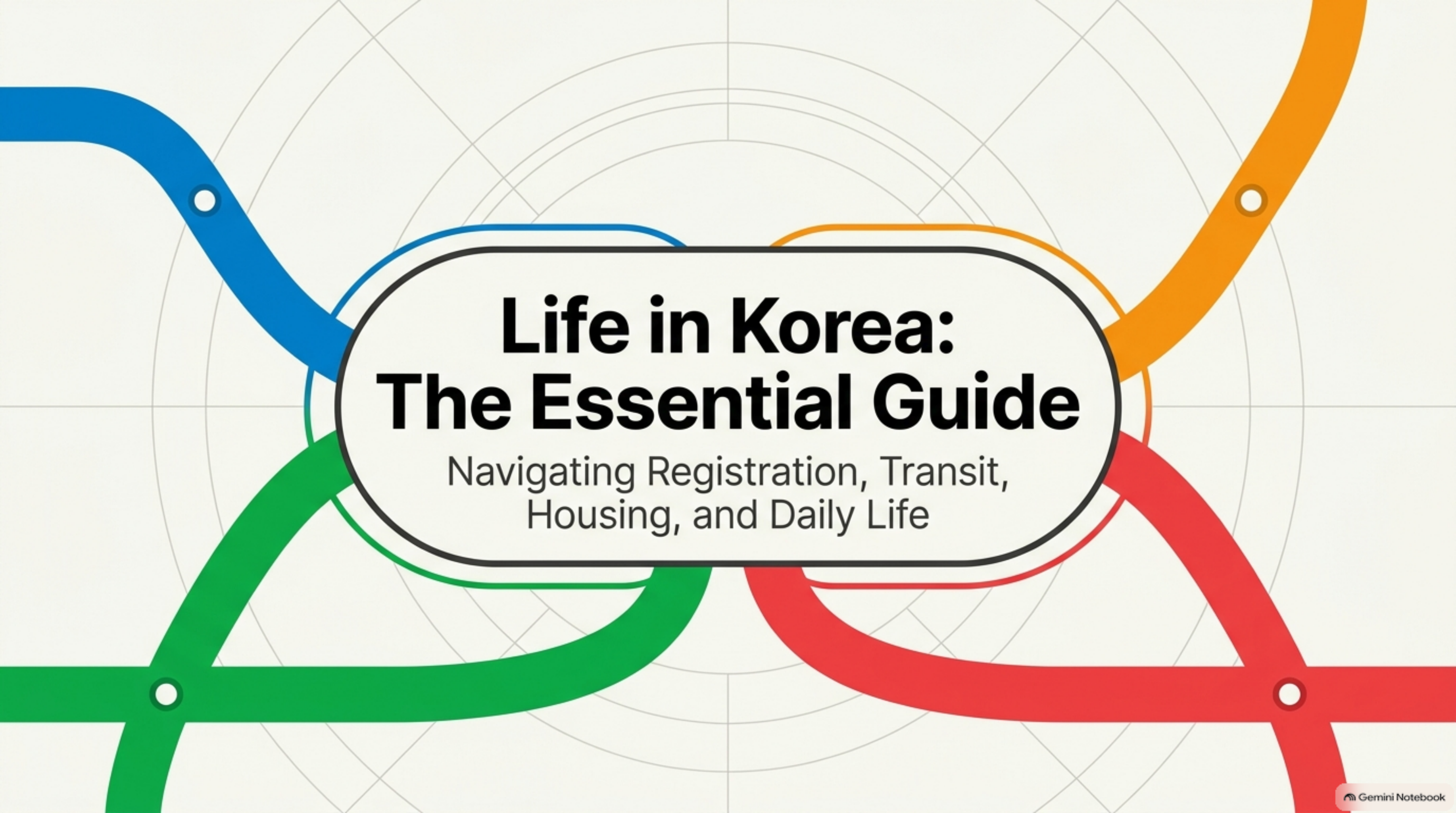
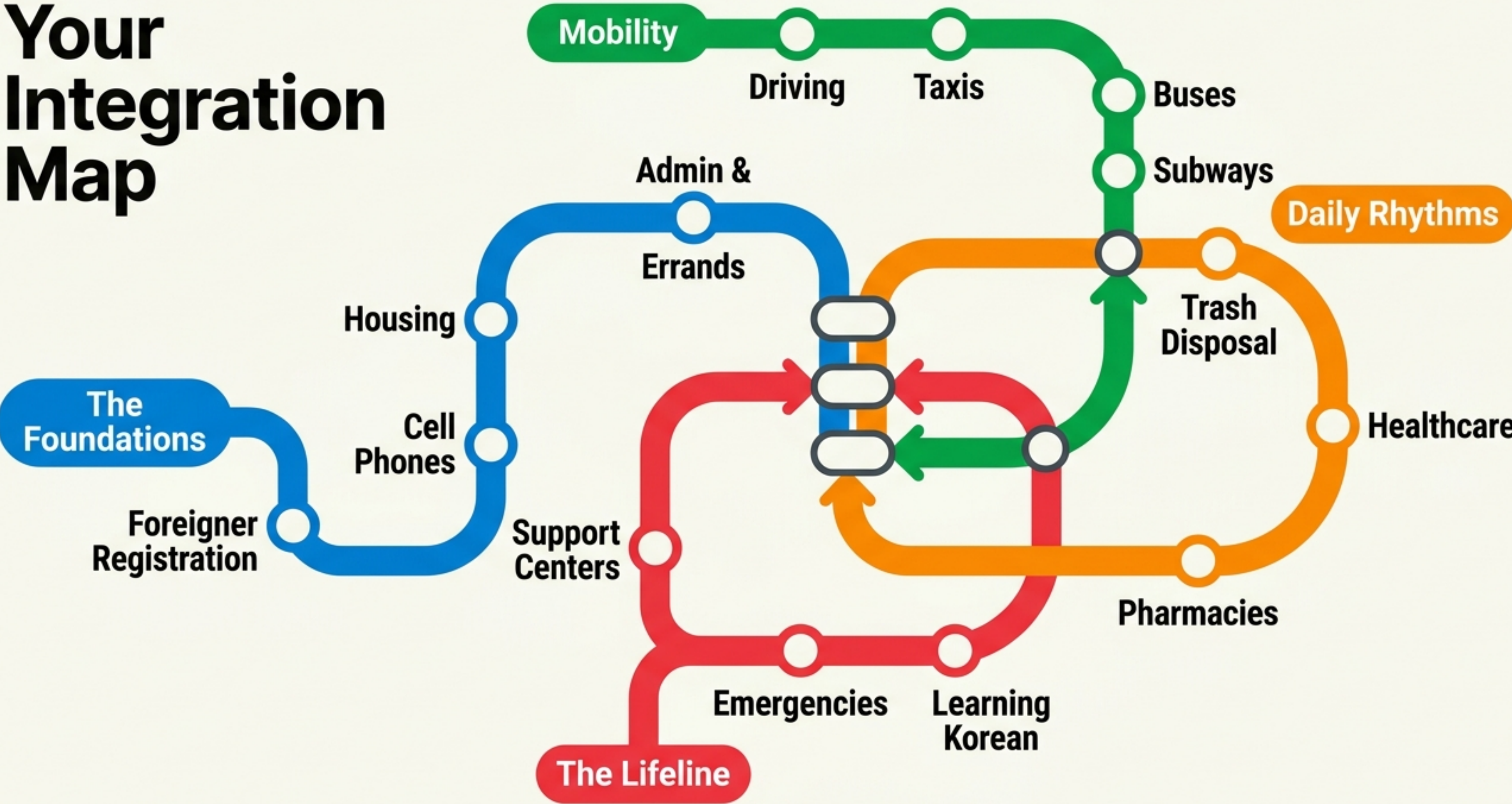




Life in Korea: The Essential Guide

Navigating Registration, Transit,
Housing, and Daily Life

Your Integration Map



Station 1: The Foreigner Registration Card (ARC)

Day 1-90

Requirement window. Anyone staying 90+ days must apply.

Application Phase

Must book a visit reservation on the HiKorea website first. Walk-ins not accepted.

Processing

Takes approximately 21 days at the local Immigration Office.



Always Carry Your ARC: Failure to have your ID on your person can result in a fine of up to 1,000,000 KRW.

Station 1b: Maintaining Legal Status

Platform Warning

Expiration Date

Safe Zone

Apply anytime between 4 months prior to expiration and the exact final day of your stay.

Penalty Zone

Applying after the expiration date results in a fine.

Return Protocol: When to surrender your card



Leaving Korea permanently (return at airport/ferry terminal).

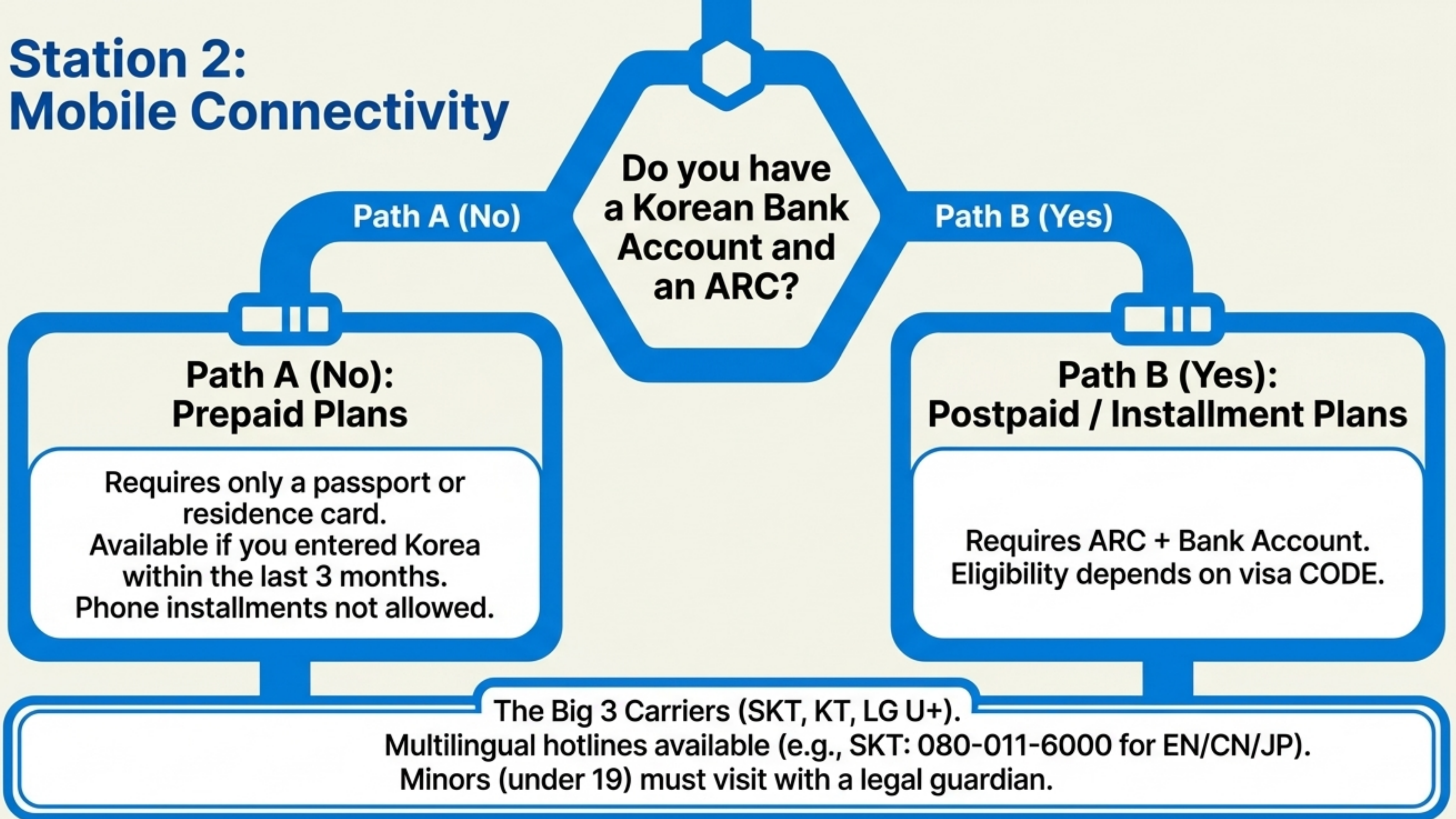


Acquiring Korean citizenship (return within 30 days).



In the event of a foreign resident's death (family returns within 30 days).

Station 2: Mobile Connectivity



Station 3: The Korean Housing Market

Jeonse (Large Deposit)



You provide a large deposit to the landlord, pay *no* monthly rent, and get the deposit back in full at the end.

(Note: Housing guarantee programs exist if landlords default).

Wolse (Monthly Rent)



Similar to Western renting. Smaller deposit + monthly fee. Higher deposits lower the monthly rent.

Common for studios (one-rooms) and Goshiwons.

Maemae (Purchasing)



Buying property.

Requires ARC.

Must report purchase and register ownership transfer within 60 days.

Station 3b: Securing the Contract

Stop 1: The Agent

Use a licensed real estate agent.

(Brokerage fees are strictly 0.5% - 0.9%).

The Contract Route

Stop 2: The

Ask to see the certified copy of the property register.

Always sign directly with the landlord.

Stop 3: The Payment

Pay a 10% down payment on the deposit in advance.

Always get receipts.

Stop 4: The Move-in Stamp

Crucial step.
Within 14 days of moving, file a move-in report at the community center and get a 'fixed date stamp' to protect your deposit.

Stop 5: The Renewal

Notify the landlord 1 to 6 months before the contract ends to move out; otherwise, it auto-renews.

Station 4: Admin & Errands



Physical: Post Offices

For domestic mail, international mail, and EMS (fast international shipping like DHL/FedEx).

Online English service available at epost.go.kr.

Platform Layout



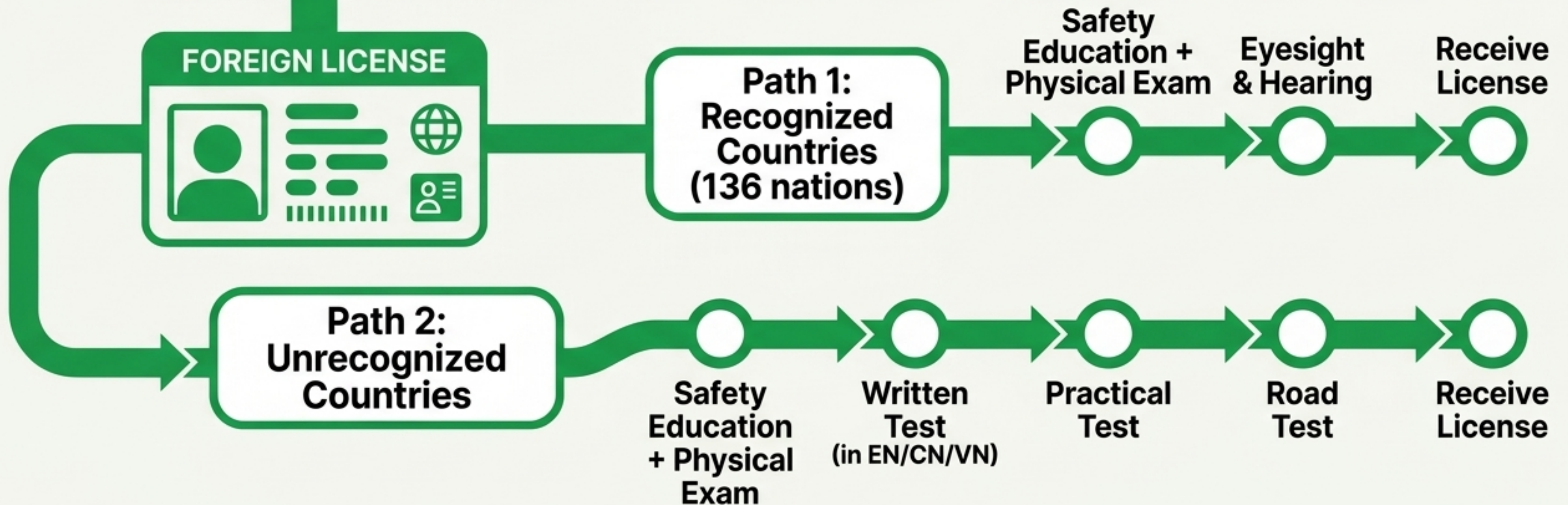
Digital: Apps & Web

Gov24 (gov.kr): Request official documents online without visiting a community center.

'My Seoul' App: City-run app with info on housing, registration, and daily life in 11 languages.

Station 5: Hitting the Road (Driving)

**Core Rule: Foreign licenses cannot be used as-is.
You receive a Class 2 regular license (vehicles up to 9 seats).**



Station 6: Catching a Taxi



Regular Taxi:
Base fare starts at
~4,800 KRW
(in Seoul).



Model (Deluxe) Taxi:
Larger, 5+ years
accident-free drivers.
Base fare starts at
~7,000 KRW.

How to Hail



**Street taxi
stands**



**Raise hand to cars with
yellow 'TAXI' light on**



**Dial local
code + 114**



**Use ride-hailing
apps**

Station 7: Mastering the Bus System



Blue (Trunk Bus): Travels main roads connecting outer areas (Gyeonggi/Incheon) into Seoul.



Green (Branch Bus): Connects neighborhoods to nearby subway stations within Seoul.



Small Green (Village Bus): Short routes connecting apartments directly to transit hubs.



Red (Express Bus): Long-distance commuter routes into Seoul.



Yellow (Circular Bus): Loops around a fixed route within Seoul (often used for sightseeing).

Station 8: Subways & The Transfer Ecosystem



The Subway System:
Spans Lines 1-9 in Seoul
plus regional lines. Express
trains skip stops; check
platform screens.

T-money



한국스마트카드



The T-Money Hub:
One card pays for
subways, buses, and
taxis. Buy and load (up
to 50k KRW) at
convenience stores.



**The Transfer Discount
Magic:** Tap your card
when getting *on* and
off. If you switch to
another bus or subway
within 1 hour of your
last ride, you receive a
massive fare discount.

Station 9: The Trash Disposal System

The Rule: Korea uses a strictly enforced “Pay-as-you-throw” system. You must buy official bags at local convenience stores.

General Waste



Crucial callout: Chicken bones, pork bones, and seafood shells go **HERE**, not in food waste.

Food Waste

Only edible food scraps. Must be completely drained of liquid. (Some apartments use RFID bins instead of bags).



Station 9b: Recycling & Bulky Items

Subway map

Recyclables



Rule:
Empty and rinse all plastic bottles before throwing them away.

Bulky Items



Desks, beds, TVs. You cannot leave these on the street. You must buy a specific 'waste sticker' from the community center (price varies by weight) and attach it.

Usable Clothing



Use designated neighborhood clothing collection bins.

Prohibited: Wheeled luggage, thick blankets, floor cushions.

— Daily Rhythms

Station 10: The Healthcare Ladder

Note: Check NHIS for
your national health
insurance details.

Level 3 Hospitals

University and major
hospitals. 500+ beds.
For severe, specialized medical
emergencies.

Level 2 Hospitals

General hospitals. 100+ beds, 7+ departments.
Used when clinics cannot treat you or hospitalization is required.

Level 1 Hospitals

Neighborhood clinics and public health centers. <30 beds.
This is your first stop for mild symptoms (colds, minor injuries).

Station 10b: Pharmacies & Home Care

 Daily Rhythms

The Pharmacy First

For minor symptoms, describe them to a pharmacist. They can sell you medicine directly without a doctor's prescription.

After-Hours

If pharmacies are closed (usually after 7 PM), nearby convenience stores carry basic emergency medicines.



Fever reducers
(high temp)



Painkillers
(headaches, body aches)



Digestive medicine
(stomach aches)



Bandages & Ointment
(burns, cuts)

Station 11: The Support Network



1345

Ministry of Justice

The ultimate foreigner hotline. Immigration counseling, visa issues, and 3-way interpretation for government agencies. Available in 20 languages.



110

General Civil Complaints

24/7 hotline for everyday problems or questions on documents. Connects to a live human counselor, not an automated machine.



1577-1366

Danuri

Specialized support center for multicultural families.

Station 11b: Emergencies & Phishing

119

Fire and Medical Emergencies.

112

Police.

The Safety Net Rule

Don't panic if you dial the wrong one. The 119 and 112 systems are linked in real-time. If you report a car crash to 119, the police are automatically notified.



Voice Phishing Warning

Financial scams are common. If targeted, immediately report to 112 (Police), 118 (Internet Security), or 1332 (Financial Supervisory).

Station 12: Learning Korean (KIIP)

The Program

The Ministry of Justice offers free public programs, most notably the Social Integration Program (KIIP).

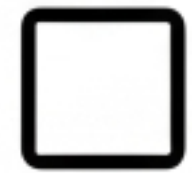
The Structure

It is a 5-level comprehensive Korean language and culture course.

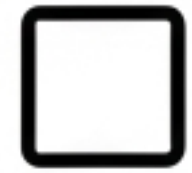
The Benefits:

Completing KIIP is not just for education—it provides massive legal benefits, extra points for visa upgrades, and is required for permanent residency applications.

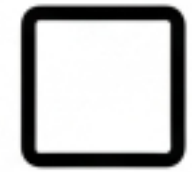
End of the Line: Your Arrival Checklist



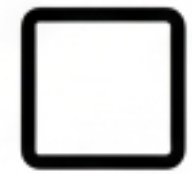
Keep your ARC on you at all times.



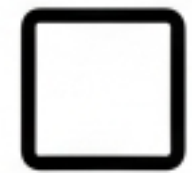
Load a T-Money card for seamless transit transfers.



Memorize your trash bag colors (and keep bones out of food waste!).



Go to Level 1 Clinics first for minor illnesses.



Save 1345 (Support) and 119 (Emergency) in your phone.

Welcome to your new life in Korea. Enjoy the journey!