and this film is an equally strong call to action and celebration of artistic expression.

**PBS Series: Secret State of North Korea 53 minutes (1/14/14)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k11kSC5Pktg>

FRONTLINE shines a light on the hidden world of the North Korean people, revealing how ordinary citizens are resisting one of the world's most oppressive regimes.

**Wide Angle: Field Trip to the DMZ: Introduction, 9 minutes (1/1/10)**

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/video/web-exclusives/field-trip-to-the-dmz-video/4530/>

As North Korea's relations with its neighbors grow ever more strained, FOCAL POINT visits the demilitarized zone that separates North and South Korea.

**Wide Angle: Crossing Heaven's Border: Introduction, 57 minutes, (7/1/09)**

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/video/crossing-heavens-border-video-full-episode/5076/>

North Korean defectors take a life-threatening journey, traveling thousands of miles through China, Laos and Thailand, in the hope of settling as free citizens in South Korea. Intrepid South Korean journalists risk their own lives to capture the action and emotion.

**Documentary: The New York Philharmonic Live from North Korea (2008)**

Google to rent from YouTube or to watch for free the different segments.

PBS had rare access inside the closed society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where contact with the outside world is completely forbidden to citizens. The Philharmonic visit marks the first by American artists there. "I have always felt that music is a powerful language," says Maestro Maazel, "in which those of us who are humane and intelligent can speak to each other, in defiance of political and cultural boundaries." The concert is the centerpiece of a 48-hour visit to Pyongyang by the Philharmonic.

**Documentary: A State of Mind: Introduction, 1.5 hours (9/11/03)**

[https://youtu.be/KfrS\\_iApjYs](https://youtu.be/KfrS_iApjYs)

This documentary tells the story of two teenage girls and their families as the girls prepare to participate in North Korea's Mass Games, an intricately choreographed display celebrating North Korea's statehood and revolutionary zeal in one of the last surviving Communist showcase pageants.

Korea Society  
Podcasts/Videos:  
<https://www.koreasociety.org/viewpoint1/podcasts-videos>

**Feature Film: Joint Security Agency, 108 minutes (2000)**

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNLcjGamf8U>

Rent or stream on Amazon. When two North Korean soldiers are found dead in the Joint Security Area, the incident threatens to point South and North Korea toward all-out war. The movie Joint Security Area was released in 2000 and lasts 108 minutes.

## Curriculum Resources

### North Korea Nuclear Crisis

<https://www.choices.edu/teaching-news-lesson/north-korea-nuclear-crisis/>

A lesson plan for teachers designed to educate students about the current nuclear crisis between North Korea and the United States. This plan also considers the use of political cartoons within the crisis and how these express opinions.

### Teaching about the Crisis with North Korea: Connect Your Classroom to the World

<https://www.teachingabouthnorthkorea.org>

The goal of this website is to provide easy, accessible resources on North Korea for teachers including relevant articles and background information.

### Korea: North and South Resources

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/71632.htm>

A very helpful webpage from the National Education Association which includes several lesson plans, background resources, maps, and videos on the subject of both North and South Korea.

### A Tale of Two Heavens: Escaping North Korea

<https://kcts9.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/wa10.socst.global.conn.lpcrosheav/a-tale-of-two-heavens-escaping-north-korea/>

This website provides a lesson plan aimed to teach students about the conditions in authoritarian North Korea and how these conditions have led to many North Koreans trying to escape the country.

### What It Looks Like Inside a Classroom in North Korea

<https://www.npr.org/2018/09/20/650052879/what-it-looks-like-inside-a-classroom-in-north-korea>

This recording offers a controlled glimpse into what life is like within a North Korean teaching training college.

### North Korea begins brainwashing children in cult of the Kims as early as kindergarten

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/for-north-koreas-kims-its-never-too-soon-to-start-brainwashing/2015/01/15/a23871c6-9a67-11e4-86a3-1b56f64925f6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/for-north-koreas-kims-its-never-too-soon-to-start-brainwashing/2015/01/15/a23871c6-9a67-11e4-86a3-1b56f64925f6_story.html)

An article which explores the childhood of North Korean citizens and how it is dominated by the leadership of the country.

### Curriculum Tools

<https://koreanwarlegacy.org/teaching-tools/> (Historical Context)

These lesson plans, which span grades 3-12, offer students a variety of resources to help them better understand the Korean War and its legacy.

### Education About Asia - North Korea topics for teaching

<http://aas2.asian-studies.org/EAA/EAA-TOC-SearchS.asp>

**Dispelling Myths about North Korea (8/31/16). (26 minutes class video)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=5&v=HNf3wM0feb8&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=HNf3wM0feb8&feature=emb_logo)

Historian Suzy Kim from Rutgers University illustrates common myths in the mainstream media regarding North Korea. She demonstrates how teachers and students can deconstruct those myths through critical analysis focusing on Korea's historical and cultural context as well as a comparative global context.

**See NCTA Class App for more contemporary Asia topics**

[http://nctasia.org/resources/class-apps/?utm\\_source=November+25%2C+2019&utm\\_campaign=FCCEAS+e-bulletin&utm\\_medium=email](http://nctasia.org/resources/class-apps/?utm_source=November+25%2C+2019&utm_campaign=FCCEAS+e-bulletin&utm_medium=email)

Explore these short classroom-applicable video presentations available from NCTA. Each "App" focuses on a timely topic or "best practice" presented by an NCTA consulting scholar, seminar leader, teacher alum, or author. How can you use the videos?