

Mongolia and Taiwan

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Mongolia is a sparsely populated country where many people live as nomads.
2. Taiwan is a small island with a dense population and a highly industrialized economy.

The Big Idea

Mongolia is a rugged land with a nomadic way of life and growing cities, while Taiwan is a densely settled and industrialized island.

Key Terms and Places

gers, p. 582
 Ulaanbaatar, p. 582
 Taipei, p. 584
 Kao-hsiung, p. 584

TAKING NOTES As you read, use a chart like the one below to take notes on the history, culture, and region today of Mongolia and Taiwan.

	Mongolia	Taiwan
History		
Culture		
Region Today		

If YOU lived there...

Like many Mongolians, you have loved horses since you were a small child. You live in an apartment in the city of Ulaanbaatar, however. Some of your family are talking about leaving the city and becoming nomadic herders like your ancestors were. You think you might like being able to ride horses more. You're not sure you would like living in a tent, though, especially in winter.

Do you want to move back to the land?

BUILDING BACKGROUND While Mongolia is a rugged land where some people still live as nomads, Taiwan is a modern and highly industrialized island. The two regions do have a few things in common, however. Mongolia and Taiwan are both neighbors of China, both are becoming more urban, and both are democracies.

Mongolia

A wild and rugged land, Mongolia is home to the Mongol people. They have a proud and fascinating history. This history includes conquests and empires and a culture that prizes horses.

Mongolia's History

Today when people discuss the world's leading countries, they do not mention Mongolia. However, 700 years ago Mongolia was perhaps the greatest power in the world. Led by the ruler Genghis Khan, the Mongols conquered much of Asia, including China. Later Mongol leaders continued the conquests. They built the greatest empire the world had seen at the time.

The Mongol Empire reached its height in the late 1200s. During that time, the empire stretched from Europe's Danube River in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east. As time passed, however, the Mongol Empire declined. In the late 1600s China conquered Mongolia and ruled it for more than 200 years.

Nomadic Life in Mongolia

Some Mongolians are nomads, who live in tents called gers. Inside, gers are furnished mainly with rugs. Different areas of the gers are used for specific purposes. For example, the back is used for an altar.

ANALYZING VISUALS What do you think it is like to live in a ger?



Gers have wooden, painted doors. The doors always face south because the wind usually blows from the northeast.

With Russia's help, Mongolia declared independence from China in 1911. Soon Communists gained control and in 1924 formed the Mongolian People's Republic. Meanwhile, Russia had become part of the Soviet Union, a large Communist country north of Mongolia. The Soviet Union strongly influenced Mongolia and gave it large amounts of economic aid. This aid ended, however, after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Since then, Mongolians have struggled to build a democratic government and a free-market economy.

Mongolia's Culture

In spite of years of Communist rule, the Mongolian way of life remains fairly traditional. Nearly half of Mongolia's people live as nomads. They herd livestock across Mongolia's vast grasslands and make their homes in **gers** (GUHR2). These are large, circular, felt tents that are easy to put up, take down, and move.

Since many Mongols live as herders, horses play a major **role** in Mongolian life. As a result, Mongolian culture highly prizes horse skills, and Mongolian children often learn to ride when they are quite young.

Mongolia Today

Mongolia is sparsely populated. Slightly larger than Alaska, it has about 2.7 million people. More than a quarter of them live in **Ulaanbaatar** (oo-lahn-BAH-tawr), the capital and only large city. Mongolia's other cities are quite small. However, Mongolia's urban population is slowly growing.

The country's main industries include textiles, carpets, coal, copper, and oil. The city of Ulaanbaatar is the main industrial and commercial center. Mongolia produces little food other than from livestock, however, and faces food and water shortages.

READING CHECK Summarizing What are some features of Mongolian culture?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
role part or function

FOCUS ON READING
Read the second paragraph under Mongolia Today. Determine the topic of each sentence. What is the implied main idea?

Taiwan

When Portuguese sailors visited the island of Taiwan in the late 1500s, they called it *Ilha Formosa*, or “beautiful island.” For many years, Westerners called Taiwan by the name Formosa. Today the loveliness of Taiwan’s green mountains and waterfalls competes with its modern, crowded cities.

Taiwan’s History

The Chinese began settling Taiwan in the 600s. At different times in history, both China and Japan have controlled Taiwan. In 1949, though, the Chinese Nationalists took over Taiwan. Led by Chiang Kai-shek, the Nationalists were fleeing the Communists, who had taken control of China’s mainland. The Chinese Nationalist Party ruled Taiwan under martial law, or military rule, for 38 years. Today Taiwan’s government is a multiparty democracy.

As the chart below explains, tensions remain between China and Taiwan. The Chinese government claims that Taiwan is a rebel part of China. In contrast, Taiwan’s government claims to be the true government of China. For all practical purposes, though, Taiwan functions as an independent country.

Taiwan’s Culture

Taiwan’s history is reflected in its culture. Its population is about 85 percent native Taiwanese. These people are descendants of Chinese people who migrated to Taiwan largely in the 1700s and 1800s. As a result, Chinese ways dominate Taiwan’s culture.

Other influences have shaped Taiwan’s culture as well. Because Japan once ruled Taiwan, Japanese culture can be seen in some Taiwanese buildings and foods. More recently, European and American practices and customs are becoming noticeable in Taiwan, particularly in larger cities.

Taiwan Today

Taiwan is a modern country with a population of about 23 million. These people live on an island about the size of Delaware and Maryland combined. Because much of Taiwan is mountainous, most people live on the island’s western coastal plain. This region is home to Taiwan’s main cities.

The two largest cities are **Taipei** (TY-PAY) and **Kao-hsiung** (KOW-SHYOOHNG). Taipei, the capital, is Taiwan’s main financial center. Because it has grown so quickly, it faces serious overcrowding and environmental problems. Kao-hsiung is a center of heavy industry and Taiwan’s main seaport.

Tensions between China and Taiwan	
China <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Considers Taiwan to be part of China■ Threatens force if Taiwan declares independence■ Officially recognized by the United States■ Member of the United Nations	Taiwan <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Claims to be China’s true government■ Growing movement for independence from China■ Unofficially recognized by the United States■ Unable to gain membership in the United Nations

A map showing the mainland of China in light green and the island of Taiwan in light pink. The word "CHINA" is written in bold black letters on the mainland, and "TAIWAN" is written in bold black letters on the island. The map is part of an informational graphic with text boxes on either side.

Taipei

Taipei, Taiwan's capital, is a bustling city of more than 2 million people. The tall tower in the photo is the Taipei 101, which is 101 stories tall.



Taiwan is one of Asia's richest and most industrialized countries. It is a leader in the production and export of computers and sports equipment. Taiwan's farmers grow many crops as well, such as sugarcane.

READING CHECK **Contrasting** How does Taiwan's economy differ from Mongolia's?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW Mongolia and Taiwan are smaller countries bordering China. Mongolia is a wild land with a nomadic people who prize horses. In contrast, Taiwan is a modern and industrialized island. In the next chapter, you will learn about Japan and the Koreans.

Section 4 Assessment

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Online Quiz

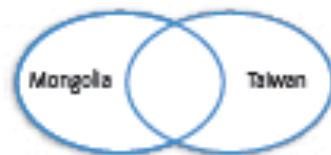
KEYWORD: SK7 HP22

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

- Define** What are gers, and what are their roles in Mongolia's culture?
 - Make Inferences** Why might many Mongolians be proud of their country's history?
 - Elaborate** Why does Mongolia's culture prize horses?
- Recall** Why is Taipei an important Taiwanese city, and what problems does the city face?
 - Summarize** What is the significance of Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan's history?
 - Evaluate** Would you rather live in Taiwan or Mongolia? Provide information about each place to explain your answer.

Critical Thinking

- Comparing and Contrasting** Create a Venn diagram like the one shown. Use your notes and compare and contrast the histories, cultures, and societies of Mongolia and Taiwan.



FOCUS ON WRITING

- Collecting Information about Mongolia and Taiwan** Consider Mongolia and Taiwan as settings for your legend. For example, your legend might explain the creation of the Gobi, a large desert located partly in Mongolia.