KOREAN-AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION

English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Handbook
2007-2008

Compiled and edited by
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2007 ETA Orientation Coordinators
We must try, through international education, to realize something new in the world -- a purpose that will inspire us and challenge us to use our talents and material wealth in a new way, by persuasion rather than force, cooperatively rather than competitively, not with the intention of gaining dominance for a nation or an ideology, but for the purpose of helping every society develop its own concept of public decency and individual fulfillment.

- Senator J. William Fulbright
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Introduction to the ETA Handbook

The *ETA Handbook* is a compilation of information collected from past ETAs and current Fulbright staff members. Its purpose is to prepare ETAs for their arrival in Korea by giving relevant general background information and vital details in regards to preparation for the ETA year. This version of the *Handbook* supercedes all other information published about the Fulbright Korea ETA Program, including past *Handbook* editions and information on the Fulbright Korea website, which may be outdated. Thus, **it is imperative that you carefully familiarize yourself with all of the material contained herein prior to your arrival.**

Questions about the ETA program should be posted in the “Pre-Arrival Q&A” forum on the ETA Bulletin Board (ETAB; http://eta-board.fulbright.or.kr/phpBB2/index.php). You may also contact the ETA Program Coordinator (eta.coordinator@fulbright.or.kr) at your convenience.

ETA Program Background and Introduction

The Fulbright Korea English Teaching Assistant Program began in the fall of 1992, when eight Americans arrived in Korea to teach English in middle and high schools. The program has grown tremendously since then, with approximately seventy English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) confirmed for the 2007-2008 year. The Korean-American Educational Commission (KAEC), Korean Ministry of Education, and U.S. Institute of International Education are the agencies that organize, select, and develop the guidelines for the program.

Unlike most Fulbright grants, which focus on research, the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship is primarily a teaching position. ETAs typically teach from late August to mid-July, including supplementary classes held during the two-month winter vacation. Many ETAs also use the long winter break period to conduct individual research projects, study Korean, take an internship in Korea, or travel around Asia. ETAs are also “cultural ambassadors,” and therefore are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities they will have to learn more about Korean culture and to share their own culture with Koreans.

To help ETAs adjust to life in Korea and to manage the challenges of working in a Korean school and living in a homestay environment, KAEC holds an intensive orientation training program each summer for new ETAs. At the end of this orientation period, ETAs move to their teaching assignments. New ETAs are placed in schools throughout Korea, *excluding Seoul*. All
first-year ETAs are required to live in a Korean homestay, which is provided by the placement school.

During the academic year, Fulbright reunites ETAs for two workshops. Past years’ workshops were held in Gyeongju and in Seogwipo, on Jeju Island. Officially, the workshops are forums to share teaching ideas, handle organizational tasks, and hear guest speakers. They are also excellent opportunities for ETA networking, cultural discussions, and problem solving. Improvements in the ETA program have developed over the years as a result of these workshops.

The Fulbright Office

The Korean-American Educational Commission (KAEC) operates the Fulbright Program from its office in Seoul. The KAEC staff maintains contact with ETAs throughout the year by phone, email, and through program workshops. ETAs are expected to inform KAEC staff of any important plans, changes, or problems that they encounter during their grant period. In addition to the ETA Program, KAEC also manages the U.S. Education Center, ETS testing facilities, and the Fulbright Research Grant Program.

Key Staff Members

- **Mrs. Jai Ok Shim**, Executive Director: Mrs. Shim has more than 20 years of experience with Fulbright. She previously worked with the Peace Corps and has an MBA from Yonsei University in Seoul.
- **Dr. James Larson**, Deputy Director: Dr. Larson is primarily responsible for Testing and Fulbright Web Services. He was in the Peace Corps and was a Fulbright Senior Scholar in Korea.
- **Mrs. Puhui Im**, Program Officer: Mrs. Im works with the both the ETA and Research branches of the Fulbright program. She maintains contact with many of the schools and works to improve school-ETA relationships.
- **Mrs. Young Sook Lee**, Program Assistant: Mrs. Lee organizes various ETA programs, such as workshops and orientation logistics. She also contacts schools when necessary.
- **Mrs. Kee Won Lee**, Secretary: Mrs. Lee works in the front office on the third floor. She handles logistic concerns.
- **Mrs. Mun Kyung Yu**, Senior Education Advisor: Mrs. Yu works with the U.S. Education Center and Camp Fulbright. Until several years ago, she worked with the ETA Program.
• **Mrs. Sung Won Park**, Accountant: Mrs. Park takes care of financial matters such as ETA shipping reimbursements and other ETA Program costs.

• **Susie Choe**, ETA Program Coordinator, 2007-2008: Susie works with the ETA Program and acts as the chief liaison between the ETAs and KAEC. She was a 2006-2007 ETA.

• **Mariah Perrin**, Executive Assistant, 2007-2008: Mariah assists the Executive Director and other Fulbright staff and works with the Fulbright Research Programs. She was an ETA from 2005 to 2007.

• **Lindsay Herron, Aimee Jachym, Michelle Lee (Jones), Bryan Parsons**, Orientation Coordinators (OCs): Lindsay, Aimee, Michelle, and Bryan will facilitate this summer’s orientation program. Michelle and Bryan are current 2006-2007 ETAs. Lindsay has been an ETA since 2005 and is also the 2006-2007 ETA Program Coordinator. Aimee was a 2004-2005 ETA and is the leader of the 2007 Orientation Coordinator Team (OCT).

**Getting Ready to Go**

**Passport**

A passport valid for at least six months after the expected arrival date in Korea (ideally, for the entire grant period) is necessary. Passports can be renewed at any time, even if they have some months remaining until the expiration date. To apply for a passport, obtain an application at a local post office or the passport services website (http://travel.state.gov/passport/).

Passports should be kept in personal possession at all times while traveling to or from Korea, or in a secure place if staying in one place for an extended period. Lost or stolen passports should be reported to the U.S. Embassy immediately. Any U.S. Embassy can issue a new passport within a few days for a small fee. Fulbright recommends making at least two photocopies of the passport picture page and the Korean visa. One copy should be left at home and one taken to Korea. This will make getting a replacement easier in the event of a lost or stolen passport. It is smart to bring an extra set of passport photos.

It is also recommended that ETAs bring an additional form of identification with a recent photograph, such as a driver’s license or university ID card. Upon arrival, Fulbright will provide ETAs with a Fulbright identification card and an IYTC or ISIC (International Youth Travel Card or International Student Identity Card) from Council Travel.
If you plan to travel extensively during the winter break, you may want to plan ahead and get extra passport pages before leaving America.

**Visa**

The Fulbright Program in Korea operates under the authority of a bi-national agreement between the Republic of Korea and the United States governments. This agreement entitles Fulbright grantees to an “A-3” or “agreement” visa status. This is a special visa status that exempts the holder from the residence control law and permits a stay in Korea for the full period of the award without mandatory extension requests or other administrative procedures. The A-3 visa status reflects the “official” nature of a Fulbright grantee’s sojourn in Korea. This also means that ETAs will not have a foreign ID card and will be issued a KAEC ID instead.

ETAs should request a visa application form from the Korean Consulate General Office in their geographic region (http://www.dynamic-korea.com/consulate_service/information2.php). Be sure to request an “A-3 Fulbright Visa.” ETAs should state that they are Fulbright grant recipients but should not indicate that they will be teaching (to eliminate any confusion about visa status). Include with the visa application (http://www.dynamic-korea.com/docs_data/form11.pdf) copies of the IIE and KAEC appointment letters, as well as a self-addressed stamped envelope to have the visa mailed back. Do not mail your passport via regular mail. Overnight mail is the most secure, in which case your SASE will also need to be a pre-paid overnight mail envelope. **You must send in your passport with your visa application in order to receive a visa!** There is no fee for an A-3 visa.

ETAs should request at least a 20-month visa. In the past, some consulates have given only 14-month visas that expired before the grant ended. ETAs who are unable to obtain an A-3 Fulbright visa, or a visa for the correct length of time, may still come to Korea without a visa. American citizens automatically receive a 30-day visitor permit at the airport. Within that period the KAEC office will arrange for the visa status to be changed to the correct A-3 status and correct length of time. Notify the ETA Program Coordinator immediately if you have any difficulty obtaining a visa or if you require a visa extension.

**Travel Arrangements to Korea**

A round-trip flight between the U.S. and Seoul is paid for by the Fulbright program. ETAs will receive travel and ticketing information from the Fulbright office in May or June. Please note that the costs for travel plans to other locations en route to Korea are not covered by the
Fulbright grant. The required arrival date in Korea is July 7. **ETAs should not make reservations on their own unless specifically told to do so.**

**Medical Considerations**

**Medical Clearance**
ETAs must submit the IIE medical form to the New York office and have it approved before they can be issued a plane ticket to Korea. IIE will send the medical form to you. Do this ASAP, as it takes several weeks to receive clearance from IIE. Please note that Korea does not require an HIV test for Americans entering the country.

**Inoculations**
Korean government regulations do not require any inoculations of travelers except for those arriving from a plague, yellow fever, or cholera-infected area. Some physicians recommend inoculations against such diseases as hepatitis, tetanus, typhoid, typhus, cholera, and polio. A physician should be consulted before deciding whether or not to obtain these or any other inoculations. The CDC is also a reliable source for information (http://www.cdc.gov).

The following vaccinations are recommended by Dr. John Linton, MD, a U.S.-certified physician and Director of the International Health Care Center at Yonsei University’s Severance Hospital:

**Very Important**
- Diphtheria, Tetanus: Updated every 10 years with a single booster. If not updated in the last ten years, it is necessary to start the series over. It is **very important** to do this before leaving the U.S., as reliable serum is in short supply in Korea.
- Hepatitis B: Three shots over three months (1 month interval between the first two). A booster every five years should be administered. Hepatitis B is common in Korea. ETAs should try to receive as many of the shots as possible before leaving the U.S. The series can be completed in Korea.

**Sometimes Recommended**
- Hepatitis A: A new vaccine does exist and has been approved in Europe. It is available in Asia, and some doctors recommend it for foreigners living in Asia.
• Japanese B Encephalitis: Two or three shots, separated by one or two weeks with a booster every three years. This disease exists in Korea although it is extremely unlikely that a foreigner will contract it. Since the consequences are serious, immunization is sometimes recommended. It is possible to be vaccinated after an epidemic is reported.

NOTE: Twinrix, the combination Hepatitis A and B shot, is not available in Korea. These courses must be done separately as explained above.

Not Considered Important for Korea
All of these vaccines can be obtained in Korea in the unlikely event that there is an outbreak of the disease:
• Typhoid vaccination
• Cholera
• Pneumovax.

NOTE: Gamma Globulin is a human serum derived product and is not recommended.

Although it is best to obtain inoculations before departure, most inoculations are readily available in Korea. To avoid unnecessary discomfort while traveling, it is recommended that inoculations obtained in the U.S. be completed at least one week prior to departure. Also, those planning to travel outside of Korea during the year should check the health recommendations for those countries. The International Traveler’s Hotline (800-232-2522) run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides this information (http://www.health.gov/nhic).

SARS and Avian Bird Flu
SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) has not greatly affected South Korea, although a few suspected cases were reported. Only three confirmed cases of SARS were reported in Korea in 2003, and precautionary measures were effective in preventing the spread of SARS in Korea. ETAs do not have to worry about contracting SARS during their term here.

At the end of 2004, South Korean officials confirmed one suspected case of a mild strain of the bird influenza virus. The case was found in ducks, which were all isolated and disposed of. Again in November 2006, South Korea confirmed an H5N1 bird flu outbreak in one region south of Seoul. Poultry was slaughtered and a quarantine maintained. The latest on the H5N1 bird flu that has affected other parts of Asia and Europe can be found at the CDC website (http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/outbreaks/current.htm).
The South Korea government has taken further precautionary measures to inhibit the spread of SARS and bird flu from other countries into Korea. ETAs should not consider contracting one of these diseases in South Korea a serious risk. ETAs who plan on traveling to other countries in the region should secure their own health information beforehand. For more information, consult the CDC website (http://www.cdc.gov/) and the WHO website (http://www.who.int/).

**Mental Health and Well-Being**

Mental health facilities are limited in Korea, which means English-speaking licensed professionals may not be readily accessible. Because you will have been medically approved by IIE, Fulbright assumes you to be healthy at the time your grant period begins. If an issue arises that requires medical attention, Fulbright will do everything possible to help you establish an appropriate contact; however, individuals with past histories of depression, eating disorders, or other mental health disorders should think seriously about their ability to cope and adjust in Korean society. Koreans are very up-front and honest about their feelings and perceptions, which is sometimes a surprise to Americans. Koreans largely consider comments about one’s weight and appearance as acceptable as talk of the weather. Many ETAs cite this as a shock at first and something they either get used to or ignore as the year goes on.

Regardless of whether or not you have a past history of mental health issues, it would be wise to develop a strong support network during orientation. This support network will help you through difficult times and provide a “sounding board” off which you can voice your concerns and issues. As ETAs, you are the only ones who will know exactly what each other is going through with your adjustments to Korean culture, school life, and the homestay. Friends and family back home are also good support systems to utilize. Email, Skype, and instant messaging are among the ways ETAs have stayed connected with their support networks at home.

Past ETAs recommend joining a gym or pursuing something else that will help you stay active throughout the year. ETAs have commented that their daily workouts were also their “mental break” time and a good way for them to relax and reflect.

Living in any foreign country for a sustained period of time offers its own unique challenges. It is important that you develop tools for managing and minimizing these stressors as they occur throughout the year. Throughout orientation, the OCs will be committed to helping you establish networks, cope with culture shock, and further support your adjustment however possible.
**Medications**

Those currently taking medication should bring prescriptions and all pertinent medical information a doctor might need in the event of an emergency. In addition to prescriptions, bring any over-the-counter medicines used on a regular basis (cold medicine, Tylenol, ibuprofen, Sudafed, etc.), as they are not often found in Korean pharmacies. It is also a good idea to bring an antidiarrheal such as Pepto Bismol, which can prevent indigestion and bacterial diarrhea if taken immediately; however, use caution when taking antidiarrheal medications, as the cause of diarrhea in Korea is often viral and requires an inexpensive antibiotic (ciprofloxacin) prescribed by a doctor. You might want to talk with your doctor about bringing ciprofloxacin for intestinal viral infections, and some doctors recommend taking acidophilus for minor digestive problems. Multi-vitamin and calcium supplements are useful while adjusting to the Korean diet, and are a little expensive in Korea. Past ETAs recommend bringing an entire year’s supply of medications to avoid the pains of having them shipped later or finding the right Korean equivalent at the pharmacy.

Many ETAs report getting sick (mainly colds) in Korea more often than in the U.S. This may be due to a variety of factors, including daily contact with many students, closer living quarters, and the culture of sharing food. For this reason, it is recommended that you bring more cold medicines and vitamins than you might otherwise plan. Past ETAs have recommended emergency vitamin supplements such as Airborne and Emergen-C.

**Medical Care**

There are competent physicians, surgeons, and dentists in all the major cities in Korea. Many are American-trained and speak English fluently. Outpatient clinics of hospitals are preferable to private clinics, and it is best to make an appointment, rather than visit the Emergency Room (unless it is a true emergency). The best hospitals in Seoul are Severance (which is associated with Yonsei University), the Asan Medical Center, St. Mary’s Hospital, Samsung Hospital, Paek Hospital and the National Medical Center associated with Seoul National University.

The facility with the longest experience in the treatment of the foreign community is the International Health Care Center of Severance Hospital (http://www.yuhs.or.kr/en/contents.asp?cat_no=28114), which is part of the Yonsei University College of Medicine in Seoul and directed by Dr. John Linton. Appointments are available daily, from 9:00 to 12:00 in the morning and from 2:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon, weekdays, and Saturday morning. The phone number is (02) 2228-5810. The staff can refer patients to Korean specialists throughout the hospital who speak English.
For ETAs who cannot come to Seoul for treatment, there are numerous quality hospitals throughout Korea. Additionally, many minor ailments (common colds, allergies, etc.) can be treated at local clinics very inexpensively. Ask your co-teacher and homestay for advice before trekking all the way to Seoul for service. Co-teachers or homestays generally assist ETAs who have fallen sick, but ETAs should notify the Fulbright office immediately in the event of medical emergencies or serious ailments.

Payment for medical service is required at the time of service. Major hospitals and clinics accept credit card payment. Plan to pay for all medical care at the time of service and seek reimbursement from the State Department health insurance later. Bring medical forms to be filled out by the doctor to the appointment to avoid delays in reimbursement (available for download on the ETA website: http://www.fulbright.or.kr/eta/english/download/ASPEForm.pdf). In the event of major emergency medical expenses, Fulbright will provide necessary assistance.

**Health Insurance**

The U.S. State Department provides grantees with basic health insurance during the period of the grant. Vaccinations, dental work, and vision are not included in this plan. There is a $25 deductible for each incident of medical care. This plan is on a reimbursement basis: ETAs pay for medical services and then submit receipts and claim forms to the Fulbright office. Fulbright will then mail the forms to the insurance company in the U.S. for a reimbursement check. The total process can take from two to six months. For more information about the State Department basic health insurance plan, please see the ASPE (Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges) website (http://exchanges.state.gov/aspe/). Insurance claim forms are also available for download on the ETA website (http://www.fulbright.or.kr/eta/english/download/ASPEForm.pdf).

Note that the State Department’s insurance policy only covers ETAs while they are in Korea. In order to provide insurance for travel outside of Korea during the grant period, each ETA will receive an IYTC or ISIC (International Youth Travel Card or International Student Identity Card) through STA Travel in the U.S. This card provides travel and health insurance while traveling anywhere OUTSIDE the U.S. For more information about IYTC benefits please visit the IYTC website (https://www.myisic.com/MyISIC/Travel/Main.aspx?MenuID=5004).

You will receive more specific information about your insurance policies at the beginning of orientation. At that time, we will explain the insurance reimbursement process and also have you fill out the application for your IYTC.
Some ETAs may be able to extend their coverage in the U.S. under parental insurance plans because the Fulbright is considered a graduate fellowship. Contact your insurance provider for more information.

**Medical Talk**
During orientation, you will have a “medical talk” given by a licensed, native-English-speaking doctor. This doctor will thoroughly cover medical considerations while living in Korea and provide emergency contact information you might need if you require assistance during the year. If you have specific medical questions, please write them down and bring them to orientation for the talk.

**Prescription Glasses and Contacts**
Prescription glasses and contacts can be easily obtained and are generally cheaper than in the U.S. A comprehensive examination, frames, and lenses can cost as little as $60. Many American-brand contact solutions are also available in Korea.

**Luggage & Personal Items**

**Airline Baggage**
The easiest and cheapest way to ship belongings to Korea is to bring it on the plane as accompanied baggage. Each economy passenger is generally entitled to check up to two pieces of baggage, neither of which may weigh more than 50-70 lbs, depending on the carrier. The three combined dimensions of each piece of checked baggage generally may not exceed 62”. Each passenger is also allowed to have one piece of carry-on luggage, which should be small enough to fit under a passenger seat or overhead compartment. This can be accompanied by a purse or laptop. ETAs should note carry-on restrictions for liquids and gels; visit the TSA website for details ([http://www.tsa.gov/311/index.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/311/index.shtm)). Additional belongings can be brought on the plane as unaccompanied baggage. Airlines usually have a standard excess-baggage charge, regardless of weight (up to the maximum). Normally this is cheaper per pound, much faster, and much safer than international mail. Check with your specific airline carrier to determine exact baggage limits and applicable excess fees.
Shipping

International mail can also be used to send baggage. See Appendix B for the appropriate addresses. Shipping options include the following:

Surface Mail: Arrives by boat and takes 2-3 months. This is the cheapest option. The U.S. Postal Service is the most reliable shipping service.

USPS Air Mail, FedEx, DHL, UPS: These shipping options are fast but significantly more expensive than surface mail. Airmail takes 1-2 weeks. FedEx, DHL, and UPS can be delivered within one week.

APO (for educational materials only, and only during orientation): See below for more information.

Overall, the shipping system is fairly reliable; however, ETAs should be careful about shipping valuables. Packages sometimes arrive already opened or with contents missing (e.g., CDs, electronic equipment). Used items and winter clothing are not at risk of being stolen. The safest way to transport valuables is to bring them on the plane or use a more expensive shipping option, such as DHL, that provides package tracking and insurance. Used and new items may be subject to customs charges if they are valuable. Generally, packages with a declared value of over $150 may be taxed (http://english.customs.go.kr/hp/eng/travel/ebba_000/ebbb_000/ebbb_000.html).

Do not send computers through the mail. In the past, ETAs have been charged up to $300 in tax after sending their laptops to Korea via mail.

APO

By authorization of the U.S. State Department, Fulbright grantees coming to Korea are permitted to mail small quantities of educational materials (books and printed materials ONLY) through “APO,” the U.S. military postal system, which is the cheapest means. Important: The U.S. Department of State sets limits on the quantity and weight of educational materials sent via APO. Prior to the start of orientation, Fulbright grantees are authorized to send a single shipment (all mailed at the same time) of no more than four boxes, none of which can weigh more than 40 pounds. All APO shipments must arrive in Korea no later than August 1st; to ensure their arrival, mail them 3-4 weeks before leaving the U.S. For mailing authorized educational materials, use the following APO address:

Cultural Affairs Officer
Public Affairs Office (KAEC)
American Embassy
As the above address indicates, the packages must be addressed to the Cultural Affairs Officer. Do not address the packages to yourself. The ETA’s name must be on each package as the sender and only as the sender. As a backup means of identification, ETAs should enclose a slip of paper with their name, home address, and the words "Fulbright Grantee to Korea" inside each package. Failure to follow these instructions may result in delays and additional costs as the packages may be returned to the sender. Note that because the packages are addressed to the Cultural Affairs Officer and not to ETAs, they can be opened for inspection without violating mail privacy laws to ensure that the contents are purely educational materials.

ETAs are only authorized to send materials via APO to Korea and will not be authorized to return them to the U.S. via APO. Thus, ETAs are solely responsible for sending home any materials brought to Korea. Fulbright Grantees are not authorized to use the APO system except for these one-time shipments of educational materials just prior to arrival in Korea. Do not give the APO address to colleagues, family, or friends for routine use.

Note that “educational materials” means books and printed materials only (including books, magazines, newspapers, and maps for classroom use). Computers, games, prizes – no matter how “educational” they are – are not allowed through the APO mailing privilege. All personal effects (clothing, household items, camera equipment for personal use, etc.) must be brought as accompanying baggage or sent through any available channel as unaccompanied baggage. No exceptions are possible. Personal items and things arriving later than August 1st are routinely returned to the sender by the Embassy mailroom. Use of the APO is a very special consideration we are given and misuse of the privilege could result in it being revoked for all Fulbright grantees.

ETAs’ APO boxes may be sent through USPS Media Mail, which is cheaper than First Class mail, and takes anywhere from 3-8 weeks to arrive in Korea. ETAs should request “Media Mail” and certify that the boxes contain only printed material in order to receive the discounted Media Mail rate.

Excess Baggage Allowance
An excess baggage allowance of $200 is included in the terms of a Fulbright award. This allowance is for the entire round trip. ETAs may use the allowance completely for the trip to
Korea, save it all for the return trip home, or divide it. The excess baggage allowance may be applied to any accompanying baggage or to items sent via an international postal system or APO. In any case, ETAs will not be entitled to more than the actual cost incurred, up to the $200 limit, and payment will be made all at once and only upon presentation of valid receipts. Any additional baggage costs are at the ETA’s own expense. Hence, it is wise to make full use of the airline’s free accompanied baggage.

Packing

How to Pack
Pack as lightly as possible. Most ETAs find they need less clothing than they expected, and you will accumulate a lot of “stuff” during your year in Korea.

Packing is divided into what we call our “2-bag policy.” When you arrive at Incheon International Airport, one of your large pieces of luggage will immediately be placed on a truck and put in storage at the Fulbright Building. You will not see this bag again until you move to your school placement at the end of August. The second bag will accompany you to our orientation site in Chuncheon. Therefore, pack everything you need for orientation into your carry-ons and one large piece of luggage.

Clothes (for Orientation)
“I packed lighter than anyone for orientation and was never wishing I had brought more. I only brought as much as I could comfortably carry (a backpack of clothes, some music, and a photo album) and washed my clothes once a week. (There are coin-operated washing machines and dryers near the dorms.) You will definitely appreciate not having much stuff for those few times in transit when you will need to carry your luggage for medium distances and up flights of stairs.” ~ Former ETA

“Summer campus dress” will be appropriate for the bulk of your time in Chuncheon, as you will largely be surrounded by other ETAs and Fulbright staff. One or two pairs of shorts, a few T-shirts, 1-2 pairs of jeans, a couple of shirts/blouses, one sweater/sweatshirt (if you get cold easily), a rain jacket (maybe), tennis shoes, sandals, and one dressy outfit should suffice. Even though you will be surrounded by other Fulbrighters for a majority of the time, you will also interact with Koreans on campus and in the community, so be sure that your clothing is representative of your role as a cultural ambassador. Excessively short shorts, exposed midriffs,
extremely low-cut tops, very low-rise jeans, spaghetti-strap tank tops, and tube tops (without a cardigan) are unacceptable. If you can’t do a 90-degree bow in it without flashing cleavage, leave it home! Overly tattered, tight, or provocative clothing should also be left at home.

For two weeks during orientation, Fulbright will simultaneously be hosting an English immersion camp for Korean students; as part of your training, you will be teaching and interacting with the students. Casual dress (e.g., shorts and T-shirt) is acceptable for teaching at the camp, as long as it meets the above stipulations.

You will be arriving at the start of the summer rainy season (hot and humid/wet) in Korea, so we cannot overstate the importance of bringing a quality, breathable rain jacket (maybe; umbrellas can be bought cheaply in Korea) and lightweight clothing that will dry quickly. Though dryers are available at the orientation site, many ETAs say they did not dry things completely and instead relied on the drying racks provided in the dorm rooms, which meant heavier cloth took a few days to dry.

If you like to go out and dance, you may want to bring something for that as well (Korean “nightclub gear” is very similar to the U.S.). Chuncheon is a medium-sized “college town” by American standards, so you will find a few clubs.

The orientation site will have a workout facility, so athletes should bring appropriate clothing. Even though it will be hot, shirts should be worn at all times while exercising, indoors or out.

At the end of orientation, you will meet your school officials (principal/vice-principal and co-teacher), and you will need to be dressed professionally for this occasion (for men: slacks, shirt with collar, tie, dress shoes [jacket/suit optional]; for women: slacks/skirt and blouse, dress [jacket/suit optional]. No uncovered shoulders or low-cut shirts!). You will also visit the DMZ sometime during orientation and should be dressed neatly; for this trip, you will need a pair of closed-toe, non-strap, non-sandal shoes.

**Other Recommended Items (for Orientation)**

You should also pack whatever you consider your “necessities” for the six weeks of orientation. Necessities may include the following:

**Laptop computer:** There are Internet hook-ups in the dorm rooms in Kangwon University. Be sure to bring your own Ethernet card software and Ethernet cord. (See “Computers” for more information.)
External hard drive: If you plan to download and/or share American TV shows, you might want the extra memory.

Large bath towel: Towels are not provided during orientation, so you will need to bring or buy one. Korean towels are usually about the same size as hand towels in America. You may be able to find larger ones in Chuncheon, but you will have to look around a bit. (You probably will not use your large towel at your homestay, however; if you can adapt easily to using a hand towel, bring or buy a hand towel and save the luggage space!)

Camera: Cameras (and electronic equipment in general) in Korea have prices comparable to the U.S., but it may be difficult to find ones with English manuals. Film is cheap and widely available, so just bring enough to get you started. Advantix film can be more difficult to find, but it is sold in select camera shops in Seoul and Chuncheon.

Toiletries: Try not to waste a lot of space on this stuff; it’s heavy, and you can buy a lot of the things you need (except deodorant) pretty much anywhere in Korea. See “Availability of Everyday Items” for the specific “American” products you can find.

iPod, Discman, etc.: There are plenty of places to buy CDs in Seoul and a few in Chuncheon. It is also possible to find reasonably priced portable CD/cassette/radio/mp3 players, but not necessarily with English manuals.

Books: Although books are heavy and take up a lot of space in your suitcase, it may be a good idea to bring a couple along. You can always trade with other ETAs once you are finished. Don’t bring too many books! There is a bookshelf in the Fulbright Building where you can deposit and borrow books; and there are several large bookstores with English selections in Seoul, including Kyobo, Youngpoong Books, and Bandi & Luni’s. Additionally, there are three used English bookstores in Itaewon, and English books can be ordered online. English books tend to be more expensive than in the U.S. (the price is often 20-30% higher).

Miscellaneous: Antibiotics, allergy medicine, bug spray, Calamine lotion, Korean phrasebook with Hangeul, photos of friends/family, travel/small board games, and cereal/snack bars/protein and calcium supplements if you’re worried about adjusting to spicy food and a switch to a rice-based diet.

Things Provided at Orientation

Bedding (one sheet and one lightweight blanket, per Korean style), pillow, Korean language textbook, international and domestic calling cards, basic Korea tourist information and map, ETA Teaching Manual, Fulbright Korea T-shirt.
Teaching Clothes (Bag 2)
You will probably be able to get away with bringing a few outfits, mixing and matching, and recycling them from week to week. The level of formality varies from school to school, but erring on the dressy side is definitely safer, especially for your first few weeks of teaching. Female teachers typically wear blazers, slacks, dress shirts/blouses, skirts, or dresses, while male teachers usually wear slacks with a shirt and tie. It is important to keep in mind that Koreans tend to dress more conservatively than Americans. In a professional setting, skirts are rarely worn above the knee, and sleeveless shirts or dresses are not appropriate teaching attire without a cardigan or other top to cover the shoulders. Deep scoop neck shirts may not be appropriate; you must be able to perform a ninety-degree bow without letting everyone see down your shirt, and revealing cleavage is often frowned upon. Tight or revealing clothing of any kind is also not appropriate. Sandals and open-toe shoes are worn with stockings (to cover the feet). Some ETAs have found that their school dress codes veered from these standards, but it is best to play it safe and keep these norms in mind if you are shopping for teaching clothes in the States. You will also need to pack for warm and cold weather, which may require more space than you have in your two suitcases. You might want to pack clothes for the first month or so of teaching (hot to mild weather) in your second suitcase and wait to see what kind of winter clothing you want to buy in Korea or have sent to you from the U.S.

Shoes
At many schools, students and faculty wear “slippers” inside. (Usually, these are any kind of slip-on shoes or “slide” sandals.) Many ETAs in previous years have brought Adidas-style sandals or Birkenstocks for this purpose, though slippers can also be purchased (in typical Korean sizes) in Korea. As for outdoors, a pair of black dress shoes will suffice for most occasions. Try to bring shoes that will have good traction in rain and snow, as Korea is an all-weather country. Past ETAs recommend Doc Martens or something similar. Also, keep in mind that Korean culture will require you to slip your shoes on and off several times in one day, as shoes are not worn in homes and many restaurants. For this reason, shoes that can be easily put on and taken off are ideal.

Suggested Teaching Materials
Teaching materials that ETAs have suggested bringing or having shipped over include the following:
- Photos of your family, friends, and hometown
- A video of your hometown and/or school
- U.S. maps (so you can show your students where you live)
• American menus (for food lessons)
• Bus or train schedules (for transportation lessons)
• Sample U.S. currency (for money/shopping lessons)
• Magazines, especially ones with popular singers or movie stars
• Postcards of your hometown/city (also good for prizes)
• CDs or tapes of pop songs to teach your students
• Music videos, commercials, TV shows (popular shows: Friends, Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Tom & Jerry, Sailor Moon, The Simpsons, SpongeBob SquarePants, and Rugrats)
• Cultural holiday stuff (e.g., videos of The Grinch or A Charlie Brown Christmas, It’s The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown!, CDs or cassettes with holiday music, Valentine’s Day hearts, St. Patrick’s Day shamrocks, etc.)
• Things for other American events (e.g., “March Madness” basketball, Black History Month, elections, etc.)

NOTE: Although certain materials (stickers, etc.) will be useful regardless, you may want to start teaching to gauge your student’s abilities and interests before bringing/sending a lot of materials to Korea. Also, it is best not to bring a lot of ESL-related books to Korea, as there is a good selection at bookstores in Seoul, and it will be difficult to predict what will be useful before you actually start teaching. You will also be given a Fulbright teaching manual to help you with lesson planning. (Please see the “Teaching” section for further information.)

Gifts for School and Homestay Family
Gift-giving is very important in Korean culture. You will create a very positive first impression if you bring gifts for your school (principal, vice-principal and co-teacher) and homestay family. (You run the risk of creating a very negative first impression if you do not participate in this aspect of Korean culture.) The gifts can be simple and preferably should be objects that aren’t readily available in Korea.

It is not necessary to bring a gift for every member of your homestay family, as you won’t know the details of your family until the very end of orientation. Rather, you should bring something that can be shared by all (e.g., food or a board game). It is not the amount of money you spend on the gifts, but rather the gesture and thought that really counts. Lastly, keep in mind that you’ll be living with these people and in their house for up to 10 months when you shop for gifts. If you are not able to procure enough gifts in America, nice tea/coffee sets or alcohol can be purchased from Korean department stores upon arrival.

Past ETAs compiled this list of gift suggestions:
• Famous products from your state/hometown or small souvenirs
• Chocolate, sweet wines
• Calendars or postcards of your state/hometown
• Pens/erasable pens or typical souvenir-type things from your hometown
• Souvenirs (T-shirts, caps) from sports teams or your university (Koreans will be more fond of these if your university is famous in Korea—e.g., Harvard, Stanford, Yale, etc.)
• American games (e.g., Jenga, Uno, and Monopoly; very popular with homestay children, and you can always use them for club classes if there are no children in your homestay)
• Perfume, after-shave, and duty-free liquor are considered very nice gifts (Koreans love name-brands like Polo)
• Beef jerky or small pack of coffee

Past ETAs’ Thoughts on Packing

*What did you bring that you didn't need?*
- Too many pairs of shoes
- Too many clothes (You really will wear the same things over and over!)
- Inappropriate clothing: low-rise jeans (we sit on the floor), thongs, flashy colors, etc.
- Too many pairs of pantyhose/socks (very available and cheap here, unless you are 5’9’’)
- Too many teaching materials (the well prepared ETAs)
- Too many toiletries (many of the same brands are available here)
- Batteries (very inexpensive and abundant in Korea)
- Nail polish and makeup are very popular and abundant in Korea
- Stationery supplies (Korea is a country of stationery-lovers, although most of it is covered with cutesy cartoons and funny English phrases.)
- Phone cards (inexpensive in Korea, or can use Skype or other Internet calling programs)

*What did you need but didn’t bring?*
- Deodorant (hard to find and expensive! Bring a year’s supply!)
- Cardigans (can take on/off easily between the cold hallways/warm classrooms)
- American cold medicine/prescription medicines
- Vitamins/calcium tablets (Dairy products are not a large part of the typical Korean diet.)
- Face wash (some brands, like Noxema, are hard to find or are expensive, although Korean products are abundant and have a lot of variety)
- American junk food (e.g., Cheetos, pretzels, etc.)
- Favorite brand of disposable razor (Generic disposable razors are readily available.)
- Larger-absorbency tampons (Pads and regular-absorbency tampons are common.)
• Original programming discs for reinstalling computer programs (Windows software, etc.)
• Insect repellent

What are you glad you did bring?
• DVDs (caveat: American DVDs are usually Region 1, which will not play in Korean
  DVD players. Look for all-region discs, or bring your own player.)
• A bit of flexibly-sized clothing for weight fluctuations
• American holiday cards (Christmas available in Korea, but other holidays are scarce)
• Products for curly hair
• A large bath towel (hard to find here)
• A year’s supply of underwear (a lot will get stretched out in Korean washing machines!)
• For women: Lots of bras (almost all Korean bras are padded and are typically available
  up to a B cup) and especially a nude bra.
• Q-tips (the Korean kind tend to be harder than the American kind)
• Pictures, pictures, and more pictures!
• Razor refills, floss, and deodorant
• External hard drive/flash drive/computer extended warranties
• Converter cables for Apple products
• Shoes (anything over 8W or 10.5M is difficult to come by in Korea)
• Slipper/sandals for school and bathroom use, boots or sneakers (if above 10M)
• Tampons (they are available in Korea, but a little different from American brands)
• Stomachache medications, Mydol, NyQuil, cipro, supplements
• Hand sanitizer
• Pillow (some ETAs find Korean bean pillows uncomfortable)
• Laptop computer
• Shout! wipes (or other stain remover)
• Stove-top cooking recipes to share foods with Korean homestay and friends. Ovens are
  rare in Korean homes; stick to no-bake recipes.
• Costco card; there are branches in a few major cities, which have many of the same
  products as Costco in the U.S. They accept U.S. membership cards.

Availability of Everyday Items
These days, American products are easy to find in Korea. If you go to a large city such as Seoul,
Daejeon, Gwangju, Daegu, or Busan, you will be able to find whatever you need. Seoul, in
particular, has a large array of imported goods from America, Europe, and Japan. At some
markets, you can find American products that are difficult to find in other parts of Korea,
including common Western brands of food and toiletries. Like most imports, the prices of these goods tend to be higher than U.S. prices. There are also 5 Costco Wholesale stores in Korea with similar items to the stores in America, though more expensive.

If you are picky about particular personal hygiene products and brands (razors, face wash, etc.), bring your own.

The following is a list of brands that are easy to find just about anywhere in Korea:

- Dove (body wash, soap, face wash, shampoo/conditioner)
- Johnson & Johnson (lotion)
- Pantene (shampoo, conditioner)
- Head and Shoulders (shampoo, conditioner)
- Renu (contact lens solution)
- Nivea (body lotion)
- Neutrogena (face wash)
- Clean & Clear (face wash, toner)
- Sun Silk (shampoo, very similar to “Thermasilk”)
- Close-up (toothpaste)
- Oral-B (toothbrushes)
- Tampax (regular absorbency; super is hard to find.)
- Kotex (variety of sizes, styles)

**Used Items for Sale at Orientation**

The OCs will collect a number of small items in good condition from the outgoing 2005 ETAs and sell them, on a first come, first serve basis to the incoming 2007 ETAs at the beginning of orientation. While an exact list of what will be available has not been compiled yet, last year’s sale included a limited number of the following:

- Hairdryers/curling irons
- Phrasebooks/dictionaries
- Computer speakers
- Full-size towels
- Travel guides
- Backpacks/book bags

The funds collected from the sale of available items will be used to fund special orientation programs.
See “Shopping,” below, for additional information about product availability in Korea.

**Arrival in Korea**

ETAs will arrive at Incheon International Airport (west of Seoul) on July 7th. After passing through baggage claim and customs, ETAs will be met at the airport by OCs and other Fulbright staff members.

**Immigration**

Entry for American citizens into Korea is straightforward. Upon arrival, everyone must go through immigration, where they will show their passport and an arrival card (distributed on the plane). On the arrival card, for “occupation” write “GRANTEE,” and for “Purpose of Visit” write “FULBRIGHT.” While these are not normally crucial entries, do not put “teaching,” or you may be held up in customs. Fulbright recommends using the KAEC office as the “Address in Korea” when completing the arrival card. Don’t forget to keep the address handy (See Appendix B).

Even those without a visa should experience no difficulties. American citizens with no visa are given 30-day permit stamps upon arrival. Notify Fulbright immediately if you arrive in Korea without an A-3 Fulbright visa.

**Baggage Claim**

After passing through immigration, go to the baggage claim and then through customs. Baggage carts are available free of charge.

**Customs**

There should be no problems in clearing customs. You’re likely to be waved through; however, occasionally Korea can exercise more stringent customs procedures. Although the “Green Channel” (no goods to declare) and “Red Channel” (goods to declare) system is in use, you may be asked to open your bags and do a “show and tell” regardless of the channel you use. (Use the Green Channel!) Take the request in stride, and be nice even if you consider the request to be annoying. As in so many other situations, a pleasant response will be more advantageous in the long run.
Most Fulbright grantees are able to use the Green Channel as they have nothing special to declare. Ordinary personal effects brought with you are not subject to duty, provided you have what could reasonably be defined as “normal” quantities. Don’t spend too much time worrying about customs. Most of you will breeze through without your bags even being opened.

**ETA Lifestyle**

The main components of the Fulbright ETA Program in Korea are the six-week summer orientation, the teaching assistantship, the homestay experience, and other opportunities for learning about Korean culture.

**Summer Orientation**

The 2007-2008 ETA orientation will take place from July 7 to August 17, and will be held at Kangwon National University (KNU) in the city of Chuncheon. Chuncheon, a city of about 250,000 people, is the capital of Kangwon province, an area known for its beautiful mountains and lakes. ETAs will live in same-sex double rooms in a co-ed dormitory on the KNU campus and will have meals at one of the university cafeterias. ETAs will also have access to university laundry facilities, campus stores, and the gymnasium, as well as the many shops and restaurants located near campus.

ETAs should prepare themselves to live with a roommate and in close quarters with about seventy Americans. For many, orientation is the first time in several years living in this kind of communal atmosphere. In addition to adjusting to cultural changes, ETAs will also need to adjust to this style of living.

Orientation dorm rooms are outfitted with bunk beds, two desks, two chairs, two upright wardrobes for clothing, and a phone for receiving calls and making on-campus calls. Showers and toilets are communal, with men’s and women’s facilities on separate floors. Orientation classrooms are air conditioned, but air conditioning at the dormitory is sporadic and is controlled directly by the university maintenance office. For this reason, some ETAs may want to purchase fans upon arrival.

The orientation program prepares ETAs for the challenges of living and working in Korea, allows them to adjust to Korean culture and lifestyle in a comfortable setting, and gives them an opportunity to develop friendships and support networks with one another. Major components of orientation include intensive Korean language instruction, teacher training and practice, and
cultural exposure. Mandatory language classes meet Monday through Friday for four hours a day in the morning, while training seminars, teaching practice (for two weeks with the Fulbright English camp), and cultural workshops are scheduled in the afternoons and evenings.

ETAs must learn Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, prior to arrival at orientation. Online links for doing so are available in Appendix D. There will be a Korean language placement exam on the first day of orientation. ETAs who do not have a basic mastery of the Korean alphabet will be at risk of falling drastically behind in Korean language class from the very beginning. Conversely, ETAs who have prior knowledge of the Korean language should not expect to “coast” through orientation, as classes will be divided by level to ensure that all ETAs receive instruction appropriate to their ability.

The typical ETA day will last from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., not including homework, studying, meals, and optional activities. Additionally ETAs may enroll in optional extracurricular activities such as taekwondo, calligraphy, or cultural exchange with Korean university students. A majority of weekends will also contain mandatory programming, so ETAs should not expect to have time to visit friends and relatives during the six-week training program.

At the beginning of orientation, the OCs will detail program expectations and guidelines in a document known as the “Orientation Agreement,” which will be signed and upheld by all ETAs. Successful completion of the orientation program components—language classes, teacher training, and cultural preparation—is a requirement for placement at a Korean host school. ETAs who do not successfully complete all aspects of the orientation program will be required to return to the U.S. at their own expense.

Placements

During the second week of the orientation program, ETAs will have an opportunity to complete a placement preference form, detailing their desires about geographic location and school type. In reality, though, ETAs end up having very little say in their exact placement; a variety of additional factors, such as placement availability, school requests, provincial budgets, and Fulbright needs, are also considered carefully by Fulbright staff before making decisions. It is anticipated that many 2007 ETAs will be placed in rural areas. ETAs will receive their placement school at the end of July and their homestay assignment during the very last week of orientation.
Teaching

The ETA Role
The Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship is primarily a teaching position. The term ETA is somewhat misleading since, in almost all cases, ETAs are the primary teachers in the classroom. The ETA role is to teach conversational (i.e., everyday) English to Korean students. Although Korean students study English starting in elementary school or earlier, most do not have a grasp on daily usage of the language. Their Korean English teachers usually speak Korean in class while teaching grammar, vocabulary, writing, etc., from a textbook. In recent years, English education in Korea has placed greater emphasis on speaking and listening. This is why, as English conversation teachers, ETAs are such valuable assets to their host schools.

The ETA contract states that ETAs are not obligated to teach more than 20 class hours per week. Most ETAs teach the full 20 hours, but the exact number of class hours taught varies by school. ETAs may teach more hours on a voluntary basis, but they may not receive extra compensation from the school or other parties.

Although ETAs teach a maximum of 20 class hours per week, they are usually at school for at least 30-40 hours per week, sometimes more. ETAs usually do lesson planning during these extra hours. Many schools also require that ETAs be present for the duration of the school day, though teaching hours will be limited to 20. Since class hours are not always consecutively scheduled, ETAs often have free time between classes. ETAs use the free time at school to plan lessons, use the Internet, and work or chat with other teachers in the teachers’ room (gyomushil). During their free time, ETAs can socialize with other teachers and students; these non-teaching hours can be very valuable when they are spent forging better relations with the school.

In Korean schools, it is common for last-minute schedule changes to occur with no prior notice. This is sometimes due to a lack of communication between other teachers and the ETA or the language barrier. It can be frustrating, but unfortunately there is very little ETAs can do to change this, beyond remaining flexible and having back-up lesson plans. ETAs can try to resolve scheduling frustrations by asking their co-teachers if they are aware of any upcoming schedule changes, but it is important to keep in mind that even Korean teachers are subject to last-minute changes in the school’s scheduling system.

Classes typically have 30-45 students, which means ETAs teaching 15-20 different class sections can expect to have 500-700 students. ETAs usually teach each class once a week, which means
teaching the same lesson many times per week. While some ETAs may be asked by their school to teach from a textbook, most are responsible for creating their own lessons and are given a considerable amount of freedom with regard to curriculum and content. ETAs may draw from their own personal creativity or previous teaching backgrounds to create lesson plans. Fulbright also provides each ETA with the *Fulbright ETA Teaching Manual*, which contains teaching tips, sample lesson plans created by previous ETAs, and links to a variety of Internet resources. ETAs also have access to ETAB, an online forum for ETA discussion and lesson plan sharing.

In addition to teaching regular classes, ETAs often teach extracurricular English club classes and English workshops for teachers. These are great opportunities for ETAs to get to know their students and colleagues better. Due to smaller class sizes, they are also ideal for experimenting with more creative and interactive lesson plans.

Although the schedule may seem daunting, it is important to remember that teaching is the primary purpose of the ETA Program. For most ETAs, it is also the most rewarding and exciting part of the year.

**Winter Break Program**

Winter vacation typically lasts from the end of December to mid-February, although it varies by school and region. During this period, most ETAs take time to travel around Asia or to the U.S., conduct independent research, study, or arrange an internship in Seoul. ETAs are also required by contract to teach a special English class at their school during winter vacation if the school wants one to be held. The nature and scheduling of the winter break class varies by school. Fulbright has set guidelines for the schools and ETAs for designing the winter break program. The class may not begin until after January 1, and the dates must be agreed upon by the ETA and the school administration. The school must notify the ETA and provide KAEC with a detailed plan for the special program (dates, number of students, hours per day, level, etc.) by September 30, 2007 (this deadline is subject to change). The program can not exceed 10 days of actual class time nor can it exceed four teaching hours per day. Class size is limited to 20 students or fewer. The ETA receives additional payment for teaching the special program, on top of their monthly stipend.

The winter break English classes are similar to club classes in material and style. Most schools allow the ETA to create their own lesson plans and agenda for the program, allowing for more inventive and fun classes. Past ETAs have taught “American” cooking, studied pop music and movies, or done creative writing and drama projects.
The Korean Educational System

Confucianism has greatly shaped Korean culture. ETAs experience this directly when working in the Korean school system. Korea has a highly competitive educational system that places great emphasis on admission to a good university. Admission to less prestigious schools is relatively easier, but the pressure to attend a top-ranked school continues to greatly affect Korean adolescent life. Which university a student attends is of much greater importance than how the student actually performs at the university level and is also thought to indicate (and influence) the student’s job prospects. As a result, there is an enormous amount of pressure on high school students. Much of the educational system is focused on preparation for highly competitive university entrance exams, the most important one being the national KSAT exam (수능) held every year in late November.

Students spend six years in elementary school, three intense years in both middle and high school preparing for rigorous entrance exams, and four years of comparative freedom in university. The educational system is highly centralized, with the Ministry of Education approving all budgets and texts. Many students also supplement their normal school education by attending private institutions (hagwon) outside of regular school hours, often in the evenings and on weekends.

The Schools

The Korean educational system is infamous for long hours and hard work. Many Korean secondary schools are segregated by gender, but some are co-educational. Most elementary schools are co-ed. There are a variety of public, private, special interest, commercial, and religious schools in Korea. Subject-oriented schools include foreign language, science, and art schools and are usually high schools. Commercial, technical, and farming schools are designed for students planning to enter the job market immediately after high school instead of attending a four-year college. Due to the varying nature of Korean schools, it is important for ETAs to tailor their teaching styles according to their school’s environment.

Some ETAs teach in regular classrooms while others teach in language labs. Most classrooms are equipped with TV monitors, computers, and Internet access. VCRs are less common; usually, schools have a few that are shared among various classrooms. Other equipment that is often shared includes overhead projectors and tape recorders.
The Students
Elementary school students do not wear uniforms, but Korean middle and high school students wear uniforms and keep their hair cut to a specified length. Like all young people, Korean students display a great range of behavior, from painfully shy to painfully wild. Some ETAs have said that they felt like they were “pulling teeth” to get their students to respond. Others have witnessed unexpected behavior, such as

- Two students cutting each other’s hair.
- Students making paper cigarettes and attempting to smoke them in class.
- Students trying to light their backpacks on fire.
- Students talking on cell phones or sending text messages.
- Students (male or female) sitting in each other’s laps and holding hands.
- Students knitting or doing needlepoint (male or female).
- Students popping each other’s pimples.
- Students farting on each other.
- Students piercing their ears with safety pins and pencils.
- Crying.
- Lots of sleeping.

These are not necessarily everyday experiences, but they are not unheard of. Students tend to be rowdier in ETA classes than in their other classes. After all, ETAs are generally younger and perceived as more “fun” than their Korean counterparts. To some Korean students, ‘ETA’ stands for “Entertaining Teachers from America.”

Although this may seem alarming, ETAs receive basic teacher training at orientation, which includes tactics for classroom management. ETAs also share effective methods of discipline at orientation, workshops, and via email discussions throughout the year. The best way to control students is to plan a disciplinary system in advance. It is better to be strict from the first day, and loosen up later, rather than try to regain authority after a period of laxity.

Corporal punishment is legal, with restrictions, in Korea. In general, urban and progressive schools are less likely to use physical punishment than more rural schools. Many teachers carry sticks to class for intimidation, but sometimes also use them for actual physical discipline. While every school is different, it is important for an ETA to be aware and anticipate the possibility of being exposed to various types of corporal punishment. ETAs are cultural ambassadors and subject to U.S. laws, and they should not engage in corporal punishment.
Students’ abilities vary greatly within the same class. Unlike the American school system, Korean classes are usually not divided on the basis of ability. Learning disabilities are often overlooked or not recognized in Korean schools and society. Schools don’t provide much support for such cases, and special education for students with extra needs is rare, especially in elementary and middle schools.

The Schedule
The school year is approximately 220 days (32 weeks), beginning in March, not September. This may cause some confusion, since ETAs enter schools mid-year in late August. There are two major vacations (summer and winter) and a number of shorter holidays and vacations throughout the year (See Appendix C.). ETAs may additionally receive time off during examination periods, but individual schools decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to grant this. Schools inform ETAs of their days off but usually not far in advance.

The typical Korean school week is Monday through Friday, with a half-day on Saturday two weeks out of the month. ETAs are not required to teach on Saturdays. School hours are typically 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for elementary school, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for middle school, and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for high school. Most Korean high school students study under teacher supervision at school until 10 p.m. or later everyday. Korean teachers generally arrive at school around 8 a.m. or earlier and leave around 5:00 p.m. or later, when the vice principal leaves or gives the teachers permission to leave. While some ETAs are allowed to leave early when their teaching duties are finished, many schools require ETAs to stay for the duration of the school day.

The daily school schedule varies from elementary to high school. A typical high school senior’s weekly subject distribution is 6 hours each of Korean and math, 4 hours of English, 2 hours each of physics and chemistry, and various electives including foreign languages, Chinese characters, music, art, history, computer programming, biology, earth science, and physical education. Students remain in the same classroom with the same students for the majority of their classes, and it is the teachers that move between classrooms. Certain classes such as chemistry or biology labs and computer programming are typically held in a different classroom.

The Co-Teacher
ETAs are assigned a primary co-teacher who is responsible for looking after the ETA’s needs. The co-teacher is usually another English teacher at the school, and he or she acts as an intermediary between the ETA and the school. While some ETAs have reported co-teachers who were not very helpful, others have had co-teachers who became their closest friend and ally at
school. Some ETAs teach in class with a co-teacher (another Korean English teacher, not necessarily the ETA’s primary co-teacher), but most do not. Most ETAs prefer to teach alone in class after the first few weeks.

**School Relations**

It is very important for ETAs to maintain good relations with their co-teachers, principals, vice principals, and other teachers at their school. Not only does it make daily school life easier, it also sets a good precedent for future ETAs to follow. ETAs typically have a desk in the gyomushil (teachers’ office) along with other teachers. One of the easiest ways to make a good impression in the gyomushil is to remember to give insa (greeting). When seeing teachers, principals, or administrators at the beginning of the day, bow and say “Annyeong hashimnikka?” (Hello, how are you?). This takes little effort and will greatly impress Korean colleagues. Other teachers may not always give insa first since ETAs are generally younger and thus expected to initiate insa.

Sometimes, it may seem difficult to be friendly with teachers or administrators because they may seem aloof or anti-social towards the ETA. But it is important to keep in mind that the language barrier is just as intimidating for them as it is for the ETA. Often, ETAs will find at the end of the year that a teacher who seemed rude or anti-social was simply too shy to speak to the native English teacher. Korean adults can be as shy as Korean teenagers when speaking English, so ETAs often have to initiate conversation.

ETAs should think about what they want to get out of their experience in Korea, whether their focus is solely on teaching and school or a combination of outside personal interests and teaching. Whether one chooses to play an active or a more passive role at school, it is still important to maintain good school relations. There will inevitably be bumps along the way, but maintaining open communication and continually working toward an atmosphere of mutual respect is important for making the most of the ETA experience.

**The Homestay**

Living with a homestay is a requirement of the ETA program and an important aspect of immersion into Korean culture and life. The homestay experience makes the ETA experience different from simply teaching in a private Korean language institute. The schools individually decide homestay arrangements after ETAs receive their placement assignments. Thus, ETAs
have little to no control over whom they will live with. Most ETAs are placed in the home of a
student or teacher at their school or another acquaintance of the school. Each ETA’s homestay
experience is vastly different, but we have done our best to summarize the experience as
accurately as possible.

What happens when a young American is placed in the home of a stranger for a year in a foreign
culture? Some days are wonderful; others are not. This is not so different from life in an
American family, with its everyday ups-and-downs. Life with a host family in a foreign culture
for a year can be difficult for both the ETA and the host family. Cultural misunderstandings may
lead to uncomfortable situations. But when ETAs try to immerse themselves in their new
family’s life and enjoy themselves, more is gained from the experience. Through the homestay,
ETAs observe and participate in the central unit of Korean culture: the family.

A typical Korean family consists of a working father, a stay-at-home or working mother, and
children. These days, more Korean households have two working parents. Some families include
grandparents, in-laws, or other relatives. Although traditional Korean values emphasize respect
for one’s elders, many Korean households seem to revolve around their youngest members: the
children. Although children are on the lowest rung of the “Confucian totem pole,” to their
parents, they are the most important family members, since they will carry on the family line.

In many homestays, ETAs are treated as sons and daughters and often experience the benefits of
living with a Korean ajumma (wife/mother). After living the single college life away from home,
many ETAs are surprised (and delighted) to find three meals a day waiting for them on the table
and neatly folded laundry on their dressers. But many ETAs also experience the negative side of
being treated as honorary offspring: being treated like children. In Korea, people often are not
considered adults until they are married. As a result of the younger age of ETAs, their inability to
speak Korean, and their lack of familiarity with Korean culture, host families often treat ETAs in
an over-protective manner. This is often difficult for ETAs to adapt to, since most have been
independent of their own families for at least a few years; however, the protective nature of host
families should be interpreted as an expression of the care and concern they have for ETAs.

Living in a homestay may be difficult for ETAs, but it puts even more pressure on host families.
There are a number of reasons why Korean families would choose to accept this pressure and the
responsibility of hosting ETAs. Many families are eager to teach foreigners about Korea, while
they, themselves, learn about America. Some have children who were hosted in another country,
and they want to return the courtesy. But most families use this as an opportunity to learn or
perfect their English. In the past, ETAs were required to tutor members of their host families in exchange for free room and board, but now the schools offer financial compensation to homestay families for hosting the ETA. The ETA is not required to tutor anyone in the homestay family, and the homestay family is not supposed to ask the ETA to do so. Keep in mind, however, that one or two hours a week of voluntary tutoring might go a long way in creating a good relationship with your homestay.

It is important to build a good relationship with host families from the beginning. ETAs should bring gifts from America for host families (see suggestions in the “What to Pack” section). In the first few months, it is important not to travel away from home every weekend. Most families only have time to spend with each other on the weekends, and if the ETA is always away, it will be difficult to build a relationship and may cause some resentment on the host family’s part. ETAs should have basic consideration for the rules of the family. Be sure to call home if you’re coming back at a late hour or missing a family dinner.

Another important cultural difference in the homestay is the relative lack of personal space and privacy compared to American standards. Most Korean homes are quite small. Having a room to oneself is a relatively modern concept in Korean history. Traditionally, there were no dividing lines within the household. Only one wall outside the house separated the family from the world, and all family members slept together in one room. Although ETAs are required by contract to have their own private room, many families have an “open door” policy and will enter the room without knocking. In Korean culture, this is not considered rude, as ETAs are included as part of the household. In fact, it is often an indication that the family feels open and close to the ETA. Should ETAs find this disconcerting, they are advised to lock doors when dressing; however, it is a good policy to leave doors open while relaxing at home, as an invitation to the host family to visit.

Another important thing to remember is that host families have lives outside their interactions with ETAs. It is easy to develop an “egotistical” attitude while in Korea, because foreign visitors (especially English teachers) receive a lot of attention and special treatment. But host families have their own personal lives, including problems at work, financial difficulties, and family relationship issues that may not be related to ETAs. Some of these problems might not be communicated due to language barriers, but most personal problems would not be shared regardless of language. There may be times when ETAs feel they have done something wrong because the host family members seem angry or upset, but it may not be related to the ETA at all.
ETAs should try to be sensitive to family dynamics and atmosphere, and remember that the world – and even Korea – does not revolve around them.

Should a problem arise in the homestay, whether it’s a personal, family, or logistical concern, Fulbright encourages ETAs to bring it to the attention of the school. If a homestay change is necessary, the school is responsible for finding the ETA a new homestay, and Fulbright will offer needed support. ETAs should keep Fulbright apprised of any homestay changes by contacting the ETA Program Coordinator.

Changing host families is not uncommon and should not be viewed negatively. ETAs might change host families during the year for a variety of reasons. One ETA commented, “Living with two families this year has been a more eye-opening experience for me. If I had only lived with one family this year I would think that that one family is what all Korean families are like.”

**Korean Language**

The Korean language is considered a member of the Altaic family, which includes languages such as Manchurian and Mongolian. Korean is structurally very similar to Japanese even though the connections between these two languages are not clearly established. Although Korean and Chinese are not related languages, about fifty percent of the Korean vocabulary is borrowed from Chinese. Up until the late 19th century, most educated Koreans wrote primarily in Chinese characters (Chinese is to Korean what Latin is to European languages). Today everyone writes in Korean, but Chinese characters (*Hanja*) are still used to some extent. Most newspapers, academic books and official messages are written in the Korean alphabet with a sprinkling of Chinese characters. Generally, personal names and titles are still written in Chinese characters for official or formal occasions. Increasingly, Chinese characters seem to be giving way to “pure” *Hangeul* (i.e., with no admixture of Chinese characters) as the preferred writing system.

The Korean alphabet, which is known as *Hangeul*, was developed in the mid-15th century. It is comprised of 10 simple vowels and 14 consonants. Koreans point proudly to the fact that *Hangeul* was voted the most scientific alphabet in the world by the 1957 UNESCO conference held in New Delhi. It is very simple to learn and can be mastered in a few days.

Knowledge of the Korean language prior to being awarded the Fulbright Grant is not a requirement of the ETA program; however, **knowledge of Hangeul is expected of all ETAs upon arrival in Korea**. *Hangeul* can be learned on the Internet or by making flashcards (see
Appendix D for links). **ETAs should be comfortable reading and writing at least the basic consonants and vowels by the time orientation starts.**

The language barrier is one of the greatest challenges for the ETA in Korea; however, ETAs do not need to be fluent in Korean to have meaningful experiences. ETAs without previous knowledge of Korean leave orientation knowing basic greetings, everyday expressions, and verb conjugations. Learning even this little will go a long way in forging good relations with school administrations, students, and homestay families.

**Independent Study**

ETAs are not required to conduct formal research, and the intense teaching schedule makes doing so difficult. All the same, ETAs have a variety of opportunities to learn about Korea through daily experience. Many ETAs have done informal research projects that incorporated their day-to-day lives as teachers and homestay participants. Other projects have involved the extracurricular activities that ETAs pursue outside of work hours. Examples of independent ETA research and activities include the following:

- English drama, video, or newspaper club activities
- ETA winter drama camp
- Community service volunteer work (orphanage, “free hagwon,” women’s center)
- Korean martial arts (*taekwondo*, *hapkido*, *geomdo*, *taekkyun*)
- Korean traditional performing arts (theatre, drumming, dance, etc.)
- Calligraphy (Chinese or Korean characters)
- Mountain climbing (popular weekend pastime)
- Study of Korean folklore and literature
- Study of Korean language
- Survey of students to study views of gender roles among Korean teenagers
- Non-Korea-specific activities such as yoga, hip-hop dance class, tennis, etc.

These types of projects are feasible, and Fulbright strongly encourages such pursuits in order to provide a more well-rounded experience in Korea. ETAs should try to establish a few non-teaching goals at the beginning of the year for completion throughout the year or during the two-month winter break.

**Living in Korea**
Safety

Korea is a relatively safe country and ETAs rarely feel any threat to their personal safety. The most common accidents are auto-related. All front-seat passengers are required by law to wear seatbelts. Often, there are no seatbelts in backseats, but ETAs should try to wear a seatbelt at all times.

Incidents of muggings, rapes, and other crimes involving personal assault are publicized in the newspaper. But although these problems have increased in recent years, Korea is very safe compared to American cities. All the same, it is best not to wander alone late at night, particularly if you are a woman. ETAs should be careful in nightlife districts where one might encounter someone who is drunk and more aggressive than usual. Just use common sense.

While violent crime is rare, theft and pick pocketing are slightly more common (but not as notorious as in some European and Asian countries). It is important to take normal precautions with passports, wallets, and purses, especially in crowded areas. The best way to safeguard a passport is to leave it at home. It is not necessary to carry your passport with you unless you are conducting business, such as opening a bank account. Wallets should be kept in front rather than back pockets. Purses also should be hung in front where they are in sight.

Some grantees worry about threats posed by North Korea. While North Korea is commonly believed to be an armed and hostile state (and not far away), it has very little impact on the daily lives of people in South Korea. Media coverage may imply a tense environment, but most people in South Korea are less worried about North Korea than about finding a parking space (the topic of a 2005 TIME article). Although anti-American sentiment has been in the media spotlight in the past couple years, ETAs are still quite safe in Korea. Demonstrations are fairly peaceful, and much of the action does not affect ETAs in their schools or homestays.

Money & Financial Matters

The basic unit of currency in Korea is the won. Bills come in denominations of 1,000 (cheon won), 5,000 (o-cheon won), and 10,000 (man won). There are 10 (ship won), 50 (o-ship won), 100 (baek won), and 500 (o-baek won) coins in circulation. Only banks and other financial instructions use the 1 and 5 won coins. Although the rate fluctuates, the easiest way to convert to dollars is to divide by 1000. Thus, a W1,000 bill is roughly equal to $1. As of April 2007, the
exchange rate was about W926 to one US dollar. An easy way to keep up with the exchange rate fluctuation is to have it emailed to you daily for free. You can sign up at http://www.xe.com.

**Bringing Money from the U.S. to Korea**

It is up to you whether you bring U.S. cash or traveler’s checks to exchange or withdraw Korean won using your U.S. bankcard (provided it has a Visa or MasterCard logo) at a Korean ATM. Each method has its advantages.

Cash is convenient, although you have to be very careful about where you put it. If you plan on traveling, it can be good, as some countries will accept it (with no percentage taken out) instead of the country’s native currency (e.g., in Cambodia and Vietnam). Dollars are readily accepted in Seoul’s foreigner district, Itaewon.

Traveler’s checks are safer than cash because they can be replaced if lost or stolen. American Express traveler’s checks are the most widely recognized in Korea and throughout Asia. (In the past, a few ETAs had difficulties with Visa ones.) In some instances, American Express traveler’s checks have been reported to get better exchange rates than cash.

In most cities, designated “international” ATMs accept foreign cards and can be used to withdraw Korean currency from U.S. accounts. In Seoul, these machines can be found in tourist areas, convenience stores, large subway stations, and some banks (especially Korea Exchange Bank). Keep in mind that your U.S. bank will likely charge a fee each time you make a withdrawal in Korea. Additionally, the Korean ATM may also charge a fee (about $1) to complete the transaction. Using a U.S. bankcard in Korea is convenient only if you can locate an international ATM, whereas cash and traveler’s checks may be exchanged at any bank or exchange agency. Some ETAs using smaller banks have reported difficulty accessing cash through ATMs.

**Orientation Stipend**

During the summer orientation period, ETAs receive a weekly stipend of W35,000 (about $35) to cover personal expenses. Fulbright pays for room and board, including three meals a day for the duration of orientation. Fulbright also covers room and board on all official group outings. Most ETAs find the stipend to be sufficient for day-to-day expenses (snacks, laundry, hygiene products, etc.); however, those who like to shop, eat out frequently, or go clubbing may find that the money runs out quickly. Past ETAs recommend bringing pocket money (anywhere from $300-$500) to cover extra expenses during orientation. Money may also be needed for
extracurricular activities, such as taekwondo or joining the gym. Last year, taekwondo cost about $100 for a month of instruction, and the university gym cost about $20 to join for one month. These prices may change this year.

**Regular Earnings**

During the school year, the ETA monthly stipend is W1,300,000, and it is paid by the individual host school. ETAs are *not* allowed to work additional hours for extra compensation. Other paid work is not permitted under the Fulbright contract and is illegal under the A-3 visa.

Schools may not be able to pay ETAs until the end of the first month of teaching. Fulbright provides a small settling-in allowance (around W200,000) to cover moving-in expenses, but this may leave ETAs low on cash for the first month at their placement. Some schools are able to organize an early payment schedule for ETAs, but these arrangements are made on an individual basis at each school. While many ETAs found the settling-in allowance to be enough to get them through the first few weeks, some bring extra money for this period. Once regular payment begins, ETAs are paid a monthly stipend from September to July in accordance with the individual school’s pay schedule.

Korea is not a cheap country, but most ETAs find the monthly stipend to be more than adequate to cover daily expenses and weekend travel. Many ETAs find that they do not spend their entire stipend each month and save the remainder, send it home, or use it to finance winter break travel.

**Banking**

Korea is a cash society. Most of Korea has skipped the “check-writing” era completely and gone to online payments, which are cheap, efficient, reliable, and universal. Most ETAs will have their stipend transferred electronically each month to their bank account. A local Korean bank account is necessary for cash wire transfers. After moving to their placement city, ETAs should have someone from the school or homestay assist them in opening a local bank account.

**Transferring or Taking Money to the U.S.**

Korean won may be taken out of the country or converted into U.S. dollars. It is also possible to wire money from Korea to the U.S. Wire transfers require a passport and the receiving U.S. bank’s information (usually, the bank’s Swift code, your account number, the routing number, and the bank’s address), along with the local account information. An unused check and deposit slip from your U.S. bank can help the Korean bank determine the correct routing number. The
usual cost of wire transfers is around $15 on the Korean side. Further fees may be applicable depending on the home bank policy.

Anyone with a U.S. passport and an international air ticket can pay in won to purchase up to $10,000 in traveler’s checks. Banker’s cashier’s checks or smaller denomination traveler’s checks are also options for bringing money back to the U.S. The won equivalent of up to $10,000 in cash may also be brought into the United States.

**Credit Cards**

Credit cards are widely used in Korea, but in some small restaurants and stores, international cards may be refused. Korean credit cards can be difficult to obtain without Korean citizenship. A few banks in Seoul provide credit cards at high interest rates for foreigners.

There are a variety of ways to pay American credit card bills from Korea. These days, the most popular method is online payments. Past ETAs have also brought checkbooks to Korea and sent checks to the U.S. each month. Wiring money directly tends to be costly. Others ran up a surplus on their credit card accounts by writing checks in advance so that they had already paid their bills before making purchases. Giving power of attorney to a relative, or adding a relative as a co-signer to your account, and having that person pay your bills from your account is also an option.

It is possible to get cash advances using your credit card (Visa or MasterCard) at international ATMs Korea. To do this you need your credit card’s PIN. Contact your credit card company to receive it and confirm before your arrival that it works. Also, check your daily withdrawal/advance limit and be aware of any fees or interest rates associated with such transactions.

**Citibank**

There are several Citibank branches in Seoul and scattered throughout other major cities. If you have a U.S. Citibank account, you should be able to access it directly. You will only be able to withdraw funds from your account. See http://citibank.co.kr/english/index.html for more information.

**Student Loan Deferments**

The Fulbright program is an authorized signatory, so it is possible to defer student loans during your grant period. ETAs with loans to pay should contact their lenders and universities to get the
proper loan deferment request forms and bring them to Korea. At the beginning of orientation, there will be a meeting about loan deferments, and ETAs will be able to fill out the necessary forms. The Fulbright office will be able to assist ETAs if any issues arise in the process. Be sure to ask your lenders when to send in your forms; in some cases sending them in during your grace period may result in processing problems. Be sure to follow up with your lenders after submitting paperwork.

**Taxes**
By law, ETAs must file U.S. taxes while in Korea. The basic principle of U.S. taxes is to report all income, including grant money from Fulbright, even if it may not be taxed. The Fulbright office cannot legally give advice regarding taxes. Arrange to bring the necessary paperwork or have it sent. Publications 520 (Scholarships and Fellowships), 54 (Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad), and 593 (Tax Highlights for U.S. Citizens and Residents Abroad), distributed by the IRS, are helpful. These are available on the IRS Web-site (http://www.irs.gov). Note: Although ETAs receive an automatic 60-day extension by living overseas, they will have to pay interest from April 15 on any unpaid taxes. H&R Block (http://www.hrblock.com) has offices in Seoul and can assist you with your preparation. ETAs do not pay Korean taxes.

**Communications**

**Mail**
The Korean postal system has a full range of services including registered and certified mail. If a letter is sent via international airmail, the delivery time is around 7-10 days for most destinations in the U.S. Post offices operate during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, and large branches are also open on Saturday mornings.

Fulbright advises ETAs to use the KAEC address (see Appendix B) until they have moved to their placement school. This address may be used at any time during the stay in Korea, but it may be more convenient to receive mail at the placement school later on. ETA mail (letters) sent to the Fulbright office will be forwarded to the ETA’s school. Packages, however, must be picked up by the ETA at the office in Seoul during normal business hours.

**Telephone**
Korea has good and reliable nationwide telephone services. A direct dialing system is operative for domestic and international calls. Pay phones are everywhere and are inexpensive to use. Prepaid international phone cards bought in Korea can be used with cell phones, pay phones, and
private lines. Some cards offer international calls for less than 10 cents per minute. Fulbright provides each ETA with a W10,000 (about $10) international calling card at the beginning of orientation. Phone cards are sold at many convenience stores around Korea. The best deals can be found in Seoul at newspaper kiosks near bus stops and in Itaewon; a common amount is W10,000 for two hours of international service.

Recently, a number of ETAs have turned to Skype (www.skype.com) and other Internet phone programs to stay in touch with family and friends while in Korea. With a microphone, speakers or headset, and an Internet connection, parties can talk over the Internet for free or call U.S. numbers for rates around 2 cents per minute. ETAs can also purchase a SkypeIN account for around $50, which gives them a local U.S. number and voicemail that friends and family can use to call them in Korea, avoiding international long distance fees.

Almost everyone has a cell phone in Korea, even in rural areas, but Korean law prohibits foreigners from acquiring cell phones with regular monthly plans due to frequent non-payment of bills by foreign customers. (Foreigners who purchase cell phones must pay for service in advance and have higher per-minute rates.) However, as part of its safety policy, Fulbright requires ETAs to purchase a cell phone upon arrival at their host schools. It is important for Fulbright to be able to contact ETAs at all times in case of an emergency.

It is the school or the co-teacher’s responsibility to secure a monthly plan for the ETA, and the ETA is responsible for the initial cost of purchasing the phone and paying the bill on a monthly basis. To cover this expense, in addition to the ETA’s regular stipend, W100,000 is provided to the ETA by the school on a monthly basis for telecommunication fees. Most ETAs’ cell phone bills are less than W100,000 per month, however, so they can pocket the difference as part of their monthly stipend. At the end of the ETA’s grant term, it is the school’s responsibility to cancel the cell phone contract on the ETA’s behalf. Since ETAs purchase the phones, not the schools, ETAs may keep the phone at the end of their grant term.

**Internet & Email**
Korea is reportedly the most “wired” country in the world, and broadband connections are far more prevalent than dial-up ones. Every school in Korea has Internet access, at least in the teachers’ office. Some ETAs have Internet connections at their homestays, and are able to share connections with avid Internet gamers and web surfers in the family. Some ETAs set up their own private Internet lines in their homestays (about W40,000-70,000); others choose to use **PC bangs** (Internet cafes) instead. Internet cafes are everywhere, even in small towns. They usually
provide full Internet services for around $1 per hour and sometimes have word processing and printing services as well. PC bangs are frequented by students and businessmen alike, most often to play computer games. Thus, some PC bangs may be dimly lit, noisy and smoky.

For some reason, email sent from Korea sometimes has compatibility problems with university accounts (.edu) and America Online (aol.com). Fulbright recommends that ETAs switch over to a free web-based account (Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.) prior to arrival. The Fulbright office will utilize an email listserv to stay in contact with ETAs throughout the year, so it’s imperative that ETAs’ email accounts accept messages from the Korea-originated fulbright.or.kr domain. Notify the ETA Program Coordinator any time your primary email address changes.

Computers & Electronics

Many ETAs recommend bringing a laptop for email, playing games, downloading music, and lesson planning (e.g., using Power Point, showing websites or movies using monitors in the classroom). But laptops are not necessary for survival in Korea. ETAs usually have their own desktop in the teacher’s office; at the very least, they have access to a shared computer in the office. Since most ETAs are at school for a major portion of the day, they can often take care of their “computer business” between classes.

Laptops need a LAN (Ethernet) card and standard Internet (RJ45 Ethernet) cable to access the Internet. Newer laptops usually have built-in LAN/Ethernet capabilities, but older laptops may require PCMCIA cards. Make sure your equipment works before coming to Korea. It is best to bring all necessary components with you rather than purchasing them during orientation. Local computer supply stores have depleted their stock in the past trying to meet all of the ETAs’ computing needs.

Wireless connections are available in Korea, but not at the orientation site. Some coffee shops in Seoul and other cities are equipped with free wireless, just as in the U.S. For exact wireless locations in Korea, try searching JiWire (www.jiwire.com).

Bring your computer’s original operating system, driver, program CDs, manuals, and serial numbers in case you need to reinstall anything. Also, keep in mind that viruses are just as common (if not more so) in Korea as in the U.S., Make sure you have up-to-date anti-virus software installed.
Devices with power supplies (laptops, battery chargers, etc.) need to be 220V compatible to work in Korea. Devices that do not have 220V capability should be left at home, since they require bulky power converters. Almost all laptop computers should have AC inputs of 100-240V AC or 60/50 Hz 1.5A, which means they will work fine in Korea. For other devices, the owner’s manual or bottom of the AC adapter/power block should have information on voltage capability.

Devices with 220V capability only need adapter plugs to fit Korean wall sockets (these are the same as in Western Europe; see picture below.). Korean wall sockets are not grounded, which simply means there are only two holes instead of three, as in the U.S. However, the adapters, as shown below, will still work with plugs with three prongs (e.g., U.S. laptop power blocks). These adaptors can be bought at the orientation site (for less than $1); but in the past, local suppliers have run out and have had to order more, which took about a week.

Caption: adaptor plug for Korean wall sockets.

Laundry & Dry Cleaning

Coin-operated laundry facilities are available at the orientation site, and your homestay will have a washing machine. Most Korean homes do not have dryers, though, and everything is air-dried. Past ETAs report that Korean washing machines are more vigorous than in the U.S., and cotton will stretch. It’s safe to expect that some of your clothes will be “abused” in this process. Mesh laundry bags can be good for protecting delicate items like bras in the washing machine.

Dry cleaners are ubiquitous and cheap. Some dry cleaners offer a pick-up service, and you can have your dry cleaning delivered to your door.

Travel
ETAs are encouraged to use their time off from school to travel within Korea. In addition to holidays, some schools give ETAs extra days off during exam periods (although notification is usually last minute). Public transportation within and between cities is relatively cheap and easy with a variety of options.

Public Transportation

Subways
Although no first-year ETAs are assigned to Seoul, many ETAs visit the city frequently. The Seoul subway system is clean and efficient, and is usually the fastest and most reliable way of getting around metropolitan Seoul, though it can be extremely crowded during the morning and evening rush hours. There are also smaller subway systems in Busan, Daegu, and Gwangju, and a new one under construction in Daejeon.

Within metropolitan Seoul, the basic subway fare is W900 with a ticket and W800 with a pass card. Long trips involving connections will cost a little extra, depending on how far you are going. The names of subway stops are printed in English and Korean. The different lines are color-coded and numbered, although the colors are sometimes difficult to tell apart and vary on different maps. The stops are numbered as well, and it is relatively easy to make transfers without getting lost.

Local Buses
Almost all areas in Seoul are served by local bus routes. Most large cities also have local bus and inter-city bus routes. You can pay in cash (coins or W1,000 bills) or, in some cities, with a pass card. You might have to ask your school or homestay for help with navigating the bus system at first, as all signs may be in Korean, and the routes may be confusing. In Seoul, the subway pass cards work on city buses as well, and transfers between buses and subways are free.

Taxis
Taxis in Korea are inexpensive compared to those in the U.S., with a starting fare of W1900 (in Seoul). Only four passengers are allowed in the taxi; drivers are very strict about this rule. Wearing a seatbelt in the front seat is mandatory. Taxis are generally safe, but women traveling alone at night should sit in the back. Taxis are also used as a means of public conveyance in the countryside. When going to an out-of-the-way place, a taxi can be hired, although it isn’t cheap. Be sure to make arrangements to be picked up later or have the taxi driver wait. Most taxi companies offer a call service for a W1,000 fee. You can ask the driver for a card with the phone number.
number of the company (or in some cases, the driver’s cell phone number). Restaurants and tourist attractions are also usually able to call a taxi for pickup service.

**Domestic Travel**

Airlines

Air service is available to all major destinations within Korea. Fares are reasonable and service is reliable. Flights are available at regular intervals throughout the day between major destinations, such as Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Gwangju, and Jeju Island. In Seoul, domestic flights go through Gimpo Airport, and international flights go through Incheon International Airport. Incheon also has domestic flights to Jeju, Daegu, and Busan, albeit less frequently than Gimpo.

Trains

Trains are efficient, safe, and inexpensive. Tickets can be purchased at the station or at various booking agents. If you know someone with a Barota (Korail membership) card, they can reserve tickets for you over the phone or online. Advance purchase of a reserved seat is recommended on the weekends and during holidays. There are several different types of trains. The KTX (Korea Train Express) train travels from Seoul Station to Busan and from Yongsan Station to Mokpo at 300 kph. It’s the most expensive train in Korea, but the convenience of traveling across the country in half the time makes it worth the expense sometimes. *Saemaul* is the fastest and most comfortable non-express train. *Mugunghwa* is also good, but slightly slower than *Saemaul*, as it stops at more stations. The commuter train, *Tongil*, is very slow. If trains are full, *Mugunghwa* and *Tongil* trains will often have standing passengers (*ipsok*) in the aisles and perched on armrests. To preserve personal space, request a window seat in advance. For train schedules, reservations, and other information please refer to the Korail English website:

Express Buses

The inter-city bus system in Korea is efficient and faster than trains (except for the KTX). Buses depart for all major provincial cities on a regular schedule, as often as every ten minutes in some cases. Advance purchase of tickets is not necessary except during special holiday periods. On the negative side, buses are subject to more delays than trains, due to highway accidents and heavy traffic. Some people also find the speed and driving style of highway buses in Korea harrowing. In the countryside, all but the most remote villages have bus service. Rural buses are inexpensive but often crowded. If possible, use “Excellent Express” (*udeung*) or “Express” (*gosok*) buses for inter-city travel. These buses are more expensive than regular buses but are considerably more comfortable. For more information on express buses refer to http://www.kobus.co.kr.
**Cars**
The Korean style of driving is often nerve-wracking and scary. Drivers swerve in and out of traffic at break-neck speeds and pass slow cars dangerously. Drunk-driving accidents are on the decline but are still common. Seat belt use is not very common, although a law requires those riding in the front seat to wear a seat belt or face a W30,000 fine. Backseat belts are sometimes tucked into the seat because they are seen as an inconvenience, and they are often difficult to dig out. Fulbright strongly encourages ETAs to wear seatbelts at all times.

**Overseas Travel**
Fulbright policy allows grantees to travel outside their host country for a *maximum* of 28 days during the course of the grant. Of these 28 days, no more than two weeks can be spent in the U.S. The other two weeks can be spent traveling in the region to gain more experience with Korea’s neighbors. Flights from Seoul to all major destinations in Asia are readily available. Discount tickets are sold for most destinations. ETAs must notify the ETA Program Coordinator of all travel plans. ETAs are required to provide contact information in case of emergency.

For flights originating from Korea, it’s usually cheaper to book through a travel agency, as opposed to directly through the airline on the Internet. Travel agency contact information will be available on ETAB after arrival in Korea.

Travel in Asia can be very cheap if one stays in low-cost accommodations and limits food expenses and souvenir shopping. The ETA stipend is usually sufficient to cover one or two international trips during the year. Those planning more luxurious trips may need other sources of cash. In general, it is better to bring U.S. currency to Asian countries and exchange it for the local currency upon arrival. It is easier to exchange U.S. dollars in most Asian countries than it is to exchange Korean won (you will also get better rates). It will also be cheaper and more convenient to exchange money in Korea than in the U.S. In some Southeast Asian markets, U.S. currency is preferred to the local currency. It is useful to have small U.S. bills ($1s or $5s) if planning to do bargain shopping in places like Vietnam, Thailand, or China. Korean won can be exchanged for U.S. dollars at major banks in Korea, although a small portion may be lost if rates are unfavorable.

**Food**
Food is an important part of any culture, and this is especially true in Korea. Korean cuisine has a reputation for being very hot and spicy, although not all dishes are. Korean food is generally healthy and delicious, using basic ingredients of rice, meat, fish, vegetables, and lots of garlic and hot pepper. Despite the prominent advertisement of bulgogi (grilled marinated beef), pork, fish, and other seafood are used more in everyday Korean cuisine than red meat.

American favorites such as hamburgers and pizza are popular among students; but in the homestay, food is usually more traditional. A typical Korean home eats an array of four to twenty types of banchan (side dishes) plus rice and soup. Korean chopsticks are slightly different from the round, wooden or plastic, Chinese-style ones used in America. They are flat and metal, making them slightly more difficult to maneuver. Koreans also use spoons with their chopsticks, and it is acceptable to use spoons often during a meal.

One of the biggest culture shocks some ETAs encounter during their first few weeks in Korea is the food, especially for those who are unfamiliar with Korean food. During orientation, ETAs live in a dormitory and eat three meals a day in the cafeteria. (Eating off-campus is always an option, but only cafeteria meals will be covered by Fulbright.) Similar to cafeteria food in America, the cafeteria food during orientation is not the best. Many of the dishes are spicy, fishy, unfamiliar, or all of the above. There will always be rice, but ETAs often crave other dietary options. Often ETAs who hate the orientation cafeteria food go on to love Korean food in their homestays.

With this in mind, ETAs should take a few precautions if they think food could be a problem. It is very easy to lose weight and get sick if one cannot eat the cafeteria food. Bringing food items (and perhaps multivitamins) from home and knowing other food options in the area will help make the summer eating manageable. In the past, the cafeteria has been persuaded to provide bread, milk, soy milk, and jam for breakfast in addition to the typical Korean breakfast of rice, kimchi, and soup. Cereal, fruit, yogurt, and juice can be easily purchased at a local supermarket, and there will be a communal refrigerator in the dormitory for ETA use.

Picky eaters can also bring food items from home, such as peanut butter, oatmeal, dried soups, instant foods, etc.; however, there are no cooking facilities available in the dorms – only hot water will be available. Peanut butter can be bought in local stores, but it is a little expensive. Canned tuna is plentiful and cheap and can be good for meal replacements. There are also restaurants close to campus that serve Western foods such as fried chicken, pizza, and pasta, in addition to plenty of delicious Korean options.
Special Diets

Vegetarians and others with dietary restrictions should notify Fulbright immediately (before coming to Korea) and tell their co-teachers and host families upon arriving at their placements. Although tofu and vegetables are used in many Korean dishes, true vegetarian cuisine can be hard to find. Vegetarian food in Korea includes a lot of tofu, bibimbap (vegetables and an egg on top of rice), seaweed-based soups, lots of side dishes, fried vegetable fritters, and more; however, most dishes have a small amount of meat (seen or unseen) mixed in with vegetables. Dishes without meat are likely to have some fish. Picking meat out of food is often the only sure-fire vegetarian option available; however, many soups are fish broth-based, so you may end up eating fish without intending to. Some previous ETAs who were vegetarians had to compromise their diet to some extent.

Fulbright does not want to discourage incoming ETAs from maintaining their vegetarianism in Korea, but it is realistic to expect that maintaining any strict eating regimen will not be easy. Vegans have an extremely difficult time maintaining their diets, as many prepared foods contain animal products. While vegetarian restaurants do exist, especially at the bottom of mountains and near Buddhist temples, total vegetarianism is uncommon in Korea. Many Koreans do not even understand the concept of vegetarianism or veganism. (For more information about vegetarian options in Korea, visit this website: http://wiki.galbijim.com/Portal:Vegetarianism. For a list of vegetarian restaurants in Seoul, try this website: http://www.happycow.net/asia/south_korea/seoul/)

Many Koreans also do not understand food allergies. This can be very dangerous, especially with foods that can cause anaphylactic shock, such as peanuts or shellfish. ETAs with severe food allergies should notify Fulbright immediately and bring any necessary medication (e.g., Epi-Pen). Upon arriving at placements, explain allergies and medication use to co-teachers and host families. Should there be any problems clearly communicating dietary restrictions, Fulbright can assist in translation. Maintaining a Kosher diet is impossible in a Korean homestay, unless food is sent from home. If you have specific questions about dietary considerations, contact the Program Coordinator.

Drinking Water

Korean tap water is safe to use for washing and brushing your teeth, but it is not recommended for drinking. Domestic bottled water is readily available. Water served in restaurants is filtered or bottled, and it is safe for drinking. Schools and often homestays will usually have a water cooler that dispenses cold and hot water. The orientation site will also have water coolers.
Coffee & Tea
Korea is a green tea society, but Starbucks has been making its presence known in the large cities. Most Koreans drink instant coffee and tea on a regular basis. Brewed coffee is usually only found at coffee shops for between $2-5 a cup. Coffee connoisseurs may want to consider bringing or buying a French press mug for personal coffee consumption. Additionally, black tea is hard to find in bags.

Eating Out
Besides Korean restaurants of all kinds, there are an increasing number of “foreign” restaurants. Western-style food is quite common, especially in downtown areas and shopping districts; however, sometimes “international” food is actually just another variety of Korean food (e.g., bulgogi pizza and kimchi spaghetti). Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and American restaurants are fairly common, and range from relatively inexpensive “Koreanized” places to more authentic and expensive establishments. More international (Thai, Indian, French, etc.), authentic-tasting foods can be found in Seoul, but they are rare in other places.

American-style fast food restaurants are common, including McDonald’s, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Pizza Hut. More middle-range chains are also becoming popular in the larger Korean cities; TGIFriday’s, Bennigan’s, Outback, and Starbucks are often found in major shopping districts and tourist areas. Dunkin Donuts and Baskin Robbins can be found in almost every city; in additional, there are a handful of Krispy Kreme stores in Seoul.

Availability of “American” Foods
Although ETAs typically don’t cook much in the homestay, it is good to visit big supermarkets on the basement level of major department stores in Korea to see what kinds of imported foods are available. Many people, Korean and foreign, prefer to do their food shopping in these large and relatively modern supermarkets. They often have international sections that carry Western brands, although at high prices. The following is a list of some American-style food that can be found in Korea:

Cereal: Fruit Loops, Frosted Flakes, Corn Flakes, Cocoa Puffs (There are similar Korean brands as well; these are the most widely available American brands).

Cheese: “Real” cheese is hard to find in Korea. Typically, easy-to-find cheese is similar to Kraft Singles in the U.S. Mozzarella cheese (known as “pizza cheese”) is also easy to find. Some department stories and bakeries also carry Philadelphia cream cheese.

Jelly/Jam: Available in most bakeries and food stores.
Peanut butter: Available even in small towns in bakeries (Crown Bakery, Paris Baguette) and some groceries. A medium sized jar of Skippy costs about W6,000.

Spaghetti & sauce: Spaghetti noodles and sauces are available in just about every food store. Big stores may even have Ragu.

Yogurt: Yoplait and Korean brands are widely available in strawberry, blueberry, plain, and peach flavors.

Chocolate milk: Nesquick and Korean brands

Popcorn: Pop Secret and similar Korean brands can be found in convenience stores, usually located near a microwave oven.

Pringles: Surprisingly enough, these can be found everywhere, too. There are even some special Asian flavors, such as “Funky Soy Sauce” and “Crispy Curry.”

Crackers, chips, cookies: Ritz, Oreos, and potato chips are readily available at convenience stores.

Entertainment & Information Resources

Korea offers a wide variety of entertainment, ranging from modern city nightlife to tours of ancient cultural sites. Entertainment options include hiking craggy mountains, watching Korean and American movies (released a few months later than in the U.S.), Western- and Korean-style pubs, arcades, and noraebang (karaoke clubs).

One of the best ways to find out about cultural events such as art exhibitions, movies, plays, and other performances is to check the calendar sections of English-language newspapers. (See Appendix D.) Current and upcoming events are listed with telephone numbers to call for more information. The Korean National Tourism Organization (KNTO) is also a good resource for information about Korea and events (http://www.knto.or.kr/ or http://english.tour2korea.com/). Brochures and booklets are available at the KNTO office, and tickets and travel reservations can be arranged there.

Seoul Selection (www.seoulselection.com) is a book and video store that also sends free weekly newsletters via email including events and cultural information. The store has a great selection of Korea-related books, movies, etc. The Royal Asiatic Society (RAS, www.raskb.com) also has a good selection of books of all kinds on Korea, everything from scholarly publications to popular guidebooks. Membership to the Korea Branch of RAS includes a regular semi-monthly lecture series as well as discounts on books and excellent tours. In addition, Fulbright has a small library.
for ETAs with books on Korea-related topics including Korean history, culture, literature, and politics.

International publications such as the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the *International Herald Tribune*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*, are available for sale at large bookstores and some newsstands.

See Appendices D and E for more useful websites and recommended books on Korea.

**Shopping**

Shopping can be an overwhelming experience initially. Items may not be where you expect them to be and trying to read and understand labels and price tags can be frustrating. Make sure to take a dictionary or phrasebook—or better yet, a Korean guide (a colleague or a student) — with you on your first few shopping expeditions. Learning the Korean number system as soon as possible will be a big help, and many communication problems can be solved by simple body language. Bargaining used to be common practice in Korea, similar to China and most Southeast Asian countries. Since the 2002 World Cup, though, the government has restricted bargaining in most places, in order to protect the interests of unsuspecting tourists. Sometimes shoppers can bargain at the large outdoor markets; but department stores, supermarkets, and convenience stores have fixed prices.

Markets in most towns and cities will carry almost anything one needs to survive in Korea. The major department stores are a good place to get basic goods and clothes, if one likes (and fits into) Korean fashions. Lotte, Hyundai, and Shinsegae are the major, high-end department stores and have branches in many cities. Prices are somewhat high, but good deals can be found during sale seasons. There are also a number of chain super-centers (think Wal-mart or Target) scattered throughout most cities. E-Mart, HomePlus, Lotte Mart, and GS Mart, to name a few, offer groceries, office supplies, toiletries, clothing, etc., at low prices.

Some of the best places for shopping in Seoul are below:

**Myeong-dong** (명동): A trendy shopping district that caters mainly to tourists. It is in downtown Seoul and has a number of clothing boutiques, coffee shops, and bars. Prices in the stores can be quite high, but you can often get good deals on shoes, bags, sunglasses, scarves, and T-shirts at...
the street stalls crowding the main avenue. Japanese tourists often come to Myeong-dong specifically to buy cheap eyeglasses.

**Insa-dong** (인사동): Traditional tea houses, arts and crafts galleries, and stores selling traditional Korean pottery, paintings, and other goods. A great place to visit on Sunday afternoons when performers and vendors take over the street, which is closed to traffic. Be sure to check out the side streets as well as the main road. Fewer tourists venture down these streets, and you can enjoy quieter shops with a less “touristy” feel.

**Namdaemun Market** (남대문, South Gate): A wholesale, outdoor market that sells everything from clothing to camping supplies to pig heads. A great place just to sightsee; open during the day and all night.

**Dongdaemun Market** (동대문, East Gate): Clothing and wholesale goods at reasonable prices, although sizes run on the small side. Also open in the afternoon and all night.

**Itaewon** (이태원): Near the main U.S. army post, this is primarily a hangout for foreigners. One of Seoul’s most famous shopping districts and a notorious nightlife district. A good place to buy souvenirs and larger-sized clothing, as well as a good place to find Thai and Indian restaurants.

**Ewha Women’s University** (이대) **Area**: This area has been greatly influenced by the female population; it boasts a cutting-edge fashion district and a wide variety of eateries, cafes, and hair salons.

**Techno Mart**: Offers every kind of household electronic device and appliance imaginable. Some bargaining is acceptable, although prices are already fairly reasonable.

**Yongsan Electronics Market**: A huge electronics superstore, similar to Techno Mart. It is advisable to check prices on items with several sellers before making a purchase. It may be difficult to get prices reduced, but you can sometimes get accessories or upgrades thrown in for free.

**Clothing & Shoe Sizes**
Women wearing over a size 8 and men wearing an XL or larger will have difficulty buying clothing in Korea, as sizes tend to run smaller. All clothing sizes can be found in Itaewon.

Bras are usually only available in A and B cups up to about a size 38.
If you have small and narrow feet, you will be able to purchase shoes easily in Korea. But if your feet are wider than normal or larger than a size 8 for women or size 11 for men, past ETAs recommend bringing or having shipped all of the shoes you will need for the year.

**Religion and Religious Services**

English-language Protestant and Catholic services are held in Seoul and other large cities. Korean-language church services are everywhere – about thirty percent of the Korean population is Christian. Jewish services are held on the U.S. military post in Seoul, but they may not be regularly held elsewhere in Korea. Also, Jewish holidays may be hard to observe. Try to negotiate ahead of time any time off or travel assistance you will need. Korea has one Islamic mosque, in Seoul, and it has services in Arabic, Korean, and English. About thirty percent of Koreans are Buddhist, and Buddhist temples are numerous. A Buddhist center called Lotus Lantern is operated for the foreign community. The Saturday editions of the *Korea Times* and *Korea Herald* list religious service information for foreigners.

Non-Christian ETAs may notice that Korean Christians are more outward with their faith. Some host families and colleagues may pressure you to attend church services or attempt to convert you. Past ETAs recommend setting boundaries early regarding religion and faith and remaining open-minded and honest about it.

Dietary restrictions (especially faith-based ones) will be an issue that will be discussed at length by host families and colleagues, and may not be fully understood. Future ETAs should prepare for many questions.

**Korean Culture and Customs: Understanding Korean Society as an ETA**

**Race**

One of the greatest challenges of living in Korea is being immersed in an almost completely racially homogeneous environment. Bruce Cummings, author of *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, writes, “[F]ew of the world’s people live in a nation with no significant ethnic, racial, or linguistic difference: Korea is indeed one of the most homogeneous nations on earth, where ethnicity and nationality coincide.” This poses great challenges to all ETAs, regardless of race and ethnicity.
Until recently, Koreans had little exposure to foreigners of any kind. Consequently, their awareness of America as having a more diverse population than what is portrayed on television is simply underdeveloped. Some Korean colleagues and host families have been known to ask odd questions and/or make unintentionally hurtful remarks. ETAs should remember that it is not meant to offend, but usually stems from a genuine curiosity. It’s hard to say exactly how this will affect one’s individual ETA experience, but generally speaking, it is imperative that individuals from diverse backgrounds come to Korea with especially open minds.

For Korean-Americans, issues of identity can be very complex. Although they are spared much of the staring and pointing, they have another set of problems unique to Korean-Americans: they are expected to speak Korean fluently and know Korean culture thoroughly, although that is often not the case. Korean-Americans often come to Korea expecting to fit into the culture in ways that they did not in the United States. While many are welcomed and immersed into the culture, others are discouraged to realize that they are neither exactly “Korean” nor exactly “American.”

Korean-American adoptees also have a unique set of issues when coming to Korea. Many past ETAs have come to Korea for the first time since they were adopted at a young age. More and more, Korean people are learning about adoption and are becoming aware of Korean adoptees currently living overseas, as well as those returning to Korea. Reactions vary from sadness and pity to surprise. For many Koreans, it is not the first time that they have heard of adoptees coming to Korea. Some adoptees choose to use their time in Korea to search for their birth parents, while others choose not to. It is up to the individual, and while there might be pressure to search, it is ultimately a personal decision. Adoptees should be prepared to receive a lot of questions about adoption from Koreans and their ETA peers. These questions usually stem from a sense of curiosity and concern but can come across as rude, especially if the adoptee is not prepared to handle them.

Some advice from past ETAs:

- Be able to give a quick response regarding your background and family history.
- Be prepared to make an extra effort to prove your “American-ness.”
- Try to not be offended by personal questions, remarks expressing disbelief, and odd conjectures about your background.
- Keep your sense of humor and view the experience as an educational opportunity.
Gender
Confucianism has shaped many aspects of Korean life. One of the ways this is most vividly experienced by ETAs is through the hierarchies of gender, age, and status that exist in Korea. Korean men have significantly greater status and power than women, a result of traditional Confucian values that emphasize the importance of sons in the family. Even today, the tradition of the first-born son being responsible for supporting the family and carrying on the family name remains important.

The lack of gender equality is also often visible in ETAs’ working and living environments. Both men and women experience a narrow range of employment choices because of strictly defined gender roles. It’s a little unusual to have friends of the opposite sex. Many people assume that a man and woman alone together are a romantic couple. Males are often pressured to drink heavily with other male colleagues. Non-Asian females are sometimes viewed as sex objects. Some Koreans believe the stereotype that all American women behave in the same promiscuous manner that women in American movies do. These gender inequalities can be upsetting to some Americans. One ETA recommended viewing them through the eyes of a cultural anthropologist. It can turn a very frustrating experience into an interesting lesson on gender equality and assumptions taken for granted in America.

While observing gender and status relations can be quite fascinating, sexual harassment is not. Sexual harassment occurs all over the world; South Korea is no exception. For non-Asian women especially, it is important to be aware of oneself and one’s surroundings. In general, Korea is very safe and poses few physical dangers; however, foreign women may be propositioned by taxi drivers and men on the street. The best advice is to walk away and try to dismiss it. Sexual harassment is a reality that several ETAs have had to face both in public and in private. Sexual harassment, reporting it, and methods for keeping yourself safe will be covered in detail at orientation. Remember, Fulbright is there to support ETAs, should they feel unsafe or threatened.

Sexuality
South Korea in general is a heteronormative society. It is common for Koreans to ask bluntly about ETAs’ boyfriends, girlfriends, or lack thereof. Past ETAs have suggested preparing an answer ahead of time to avoid any discomfort. This is especially important if an ETA is homosexual. Some Koreans still deny that homosexuality exists in Korea, and it is often viewed negatively, sometimes as a “Western” phenomenon. Recently the Korean entertainment business has been credited with helping to change the nation’s perceptions of homosexuality. One of
Korea’s top-grossing films, *The King and the Clown*, focuses on a gay love triangle. There is a small gay community, mostly centered in Itaewon and Hongdae in Seoul. For more information visit [http://www.utopia-asia.com/tipskor.htm](http://www.utopia-asia.com/tipskor.htm) or [http://www.fridae.com](http://www.fridae.com). Whatever their sexual orientation, ETAs are strongly encouraged to exercise caution and use their own judgment as to whom to confide in about personal matters. Some ETAs have decided to come out to their teachers, host family, and new friends; however, homosexual or bisexual ETAs may feel alienated in their surroundings. Regardless, Fulbright will be there to offer support.

**Touching**

Ironically, platonic same-sex relationships are often very physically affectionate and may be perceived by Westerners as homosexual. It is not unusual to see men walking hand-in-hand down the street or girls with arms linked at the waist. (On the other hand, public physical affection between members of the opposite sex is still rare, except in Seoul and among younger couples.) As a result, ETAs will encounter various incursions on personal space. Students, teachers, and strangers alike often pat or rub ETAs arms, hold hands with them, and/or physically guide them to different places. These actions are by and large considered friendly overtures and are not meant to be sexual, condescending, or offensive; however, it can still be surprising, and ETAs should be aware that it might occur.

**Body Image**

Plastic surgery has become increasingly popular in Korea. One of the most common surgeries is a double eyelid surgery to enlarge the appearance of a person’s eyes. One of the more extreme surgeries involves the removal of calf muscles to make legs appear slimmer and longer. Koreans are extremely focused on dieting and do not consider it rude to suggest that someone should diet. This focus on thinness and comments about one’s appearance can easily contribute to a negative body image, especially for ETAs accustomed to the acceptance, or at least presence, of a wider range of bodies in America. Though anorexia and bulimia are as prevalent in Korea as in the U.S., Korea largely lacks awareness of and treatment for these eating disorders. Many ETAs have noticed clear signs of eating disorders among students and adults but were unable to find proper avenues to discuss them.

**Korean Manners & Etiquette**

An unusual degree of homogeneity has developed among the Korean people during their long history. This is a country with no ethnic minorities, known as the only country in Asia without a
Chinatown. In the modern era, in particular, this cultural heritage has been complemented by a strong sense of national identity. Despite the political division of the Korean peninsula since 1945, Koreans still consider themselves to be one nation.

Traditionally, abiding by the rules of propriety has been considered extremely important in Korea. And though Korea has significantly modernized, those rules are still often enforced by society. A great deal of attention is paid to the way one acts and dresses. Facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and other such characteristics count for a great deal more than most Americans could imagine.

While these traditional practices of propriety are seen in most Korean homes and even in public places in rural areas, they are not especially evident in the everyday urban life of contemporary Korea. On the contrary, much of the behavior witnessed in public places in Korea, especially in Seoul, may seem rude and ill mannered. It may not be much of a consolation, but many Koreans feel the same way. The anonymity of urban life, the hectic pace, and the at-times mind-boggling congestion all seem to have combined to make life a “rat race.”

As visitors to Korea, however, ETAs should try to observe as much propriety as possible, especially in relations with coworkers. Respect for traditional values will be appreciated, even by those who are not observing them themselves. Past ETAs note that it’s best to start out conservative at first and gradually relax as much as is appropriate to one’s circumstances.

**Use of Names**

Unlike the United States, first names are used very infrequently in Korea, even among members of the same family. Instead, consistent with the general attention to relationship, the emphasis is on the position of the person referenced. For example, Professor Kim Chul Soo would be called Kim Gyosunim (roughly translated as “Honorable Professor Kim”) by everybody except his closest friends and some members of his family. “Chul Soo” and “Mr. Kim” are both inappropriate forms of address.

One reasonably certain way not to offend someone of unknown status is to attach the appellation “seonsaengnim” to the person’s surname. This roughly translates as “teacher” and should be complimentary to the person addressed. If the person is entitled to a more distinguished title, he will correct the speaker but will not be offended.
Note that “mister” and “miss” are social ranks, not marital states. A “mister” is a young male office staff member, and the more widely used “miss” is any office-level or service-level female under age 35 or so, whether married or not.

**Tips for Good Etiquette**

*Use two hands.* When passing an object of any kind, both hands are always used (or “symbolic” both hands, using the right hand with the left hand touching the right elbow). Passing with one hand, especially the left hand, is considered rude.

*Don’t point.* Summoning people or taxis is done by holding the arm out straight, palm down, and flexing the downturned palm toward the body. Never use a crooked finger, as in the U.S. Not only is this impolite, it will often not be understood. Do NOT point at people with the index finger. Instead, indicate someone or something with a nod of the head, a thrust of the chin, or by gesturing using your entire hand.

*Do bow—or maybe shake hands.* Most Korean men are used to handshaking, but some Korean women are not. Thus while men shake hands with men almost universally, men rarely shake hands with women, nor women with women. The safe thing to do is to wait to see if the other person extends a hand. If someone does offer a hand, it is normally polite to take that hand with both of yours.

*Don’t eat with your fingers.* When eating Korean food, use chopsticks, spoons, or a toothpick (for eating pieces of fruit). Koreans consider handling food with bare fingers indelicate. Even sandwiches usually are wrapped in a paper napkin. On the other hand, if chopsticks are difficult to use and there’s no fork, don’t hesitate to use the spoon. Koreans use the spoon much more than Americans do. Also, do not put your chopsticks in your rice bowl; this is considered bad manners and bad luck since the gesture is used when honoring one’s ancestors in Korea.

*Don’t tip.* There is generally no tipping in Korea. A service charge is added to the bill at most hotels in lieu of a tip. It is not necessary to tip taxi drivers unless they help carry luggage or provide some extra service.

*Remove your shoes (and wear socks).* It’s considered crude to wear shoes inside one’s living space, and wearing socks indoors (especially when you’re a guest) is more polite than bare feet.

*Do give gifts.* Korea has a very prevalent gift-giving culture. Often, ETAs find food, drinks, and even socks or toothbrushes left as gifts on their desks at school. It is important to return the favor.
Giving small gifts such as snacks, drinks, etc., can be a great way to show appreciation and promote camaraderie when language and cultural barriers otherwise prevent it.

Smile—and relax! More thorough explanations and additional etiquette guidelines will be discussed during orientation.

**Anti-Americanism & U.S. – Korea Relations**

The peace and stability of the Korean peninsula is vital to maintaining the peace and security of Northeast Asia, including Japan and China. For that reason, Korea is considered of great strategic importance to the United States. Since the Korean War, the U.S. has maintained a strong military presence in South Korea; today, U.S. and Korean forces work together to ensure security on the Korean peninsula. Over the next few years, U.S. forces will gradually move from the Yongsan military base in central Seoul to Pyongtaek, which will decrease the presence of U.S. military personnel in Seoul.

Although most of the older generation of Koreans who lived through the Korean War retain friendly feelings toward the U.S., younger people have much more ambiguous feelings about the American role in Korea. Thus ETAs may witness expression of anti-American sentiments, especially from students. In the wake of President Bush’s “axis of evil” comments about North Korea and a 2002 incident in which two Korean female middle school students were run over and killed by a U.S. military vehicle, Koreans have been more prone to anti-Americanism. Opinions became further polarized recently in the 2006-07 negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement, reactions to North Korea’s nuclear testing and disarmament, and the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech. Many of the Koreans who express such views make a distinction between “anti-Americanism” (*banmi*) and “criticism of U.S. foreign policy” (*bimi*). The former generally is associated with a relatively small group of younger people, mostly students. The latter, which resembles the thinking behind newspaper editorials, is criticism directed at specific American policies rather than America in general. Unlike *banmi*, which may be beyond the realm of rational discussion, *bimi* views may be well founded, although one personally may not agree with them. But even true “*banmi*,” deep-rooted anti-Americanism, seldom spills over into personal animosity against individual Americans. Just be prepared to answer some potentially difficult questions about American foreign policy.
Cultural Adjustment

Culture Shock
Everyone will experience some form of culture shock at some point in time. Culture shock can be positive, but it is also sometimes characterized by a distrust and dislike of people, places, and things. Often this manifests itself in negative feelings that everything is done incompetently or incorrectly, that everything is dirty and unsafe, or that one is isolated and the center of derisive attention. It might also be manifested in a generalized, non-specific sense of frustration. In Korea, the symptoms are aggravated by the following:

Communication problems: Difficulties in communication due to the relative scarcity of English speakers and sharp differences in worldview will become a fact of life for ETAs. The real problem is that some of the people most important in daily survival, such as bank tellers, aren’t able to speak English. The fact that many professors and students can speak English is scant consolation when trying to buy water at the corner shop.

Crowds: Seoul and the other major cities are crowded, and many foreigners never quite get used to it, unless they happen to come from a city of 12 million. Others get so used to it that they find themselves wondering where all the people have gone when they return to the U.S. and find the streets comparatively empty.

Constant staring: In Korea, as in Asia generally, it is not particularly impolite to stare, especially at a foreigner who has “unusual” physical features, though this is not so common in Seoul. Some foreigners attract more attention than they would like. Some enjoy being instant celebrities everywhere they go. The emotional impact it makes can vary from day to day.

Direct questions: Americans are often taken aback by what they consider to be very private and personal questions, such as “Are you married? Why aren’t you married?”, “How much money do you earn?”, and “What university did you attend?” It is perfectly acceptable to defer answering questions that are too personal, as long as it’s done politely. The constant question, “How old are you?” is necessitated by the language, in which one speaks differently to older and younger people.

Points to Consider
Don’t worry! Over 500 ETAs have survived and thrived in this very different culture. They recommend approaching teaching with professionalism and enthusiasm, and learning from Koreans and Korean culture instead of expecting or hoping Koreans will think and behave in more “Western” ways. ETAs suggest pursuing personal goals (e.g., travel, taekwondo, music, journaling, etc.), engaging in Korean culture (celebrating holidays, learning a Korean instrument,
socializing with Koreans), staying connected to people from home and other ETAs, growing through challenges, and being positive.

ETAs must learn Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, before arrival. Learning the two number systems as soon as possible will also be beneficial. It’s a good idea to learn at least some basic phrases before arrival and practice the language at every opportunity. After arrival, it is a good idea to carry a phrasebook (with Hangeul, not just Romanized words) to study and practice useful expressions on the spot. Koreans will sincerely appreciate these efforts. At times, of course, it may be difficult for them to avoid displaying some amusement at these halting attempts, but don’t let that discourage you. Practicing Korean means making mistakes; it’s a learning process.

Past ETAs have suggested the key to survival for one year in Korea is remember that Korea is a different country, and it is the ETA, not the Koreans, who have to adjust. The most productive strategy is simply to relax and keep all developments in perspective. The rationale for doing things in ways that at first seem inefficient or even wrong may become clearer if one keeps an open mind. Of course, there are always times in which no amount of tolerance will allow one to accept certain actions or situations. In these cases, simply walk away; it is unlikely that one English teacher can change all of Korea in one year. Try to avoid generalizing all things unpleasant as being “typically Korean.” This kind of thinking makes it difficult to maintain a positive outlook. Furthermore, Koreans differ in attitude and experience, just as Americans do. If certain people are unappealing, seek out others. Korea is full of all kinds of Koreans! Don’t take anything too personally, and try to be flexible, positive, courteous, and adventurous. You’re in for a remarkable, memorable experience.
Appendix A: Important Contacts

**Fulbright Office**

**ETA Program Coordinator** (until August 2007) – Lindsay Herron

Cell phone: 010-2689-6197  eta.coordinator@fulbright.or.kr

*NOTE: The ETA Program Coordinator should always be the ETAs’ and ETAs’ relatives first point of contact with the Fulbright office. During orientation, however, the Orientation Coordinators will serve as the ETAs’ on-site emergency contacts. Their contact information will be provided via email prior to arrival.*

Main Line: 02-3275-4000  Fax: 02-3275-4028

Executive Director – Mrs. Jai Ok Shim  shim.jo@fulbright.or.kr

Deputy Director – Dr. James Larson  jlarson@fulbright.or.kr

**U.S. Embassy**

Operator: 02-397-4114  American Citizen Services: 02-397-4442

*NOTE: The Embassy has no way to find out how to reach ETAs.*

**Medical Facilities**

Asan Medical Center: 02-480-3114

Seoul Foreign Clinic: 02-796-1871

Severance Hospital International Health Care Center: 02-2228-5810

Dr. Linton, Emergency Pager: 012-263-6556

Dr. Sung, OB/GYN: 02-790-0802 (0803)

Dr. JaYoung Kwon, Female OB/GYN at Severance Hospital: jaykwon@yumc.yonsei.ac.kr, 02-2228-5800, 02-2228-6302

**Other Useful Numbers**

Police: 112

Information: 114

Emergency: 119

Royal Asiatic Society: 02-763-9483

Tourist Info Center: 02-757-0086

US Embassy Public Affairs Library (Seoul) Mon-Fri 11-6: 02-397-4283

Help-Line (English telephone counseling service) 9-6 Fridays: 02-3272-8600;

Fax (any day): 02-719-8600
Public Transportation (complaint/lost and found): 02-777-5000
Foreign Community Service (FOCUS): 02-798-7529
American Chamber of Commerce: 02-752-3061

**Overseas Calling Information**

*NOTE: Do not dial the ‘0’ in front of Korean area codes when calling from overseas.*

Overseas Call Info: 004
Overseas Operator (op-assisted calls): 007
International Access Code from the U.S. to Korea: 011-82
Int'l. Dialing Access Code from Korea to a foreign country: 001 + country code
U.S./Canada Country Code: 1
Appendix B: Address List for Shipping and Mail

1. Fulbright KAEC Address
   YOUR NAME, ETA
   Korean-American Educational Commission
   Fulbright Building
   168-15 Yomni-dong, Mapo-gu
   Seoul 121-874 SOUTH KOREA

2. Shipping Educational Materials (books and printed material only, only once, and prior to the end of Orientation)
   *Use ETA’s name as SENDER ONLY; see section on APO Mail*
   Cultural Affairs Officer
   Public Affairs (KAEC)
   American Embassy
   Unit #15550
   APO AP 96205-001

3. Shipping Winter Clothes and Other Things Not Needed Until Later
   Wait until you get your school’s address and have it sent there by surface mail (cheapest option). Surface mail will take 4-8 weeks to arrive. Do not send by APO; it will be returned to the U.S.

4. Where to Have Letters Sent During the 6-Week Orientation
   You have two choices. Each has its advantages.
   
   To send mail directly to the orientation site, use the address below. Keep in mind that most mail takes about two weeks to get to Korea. Any mail that arrives after August 10, 2007, may not be forwarded.
   Your Name (Fulbright)
   c/o Director of Dormitories
   Kangwon National University
   Chuncheon, South Korea 200-701

   You can also choose to have your mail sent to the Fulbright office in Seoul (see number 1 above). Any mail that arrives after orientation has ended will be forwarded to you. Fulbright will deliver
mail to the orientation site periodically throughout orientation. Keep in mind that mail will usually be hand carried from our offices via train, so large packages may have to be picked up in person when ETAs come to the Fulbright office at the end of orientation.
Appendix C: Korean Holidays

July 17, 2007  Constitution Day

August 15, 2007  Liberation Day

September 24-26, 2007  Chuseok (Harvest Festival) – 15th day of 8th lunar month

October 3, 2007  National Foundation Day

December 25, 2007  Christmas Day

January 1, 2008  New Year’s Day

February 6-8, 2008  Seolnal (Lunar New Year) – 1st day of 1st lunar month, plus the day before and after

March 1, 2008  Independence Day

April 5, 2008  Arbor Day

May 5, 2008  Children’s Day

May 12, 2008  Buddha’s Birthday (Seokka Tanshin-il) – 8th day of 4th lunar month

June 6, 2008  Memorial Day

NOTE: The KAEC offices are closed for the holidays of both Korea and the United States.

This list includes Korean holidays only.
Appendix D: Useful Websites

1. Fulbright-related Websites
Fulbright Korea  http://www.fulbright.or.kr
IIE Fulbright Program for US Students  http://us.fulbrightonline.org

2. Korean Language Programs

Online Language Websites
Life in Korea  http://www.lifeinkorea.com/Language/korean.cfm
Sogang University  http://korean.sogang.ac.kr
Introduction to Korean  http://langintro.com/kintro/index.htm
Korean Language  http://www.interedu.go.kr/intro_eng.htm
Korean Tutor  http://www.koreantutor.com/default.asp

Language Academies in Seoul
Ganada  http://www.ganadakorean.com/
Language Teaching Research Center  http://www.ltrc.co.kr/eng/

3. General Information About Korea
Korea National Tourism  http://english.tour2korea.com/
Life In Korea  http://www.lifeinkorea.com/
What’s On Korea  http://english.whatsonkorea.com/
Seoul Selection  http://www.seoulselection.com/
Korea Web  http://koreaweb.ws/
U.S. Embassy  http://seoul.usembassy.gov/
An American Teaching  http://www2.ald.net/~roden/korea
English in South Korea

4. Korea-Related Blogs

The Marmot’s Hole  http://www.rijkohler.com/
The Lost Nomad  http://www.lostnomad.org/
North Korea Zone  http://www.nkzone.org/nkzone/
Scribblings of the Metropolitician*  http://metropolitician.blogs.com/
Weblog @ Oranckay  http://oranckay.net/blog/
Frog in a Well  http://www.froginawell.net/korea/

*The author is an ETA alumnus and maintains a Korea-related Podcast as well. The link to the Podcast is available on the blog site.

5. Other Sites

Arts and Culture
Seoul Arts Center  http://www.sac.or.kr/eng/
National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts  http://ncktpa.go.kr/eng/index_eng.jsp

Computer

English Korean Newspapers
Korean Herald  http://www.koreaherald.com/
Korea Times  http://times.hankooki.com/
Joongang Ilbo  http://joongangdaily.joins.com/
International Herald Tribune  http://www.iht.com/asia.html
Digital ChosunIlbo  http://english.chosun.com
Economic Life  http://english.hankyung.com

Film and Theater
Theater Info  http://www.4theater.com
Korean Films  http://www.koreanfilm.org/
Asian DVDs  http://www.dvdasian.com/

Health
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center for Disease Control</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdc.gov/">http://www.cdc.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
<td><a href="http://www.who.int/">http://www.who.int/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident and Sickness</td>
<td><a href="http://exchanges.state.gov/aspe/">http://exchanges.state.gov/aspe/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program for Exchanges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating Disorders</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aabainc.org">http://www.aabainc.org</a></td>
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**English Books in Korea**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Book Store</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>What the Book (Itaewon)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.whatthebook.com/">http://www.whatthebook.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YesAsia</td>
<td><a href="http://www.yesasia.com">http://www.yesasia.com</a></td>
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**Transportation**

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<th>Service</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>Express Bus Info</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kobus.co.kr/eng/index.jsp">http://www.kobus.co.kr/eng/index.jsp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Airlines</td>
<td><a href="http://www.koreanair.com">http://www.koreanair.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asiana Airlines</td>
<td><a href="http://www.asiana.co.kr/english/">http://www.asiana.co.kr/english/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoul Subway</td>
<td><a href="http://www.smrt.co.kr/english_smrt/cyberstation_smrt/cyberstation.jsp">http://www.smrt.co.kr/english_smrt/cyberstation_smrt/cyberstation.jsp</a></td>
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Appendix E: Recommended Books

Travel Guides
Insight Guide Korea by Tom Le Bas
Moon Handbooks South Korea by Robert Nilsen
Culture Shock! Korea* by Sonja Vegdahl and Ben Seunghwa Hur
*2004 ETAs contributed to the revision of the 2005 edition.
NOTE: Past ETAs do not recommend Lonely Planet Korea, as much of the information and maps it contains are incorrect.

Korean Phrasebooks
Lonely Planet Korean Phrasebook by Minkyoung Kim and J. D. Hilts
Korean at a Glance by Daniel D. Holt
NOTE: Langenscheidt's Pocket Dictionary Korean/English, English/Korean (Turtleback) is not recommended, as it relies too heavily on phonetic Romanized pronunciations. ETAs should only buy phrasebooks that include Hangeul (Korean characters), which will be more useful for study and everyday use.

General History/Introduction to Korea
Korea's Culture and Customs by Donald Clark
Korea's Place in the Sun by Bruce Cumings
Learning to Think Korean: A Guide to Living and Working in Korea by Robert Kohls
The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies by Michael Breen
The Two Koreas by Don Oberdorfer
Korea: Old and New by Carter Eckert, et al
A New History of Korea by Ki-Baik Lee

North Korea
North Korea: Another Country by Bruce Cumings
The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950 by Charles Armstrong
Comrades and Strangers: Behind the Closed Doors of North Korea by Michael Harrold
Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty by Bradley K. Martin
The Aquariums of Pyongyang by Chol-Hwan Kang
Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea by Guy Delisle (graphic novel)

Literature
Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. 1, 2 ed. by Peter Lee
Early Korean Literature by David R. McCann
YOBO: Korean American Writing in Hawaii, ed. by Nora Okja Keller
An Appointment With my Brother by Mun-yol Yi
Surfacing Sadness: A Centennial of Korean-American Literature, 1903-2003 ed. by Yearn
Hong Choi
Brother Enemy: Poems of the Korean War ed. by Ji-moon Suh
Comfort Woman by Nora Okja Keller
Mujong by Yi Kwangsu
Three Generations by Sang-seop Yom
Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea by Ilyon

Miscellaneous Non-Fiction
Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea by Hildi Kang
The Kwangju Uprising by Henry Scott-Stokes
The Comfort Women by George Hicks
Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women by Dai Sil Kim Gibson
Korea in War, Revolution, and Peace by Horace Underwood (memoirs)
Living Dangerously in Korea by Donald Clark
Hamel’s Journal And A Description Of The Kingdom Of Korea 1653-1666 by Hendrik Hamel
Korea: A Walk Through the Land of Miracles by Simon Winchester
The Imjin War by Samuel Hawley
Korea Through Australian Eyes by George Rose
Nanjung Ilgi: War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-Sin by Yi Sun-Sin