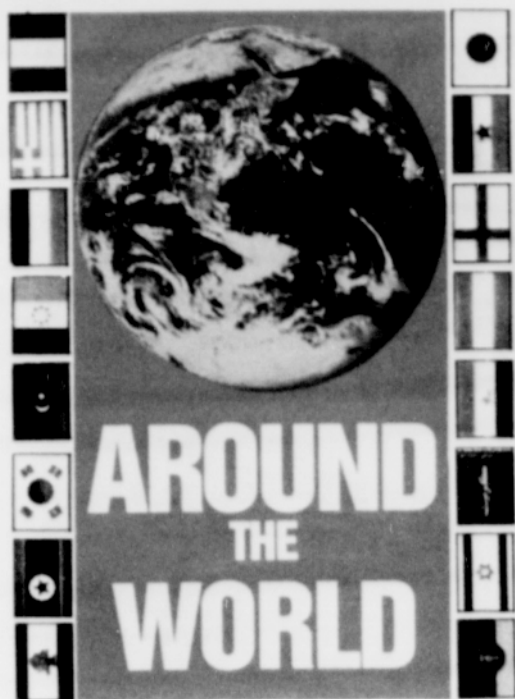
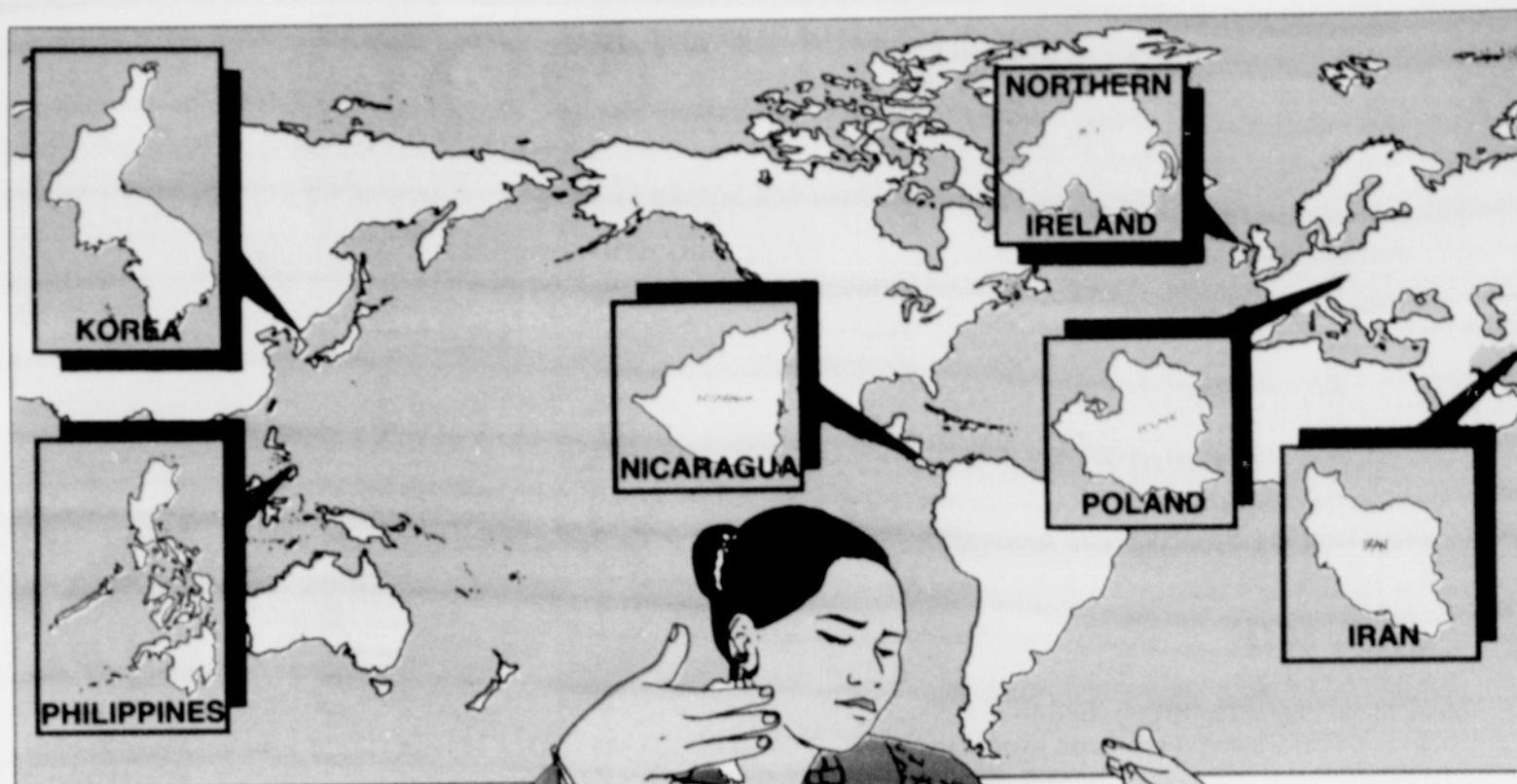




Nations in the news

Different countries are in the news every day. Have you ever wondered about the kids who live in these countries? What are their schools like? What kind of food do they eat? What kind of clothes do they wear?



Korea

Education is very important in Korea — maybe the most important part of the whole culture. Most school expenses are paid for by the government. Children must attend school between the ages of six and 12, but most continue on through high school. In order to go on to college, however, students must pass very difficult exams.

Koreans like spicy food, usually eaten with boiled rice. Barbecued beef slices called *pulgogi* are considered a special treat. Koreans also enjoy fish and soup. They don't usually have sweet desserts but may share some fruit at the end of a meal.

People used to call Korea the land of white-dressed people. Now white is mostly worn by women who are in mourning. Koreans today dress like Americans but have beautiful silk jackets (above) to wear on special occasions.

Nicaragua

This country has a shortage of schools and teachers. But the Sandinista government is trying to educate its people. More than half of the Nicaraguan people can read.

Beans and rice are eaten at most meals. Nicaraguans eat tortillas, enchiladas and *baho*, which is meat, vegetables and bananas. They have lots of tropical fruits to eat. Both arms, but not the elbows, usually remain on the table during the meal. Sometimes people take a siesta, or nap, after their midday meal.

Nicaraguans wear lightweight, washable clothing all-year round because the average temperature is 80 degrees.

Poland

School is free for all kids in Poland. They must attend at least ten years, starting with kindergarten. Students must take exams to get into universities and only about five percent are accepted into the most popular schools.

Poles (people who live in Poland) eat the biggest meal of the day in the afternoon. Parents start to work early and usually arrive home by 3 p.m. The main meal might include soup, meat or fish, salad, potatoes and tea. Poland is not a rich country, and the food supply is limited. Canned fish, bread and dairy products are always available, but other items are harder to find.

Clothes are quite expensive in Poland and there are not many styles to choose from. As a result, most people in the rural areas make their own clothes. People in the cities dress like Americans. Blue jeans are popular among the students.



Iran

Religion and school are combined in Iran. Kids learn about their Islam religion in school. Thanks to money from the country's natural resources, especially oil, better schools are being built and teachers are being trained. Less than half the people in Iran can read.

People eat Persian food. Their most famous dish is *shish-kebabs*, which are pieces of meat and vegetables cooked on a stick called a skewer. Sometimes drinking water must be cleaned with filters.

Iranians are known for dressing formally. Women are almost completely covered by their clothes. They wear thick, dark stockings on their legs and dark clothes. Men are not allowed to wear short-sleeved shirts.

Philippines

Education is also highly valued in the Philippines. The literacy rate — number of people who can read and write — is higher in the Philippines than in any other East Asian country. The government spends 40% of the nation's budget on education.

Filipinos (people who live in the Philippines) eat rice and lots of it. For protein, this island country depends on fish caught from the Pacific Ocean. Filipinos also enjoy fresh tropical fruit and vegetables.

The *barong* for men and the *balintawak* for women are the national costumes in the Philippines. A *barong* is a beautifully embroidered shirt. A *balintawak* (above) is a full-length dress with a scoop neckline. Filipinos only wear these costumes on special occasions. The rest of the time they wear the same kind of clothes Americans wear.

Northern Ireland

Kids either go to Catholic or Protestant schools. All kids 4½ to 11 years old must go to primary school. If they pass a test at age 11, they go to grammar school which prepares them for college. If they don't pass the test, they go to secondary school or to a technical college to learn a profession or trade. Schools are more strict than those in the United States.

The Irish usually serve at least two kinds of potato dishes at every meal. The evening meal is called *tea*. Dinner during the middle of the day is called *high tea*.

Since Ireland is a poor country, people can't afford to dress in the latest fashions. Because the weather is often rainy, they usually carry a raincoat or umbrella.