Power Takes Hold

Trace how Kim Il Sung established a dictatorship in North Korea.

TOT.C.9.3.B "establishment of the North Korean dictatorship,"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence of Soviet support for Kim Il Sung, and circle actions that reduced the power of his rivals. Number three turning points you find in the order they happened.

How Kim Il Sung Consolidated Power

1. In August 1945, Japan's rule over Korea ended, but Koreans did not gain a single, independent government. Soviet troops occupied the north, while American troops occupied the south. In the northern zone, Soviet officials promoted Kim Il Sung, a Korean guerrilla who had fought Japan, over other possible leaders. They helped place him at the head of a new northern governing committee in 1946. Soviet backing gave Kim access to offices, soldiers, and public attention that his rivals lacked. Yet outside support alone could not make him a dictator. He still had to build loyalty within northern Korea.

2. Kim's committee used policies that changed daily life as well as politics. A 1946 land reform took land from Japanese owners and large Korean landowners and gave it to poor farmers. Many recipients now had a reason to support the new authorities, while wealthy landowners lost influence. The government also took control of major industries and expanded its authority over political groups. In 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established in the north, with Kim as premier. Elections offered voters candidates approved by the ruling coalition, not a free choice among competing parties. Institutions made Kim's position look official while narrowing alternatives.

3. War gave Kim another opportunity to concentrate power. North Korean forces invaded the south in June 1950, starting the Korean War. After the 1953 armistice stopped major fighting, Kim accused political rivals of disloyalty and had some tried or removed from office. In the following years, further purges pushed out leaders with ties to other communist groups. State media praised Kim as the nation's indispensable leader, and open criticism became dangerous. By weakening independent voices and making the ruling party answer to him, Kim turned institutions built after 1945 into tools of personal rule. This dictatorship emerged over years, not in one sudden announcement.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Soviet actions give Kim an advantage over other possible leaders? Why was that advantage not enough by itself?

2. How could the 1946 land reform both gain support for the new authorities and weaken possible opponents?

3. How did the new state and its elections help Kim keep power while limiting alternatives?

4. How did Kim use the years after the Korean War to make challenges to his rule less likely?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 105 word museum label explaining why North Korea's dictatorship developed over time rather than in one announcement. Use evidence from at least two paragraphs, identify two different methods of building power, and explain how those methods worked together.

ANSWER KEY

Power Takes Hold

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.9.3.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline evidence of Soviet support for Kim Il Sung, and circle actions that reduced the power of his rivals. Number three turning points you find in the order they happened. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Soviet actions give Kim an advantage over other possible leaders? Why was that advantage not enough by itself?	**Soviet officials promoted Kim and helped put him in charge of a governing committee, giving him resources and public attention. He still needed to build loyalty within northern Korea.**
2	How could the 1946 land reform both gain support for the new authorities and weaken possible opponents?	**Poor farmers who received land had reason to support the authorities, while large landowners who lost land also lost influence.**
3	How did the new state and its elections help Kim keep power while limiting alternatives?	**The new state made Kim's leadership official as premier. Elections restricted voters to candidates approved by the ruling coalition, limiting competing political choices.**
4	How did Kim use the years after the Korean War to make challenges to his rule less likely?	**He accused rivals of disloyalty, removed or tried some, and carried out further purges. Public criticism also became dangerous.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Kim Il Sung did not become an unchecked ruler the day Japan surrendered. Soviet officials helped him gain a leadership post, giving him a platform that other Korean leaders lacked. Land reform then won support from poor farmers, while the new state and controlled elections reduced opportunities for competing leaders. After the Korean War, Kim removed rivals and made public criticism dangerous. Earlier institutions gave him authority and resources; later purges made it harder for anyone inside those institutions to challenge him. Together, these steps changed political leadership into a dictatorship.

For the marking job, accept any three accurately ordered turning points supported by the passage. For the museum label, look for evidence from at least two paragraphs and an explanation of how two methods reinforced each other.