

A Day in the Life

Teens in South Korea face a far more stressful experience preparing for college admission than young people in the United States. High school is extremely difficult in South Korea. One proverb says: "If you sleep four hours a night, you will go to college. If you sleep five hours a night, you won't." While SAT prep courses are a booming industry in many U.S. school districts, in South Korea, preparation for the college entrance exam is grueling and long term, and more often than not, Korean parents spend a lot of money for extra classes in the evening and for private tutoring.

Here's a sample "day in the life" of two teen girls, one in South Korea and the other in the United States:

	SOUTH KOREA	UNITED STATES
Time of day	Su-Jin (14 years old)	Sarah (14 years old)
6:30 a.m.	Wake up and prepare to go to school	Wake up and prepare to go to school
7:20 a.m.	Walk to school	Ride school bus to school
7:40 a.m.	Arrive at school	Arrive at school
2:30 p.m.	Still at school (sixth class period)	All classes end. Go to the gym for basketball junior varsity practice
4:00 p.m.	Leave school	Leave school
4:30 p.m.	Arrive at the educational institute for additional classes in Korean, English and math	Return home, watch TV, do some chores
6:30 p.m.	Sleep during the break at the educational institute	Eat dinner, then watch TV
8:00 p.m.	Return home and have dinner	Start homework
8:30 p.m.	Use the Internet—blog, chat with friends, play games, visit Web sites	Finish homework and update Facebook at the same time
9:00 p.m.	English tutor comes to home; practice English reading and writing	Listen to music, check Facebook and other Web sites
10:30 p.m.	Continue studying with the tutor	Go to bed and text friends
11:00 p.m.	Do homework from school and the academic institute while listening to music	Sleep
1:00 a.m.	Go to bed	Sleep