Why It Matters

East Asia’s increasing participation in the global community, and the resulting diffusion of the region’s cultures, continue to have a profound effect on the world. East Asia’s growing and aging populations bring challenges for the future.

Section 1: China

The characteristics and distribution of human populations affect physical and human systems. China’s economy and culture are undergoing changes as people migrate from rural areas to urban areas.

Section 2: Japan

Culture influences people’s perceptions of places and regions. Japan’s mix of Asian and Western cultures has been a contributing factor to the country’s influence in the world.

Section 3: North Korea and South Korea

Geography is used to interpret the past, understand the present, and plan for the future. North Korea and South Korea share similar histories but are moving in very different directions.

Geography ONLINE

Chapter Overview  Visit the World Geography and Cultures Web site at glencoe.com and click on Chapter Overviews—Chapter 27 to preview information about the cultural geography of the region.

The Kiyomizu-dera Buddhist temple is one of the best-known sights of Kyōto, Japan.
Summarizing Information  Make a Three-Tab Book to help you organize information about the culture of the countries in East Asia.

Reading and Writing  As you read the chapter, use your Foldable to organize the main ideas about the cultural geography of each country under the appropriate tab. Be sure to include information about population patterns, history and government, and culture.
China is rapidly changing and urbanizing, its cities becoming busier than ever before. Like other cities around the world, Chinese cities are a mix of excitement, crowds, skyscrapers, and shops selling everything imaginable.

Voices Around the World

“No matter how you enter modern China, it’s always a shock. Whether you fly in through Hong Kong or Shanghai, or come in by road or rail, once inside you can’t help but experience China’s vitality through a condition the Chinese refer to as renao, meaning ‘hot and noisy.’ . . .

Crossing from Myanmar to China above the wide Shweli River, I feel renao’s zing as soon as I reach the other side: honking cars and trucks and constantly beeping cell phones. My first stop, the city of Ruili, is full of neon lights, skyscraper hotels, and audio speakers blaring pop music from storefronts. I have a sense that, were I to ask, I could buy anything along its streets . . .”

—Donovan Webster, “Blood, Sweat, and Toil Along the Burma Road,” National Geographic, November 2003
Population Patterns

**MAIN Idea** Cities and rural areas are changing as large numbers of Chinese move to urban areas.

**GEOGRAPHY AND YOU** How do people’s lives change when they move from rural areas to the city? Read to learn how China’s cities are changing.

Ancient cultures mix with modern ways as China adapts to the changing needs of the people, many of whom are moving to large urban centers.

**The People**

When people in China say someone is Chinese, they use the Chinese word that means “a person of the Middle Kingdom.” About 92 percent of China’s more than 1.3 billion people belong to the Han, an ethnic group named for a powerful ancient ruling family. From 206 B.C. to A.D. 220, Han rulers developed a culture whose influence has lasted to the present. The remaining 8 percent of China’s population belongs to about 55 different ethnic groups.

Although ruled by China, non-Chinese ethnic groups have their own separate histories and cultures. Tibet was once a Buddhist kingdom. Since China’s takeover in the 1950s, tensions still exist between the Chinese and the Tibetans.

Taiwan, an island country off China’s southeastern coast, and China share a long history. Most of Taiwan’s people are descended from Chinese who migrated to the island several hundred years ago. Taiwan’s original inhabitants, or aborigines, are related to peoples in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region. They make up only about 2 percent of Taiwan’s population.

The people of Mongolia are mostly ethnic Mongolians. Centuries ago, their Mongol ancestors ruled the world’s largest land empire, which stretched from China to eastern Europe. Today the Mongolians are divided into separate linguistic groups.

**Density and Distribution**

Despite China’s large land area, more than 90 percent of its people live on only one-sixth of the land. Most inhabit the fertile valleys and plains of China’s three great rivers: the Huang He, Chang Jiang, and Xi River. Large urban centers, such as Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, and Guangzhou, lie in river valleys or coastal plains. Mongolia’s vast steppe regions have a population density of only 4 people per square mile (2 people per sq. km).

**Urban Growth**

Although most Chinese still live and work on farms, millions of people continue to migrate to high-growth urban areas. This increasing urbanization, along with population growth, has led to overcrowding in some Chinese cities. The rural-to-urban shift has contributed to farm labor shortages. To stem migration from rural areas to overcrowded urban areas, China has built dozens of new agricultural towns in remote areas. These towns are designed to provide more social services and a better quality of life for rural people.

The strains from China’s growing population have led the government to enact policies to limit population growth. In 1979 China began a policy that allowed each family to have no more than one child. This policy has somewhat slowed the growth. Because there are exceptions to this policy, which is no longer strictly enforced, China’s population growth is once again increasing.

**Movement** How has urban population growth affected rural areas in China?
China has experienced powerful transformations throughout its long history.

**MAIN Idea** China has experienced powerful transformations throughout its long history.

**GEOGRAPHY AND YOU** What do you know about the early history of the United States? Read to learn about China’s ancient and modern history.

China has experienced numerous long-ruling dynasties and has undergone major political and cultural changes. Throughout its history the country has been a powerful force in East Asia.

**Early History**

China, home to the earliest East Asian civilization, is the region’s culture hearth, a center from which ideas and practices spread to surrounding areas. Although China’s culture began more than 5,000 years ago in the valley of the Wei River, historical records were first kept under the Shang dynasty, or ruling family. This dynasty took power about 1600 B.C. in the North China Plain. Like all succeeding dynasties, the Shang faced rebellions by local lords, attacks by central Asian nomads, and natural disasters. When the government was stable, it could defend its people against some of these problems. Eventually, however, the dynasty weakened and fell. According to the Chinese, a fallen dynasty had lost “the mandate of heaven,” the approval of the gods and goddesses.

After the Shang, the Zhou (JOH) dynasty ruled for about 800 years, beginning around 1045 B.C. During the Zhou dynasty, Chinese culture spread, trade grew, and the Chinese began making iron tools. China’s best-known philosopher, Confucius (or Kongfuzi), lived during this time. He founded a system of thought, based on discipline and moral conduct, called Confucianism. Another thinker, Laozi (or Lao-Tzu), helped found Daoism, a philosophy of living in simplicity and harmony with nature.
In the 200s B.C., Qin Shi Huang Di united all of China and built the first section of the Great Wall to ward off attacks from Central Asia. Under the Han and Tang dynasties, traders and missionaries took Chinese culture to all of East Asia. In the early 1400s, under the Ming dynasty, explorer Zheng He (JUHNG HUH) reached as far as the coast of East Africa. The Qing ruled China from the mid-1600s to the early 1900s.

By the 1600s Western countries had set up shipping routes to East Asia, hoping to share in the region’s rich trade in silk and tea. China, however, rejected foreign efforts to penetrate their markets. During the 1800s, Europeans became increasingly dissatisfied and used powerful warships to force China to open more ports. By the 1890s, European governments and Japan had claimed large areas of China as spheres of influence — areas in which they had exclusive trading rights.

**Modern China**

During the 1900s, East Asia as a whole was involved in two world wars. Meanwhile, China faced its own internal upheavals.

**Revolutionary China** In 1911 a revolution led by Sun Yat-sen (or Sun Yixian) ended the rule of emperors in China. By 1927 a military leader, Chiang Kai-shek (or Jiang Jieshi), had formed the Nationalist government of the Republic of China. Meanwhile, Chiang’s Communist rival, Mao Zedong, gained support from China’s farmers. After years of civil war, the Communists won power in 1949 and set up the People’s Republic of China on the mainland. The Nationalists fled to Taiwan where the Republic of China continued.

**Economic Changes** During the “Great Leap Forward” campaign of the 1950s, large government-owned farms replaced small-scale cooperatives. The new farms, however, failed to produce enough food for the country. Millions of Chinese died of starvation, and the economy crumbled.

To move China forward in the 1970s, Deng Xiaoping (DUHNG SHYOW•PING) and other leaders allowed private ownership of businesses and farms. Chinese officials welcomed foreign businesses and technology.

In the late 1900s, the People’s Republic of China maintained strict Communist political rule. However, pressures to modernize gradually opened China’s economy to free market influences.

Meanwhile, Taiwan built a powerful export-based economy and carried out democratic reforms in government.

**A Tale of Two Chinas** Since the 1950s, Taiwan and China have wanted reunification, but only on their own terms. By the 1990s, Taiwan was an economic powerhouse. Today the economies of China and Taiwan are intertwined. Taiwan has invested billions of dollars in factories on the mainland. China, along with the rest of the world, relies on Taiwan for key computer and electronics parts.

**A Free Mongolia** The modern country of Mongolia was born after the overthrow of China’s Qing dynasty in the revolution of 1911. At the time, Outer Mongolia was a province of China. However, the Mongols declared that although they had been loyal to the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty, they owed no loyalty to the new China.

Under Soviet influence, Mongolia was a communist state from 1924 to 1991. After the collapse of Soviet communism, the Mongolians adopted a democratic constitution that opened the way for free elections and economic reform.

**READING Check** Place What ended the rule of emperors in China?
Culture

MAIN Idea  Chinese culture is a mix of modern and traditional practices.

GEOGRAPHY AND YOU  What cultural traditions does your family practice? Read to learn about the traditional and modern elements of Chinese culture.

The people of China have a long, rich cultural heritage with influences that include Confucianism, Buddhism, and communism.

Education and Health Care

In the past, only the wealthiest Chinese learned to read and write, but China’s communist government has pushed efforts to increase literacy. During the Cultural Revolution, a period of upheaval in the late 1960s, literacy suffered a brief setback. Schools and factories closed, and people believed to be enemies of Mao Zedong’s form of communism were persecuted. After Mao’s death, however, the government again emphasized education, and literacy has steadily risen.

Better health care has increased life expectancy in China to above 70 years. Communist governments generally pay for medical treatment, but economic reforms mean fewer promised services than before.

Language and Religion

Most people in China speak the Mandarin dialect of the Han Chinese language. Unlike Western languages that use letters to represent sounds, Chinese languages use ideograms, pictures or symbols that stand for ideas.

The Chinese Communist government discourages all religious practices, and many people officially identify themselves as atheist, or nonreligious. Others, however, still hold to their traditional faiths, which include Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. In Tibet the Chinese government places restrictions on the Buddhist population. Tibetans risk arrest for owning photos of the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader.

The Arts

Chinese artistic and literary achievements are rooted in the long history of the region. Ancient Chinese poetry described human relationships and the beauty of nature. Chinese traditional opera uses elaborate costumes, music, and acrobatics or martial arts. During the Tang dynasty, Chinese potters created the fine, thin porcelain known today as china. In modern times, the Cultural Revolution tried to wipe out the traditional arts, but these traditions are slowly returning.

Vocabulary

1. Explain the significance of: aborigine, culture hearth, dynasty, ideogram, atheist.

Main Ideas

2. What was one of the powerful transformations China experienced during ancient times? During modern times?
3. How is Chinese culture a mix of traditional and modern practices? Give an example of each.
4. Create a diagram like the one below to describe how cities and rural areas are changing as large numbers of Chinese people move to cities.

Critical Thinking

5. How might population growth and the continued rural-to-urban migration affect China’s agricultural future?
6. Making Inferences  Why do you think the Chinese Nationalists, who later fled to Taiwan, called their government the Republic of China?
7. Analyzing Visuals  Study the population pyramid on page 677. What does its shape say about the structure of China’s population?

Writing About Geography

8. Expository Writing  Write a paragraph explaining the impact of the Cultural Revolution in China.
In Japan, the traditional and the modern exist side-by-side. Traditional beliefs characterize Japanese culture in modern cities. Ancient moats and palaces sit next to glass skyscrapers in Tokyo, the capital city.

Voices Around the World

"...I understood why one morning, on a walk up Hibiya-dori, a major road that runs through Tokyo’s Marunouchi district, where cars wheezed alongside an outer moat. At my back, traffic noises echoed off glass skyscrapers while commuters in their thousands poured from subway stops. Before me lay Babasaki Moat, deep and black, with a steep stone wall rising from the water on the other side; beyond that, another ring of moats, and more walls guarding the inner palace. It looked impenetrable, enough to wilt the toughest samurai."

—Robert M. Poole, “Japan’s Imperial Palace: Beyond the Moat,” National Geographic, January 2001
Population Patterns

MAIN Idea  Japan’s ethnically homogeneous and highly urban society shapes population patterns.

GEOGRAPHY AND YOU  How do urban areas influence life in the United States? Read to learn about Japan’s densely populated cities and the people who live there.

Most of Japan’s people and urban areas are concentrated in the relatively small lowland areas on seacoasts and in valleys and plains. As in other countries, life in Japan’s large cities moves at a quicker pace than it does in more rural areas.

The People

The population of Japan is ethnically homogeneous—having a population belonging to the same ethnic group. As a result, Japan has not experienced the same level of ethnic conflict as countries with a wider variety of ethnic groups. About 99 percent of Japan’s population is ethnic Japanese, descendants of Asian migrants who crossed the Korean Peninsula to reach Japan centuries ago. The migrants forced Japan’s earliest-known aboriginal people, the Ainu, to move gradually north. Small numbers of Ainu still live on the island of Hokkaido.

Density and Distribution

Japan has limited land area for its large population. Its average population density is about 875 people per square mile (338 people per sq. km). Forested mountains cover the central part of the country, leaving only valleys and coastal plains for settlement. About 78 percent of Japan’s 127.7 million people live in coastal urban areas, such as the Tōkaidō corridor—a series of cities crowded along the Pacific coast of Honshū between Tokyo and Kobe. Tokyo is the world’s most populous urban area, with more than 35 million people. By contrast, Japan’s northernmost large island, Hokkaidō, remains rural with few people.

Urbanization shapes the physical surroundings and lifestyles of the Japanese people. Hundreds of skyscrapers tower over the busy streets of Japan’s modern cities. Glaring neon signs advertise cars, electronics, and watches. As in most of East Asia’s crowded cities, people often live in a tiny one- or two-bedroom apartment. Because of Japan’s high population density and costly land, suburban homes are small compared to those in other developed countries.

As citizens of one of the most heavily urbanized countries in the world, the Japanese have adapted to their crowded conditions with a system of expressways and trains. Many people use the Shinkansen bullet train for long-distance travel. The electric train reaches speeds of over 160 miles per hour (257 km per hour) along the Tōkaidō corridor.

Population and Transportation in Japan

MAP STUDY

1. Movement  To travel from Nagano to Nagoya, what kind of transportation would you take?

2. Place  How does the route of the bullet train relate to population density?

Use StudentWorks™ Plus or glencoe.com.
History and Government

MAIN Idea Japan has been shaped by both isolation from and interaction with other cultures throughout its history.

GEOGRAPHY AND YOU How did interaction with colonial powers influence the United States? Read to learn how Japan was affected by different cultures throughout its history.

Japan’s history is one of transformation and tradition. Japan has maintained its cultural traditions while leaping toward modernization over the last century.

Early History

The Korean Peninsula was for centuries a cultural bridge between the Asian mainland and Japan. As a result, China and Korea had a significant impact on Japan’s civilization. In the a.d. 400s Japan, once ruled by many clans, or family groups, united under the Yamato dynasty. Yamato rulers adopted China’s philosophy, writing system, art, sciences, and governmental structure. The Japanese also were influenced by the works of Korean scholars.

By the 1100s, armies of local nobles had begun fighting for control of Japan. Yoritomo Minamoto became Japan’s first shogun, or military ruler, in 1192. Supporting the shogun were professional warriors, or samurai. Although an emperor officially ruled Japan, the samurai helped powerful shoguns govern the country until the late 1800s.

The first documented contact with the West was in 1542, when a Portuguese ship headed to China was blown off its course and landed in Japan. Next followed European traders and Catholic missionaries, which raised suspicions among Japanese shoguns that European military conquest would follow. The shoguns then restricted foreigners within Japan, eventually forcing them to leave and barring all outside peoples except for a few merchants at Nagasaki. Japan remained isolated for two hundred years.

During the 1800s the United States worked to open Japan for trade. In 1854 the U.S. Navy pressured the Japanese to trade with the United States. Not long afterward, rebel samurai forced shoguns to return full authority to the emperor. Japan’s new government rapidly modernized the country’s economy, government, military forces, education, and legal system. This period came to be known as the Meiji Restoration.

Modern Japan

From the 1890s to the 1940s, Japan was transformed from a feudal country to a modern country in which education improved and the economy grew rapidly. The country experienced a cultural convergence, or the mixing of cultures, as interaction with other countries increased.

Japan used diplomacy and military force to build an empire. Japan was at war with China from 1894 to 1895, finally gaining islands that included Taiwan (then called Formosa). It fought Russia from 1904 to 1905, also for control of Korea, and gained rights to Manchuria and the large Russian island called Sakhalin. Japan finally annexed Korea in 1910.

This expansion was one factor that led Japan to fight the United States and other Allied countries in World War II. After World War I, in which Japan fought with the victorious Allies, the country had experienced record prosperity.
Though Japan steered toward a democracy, military leaders gained influence over the government. They invaded Manchuria in 1931, China in 1937, and signed a pact with Nazi Germany in 1936. Japan was involved in World War II for four years, lost 3 million Japanese lives, and suffered from the dropping of atomic bombs by the United States at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

After its surrender to the Allies in 1945, Japan became a democracy. Stripped of its overseas territories and military might, Japan rebuilt its shattered economy and society. By the late 1900s, it had emerged as a global economic power with worldwide trading and business links. Today Japan is the world’s second-largest economy. It produces and sells high-value items to nearly every country in the world.

Human-Environment Interaction
What physical feature influenced the spread of ideas and cultures from the Asian mainland to Japan?

**Japanese culture is a mix of ancient and modern influences.**

**GEOGRAPHY AND YOU** How important is education in the United States? Read to learn how Japanese culture values education.

Daily life in Japan reveals the blending of ancient and modern cultures.

**Education and Health Care**
Education is highly regarded and encouraged in Japan. Early on, students focus on getting into good schools. Education is compulsory for children up to age 15. High school curricula are designed to prepare students for university.

**Culture**

**MAIN Idea** Japanese culture is a mix of ancient and modern influences.

**GEOGRAPHY AND YOU** How important is education in the United States? Read to learn how Japanese culture values education.

**MAP STUDY**
1. **Regions** What areas of mainland East Asia were ruled by Japan during World War II?
2. **Location** Why was Japan’s conquest of Manchuria an important step in expanding its empire?

---

**Japan in World War II**

- **MAP STUDY**
  - **1. Regions** What areas of mainland East Asia were ruled by Japan during World War II?
  - **2. Location** Why was Japan’s conquest of Manchuria an important step in expanding its empire?
Improved health care has helped increase the average life expectancy in Japan to 82 years. This aging of the population has put a strain on health care and other social services. Governments provide preventive health care, and for those without health insurance through their employers, governments provide health-care insurance.

**Language and Religion**

Although the Japanese language developed in isolation, experts believe it may be distantly related to Korean and Mongolian. Over the centuries, Japanese borrowed words and a writing system from Chinese. Western languages, especially English, have also influenced Japanese.

Many Japanese people practice both Buddhism and Shintoism, an ancient Japanese religion that stresses reverence for nature. Religion in Japan tends to be a blend of different practices from various faiths. For example, a family may celebrate Shinto rituals, have a Christian wedding, and hold a funeral ceremony at a Buddhist temple.

**The Arts**

The Japanese have developed their own unique art forms. Throughout history, artists have painted the rugged landscapes of their country. Other Japanese art forms include origami, in which paper is folded into the shapes of animals and birds; the tea ceremony; and formal landscaping. Japan’s lively Kabuki theater uses costumes, song, and dance.

In ancient Japan, poetry flourished among the educated members of society. In A.D. 1010 a Japanese noblewoman, Lady Murasaki Shikibu, wrote one of the world’s first novels, *The Tale of Genji*, about the life and loves of a prince at the emperor’s court. The Japanese developed a form of poetry called *haiku* that originally had only 3 lines and 17 syllables but now is written in many line and syllable combinations.

**Family Life and Leisure**

Although the Japanese have smaller families than in the past, the family is still viewed as a source of stability and strength. Ancient traditions and beliefs continue to shape how children are raised. They are taught that being part of a group is more important than individuality.

Japanese culture, in contrast, is more flexible. As in many countries, Japanese people experience acculturation, the absorption of popular culture from another country. The popularity of the Western sport of baseball is one example.

**Regional Influences**

What traditions of family and behavior characterize Japanese society?

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**Vocabulary**

1. Explain the significance of: homogeneous, clan, shogun, samurai, cultural convergence, haiku, acculturation.

**Main Ideas**

2. How has Japan’s ethnically homogeneous population shaped population patterns in the country?
3. What influences Japan’s population density and the location of its cities?
4. Describe one example of how isolation and one example of how interaction shaped Japan’s history.
5. Create a chart like the one below to identify ancient and modern influences on Japanese culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ancient Influences</th>
<th>Modern Influences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Critical Thinking**

6. How has Western culture influenced culture and government in Japan?

7. What might have caused Japan to become an economic power after World War II?

8. Study the map of Japan in World War II on page 684. Which present-day countries were controlled by Japan in 1941? In 1942?

**Writing About Geography**

9. Write a letter to a friend describing your recent visit to Japan. Be sure to include details you learned in the section.

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**Geography ONLINE**

To review this section, go to glencoe.com and click on Study Central.
North Korea and South Korea

It is impossible to understand the histories of North Korea and South Korea without seeing the connections of both countries to the surrounding region. Nestled between China and Japan, the cultures of the Koreas have been influenced by both countries. While South Korea becomes more engaged in the world market, Communist North Korea becomes more isolated as it develops its military.

Voices Around the World

“I can’t take my eyes off the North Korean guards staring at us through the windows, close enough for us to see the red Kim Jong Il pins on their chests. Their hard stares unnerve me. ‘As a visitor you are not allowed to gesture at, or communicate with, the North Koreans. They want to provoke incidents,’ Lieutenant Levine has warned me.”

—Tom O’Neill, “DMZ: Korea’s Dangerous Divide,”
National Geographic, July 2003
Population Patterns

**MAIN Idea** Physical geography and an ethnically homogeneous population affect population patterns in North Korea and South Korea.

**GEOGRAPHY AND YOU** How has U.S. culture benefited from the many different peoples who have come to live here? Read to learn how ethnicity influences life in North Korea and South Korea.

Although people in North Korea and South Korea share the same ethnic background, each country’s politics and economies have diverged greatly over the last few decades. This has led to large population shifts as North Koreans and South Koreans have migrated to other countries.

### The People

Like Japan, Korea is ethnically homogeneous. Koreans trace their origins to early peoples from northern China and central Asia. They have maintained their common identity despite long periods of foreign rule and today’s division of the Korean Peninsula into Communist North Korea and democratic South Korea. While no indigenous minorities live in North Korea, there are small groups of Chinese and Japanese who moved to the country in the mid-1900s. South Korea is home to people of Chinese descent, as well as foreign nationals.

### Density and Distribution

In North Korea and South Korea, most people inhabit coastal plains that wrap around the Korean Peninsula’s mountainous interior. About two-thirds of the Korean population live in rapidly growing cities, such as Seoul (SOHL), South Korea, and P’yongyang, North Korea.

The population characteristics of the two countries begin to diverge with population density. The average population density in South Korea is 1,260 people per square mile (487 people per sq. km). North Korea’s population density is much lower at 492 people per square mile (190 people per sq. km). North Korea’s population is unevenly distributed, with higher densities along the coastlines.

The North Korean government’s focus on industrialization after World War II led to a shortage of farm labor as people migrated to cities for work. The urban population also grew quickly after the Korean War in the 1950s. Today, however, North Korea is about 60 percent urban. In South Korea many people have moved to coastal cities, seeking industrial jobs. Today the country is 80 percent urban.

Politics has affected migration on the Korean Peninsula. To escape communism, many people in the mid-1900s fled from North Korea to South Korea or to other countries, especially the United States and Canada, seeking political and economic freedom. South Korea’s population more than doubled between 1950 and 1990. Today South Korea has 48.8 million people, more than twice as many as North Korea, where the standard of living is much lower.

North Korea and South Korea are divided by the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). This border area was established at the end of the Korean War. Since the war, no official peace treaty has ever been signed, and the DMZ continues to have a large military presence. Soldiers from the two sides can peer across the zone at each other through binoculars. Despite this tension, the two countries have begun to cooperate on trade and tourism.

**READING Check** Place How does population density differ in North Korea and South Korea?
History and Government

MAIN Idea The decision to divide Korea into North Korea and South Korea remains an important factor in the two countries’ development.

GEOGRAPHY AND YOU How did the division between the U.S. North and South lead to the Civil War? Read to learn how Korea’s division has affected the history of North Korea and South Korea.

Korea, in its early history, faced the challenges of aggression from neighboring countries China and Japan. Its more recent history, as North Korea and South Korea, is one of harsh rule by each country’s own leaders.

Early History

About 1200 B.C., Chinese settlers brought their culture to the neighboring Koreans. Buddhism later spread from China to Korea and became Korea’s main religion. In the centuries that followed, a series of Korean dynasties, including the Silla and the Koryo, united the Korean Peninsula.

Throughout Korea’s history, neighboring countries have invaded and fought over its land. Mongolia occupied the country from the early A.D. 1200s through the early 1300s. Around 1300 the Chinese seized control of Korea and introduced Confucianism, which became the model for Korea’s government, education, and family life. Japan launched invasions in the late 1500s, during the height of Korean civilization.

By the 1800s, colonial powers in Japan and Europe desired control of Korea. Western countries approached Korea through a unified policy called “gunboat diplomacy,” or diplomacy using military force. Korea responded by adopting a closed-door, isolationist policy to keep out foreign powers. This earned it the nickname “Hermit Kingdom.”

Though Korea maintained its independence until the late 1800s, other countries began to view it as a territorial prize. A war between China and Japan, the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), erupted over control of the country. Another war between Russia and Japan, the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), was fought for the control of Korea. After winning both wars, Japan annexed Korea in 1910, incorporating the country into its expanding empire.

The Japanese administered harsh control of the Korean people. They tried to replace the Korean language and culture with Japanese language and culture. Japan maintained its control over Korea until the end of World War II, in 1945.
A Divided Korea

After World War II, Korea was divided into U.S.-backed South Korea and Communist-ruled North Korea. Wanting to unite Korea, North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950. During the Korean War, UN forces, led by the United States, rushed to South Korea’s defense. By June 1951, each army had dug in near the thirty-eighth parallel. The stalemate ended with a truce in 1953. Millions of Koreans had died, and both countries were devastated. Today North Korea and South Korea are still separated. Though once a united culture, North Korea and South Korea have experienced cultural divergence, or a growing apart of their cultures, because of their distinctly different political and economic systems.

After the war, people of both North Korea and South Korea experienced strict rule under autocratic rulers. A military coup in South Korea in the early 1960s put Major General Park Chung-Hee in power. He was assassinated in 1979. Under his rule, the country’s economy grew, but political freedoms were limited. South Koreans protested against this harsh rule, culminating in violent clashes between the government and the pro-democracy movement.

North Korea has a centralized government controlled by the Korean Workers’ Party (KWP). All government officials belong to the party, which is the only official party in the country. Very little is known today about the government’s operation, except that the current leader, Kim Jong Il, holds authority over the country and its government.

In 2000 talks between North Korea and South Korea helped to improve their relations. This progress ended, however, when North Korea reactivated its nuclear reactor in 2002. Most nations condemned North Korea for testing a nuclear weapon in 2006. The strict government rule has contributed to the country’s economic stagnation, acute food shortages, and serious mismanagement of crucial resources. Since the mid-1900s, an estimated two million North Koreans have died from food shortages. There are said to be as many as 200,000 political prisoners in North Korea. Human rights abuses in slave labor camps are also reported.

Reading Check: Regions What led to the division of Korea?
Culture

**MAIN Idea** Ancient ties have created a shared culture, while modern political divisions have fueled differences in North Korea and South Korea.

**GEOGRAPHY AND YOU** What cultural similarities does the United States share with Great Britain? Read to learn about cultural similarities in North Korea and South Korea.

The different governments of North Korea and South Korea have influenced the directions these countries have recently taken.

Education has improved in South Korea since World War II. Most students attend middle and high school, and university attendance is increasing. In North Korea, however, education serves primarily to teach communist ideology.

The United Nations helped South Korea rebuild its health-care system after the war. Today it is a successful, modern system, and life expectancy is 77 years. North Korea provides health care to its citizens, but its people still suffer from inadequate food, water, and heating supplies.

The language of North Korea and South Korea is Korean, which experts believe is distantly related to Japanese. Over centuries, Korean has also borrowed from Chinese.

The Korean way of life is largely based on Confucianism. However, people also practice Buddhism, Christianity, and Cheondogyo, a combination of these religions.

The traditional arts are similar in both countries. During the Koryo dynasty, artists made graceful vases with a pale green glaze called celadon, which is still highly valued throughout the world. Buddhist temples contain many statues and sculptures in stone, bronze, or jade. Local woods and granite are used to build Buddhist temples.

The arts today are influenced by the different political atmospheres in North Korea and South Korea. The Communist ideology shapes culture and the arts in North Korea, whereas South Korea has adopted many elements of Western culture.

**READING Check** Place What is the goal of education in North Korea?

**Geography ONLINE**

**Student Web Activity** Visit the World Geography and Cultures Web site at glencoe.com and click on Student Web Activities—Chapter 27 for an activity about East Asian customs.

### Vocabulary

1. Explain the significance of: cultural divergence.

### Critical Thinking

6. How were developments in North Korea and in South Korea similar after the Korean War? How were they different?

7. **Analyzing Visuals** Study the population density map on page 658 of the Regional Atlas. Which areas of North Korea and South Korea are the most densely populated?

### Writing About Geography

8. **Narrative Writing** Choose one of the arts or religions of North Korea and South Korea and consider what interests you about this subject. Then write a paragraph describing why you would like to learn more about this topic.

### Section 3 REVIEW

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**Interactive Graphic Organizer**

To review this section, go to glencoe.com and click on Study Central.
**The People of East Asia**

- The populations of North Korea, South Korea, and Japan are ethnically homogenous.
- China, Mongolia, and Taiwan have slightly more diverse populations. For example, China is home to about 56 different ethnic groups, most of which are Han Chinese.
- Population in China and South Korea continues to grow, while Japan’s aging population is creating new challenges for the country.

**History and Government**

- Confucianism and Daoism developed in China. Buddhism spread from India throughout East Asia.
- China was ruled by a succession of dynasties until the early 1900s. Today China’s government is an authoritarian one-party state.
- Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Mongolia have democratically elected governments.
- North Korea’s government is run by communist dictator Kim Jong Il.

**East Asia Today**

- Diplomatic and military pressure from the West has gradually opened up much of East Asia to the outside world.
- With the exception of North Korea, East Asia has actively opened its markets, and become a global exporter of goods.
- North Korea remains economically cut off from the rest of the world.
STANDARDIZED TEST PRACTICE

TEST-TAKING TIP
When you have finished, check your work to be sure you have answered all the questions.

Reviewing Vocabulary
Directions: Choose the word or words that best complete the sentence.

1. A(n) _______ is a family whose members rule a country for a long period of time.
   A  autocracy
   B  democracy
   C  dynasty
   D  empire

2. Chinese is written in _______, symbols that stand for words rather than sounds.
   A  alphabets
   B  ideograms
   C  pictures
   D  sign language

3. Although it has had an emperor for hundreds of years, Japan was ruled by military leaders called _______ from the late 1100s until the late 1800s.
   A  samurai
   B  kings
   C  shoguns
   D  generals

4. The separation of places by distance or political conflict can cause them to become different through _______.
   A  war
   B  cultural divergence
   C  conversion
   D  syncretism

Reviewing Main Ideas
Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

Section 1 (pp. 676–680)
5. What happened when large government farms took over agricultural production in China?
   A  It caused famine and economic collapse.
   B  Food production skyrocketed.
   C  People revolted against the government.
   D  There was no large impact.

Section 2 (pp. 681–685)
6. How does Japan rank today among the world’s economies?
   A  It is the largest.
   B  It is the second-largest.
   C  It is the tenth-largest.
   D  It is the smallest.

Section 3 (pp. 686–690)
7. What was the situation between North Korea and South Korea following the Korean War?
   A  A peace treaty was signed.
   B  Fighting resumed.
   C  Fighting ended with a truce.
   D  The two countries ignored each other.
Critical Thinking

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

8. The last Chinese dynasty ended in 1900. What may have contributed to its fall?
   A. China was forced open to trade by the United States and Europe.
   B. The communists killed the last emperor.
   C. Mongolia invaded China.
   D. Unrest forced China’s leader to flee to Taiwan.

Base your answer to question 9 on the map and on your knowledge of Chapter 27.

9. What religion is dominant in South Korea?
   A. Christianity
   B. Chinese religions
   C. Suni Islam
   D. Japanese religion

Document-Based Questions

Directions: Analyze the document and answer the short-answer questions that follow the document.

During Mao Zedong’s rule in China, people studied his sayings for guidance on how to live and work. Some were quoted as proverbs. Here are a few of the many sayings that were reproduced and quoted.

We must see to it that all our cadres [government workers] and all our people constantly bear in mind that ours is a big socialist country but an economically backward and poor one, and that this is a very great contradiction. To make China rich and strong needs several decades of intense effort, which will include, among other things, the effort to practise strict economy and combat waste, i.e., the policy of building up our country through diligence and frugality.

The wealth of society is created by the workers, peasants and working intellectuals. If they take their destiny into their own hands, follow a Marxist-Leninist line and take an active attitude in solving problems instead of evading them, there will be no difficulty in the world which they cannot overcome.

What is work? Work is struggle. There are difficulties and problems in those places for us to overcome and solve. We go there to work and struggle to overcome these difficulties. A good comrade is one who is more eager to go where the difficulties are greater.

—Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong

10. What does Mao say to encourage his people to work for China’s development?

11. According to Mao Zedong, who creates the wealth of a country?

Extended Response

12. Compare and contrast the cultures of China and Japan. How are these cultures similar? How are they different?

For additional test practice, use Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 27 on glencoe.com.
Just the Facts:

- There are 12.4 million Asian Americans living in the United States today.
- In 2004 Asia supplied about 60 percent of the technology imports to the United States.
- There are approximately 25 Chinatowns located throughout the United States in various cities.
- In 2005 China surpassed Canada as the number 1 exporter of goods to the United States.
- In 2005 basketball player Yao Ming received a record 2,558,278 votes for the NBA All-Star team.
Making the Connection

The connections between East Asia and the United States are obvious in everything from the cars we drive to the food we eat. Immigration and trade continue to bring the countries of this region in closer contact with the United States.

Food Immigrants brought East Asian cuisine to the United States. The food traditionally includes lots of vegetables and fish and is frequently served with steamed rice. The cuisine served in U.S. restaurants is often Americanized, making use of fewer vegetables and more red meat and sauces.

Chinatowns During the 1840s and 1850s, the United States experienced its first major Chinese immigration. Most newcomers worked in the California gold mines and railroad construction. These immigrants were often discriminated against by other American citizens because of differences in culture and language. As a result, the Chinese often settled together in what have become known as Chinatowns. Many of these were located on the West Coast, especially in California.

Going Out With a Bang Simple fireworks were made as early as the Chinese Han dynasty (206 B.C.) by roasting bamboo, which made a loud sound. Daoist monks later played with gunpowder, creating more modern fireworks. Today, across the United States, large fireworks displays are used to commemorate holidays such as Independence Day.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

1. Human Systems What are some of the technologies and products coming from East Asia that you encounter every day? How important are these things to your life?

2. Places and Regions Why do you think more Asian Americans in the United States come from China than from any other East Asian country?