Unit 3

Building Strong Communities

A voter taking part in decision making in St. John's, Newfoundland

A team working together toward a common goal in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Canadian Members of Parliament in session in Ottawa, Ontario
Essential Question

How are people’s lives affected by how much power they have?

Working Together

Have you ever been part of a team or club, or participated in a game? Was there a leader or leaders? How were those leaders selected? What was your team's or club's purpose? Sports teams, schools, communities, and countries have different ways of achieving goals. One person may make all of the decisions, or everyone may decide together. How do the governments of Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and Canada work to build strong nations?

What you will learn in this unit

- What is power and who has it in Japan, North Korea, and South Korea?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of various systems of government?
- What are the structures and processes of Canada’s democratic government?
- What roles do First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples have in Canada’s government?

In this unit, you will learn about the lives of the two teens shown below.

Asuka
Home: Yokohama, Japan
Chapter 5

Alyssa
Home: Ottawa, Canada
Chapter 6
Chapter Focus Question

How do various forms of government affect people's lives?

Where in the World Are Japan and the Koreas?

Regina to Tokyo: 8561 km

What Time Is It There?

Regina
9:00 a.m. Monday

Tokyo
12 midnight Monday
In this section, you’ll read about Asuka. She is in high school and lives with her family in Yokohama, Japan. Life has not been easy for Asuka, but that has not stopped her from wanting to make the world a better place to live. What does Asuka’s story tell you about why she is happy to challenge herself with real-world issues?

Story by Michael Condon

In the bamboo- and concrete-covered hills of Yokohama, a cluster of identical apartment blocks stands out. The drab, box-shaped buildings have numbers stencilled onto their walls to identify them. On the third floor of one of these buildings, in a small apartment no bigger than an average Canadian living room, lives Asuka. She shares the apartment with her father, her grandmother, her 15-year-old brother, the family’s pet turtle, and Max, a pet rabbit.

More than 36 million people live in the Greater Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area. This is more than the entire population of Canada. With so many people needing housing, space is scarce. Most people live in small apartments. About 2500 people live in this four-block-square area of Yokohama. It is very crowded, and the cost of living in Yokohama is high.
For a single-parent family, it can be a struggle to make ends meet. Asuka’s family moved to Yokohama after her parents divorced. She was three years old. To support the family, her father took a job as a salesman in the construction industry. With money short, Asuka also helps out by working up to 20 hours a week after school. She gives one third of her wages to the family and uses the rest to pay her other expenses.

Though her family does not have a lot of money, Asuka considers herself fortunate. Every day she wakes up at 6:30 a.m., grabs the bento box lunch her grandmother has prepared, and heads off to school. She attends a high school in the middle of Yokohama, where she studies international affairs. Her courses are demanding. They include history, politics, and economics, but also Japanese, English, and Korean language arts.

Asuka has developed a keen interest in politics, economics, and history. She plans to study these subjects when she goes to college. Asuka thinks it is important to learn about politics and history because they explain how various countries have developed and the way
Asuka is a high-energy person. In addition to her studies and her job, she takes part in extracurricular activities. These activities range from volunteer work to playing drums in a rock band. Asuka is a leader in the school’s Glocally Club. (The club’s name is a combination of the words “global” and “locally.”) As part of the club’s activities, the students go on field trips to observe war ruins. They also learn how wars affect people, and look for ways to achieve peace in the modern world.

The teacher working with the club has introduced the students to some serious issues that are far from the minds of the average high school student in most developed countries. Asuka is glad that the teacher challenges them to think about world issues.

Over the last couple of years, Asuka has also taken part in the Yokohama Student Forum. Last year she became a student leader and put together a forum on child labour—an issue that touches the lives of families across Asia.

Asuka appreciates all the opportunities she has had. “I have [led] a privileged life,” she says, “while others are suffering elsewhere.” After graduating from college, Asuka says she wants to do something to help others less privileged.

Judging by what she has achieved so far, the promising young student will be likely to put her talents to good use in the future.

**INQUIRING MINDS**

1. What has Asuka done to build a strong community and to help others?
2. Asuka is concerned about issues such as child labour. What current world issues concern you?
How do the governments of Japan, North Korea, and South Korea meet geographical challenges?

More About

North and South Korea
For almost 1000 years, the Korean peninsula was one country: Korea. After the Second World War, the peninsula was split into two countries: North Korea and South Korea. Any reference to “Korea” indicates the time period before the Second World War.

The people of Japan, North Korea, and South Korea have learned to live in a challenging environment. The physical features, climate, and natural resources of the region have created conditions that can make living there difficult. The governments of these countries help people prepare for and recover from natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, storms, and tsunamis. The governments also find ways to obtain resources and materials that are needed to build a strong economy.

Physical Features

Japan is a 2400-kilometre-long chain of islands made up of four large islands and more than 3000 smaller islands. The countries of North Korea and South Korea (also called “the Koreas”) form the Korean peninsula, which is part of the continent of Asia.
Earth’s crust consists of separate blocks of rock and soil, called tectonic plates. The edges of four plates are close to Japan and the Koreas. As one tectonic plate sinks beneath Japan, it melts and becomes molten rock. The molten rock can rise to Earth’s surface, creating volcanic eruptions. Japan has 116 active volcanoes.

The pressure of these plates slowly moving together causes frequent earthquakes, many of them major ones. On March 11, 2011, Japan experienced the most destructive earthquake in its history. A tsunami, or tidal wave, was created by this earthquake. The tsunami destroyed towns and many kilometres of coastline. Thousands of people were killed or missing, and millions were left without power and water. The tsunami also damaged the cooling system of a nuclear power plant, causing a radiation crisis.

Although earthquakes can still cause terrible destruction, the government of Japan has done much to prepare for these natural disasters. Building codes are very strict, and support for people affected by earthquakes has increased.

The tsunami created by the 2011 earthquake was up to 10 metres high, and destroyed many homes, ships, ports, and farmland.

**Map Skills**

How might areas with high elevation be used differently from areas with low elevation?
A Challenging Climate

Japan, North Korea, and South Korea are mid-latitude countries. Summer seasonal winds cause storms called monsoons that can drop more than 200 centimetres of rainfall in a year. The flooding and mudslides from monsoons have killed people, buried houses, and destroyed crops.

Powerful tropical cyclones, called typhoons, are also a result of the region’s ocean and wind currents. Typhoons are similar to hurricanes in the western hemisphere, with wind speeds between 120 and 220 kilometres per hour. Most typhoons happen between May and October, and are very destructive. In 2010, typhoons and other tropical storms in this region caused more than $1 billion in damage.

The governments of Japan and South Korea have disaster plans in place to help people when these natural catastrophes occur. These countries also work together to track typhoons and issue warnings to their citizens.

Graph Skills

How can the government use the information in these graphs to make disaster plans?

Tokyo: Average Rainfall

P'yongyang: Average Rainfall

Rescue workers evacuate residents during a flood caused by a storm.
Scarcity of Land and Resources

With many hills and mountains, Japan and North and South Korea face a shortage of flat land. This type of land is the best location for houses and apartment buildings, but it is also needed for farming and industry. As a result, the flat land in this region is very crowded. The people and the governments of these countries must carefully plan how they will use this land.

Farming the Land  Rice is the most important crop in both Japan and the Koreas. In North Korea, a cool, dry climate means that farms produce less rice than those in South Korea or Japan. However, both South Korea and Japan are highly urbanized. This means that large cities and towns take up more space, and less land is available for farming.

With less flat land available, farmers must work on hilly land instead. Terraces, which are levels of flat land dug into the side of a hill, are used to create fields. Large tractors are too big to plow the narrow terraces, so rice is planted and harvested by hand or with small machines.

Comparing the Populations of Japan and the Koreas

In 2010, the population of Japan was more than 126 million. North Korea had almost 24 million people, and South Korea had more than 48 million. The area of these countries combined is smaller than the province of Saskatchewan.

Map Skills

Why is there so little cropland in Japan?
In some areas, farmers irrigate the land so that they can plant crops during drier times of the year. This practice allows more than one type of crop to be grown on the same land. Such small-scale farming takes a great deal of time and hard work. Farmers do it to make the most of limited land.

**Fishing** The surrounding seas provide ample food for the people in this region. The ocean currents near Japan create a healthy environment for many different species of fish. Enough fish products are produced to feed the population in the region and to export to other countries around the world. But even with the availability of fish, Japan and the Koreas have to import other food because of the limited land available for farming.

**Scarce Resources** Both Japan and South Korea have few mineral resources, and must trade with other countries for these kinds of resources, which are needed in their industries. North Korea, though, is rich in mineral resources such as coal, lead, iron ore, copper, gold, and salt. However, this country must still import goods such as grain and machinery.

All three countries need to import additional energy resources. While the fast-flowing rivers are good for hydroelectricity, they cannot generate enough electricity to support their large populations. To meet their energy needs, South Korea and Japan have built nuclear power plants.
Adapting to Challenges

The governments of Japan and the Koreas help their citizens live in a challenging environment. For example, construction regulations have been changed so that buildings are more resistant to fires, floods, and earthquakes.

In the past, most buildings in the region were made of wood, and could be easily destroyed. Today, construction regulations require the use of modern technology and materials that can withstand the forces of nature. Rubber pads under skyscrapers dampen the shock waves of earthquakes. Computer systems move weights in the bases of the skyscrapers to keep the buildings balanced.

Safety Alerts  Governments have developed early warning systems that help people take safety measures before earthquakes strike. One system developed in Japan can give people as much as 30 seconds of warning. This might not seem like very much time, but every second is important when an earthquake is about to hit.

“School children will be able to take shelter under their desks in classrooms if they have five seconds. In fact...if we have 10 seconds to prepare for major tremors, we can reduce the number of deaths caused by quakes significantly.”

-Yoshinori Sugihara, head of the Emergency Earthquake Alert and Trial Project
Top 10 Populations (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,354,146,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,214,464,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>317,641,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>232,517,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>195,423,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>184,753,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>164,425,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>158,259,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>140,367,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>126,995,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>33,890,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tight Spaces** Japan has the 10th-highest population in the world, but not much living space. In Japan, skyscrapers fill cities, and many shopping centres have several floors underground. Transit systems must be able to handle hundreds of thousands of people taking trains and subways to and from work and school every day. Japanese people have found various ways to use space creatively.

- Capsule hotels have very small rooms.

- Oishiya [oh shee ya] or "pushers" pack commuters onto Tokyo subway trains during rush hour.
Environmental Threats  Managing natural resources is another challenge. With so many people crowded together, it is easy to use limited resources too quickly.

North Korea and South Korea have lost much of their forest land by cutting trees faster than they can grow back. Without tree cover, rainwater washes quickly into rivers and streams, and flooding becomes worse. Soil needed for farming is washed away.

Overfishing is a problem in the region because too many fish have been taken from coastal waters too quickly. Today, laws control the number and kinds of fish that can be caught. It is possible that a ban on bluefin tuna fishing may be put into place to help fish stocks recover. This is similar to the ban on cod fishing off Canada’s east coast.

Intensive use of the land has resulted in serious pollution in all three countries. Factories, cars, and farms all create air and water pollution.

While much remains to be done, the people of South Korea and Japan have pushed their governments to make changes to protect the environment. Their governments work to reduce air and water pollution, find cleaner fuels, and recycle more waste. The North Korean government has made less progress in addressing these problems. A shortage of clean water is a serious problem in that country.

Thinking It Through

Key Ideas
1. Describe the advantages and challenges of the region’s geography. Consider the physical features, climate, land use, and natural resources.
2. Look at the chart on page 132. How might a government use population statistics to plan for challenges?
3. If you were in power, what would you focus on to help people of this region adapt to geographic challenges?

Thinking Critically
4. In what ways have geographic challenges made Japan, North Korea, and South Korea interdependent?

Chapter Focus Question
How do various forms of government affect people’s lives?

5. How have the governments of Japan, South Korea, and North Korea used their power to help people live in a challenging environment?