

CHAPTER  
**26**

# The Korean Peninsula

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**GEOGRAPHY**

**A Rugged Peninsula**

**2**

**HISTORY & CULTURE**

**Strong Traditions, Modern Innovations**

**3**

**GOVERNMENT & ECONOMICS**

**Contrasting Countries**



**ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

**How can North Korea and South Korea overcome their differences and live in peace?**

**CONNECT**



**Geography & History**



Use the map and the time line to answer the following questions.

1. Which countries are the Koreas' closest neighbors?
2. What major religion spread to the Korean Peninsula from China?



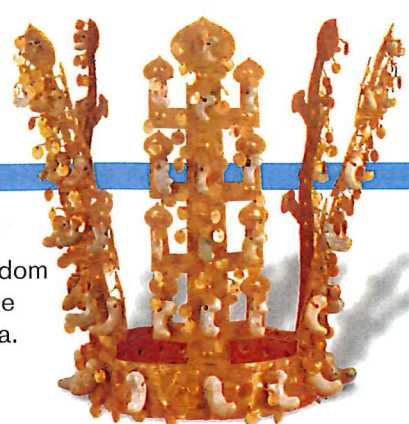
**A.D. 300**

**Culture**

**◀ 300s** Buddhism is introduced from China.

**History**

**660s** The kingdom of Silla unifies the Korean Peninsula. (Silla crown) ▶

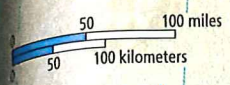


**Government**

**1392** The Choson Dynasty is established and rules until 1910.

# Present-Day Korean Peninsula

[Click here](#) to explore the Korean Peninsula @ [ClassZone.com](#)



⊛ National capital  
• Other city

## History

**1910–1945** Japan has complete control of Korea.



## Economics

**1960s–1980s** South Korea experiences an economic boom. (Ship carrying exports)

## Today



## History

**1953** The Korean War ends with a truce, but North Korea and South Korea remain divided.

SECTION  
**1**

# Reading for Understanding

## ▶ Key Ideas

### BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

China is a vast country in East Asia with a variety of landforms, climates, and natural resources.

### NOW YOU WILL LEARN

Korea lies on a peninsula, which provides a moderate climate and plentiful resources.

## ▶ Vocabulary

### TERMS & NAMES

**Korean Peninsula** a body of land bordered by the Yellow Sea to the west, the East Sea (or Sea of Japan) to the east, the Korea Strait to the south, and China and Russia to the north

**Yalu River** the longest river on the Korean Peninsula; forms part of the border between China and North Korea

**Mount Paektu** (PAHK•too) the highest mountain (9,003 feet) on the Korean Peninsula

**Cheju** (CHEH•JOO) **Island** largest island off the southern coast of the Korean Peninsula

**monsoon** a seasonal wind that usually brings moist air during the summer and dry air during the winter

**typhoon** a tropical storm that starts in the western Pacific or Indian oceans

### BACKGROUND VOCABULARY

**peninsula** a large mass of land surrounded on three sides by water



**Visual Vocabulary** satellite image of a typhoon

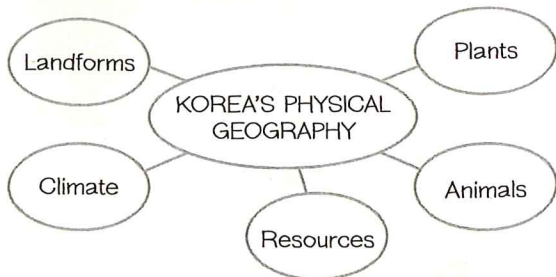
## ▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the web diagram shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the diagram to record main ideas about the physical geography of North Korea and South Korea. Add ovals or start a new diagram as needed.



Skillbuilder Handbook, page R4

### FIND MAIN IDEAS



### GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Go to Interactive Review @ClassZone.com



SECTION  
1

GEOGRAPHY



# A Rugged Peninsula

## Connecting to Your World

Have you ever seen a photograph of a sunrise over a mountain range, such as the Rockies or Appalachians in the United States? These pictures often convey a sense of calm and peace. Korea is dominated by mountainous terrain. The peaceful sunrises over its mountains have inspired people to call Korea the “Land of the Morning Calm.” The peninsula’s rocky landscape has played a large part in shaping the history and culture of the Korean people.



## An Isolated Land

**KEY QUESTION** What are some of the geographic features of the Korean Peninsula?

Korea is a **peninsula**, which means that it is surrounded on three sides by water: the East Sea (or Sea of Japan) to the east, the Yellow Sea to the west, and the Korea Strait to the south. China and Russia border Korea to the north. The **Korean Peninsula** has both isolated and protected its people. In fact, ancient Korea was called the “hermit kingdom.” Today, the Korean Peninsula contains two nations—North Korea and South Korea. The tradition of isolation continues in North Korea, which has little contact with other nations.

### Cheju Waterfall

According to legend, heavenly creatures bathed under this fall, which is surrounded by lush vegetation.

### Mount Daedunsan

This mountain in South Korea is famous for its rocky cliffs.

**The Korean Peninsula** The map on the opposite page shows the bodies of water and landforms on the Korean Peninsula. As you have already learned, the Yellow Sea **A** is situated to the west of the peninsula. The Korea Strait lies between the peninsula's southern coast and the west coast of Japan. The eastern side of the Korean Peninsula borders the East Sea (also known as the Sea of Japan). The **Yalu River B**—known as the Amnok River in Korean—is the longest river on the peninsula. The Yalu and the Tumen rivers form the border between China and North Korea.

The rugged terrain of the Korean Peninsula consists of several mountain ranges. The Hamgyong (HAHM•GYUHNG) range extends along the peninsula's northern border and contains **Mount Paektu (PAHK•too) C**. At 9,003 feet, this peak is the highest on the peninsula. The Nangnim Mountains run from north to south through the center of North Korea. Farther south, the Taebaek (TAY•BACK) Mountains **D** run north to south along the eastern coast. Branching off from this range are the Sobaek Mountains, which extend across the center of South Korea.

More than 3,000 islands lie off the coasts of the Korean Peninsula. Many of them are small and uninhabited. But the largest, **Cheju (CHEH•JOO) Island E**, has a population of about 530,000. Cheju lies near the southern part of the peninsula and plays an active role in the culture and economy of South Korea.

**Impact of Geography on Korea** The isolation and protection provided by Korea's geography have allowed the Koreans to develop their own distinct culture. Of course, Chinese culture has had a strong influence. But Koreans have always adapted this culture to fit their own. Koreans even adapted the Chinese language to create their own, as you'll learn at left.

In general, Koreans have been content to remain in their land and follow their own way of life. However, maintaining a peaceful Korean state has not always been easy. Korea's aggressive neighbors, China, Japan, and Russia, have each attempted to control the peninsula. You will learn more about how these superpowers affected Korea's history in Section 2.

**SUMMARIZE** Describe some of the geographic features of the Korean Peninsula.

## CONNECT Geography & Culture

### The Hangul Alphabet

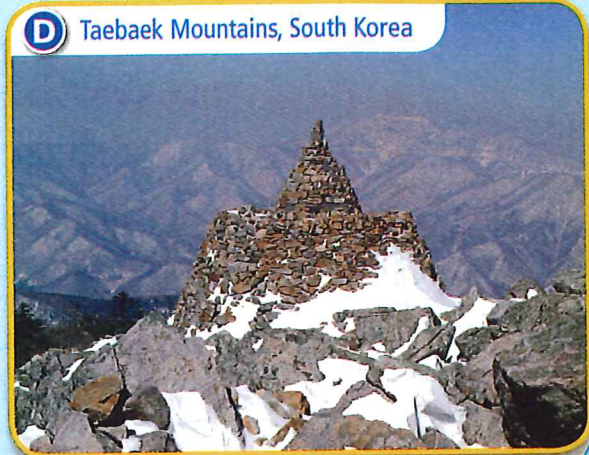
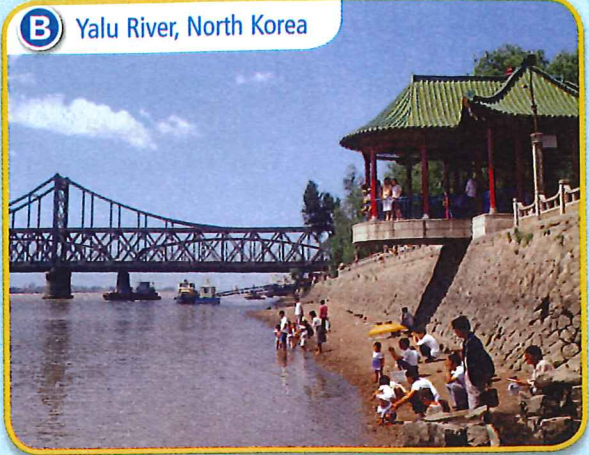
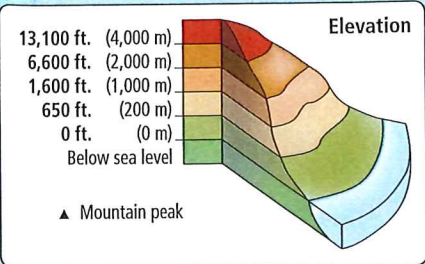
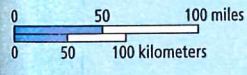
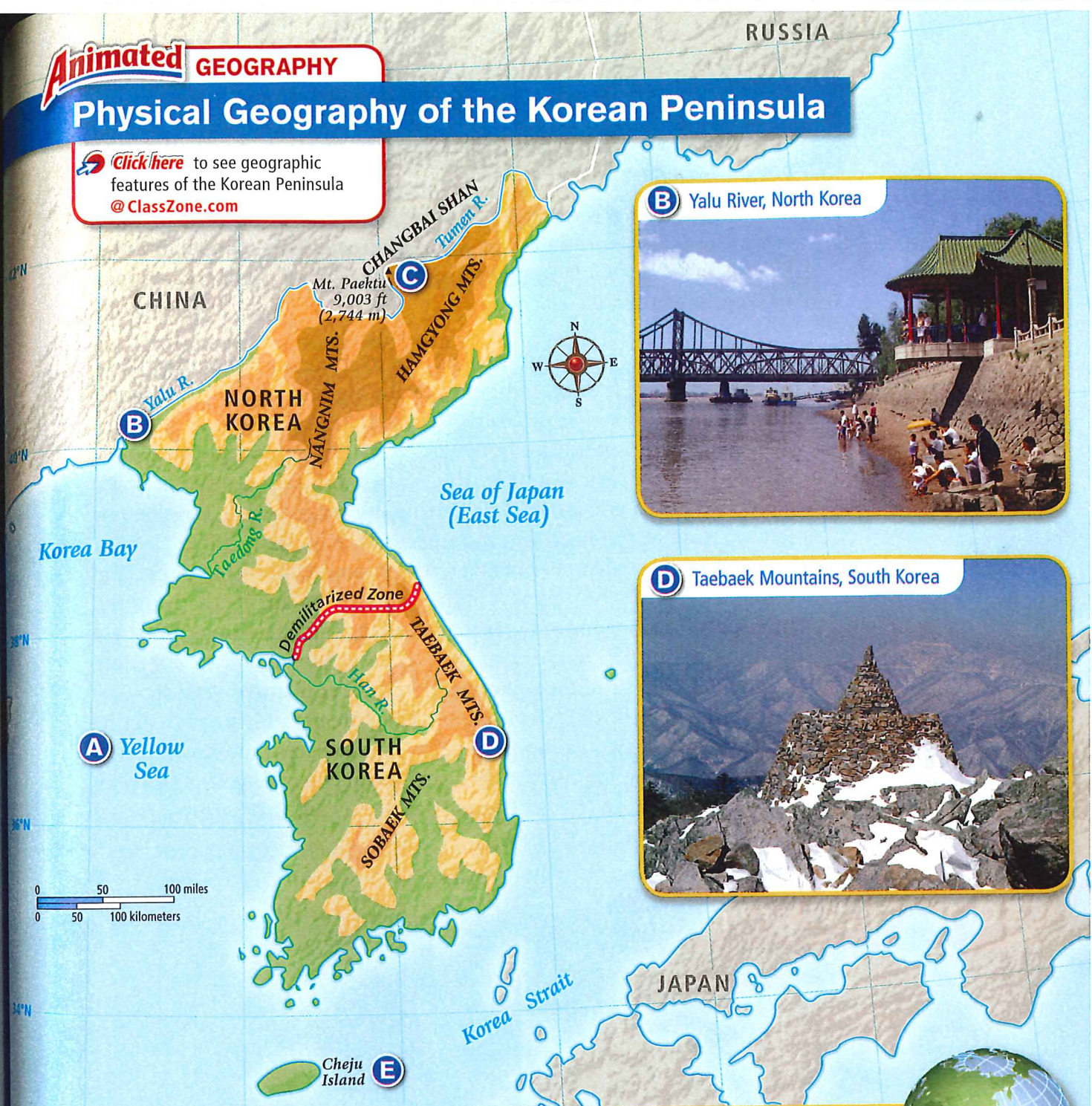
For over a thousand years, educated Koreans used a complicated writing system based on Chinese characters. Then in the 1440s, King Sejong, shown below, created a simple Korean writing script. The result was the hangul alphabet, which allowed uneducated Koreans to learn to read and write. The characters below express the word *hello*.

안녕하세요



# Physical Geography of the Korean Peninsula

 [Click here](#) to see geographic features of the Korean Peninsula @ [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com)



## CONNECT Geography & Culture READING A PHYSICAL MAP



As you study the map,

- note the Demilitarized Zone, which marks the boundary between North and South Korea
- think about the impact on Korea of its neighbors
- note locations of high and low elevation in Korea

- 1. Region** In what ways is the physical geography of North and South Korea similar?
- 2. Movement** What impact might this physical geography have on both nations?

## Climate, Plants, and Animals

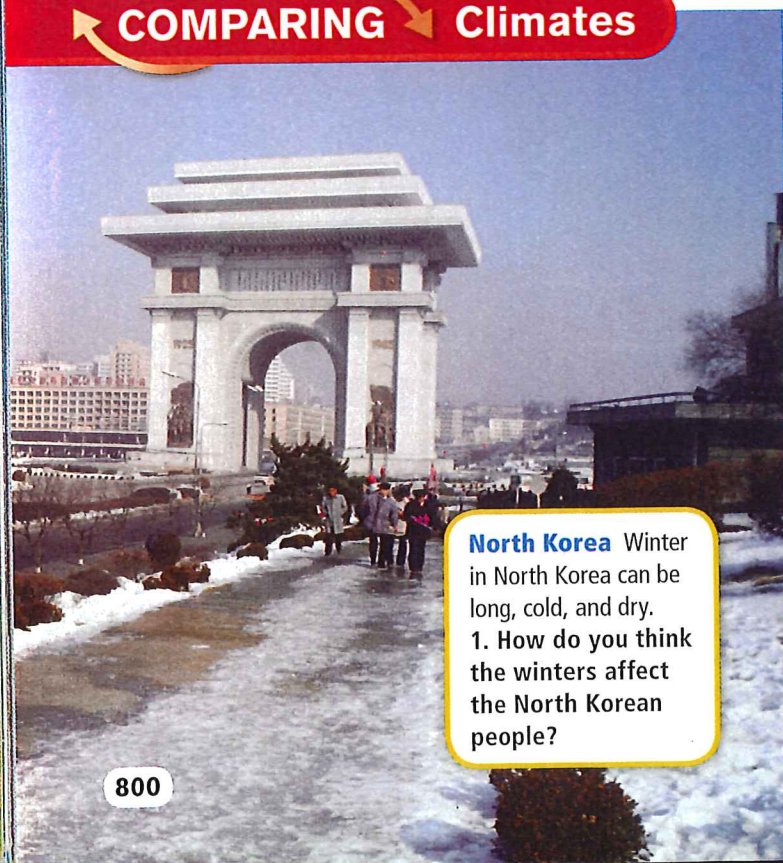
**KEY QUESTION** What types of climates, plants, and animals are found on the Korean Peninsula?

The mountains of the Korean Peninsula and the seas that surround it both have a major impact on Korea's climate. This climate, in turn, has played a large role in determining the type of plant and animal life on the peninsula.

**A Moderate Climate** In general, the climate on the peninsula is moderate. Summer weather differs little throughout Korea, with average July temperatures ranging from 70°F to 80°F. But in the winter, the difference in temperature between North Korea and South Korea can be extreme. For example, the average January temperature in southeast Korea is around 35°F. During the same month, the average temperature in the northern mountains is only about -8°F.

Most of the Korean Peninsula receives around 40 inches of precipitation each year. The majority of this rain arrives during the summer monsoons. A **monsoon** is a seasonal wind that usually brings moist air during the summer and dry air during the winter. At times, summer monsoons help produce **typhoons**, fierce tropical storms that start in the western Pacific or Indian oceans. The Korean Peninsula is usually hit with one or two typhoons a year. Typhoons are similar to hurricanes, which you have probably heard about. Hurricanes are tropical storms that start in the northern Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, or the eastern Pacific Ocean.

### COMPARING Climates



**North Korea** Winter in North Korea can be long, cold, and dry.  
1. How do you think the winters affect the North Korean people?



**South Korea** Spring temperatures average about 50°F in South Korea.  
2. What impact does this climate appear to have on the country's vegetation?

**Plant and Animal Life** The Korean Peninsula contains much diverse plant life, but the region's natural vegetation is largely forest. Today, forests cover about two-thirds of the land area of South Korea. Fir, spruce, pine, and elm trees grow in the northern and central parts of the country. Bamboo and evergreens grow along the southern coast.

The Korean Peninsula also has a wide variety of wildlife. Deer, mountain antelope, bears, and leopards make their home in mountainous areas and in the forests. Many types of birdlife also live on the peninsula, including herons, cranes, and wild pigeons. In addition, the peninsula is a popular stopover for ducks, wild geese, and swans migrating to Japan, Southeast Asia, and Australia.

As in much of the world, human activities have threatened the survival of wildlife on the Korean Peninsula, particularly in forested areas. People have cut down many of the trees for construction, heating, and cooking. This deforestation destroyed many of the animals' homes. Since the 1970s, however, strong efforts have been made to reforest the land. As a result, some animals that had been considered endangered are making a comeback. The black bear, for example, has returned to some remote mountain areas.

Some of the animals have been rescued by chance. In Section 2, you will learn about a wildlife preserve that accidentally developed along the border between North Korea and South Korea. This accidental preserve has become the Korean Peninsula's most important wildlife refuge.

**CATEGORIZE** Tell what types of climates, plants, and animals are found on the Korean Peninsula.

## Natural Resources

**KEY QUESTION** How are the natural resources of North Korea and South Korea similar and different?

The rainfall and warm temperatures during the summer make Korea's climate ideal for growing rice. But the rocky terrain of the peninsula makes farmland scarce. Koreans have been able to squeeze tiny fields along hillsides by using terraced farming. Even so, the overall lack of good farmland has led Koreans to rely on other resources, including the abundant fish along the coastlines and mineral deposits.



**Red-Crowned Crane** In Korean culture, the red-crowned crane symbolizes happiness, good luck, and long life, and often appears in traditional paintings. **Why might a bird represent such positive attributes?**



**Farmland and Agriculture** The largest portion of farmland on the Korean Peninsula is found on the western and southern coastal plains. Because of overuse, however, the soil is not very fertile. To remedy this, farmers have extensively used irrigation and fertilizers.

Since most of the best farmland is located in South Korea, this nation has a much higher crop yield than North Korea. Rice is the most important crop in both North Korea and South Korea. These nations also grow wheat, potatoes, and barley. South Koreans, in addition, grow Chinese cabbage, melons, onions, and soybeans. Cheju Island is famous for its mandarin oranges. In fact, Cheju oranges constitute South Korea's major cash fruit crop.

**Fishing** The lack of usable land has affected Korea's fishing industry. Since the Korean Peninsula does not have enough land to raise much livestock, Koreans rely on fish as an important source of protein. As a result, the fishing industries of the Koreas have risen to keep up with the nutritional needs of the rising population. Both North Korea and South Korea have taken full advantage of their extensive coastal areas. In fact, South Korea has become one of the major deep-sea fishing countries of the world.

## CONNECT Geography & Culture

### Women Divers of Cheju Island

For more than 1,500 years, the women divers, or *haenyo*, of Cheju Island have caught shellfish, squid, and sea urchins, such as the one shown here. This seafood has provided the main source of nourishment for themselves and their families. Their husbands often stay at home and watch the children.

The women divers work until they are well into their 60s—and beyond. They can plunge down to depths of 60 feet and stay underwater for three to five minutes. And all of this is done without the aid of any breathing equipment. This tradition of diving has been handed down from mother to daughter for generations.



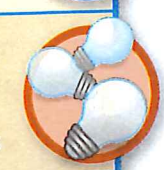

#### CRITICAL THINKING

**Make Inferences** What inferences can you make about the women divers?



**Mineral Resources** The vast majority of mineral resources on the Korean Peninsula are in the north. In fact, North Korea has the largest magnesite deposit in the world. Other minerals include iron ore, coal, gold, lead, and zinc. North Koreans have taken advantage of these rich deposits by mining them extensively. Mineral resources in South Korea are few. However, the nation does have some large graphite and tungsten deposits.

Most of North Korea's electric power is produced by coal-burning plants. In contrast, the majority of electricity in South Korea is provided by petroleum-burning plants. However, this nation has to import all of its oil. As a result, the oil crisis of the 1970s hit South Korea hard. To reduce South Korea's dependency on oil, the government had built 20 nuclear power plants by 2006. By 2015, the government hopes to have about 30 such plants.

Minerals in the Koreas	
Minerals	Uses
<b>Graphite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pencils</li> <li>applications that involve high heat</li> </ul> 
<b>Magnesite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flooring materials</li> <li>fertilizers</li> <li>bricks</li> </ul> 
<b>Tungsten</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>filament in light bulbs</li> <li>heating element in electric furnaces</li> </ul> 
<b>Zinc</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coating on iron and steel to protect from corrosion</li> <li>batteries</li> </ul> 

**COMPARE AND CONTRAST** Explain how the natural resources of North Korea and South Korea are similar and different.

**ONLINE QUIZ**  
For test practice, go to  
Interactive Review  
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## Section 1 Assessment

### TERMS & NAMES

#### 1. Explain the importance of

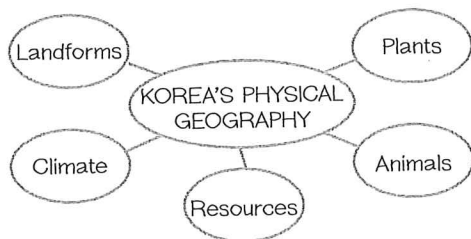
- Korean Peninsula
- Yalu River
- Mount Paektu
- Cheju Island

### USE YOUR READING NOTES

#### 2. Find Main Ideas

 Use your completed web to answer the following question:

What impact have people had on the vegetation on the Korean Peninsula?



### KEY IDEAS

- What are some of the major mountain ranges of the Korean Peninsula?
- Why did deforestation occur on the Korean Peninsula?
- What have Korean farmers done to try to make their soil more fertile?

### CRITICAL THINKING

- Draw Conclusions** How has the geography of the Korean Peninsula influenced Korea's culture?
- Compare and Contrast** How do the climates of North Korea and South Korea differ?
- CONNECT to Today** How has South Korea recently reduced its dependency on oil?
- WRITING** **Compose an Essay** Research and write an essay about the deep-sea fishing industry in South Korea. Include information about the types of ships used, the methods used to catch various fish, and the effect of this fishing on the environment.