

South Korea Adopts International Age Counting Method

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In South Korea, people have just become one or two years younger thanks to a change in how they count age! This might sound surprising, but it's all because of the switch from their traditional method to the international standard of counting age.

In the traditional Korean way, someone was considered to be one year old right when they're born. Then, they would add another year to their age every January 1st, no matter when their birthday was. So, a baby born late in December would turn two years old just a few days later!

But now, the rule has been changed. People in South Korea will start at zero years old when they are born, just like a newborn baby, and they'll only turn one year older on their actual birthday. This method, known as the "international age," has been used in South Korea since the 1960s for important stuff like medical records and legal documents, but in day-to-day life, many people still used the old way.

This switch was made to prevent any mix-ups and disagreements that sometimes happened because of the two different age counting methods. In fact, according to a survey done by the government last year, most South Koreans (86%) were ready to use the international age in their everyday life when the new laws kicked in.

However, in South Korea, there is still another way they count age for certain things. This includes when you can join the army, start school, or become old enough to drink or smoke. This system also starts counting at zero at birth and adds a year every January 1st. Officials say that this method isn't going to change just yet.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Why did South Korea decide to change their traditional age counting system?

- a) Because it was causing mix-ups and disagreements.
- b) Because most people preferred the international age system.
- c) Because they wanted to align with international standards.
- d) All of the above.

2. How will South Koreans count their age under the new system?

- a) They will add a year every January 1st.
- b) They will start counting from one at birth.
- c) They will start counting from zero at birth and add a year on their actual birthday.
- d) They will add two years every January 1st.

3. If someone was 32 years old in the traditional counting system, how old will they be in the international counting system?

- a) 32
- b) 33 or 34
- c) 31 or 32
- d) 30 or 31



4. How did most South Koreans react to the new age counting laws according to a government survey?
- a) They were surprised.
 - b) They were ready to use it.
 - c) They were confused.
 - d) They were against it.
5. When did South Korea start using the "international age" for legal documents and medical records?
- a) Just recently.
 - b) In the 1960s.
 - c) Last year.
 - d) They haven't started using it yet.
6. In South Korea's traditional age counting system, someone can be two years old even if they are a newborn baby. How can this happen?
- a) They were born late in December.
 - b) They were born early in January.
 - c) They were born on February 29.
 - d) The traditional system added two years every January 1st.
7. Which of these statements is NOT true?
- a) The traditional age counting system in South Korea added a year to someone's age every January 1st.
 - b) The new age counting system in South Korea adds a year to someone's age on their actual birthday.
 - c) All South Koreans immediately supported the new age counting system.
 - d) The international age has been used for some important records since the 1960s.
8. How will the new age counting system affect the medical industry in South Korea?
- a) They have to change their documents.
 - b) They will never know anybody's true age anymore.
 - c) It won't affect them much because they've been using the international age system since the 1960s.
 - d) They will have to fire all their medical workers.
9. What might be a reason for South Korea to maintain a different age counting system for certain things?
- a) To respect traditional Korean culture.
 - b) To confuse people.
 - c) To align with international standards.
 - d) To make people feel younger.
10. What is the main idea of the article?
- a) South Korea is changing their education system.
 - b) South Korea is enforcing a new age limit for joining the army.
 - c) South Korea has changed their age counting system.
 - d) South Korea is changing the legal age to drink and smoke.

Speaking and Writing Activities:

- Discuss these questions with a partner or a small group.
- Choose one topic and write a response to it. Show your writing to a classmate or teacher.

1. What is a good legal age for driving, drinking alcohol, or voting? Explain your opinions.
2. In the USA, they use different measurement systems than the rest of the world, such as feet, inches, and Fahrenheit. Do you think they should change them?
3. What is the best age to be, and why?

