

No Child Left Behind: Closing the Gap

Since Asian Americans are often stereotyped as model students, they may lack the support they need in school, even if they have learning disabilities or limited English proficiencies. Stereotypes about Asian Americans must be dismantled so that each child is seen as an individual with specific strengths and needs.

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), all students are required to take standardized tests, even students who are just learning English. This can be hard for Asian Americans students who are just learning English, since there are few bilingual programs or translations available into languages other than Spanish. Even though NCLB allows for students to take assessments in their native language, only ten states have this option available. This is an issue that is relevant to Korean Americans: there are 51,000 Korean American English Language Learners in the United States, 20.2% of all Korean American students.

Cultural differences can also make education difficult. Teachers, parents, and students need to work together to provide the best education possible for students.

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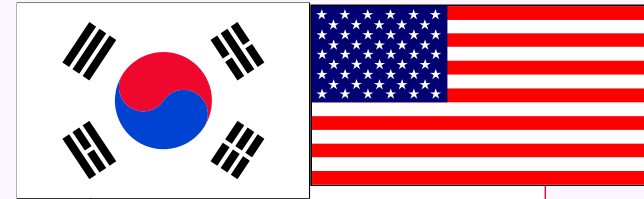
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Korean Americans

History, Culture, Socialization, and Education



Historical Issues



The peninsula of Korea is located in East Asia, bordered by China, Russia, and several seas of the Pacific Ocean. After hundreds of invasions by neighboring nations throughout its history, Korea was split after World War II. Today, North Korea has a communist dictatorship, while South Korea is a republic.

The culture is influenced by

Confucian beliefs, including valuing elders, community, and family over the individual, religions including Shamanism, Buddhism, and Christianity, and Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Western cultures. Despite influences of other nations, Korea has its own cultural identity.

Koreans first began to immigrate to the United States in the late 1800s, and moved in great numbers to Hawaii to work on sugar plantations in the early 1900s. Political refugees and students also sought asylum in the US, including many immigrants from upper and middle-class families.

Many Koreans faced discrimination upon arriving in America in jobs, schools, and property. Korean Americans are stereotyped as being largely successful in business and education, and many native-born Americans resented the success of Korean immigrants.

Sociological Issues

Moving from the Korean culture that values family to the American culture that celebrates the individual is a hard adjustment for many Korean Americans. Korean Americans have preserved their culture through organizations such as Korean neighborhoods, schools, churches, and community groups, which also help new immigrants acclimate to American society and feel at home. Korean organizations also offer language and culture classes to teach Korean American children about their heritage.

With the heavy emphasis on family, Korean culture has had definite customs involving marriage. Traditionally, the parents chose their children's spouses. The extended family is also important, and many Korean households incorporate multiple generations. Today, however, many Korean Americans choose their spouses and choose more Western ceremonies, bridal gowns, and formal suits.

Although many Korean Americans arrive in the United States with high levels of education, many of them do not have a high English proficiency level and therefore cannot obtain jobs to match their levels of education. According to the 2000 Census, 41% of Korean households are linguistically isolated, which makes it harder for children to learn English when they only speak Korean at home.

Social class plays a large role in the success of Korean American students; typically, students who drop out of school are from poor and working class families, while students who do well in school are from middle class families.

Philosophical Issues

Koreans have always placed a strong emphasis on academic achievement, and many Korean American parents pressure their children to perform well in school. Compared to other underrepresented groups, Asian Americans, on average, have scores that are rising significantly and also have higher graduation rates from high school and college, which is why they are sometimes viewed as the "model minority." However, some Asian American students have a hard time meshing the expectations of their culture with American values of individualism, and some even drop out of school because of the pressures of high expectations and the lack of help for students who are not proficient in English.

Asian Americans in general, including Korean Americans, are more likely to have limited English proficiency. Almost 25% of Asian Americans live in a household where they or other family members have limited proficiency in English.



Korean and American flags