

Japan and the Koreas

Section 3



MAIN IDEAS

1. Since World War II, Japan has developed a democratic government and one of the world's strongest economies.
2. A shortage of open space shapes daily life in Japan.
3. Crowding, competition, and pollution are among Japan's main issues and challenges.

Key Terms and Places

Diet Japan's elected legislature

Tokyo capital of Japan

work ethic belief that work in itself is worthwhile

trade surplus exists when a country exports more goods than it imports

tariff fee a country charges for exports or imports

Osaka Japan's second largest city

Section Summary

GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY

Although Japan's emperor is the country's official leader, he has little power and his main role is to act as a symbol. In Japan today power rests with an elected prime minister and a legislature, called the **Diet**, that govern from the capital of **Tokyo**. Starting in the 1950s, Japan has become an economic powerhouse. Japanese companies use the latest manufacturing techniques to make goods such as cars, televisions, and DVD players. The government has helped Japanese companies succeed by controlling production and planning for the future. The strong **work ethic** of Japan's workers has also helped. They are very well-trained and loyal. Most goods made in Japan are for export to places like the United States. Japan exports much more than it imports, causing a huge **trade surplus**, which has added to Japan's wealth. The amount of imported goods is kept low through high **tariffs**, or fees, which are added to their cost.

Circle the terms that explain who has power in Japan.

What happens to most goods manufactured in Japan?

Section 3, continued

Japan's economic success is due to its manufacturing techniques, not natural resources. Japan must import most of the raw materials it uses to make goods, and much of its food.

DAILY LIFE

Japan is densely populated, and cities such as Tokyo are very crowded. Almost 30 million people live near Tokyo, making land scarce and expensive. Therefore, Tokyo has many tall buildings to get the most from scarce land. They also locate shops underground. Some hotels save space by housing guests in tiny sleeping chambers. Crowded commuter trains bring many people to work in Tokyo every day. For fun, people visit parks, museums, baseball stadiums, an indoor beach, and a ski resort filled with artificial snow.

Other cities include **Osaka**, Japan's second largest city, and Kyoto, the former capital. Japan's major cities are linked by efficient, high-speed trains, which can travel at more than 160 miles per hour.

Most people live in cities, but some live in villages or on farms. The average farm in Japan is only 2.5 acres, too small for most farmers to make a living, forcing many to look for jobs in the city.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Despite its success, Japan is faced with several challenges. The lack of space due to dense population is a growing problem. In recent years, countries such as China and South Korea have taken business from Japanese companies. Pollution is another problem of growing concern.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Evaluating Information Write a paragraph about which of Japan's issues and challenges you think is the most serious. Support your choice with details from the text.

About how many people live in the Tokyo area?

Underline the places people in Tokyo visit for fun.

Underline Japan's issues and challenges.