

## Welcome to Dynamic Korea!

Written by: Hieu Bui

A Elementary school in Gyeongbuk

Congratulations on becoming an EPIK!!! You are now part of an elite group of individuals from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and other English speaking countries around the world. Although you might find that there are a disproportionate amount of South Africans in the EPIK Program, they are a lively bunch and even more wonderful as individuals. We, you and I included, have been chosen not only to be educators of the English language here in Korea, but also to represent our home countries and ethnic cultures in a positive light. It might be a little disheartening not knowing exactly what to expect in the coming months. Yet, please rest assured that Korea is one of the safest countries in the world to be in and EPIK is the premiere program to teach English in Korea. Winters here are cold and summers extremely hot and humid. The rainy season follows shortly after with a brief few months of cool weather in the autumn. Then, “Hello.” it’s the bitter cold again. “Be prepared.” is the golden rule of thumb here. Except for gasoline, the costs of most everything are comparable to the United States. (Sorry to the non-Americans, I’m not sure about the costs of living in your country.) Every EPIK’s experience will be different, though this Americano’s five-month (and counting) journey through the unique and “dynamic” environment of Korea has been enriching and filled with challenges and joy. “Dynamic Korea” is the catch-phrase seemingly adopted by the Ministry of Tourism that you will invariably encounter during your stay here. The slogan seeks to epitomize the ever-changing and lucid brilliance of South Korea’s economy, culture, and people. However, among EPIK Native Teachers it has become a pun for some of the peculiarities that one may encounter living and working for EPIK. Don’t worry. You’re not alone. EPIK Native Teachers have great support forums to help each other out. Thus, in all totality of its meanings, I would like to extend to you a warm, “Welcome to Dynamic Korea!”

In a world where modern advances intertwine with traditions, Korea is – from what I have seen—a hodgepodge of neon jungles and big branded opulence nestled side by side temples and fortresses of the ancients. High-rise skyscrapers neighbor farms and rice paddies. Living as an EPIK in Korea will have moments of peaks and troughs. Always remember that we are guests in Korea and the toughest situations can be resolved if communication channels are clear of misunderstandings. Best wishes to you and welcome to being a part of something great! Welcome to EPIK!

