

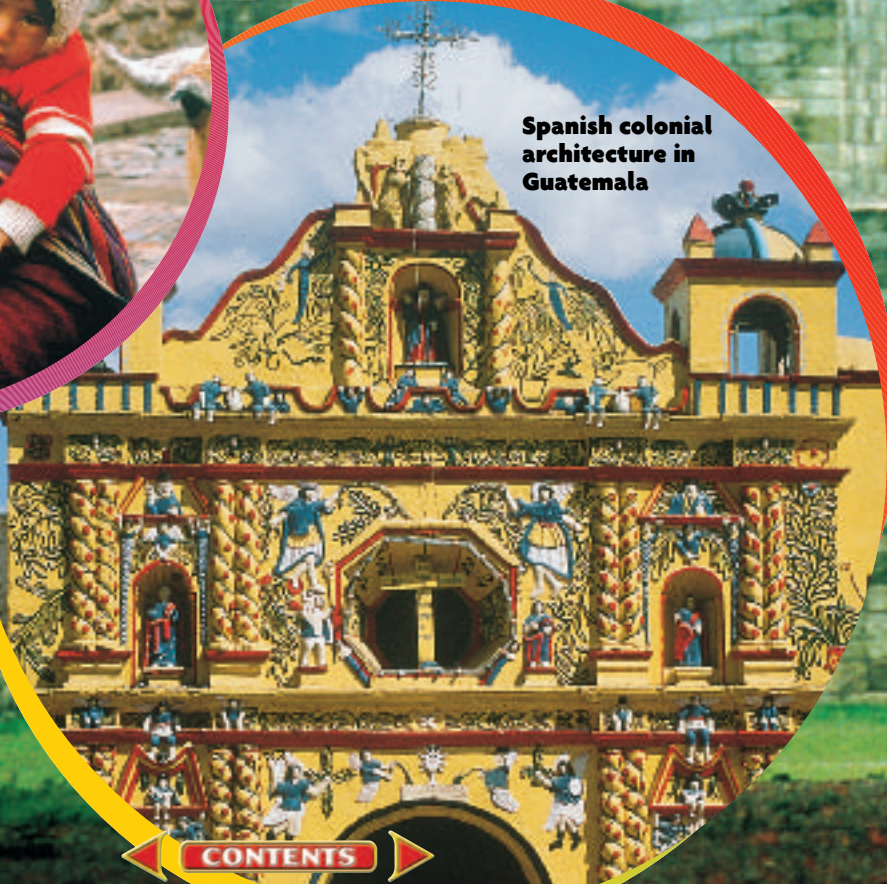
# Unit

## 3

**Peruvian Indian woman and child**



**Spanish colonial architecture in Guatemala**





# Latin America

**W**here can you find steamy tropical forests, frigid mountain peaks, thundering waterfalls, and peaceful island beaches? All of these contrasts can be found in Latin America—a huge part of the world made up of 33 nations on two continents. This region stretches from the Mexico–United States border, in North America, to the southernmost tip of South America.

## Focus on:

# Latin America

**COMMON THREADS OF LANGUAGE AND RELIGION** unite this region. Once claimed as European colonies, most Latin American countries still use either Spanish or Portuguese as the official language. These two languages are based on Latin, which is how the region gets its name. Most Latin Americans are Roman Catholic, another influence from colonial times.

### The Land

Latin America stretches from the Rio Grande south to Tierra del Fuego, just 600 miles (966 km) from Antarctica's frozen shores. Three times larger than the continental United States, the region includes Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean islands, and South America.

**Mountains** Mountains are prominent features in many parts of Latin America. Some Caribbean islands are actually the exposed tops of ancient, submerged volcanoes. In Mexico, the branches of the Sierra Madre spread like welcoming arms to hug a central highland known as the Mexican Plateau. Mist-covered peaks stretch through the interior of Central America. The Andes, the longest series of mountain ranges in the world, follow the western coast of South America for 4,500 miles (7,242 km). Volcanic activity and earthquakes are common in these mountainous areas of Latin America.

**Plains** Narrow coastal plains line the edges of Mexico and Central America. South America has vast inland plains. These include the pam-

pas of Argentina and the llanos of Colombia and Venezuela. The largest lowland area on this continent is the basin of the Amazon River, the longest river in the Western Hemisphere. Other rivers in Latin America are the Rio Grande, the Magdalena, the Orinoco, the Río de la Plata, and the São Francisco River in South America.

### The Climate

Most of Latin America has a tropical climate. Daily showers drench the rain forests, which thrive in the lowlands. In Brazil, the Amazon River and its tributaries snake through the largest area of rain forest regions, which covers roughly one-third of South America.

The climate tends to be drier and cooler at higher elevations and farther away from the Equator. Under these conditions, tall grasses and scattered trees flourish. Drier still are parts of northern Mexico and southern Argentina. Here, rainfall is sparse and so is vegetation. Yet even these places are lush compared to the Atacama Desert, along Chile's coast. The barren Atacama is among the world's driest places.



Three-toed sloth in rain forest, Panama ▶

◀ Peaks of the Andes, Chile



## The Economy

Latin America is rich in natural resources. Gold drew many of the first European conquerors. Copper, silver, iron ore, tin, and lead also are abundant in the region. Some Latin American countries are among the world's leading producers of oil and natural gas.

Agriculture plays an important role in the region's economy. Coffee, bananas, and sugarcane thrive in the moist, fertile lowlands. On higher ground, farmers grow grains and fruits, while cowhands known as *gauchos* drive huge herds of cattle across rolling grasslands.

Many countries in the Caribbean islands rely on tourism to support their economies. A warm, sunny climate and beautiful beaches attract millions of tourists a year.

Industrialization is increasing in Latin America. However, some countries are moving along this path more quickly than others. In recent years, Mexico, Brazil, and Chile have become major producers of manufactured

goods. Lack of money, skilled labor, and reliable transportation have hindered industrial development in other parts of the region. Geographic barriers such as rugged mountains and thick forests have also been obstacles to development.

## The People

Long before Europeans crossed the Atlantic Ocean, great Native American civilizations had developed in Latin America. The Olmec set up an early civilization along the Gulf of Mexico. The Maya later flourished in the Guatemalan lowlands and across Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. The central highlands of Mexico were the site of the Aztec Empire. In South America, the Inca established an empire that stretched from southern Colombia to central Chile.

**From Colonies to Nations** Beginning in the 1500s, Spain and Portugal ruled most of Latin America. Explorers and settlers from these European countries destroyed the Native American civilizations. They also brought enslaved Africans to work alongside Native Americans on large farms called plantations.

Independence came for many Latin American countries in the early 1800s. Wealthy landowners and military officials controlled governments. They often ignored the needs of poor farmers and workers. During the mid-1900s, Latin America experienced dramatic economic, social, and political changes. Today a number of Latin American countries have democratic governments.



◀ Mexican boy carrying decorated cross for religious celebration





**Latin America Today** Latin America's countries remain a cultural mixture—Native Americans, Europeans, Africans, and others have all left their mark. Yet the region's cultures do maintain common threads. For example, the majority of Latin Americans practice the Roman Catholic faith brought by the Spanish and the Portuguese. In addition, most of them speak either the Spanish or Portuguese languages. Because these languages are based on the ancient Roman language Latin, the region became known as Latin America.

Most Latin Americans today live in urban areas along the coasts of South America or in a band reaching from Mexico into Central America. Some of the largest cities in the world are in Latin America, including Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo.

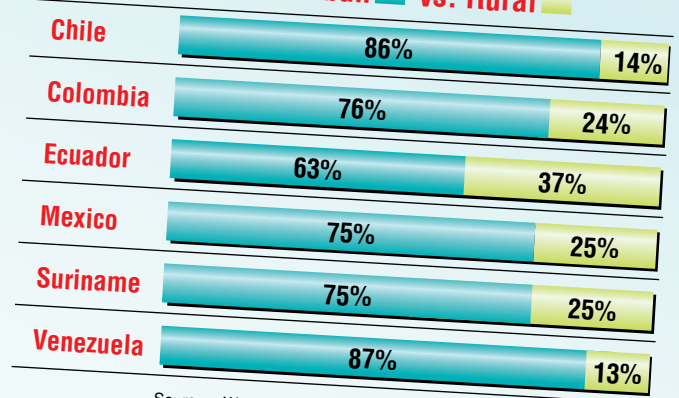
**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil ▼**



**Data Bits**

Country	 Automobiles per 1,000 people	 Television sets per 1,000 people
Chile	88	240
Colombia	43	279
Ecuador	41	213
Mexico	102	272
Suriname	123	241
Venezuela	68	185

**Population: Urban vs. Rural**



Sources: World Development Indicators, 2002; The World Almanac, 2004.

**Exploring the Region**

1. What is Latin America's longest series of mountain ranges?
2. What type of climate is found across most of the region?
3. Which European countries once ruled Latin America?
4. Which Latin American countries are industrializing most rapidly?

**Latin America**

**Physical**



▲ Mountain peak

0 mi. 1,000  
0 km 1,000  
Lambert Azimuthal Equal-Area projection

26,247 ft.	0 mi. 500	8,000 m
19,685 ft.	0 km 500	6,000 m
13,123 ft.		4,000 m
6,562 ft.		2,000 m
— LIMA	Sea level	SALVADOR



## Political



## MAP STUDY

- 1 What huge lowland area lies in northern Brazil?
- 2 What is the capital of Cuba?

South America



Urban Population Growth



Some of the Fastest-Growing Cities, 1950–2015  
 Populations for indicated years  
 1950 (red)  
 2003 (orange)  
 (projected) 2015 (green)



MAP STUDY

- 1 By how much did São Paulo's population increase from 1950 to 2003?
- 2 What is Bogotá's population projected to be in 2015?

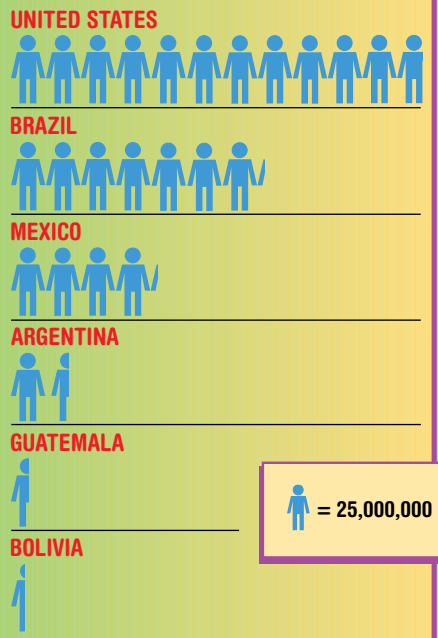


## Geo Extremes

- 1 HIGHEST POINT**  
Aconcagua (Argentina)  
22,834 ft. (6,960 m) high
- 2 LOWEST POINT**  
Valdés Peninsula (Argentina)  
131 ft. (40 m) below sea level
- 3 LONGEST RIVER**  
Amazon River  
(Brazil and Peru)  
4,000 mi. (6,437 km) long
- 4 LARGEST LAKE**  
Lake Maracaibo (Venezuela)  
5,217 sq. mi. (13,512 sq. km)
- 5 HIGHEST LARGE NAVIGABLE LAKE**  
Lake Titicaca  
(Peru and Bolivia)  
12,500 ft. (3,810 m) high
- 6 HIGHEST WATERFALL**  
Angel Falls (Venezuela)  
3,212 ft. (979 m) high
- 7 DRIEST PLACE**  
Atacama Desert (Chile)  
rainfall barely measurable

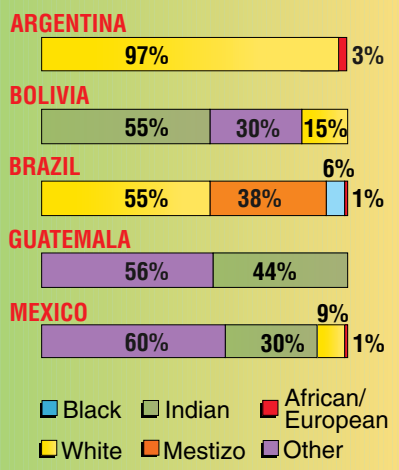


### COMPARING POPULATION: United States and Selected Countries of Latin America



Source: Population Reference Bureau, 2003.

### ETHNIC GROUPS: Selected Countries of Latin America




Source: CIA World Factbook, 2002.



### GRAPHIC STUDY

- 1** What two Latin American "extremes" are found in Venezuela?
- 2** What countries have a majority of mestizos (people of mixed European and Native American ancestry)?

## Country Profiles



### ANTIGUA and BARBUDA

**POPULATION:**  
100,000  
436 per sq. mi.  
168 per sq. km



**LANGUAGE:**  
English

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Petroleum Products

**MAJOR IMPORTS:**  
Foods and Livestock

**CAPITAL:**  
St. John's

**LANDMASS:**  
170 sq. mi.  
440 sq. km

### ARGENTINA

**POPULATION:**  
36,900,000  
34 per sq. mi.  
13 per sq. km



**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Meat

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Buenos Aires

**LANDMASS:**  
1,073,514 sq. mi.  
2,780,401 sq. km

### BAHAMAS

**POPULATION:**  
301,000  
58 per sq. mi.  
22 per sq. km



**LANGUAGES:**  
English, Creole

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Pharmaceuticals

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Foods

**CAPITAL:**  
Nassau

**LANDMASS:**  
5,359 sq. mi.  
13,880 sq. km

### BARBADOS

**POPULATION:**  
300,000  
1,524 per sq. mi.  
588 per sq. km



**LANGUAGES:**  
English

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Sugar

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Manufactured Goods

**CAPITAL:**  
Bridgetown

**LANDMASS:**  
166 sq. mi.  
430 sq. km

### BELIZE

**POPULATION:**  
300,000  
31 per sq. mi.  
12 per sq. km



**LANGUAGE:**  
English

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Sugar

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Belmopan

**LANDMASS:**  
8,865 sq. mi.  
22,960 sq. km

### BOLIVIA

**POPULATION:**  
8,600,000  
20 per sq. mi.  
8 per sq. km



**LANGUAGES:**  
Spanish, Quechua, Aymara

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Metals

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITALS:**  
La Paz, Sucre

**LANDMASS:**  
424,162 sq. mi.  
1,098,580 sq. km

### BRAZIL

**POPULATION:**  
176,500,000  
53 per sq. mi.  
21 per sq. km



**LANGUAGE:**  
Portuguese

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Iron Ore

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Crude Oil

**CAPITAL:**  
Brasília

**LANDMASS:**  
3,300,154 sq. mi.  
8,547,399 sq. km

### CHILE

**POPULATION:**  
15,800,000  
54 per sq. mi.  
21 per sq. km



**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Copper

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Santiago

**LANDMASS:**  
292,135 sq. mi.  
756,626 sq. km

### COLOMBIA

**POPULATION:**  
44,200,000  
100 per sq. mi.  
39 per sq. km



**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Petroleum

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Bogotá

**LANDMASS:**  
439,734 sq. mi.  
1,138,911 sq. km

### COSTA RICA

**POPULATION:**  
4,200,000  
211 per sq. mi.  
81 per sq. km


**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Coffee

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Raw Materials

**CAPITAL:**  
San José

**LANDMASS:**  
19,730 sq. mi.  
51,100 sq. km




### CUBA

**POPULATION:**  
11,300,000  
264 per sq. mi.  
102 per sq. km


**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Sugar

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Petroleum

**CAPITAL:**  
Havana

**LANDMASS:**  
42,803 sq. mi.  
110,860 sq. km



Countries and flags not drawn to scale



For more information on countries in this region, refer to the Nations of the World Data Bank in the Appendix.

### DOMINICA



**POPULATION:**  
100,000  
242 per sq. mi.  
93 per sq. km

**LANGUAGES:**  
English, French

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Bananas

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Manufactured Goods

**CAPITAL:**  
Roseau

**LANDMASS:**  
290 sq. mi.  
751 sq. km



### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



**POPULATION:**  
8,700,000  
463 per sq. mi.  
179 per sq. km

**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Ferro-nickel

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Foods

**CAPITAL:**  
Santo Domingo

**LANDMASS:**  
18,815 sq. mi.  
48,731 sq. km



### ECUADOR



**POPULATION:**  
12,600,000  
115 per sq. mi.  
44 per sq. km

**LANGUAGES:**  
Spanish, Quechua

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Petroleum

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Transport Equipment

**CAPITAL:**  
Quito

**LANDMASS:**  
109,483 sq. mi.  
283,561 sq. km



### EL SALVADOR



**POPULATION:**  
6,600,000  
817 per sq. mi.  
315 per sq. km

**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Coffee

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Raw Materials

**CAPITAL:**  
San Salvador

**LANDMASS:**  
8,124 sq. mi.  
21,041 sq. km



### FRENCH GUIANA\*



**POPULATION:**  
200,000  
5 per sq. mi.  
2 per sq. km

**LANGUAGE:**  
French

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Shrimp

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Foods

**CAPITAL:**  
Cayenne

**LANDMASS:**  
34,749 sq. mi.  
89,999 sq. km



### GRENADA



**POPULATION:**  
100,000  
800 per sq. mi.  
309 per sq. km

**LANGUAGES:**  
English, French

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Bananas

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Foods

**CAPITAL:**  
St. George's

**LANDMASS:**  
131 sq. mi.  
339 sq. km



### GUATEMALA



**POPULATION:**  
12,400,000  
294 per sq. mi.  
114 per sq. km

**LANGUAGES:**  
Spanish, Mayan Languages

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Coffee

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Petroleum

**CAPITAL:**  
Guatemala City

**LANDMASS:**  
42,042 sq. mi.  
108,889 sq. km



\* Territory of France

### GUYANA



**POPULATION:**  
800,000  
9 per sq. mi.  
4 per sq. km

**LANGUAGE:**  
English

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Sugar

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Manufactured Goods

**CAPITAL:**  
Georgetown

**LANDMASS:**  
83,000 sq. mi.  
214,969 sq. km



### HAITI



**POPULATION:**  
7,500,000  
703 per sq. mi.  
271 per sq. km

**LANGUAGES:**  
French, Creole

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Manufactured Goods

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Port-au-Prince

**LANDMASS:**  
10,714 sq. mi.  
27,750 sq. km



### HONDURAS



**POPULATION:**  
6,900,000  
159 per sq. mi.  
61 per sq. km

**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Bananas

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Tegucigalpa

**LANDMASS:**  
43,278 sq. mi.  
112,090 sq. km



### JAMAICA



**POPULATION:**  
2,600,000  
624 per sq. mi.  
241 per sq. km

**LANGUAGES:**  
English, Creole

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Alumina

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Kingston

**LANDMASS:**  
4,243 sq. mi.  
10,989 sq. km



## Country Profiles

**MEXICO**




**POPULATION:**  
104,900,000  
139 per sq. mi.  
54 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGES:**  
Spanish,  
Native American  
Languages

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Crude Oil

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Mexico City

**LANDMASS:**  
756,062 sq. mi.  
1,958,201 sq. km

**NICARAGUA**




**POPULATION:**  
5,500,000  
109 per sq. mi.  
42 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish



**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Coffee

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Manufactured  
Goods

**CAPITAL:**  
Managua

**LANDMASS:**  
50,193 sq. mi.  
129,999 sq. km

**PANAMA**

**POPULATION:**  
3,000,000  
102 per sq. mi.  
32 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGE:**  
Spanish



**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Bananas

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Panama City

**LANDMASS:**  
29,158 sq. mi.  
75,519 sq. km

**PARAGUAY**

**POPULATION:**  
6,200,000  
39 per sq. mi.  
15 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGES:**  
Spanish, Guarani



**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Cotton

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Asunción

**LANDMASS:**  
157,046 sq. mi.  
406,749 sq. km

**PERU**

**POPULATION:**  
27,100,000  
55 per sq. mi.  
21 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGES:**  
Spanish, Quechua,  
Aymara



**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Copper

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Lima

**LANDMASS:**  
496,224 sq. mi.  
1,285,220 sq. km

**PUERTO RICO\***

**POPULATION:**  
3,900,000  
1,123 per sq. mi.  
434 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGES:**  
Spanish, English



**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Pharmaceuticals

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Chemical Products

**CAPITAL:**  
San Juan

**LANDMASS:**  
3,456 sq. mi.  
8,951 sq. km

**ST. KITTS and NEVIS**

**POPULATION:**  
50,000  
339 per sq. mi.  
128 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGE:**  
English

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Machinery



**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Electronic Goods

**CAPITAL:**  
Basseterre

**LANDMASS:**  
139 sq. mi.  
360 sq. km

\* U.S. Commonwealth

**ST. LUCIA**

**POPULATION:**  
200,000  
677 per sq. mi.  
261 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGES:**  
English, French



**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Bananas

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Foods

**CAPITAL:**  
Castries

**LANDMASS:**  
239 sq. mi.  
619 sq. km

**ST. VINCENT and the GRENADINES**

**POPULATION:**  
100,000  
731 per sq. mi.  
282 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGES:**  
English, French



**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Bananas

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Foods

**CAPITAL:**  
Kingstown

**LANDMASS:**  
151 sq. mi.  
391 sq. km

**SURINAME**

**POPULATION:**  
400,000  
6 per sq. mi.  
3 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGE:**  
Dutch



**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Bauxite

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Paramaribo

**LANDMASS:**  
63,039 sq. mi.  
163,271 sq. km

**TRINIDAD and TOBAGO**

**POPULATION:**  
1,300,000  
661 per sq. mi.  
255 per sq. km.

**LANGUAGE:**  
English

**MAJOR EXPORT:**  
Petroleum

**MAJOR IMPORT:**  
Machinery

**CAPITAL:**  
Port-of-Spain

**LANDMASS:**  
1,981 sq. mi.  
5,131 sq. km

Countries and flags not drawn to scale

For more information on countries in this region, refer to the Nations of the World Data Bank in the Appendix.



\* Territory of U.S.

## BUILDING CITIZENSHIP

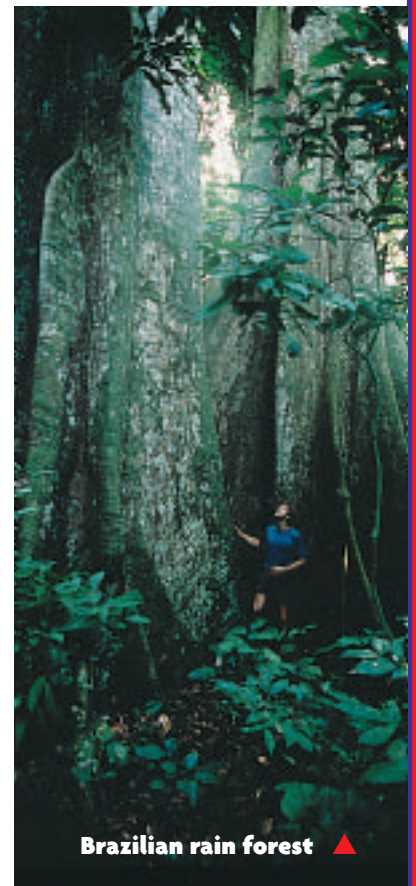
**Public and Private Needs** More than one-third of the area of Brazil is covered by a rain forest. This fragile ecosystem is home to millions of plant, animal, and insect species. Some of the plants are important sources of medicines. According to scientists, more than 50 percent of the world's species live in the rain forest.

The rain forest is also a major source of timber, minerals, fruits, and vegetables. Building roads and clearing land to reach these resources has led to major destruction of the rain forest habitat. The government of Brazil has tried to set aside large portions of the rain forest as preserves. The government does allow development of its natural resources as income for its citizens, however.

Because of its effect on climate, the rain forest is important not just to Brazil but to the whole world. Who should have more say about how much of the rain forest is preserved—Brazil or the United Nations?

### WRITE ABOUT IT

Imagine that a new golf course is being built in your city. The area where it is being built includes natural wetlands where birds and animals live. Write a letter to the city council outlining what steps you think the golf course developers should take to protect the wetlands.



Brazilian rain forest ▲



Chapter  
**6**

# Mexico



**The World  
and Its People**

NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC



To learn more about the people and places of Mexico, view *The World and Its People Chapter 6* video.



**Social Studies** Online

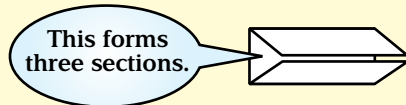
**Chapter Overview** Visit *The World and Its People* Web site at [twip.glencoe.com](http://twip.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 6—Chapter Overviews** to preview information about Mexico.

# FOLDABLES™

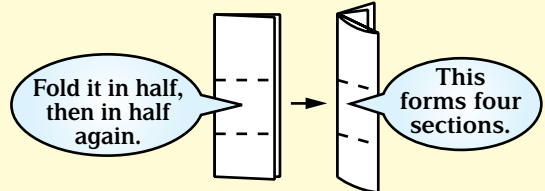
## Study Organizer

**Categorizing Information** When you group information into categories on a table, it is easier to study characteristics of items. Make this foldable to help you describe Mexico's land, economy, and government—past and present.

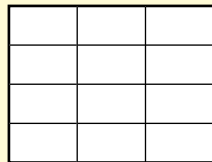
**Step 1** Fold a sheet of paper into thirds from top to bottom.



**Step 2** Open the paper and refold it into fourths from side to side.



**Step 3** Unfold, turn the paper, and draw lines along the folds.



**Step 4** Label your table as shown.

	Past	Present
Mexico's Land		
Mexico's Economy		
Mexico's Government		

**Reading and Writing** As you read the chapter, record key facts about Mexico's land, economy, and government in the appropriate places on your table foldable.

## Why It Matters

### Moving Forward

Mexico is a country working hard to catch up with the more industrialized countries of the world. Today Mexico is an important trading partner of the United States. However, a rapidly growing population and a developing economy have made it difficult for Mexico to support all of its people.

◀ **The Lighthouse of Commerce and the Cathedral of Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico**



## Section

# 1

# Mexico's Land and Economy

## Guide to Reading

### Main Idea

Mexico's mountainous landscape and varied climate create different economic regions.

### Terms to Know

- land bridge
- peninsula
- latitude
- altitude
- hurricane
- vaquero
- maquiladora
- subsistence farm
- plantation
- industrialize
- service industry

### Reading Strategy

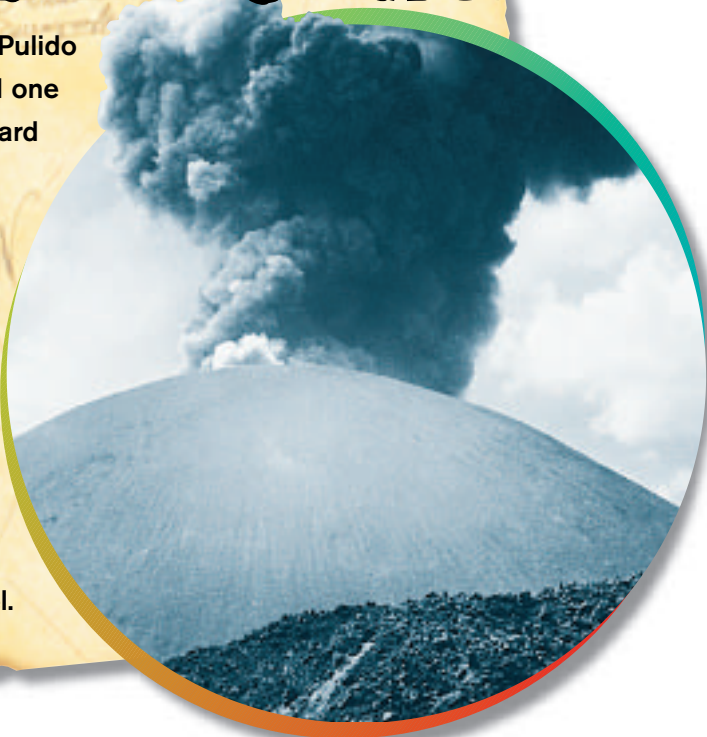
Create a chart of Mexico's economic regions like this one. List the main economic activity of each region.

Region of Mexico	Economic Activity
Northern	
Central	
Southern	



## Exploring our World

Mexican farmer Dionisio Pulido was plowing his cornfield one day. Suddenly his son heard a rumble in the ground. Then white smoke began to spew into the air. When they awoke the next day, they saw a volcano 30 feet (9 m) high. Today, more than 50 years later, the volcano named Parícutín soars nearly 9,200 feet (2,800 m) above sea level.



**P**arícutín and other volcanoes are part of the rugged landscape of Mexico, which sits where three plates in the earth's crust collide. Sometimes the movement of these plates brings disastrous results. Hot magma, or melted rock, shoots through a volcano. The ground shifts violently in an earthquake. Do you see why Native Americans once called Mexico "the land of the shaking earth"?

## Bridging Two Continents

Mexico forms part of a **land bridge**, or narrow strip of land that joins two larger landmasses. This land bridge connects North America and South America. Look at the map on page 191. You can see that Mexico borders the southern United States.

Physical geographers, or people who study continents and landforms, think of Mexico as part of North America. Cultural geographers, however, think of Mexico as being part of Latin America. For cultural



geographers, language, customs, religion, and history are important areas of study. Both groups are correct. Mexico is a Latin (Spanish-speaking) country on the continent of North America. Its location in North America makes it an important trading partner to the United States and Canada. Yet Mexico's culture is closely tied to Central and South America. It is a country that bridges two continents.

The Pacific Ocean borders Mexico on the west. Extending south along this western coast is **Baja** (BAH•hah) **California**. It is a long, narrow **peninsula**, or piece of land with water on three sides. On Mexico's eastern side, the **Gulf of Mexico** and the **Caribbean Sea** border the coasts. Between the Gulf and the Caribbean Sea is another peninsula—the **Yucatán** (yoo•kah•TAHN) **Peninsula**.

Mexico is a rugged land. If you were to see it from space, you might think that the country looked like a crumpled piece of paper with deep folds. Towering mountain ranges and a huge, high plateau occupy the center of the country.

**The Sierra Madre** Three different mountain ranges in Mexico make up the **Sierra Madre** (SYEHR•ah MAH•thray), or “mother range.” Because of



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

## Mexico: Political



**Applying Map Skills**

1. Mexico is divided into states. How many states are there?
2. What country borders Mexico on the north?

Find NGS online map resources @ [www.nationalgeographic.com/maps](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/maps)



the rugged terrain, few people live in the Sierra Madre. The mountains are rich in resources, though. They hold copper, zinc, silver, and timber.

Many of Mexico's mountains are volcanoes. Popocatepetl (POH•puh•KA•tuh•PEH•tuhl), or "El Popo," as Mexicans call it, erupted violently centuries ago. In December 2000, El Popo erupted again, hurling molten rock into the sky. About 30,000 people from surrounding areas were forced to temporarily leave their homes. Tens of millions of people live 50 miles (80 km) or less from the mountain and could face even worse eruptions in the future.

Mexicans face another danger from the land. Earthquakes can destroy their cities and homes. A 1985 earthquake killed nearly 10,000 people in Mexico's capital, **Mexico City**, even though the earthquake's center was about 185 miles

(298 km) away. Mexico experiences many earthquakes because it is one of the countries that border the "Ring of Fire." This name describes the active volcanic zone that forms the western, northern, and eastern edges of the Pacific Ocean. Earthquakes in the zone are common due to movement of the huge Pacific plate deep under the earth's crust.

**The Plateau of Mexico** The map on page 196 shows that the Sierra Madre surround the large, flat center of the country, the Plateau of Mexico. You find mostly deserts and grassy plains in the northern part of the plateau. Broad, flat valleys that slice through the center hold many of the country's chief cities and most of its

people. To the south, the plateau steadily rises until it meets the high, snowcapped mountains of the Sierra Madre del Sur.

**Coastal Lowlands** Mexico's lowland plains squeeze between the mountains and the sea. The Pacific Coastal Plain begins with a hot, largely empty desert in the north. As you move farther south, better soil and rainfall allow ranching and farming along this plain. On the other side of the country, the Gulf Coastal Plain has more rain and fertile soil for growing crops and raising animals.

 **Reading Check** What is the volcanic zone called that affects Mexico?

## Land of Many Climates

Mexico has many different climates. Why? As you read in Chapter 2, **latitude**—or location north or south of the Equator—affects temperature. The Tropic of Cancer, which cuts across the center of Mexico at 23½°N latitude, marks the northern edge of the Tropics. Areas south of

 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

## On Location



### Mexico City

Popocatepetl rises above Mexico City's hazy skyline.

**Human/Environment Interaction** What two natural dangers do people in Mexico face?





## Mexico's Altitude Zones



this line have warm temperatures throughout the year. Areas north of this line are warm in summer and cooler in winter.

**Altitude**, or height above sea level, also affects temperatures in Mexico. The higher the altitude, the cooler the temperatures are—even within the Tropics. The diagram above shows that Mexico's mountains and plateau create three altitude zones. You could travel through all of these zones in a day's trip across the Sierra Madre.

Because the coastal lowlands are near sea level, they have high temperatures. Mexicans call this altitude zone the *tierra caliente* (tee•EH•rah kah•lee•EHN•tay), or “hot land.” Moving higher in altitude, you find the *tierra templada* (teh•m•PLAH•dah), or “temperate land.” Here the climate becomes more moderate. In the highest zone, the climate becomes even cooler. Mexicans call this the *tierra fría* (FREE•ah), or “cold land.”

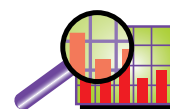
Rainfall varies throughout Mexico. Baja California and northern Mexico receive very little precipitation. Other regions receive more, mostly in the summer and early fall. From June to October, Mexico can be hit by **hurricanes**. These fierce tropical storms with high winds and heavy rains form over the warm waters of the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans. They can strike Mexico with fury.

**Reading Check** What is Mexico's warmest altitude zone?

## Mexico's Economic Regions

Mexico's physical geography and climate together give the country three distinct economic regions: the North, Central Mexico, and the South. Large stretches of northern Mexico are too dry and rocky to farm without irrigation. By building canals to carry water to their fields, farmers can grow cotton, fruits, grains, and vegetables.

**Northern Mexico** Did you know that the skills used by American cowhands originated in Mexico? Mexican cowhands, called **vaqueros** (vah•KEHR•ohs), developed the tools and techniques for herding, roping, and branding cattle. Vaqueros carry on this work today.



### Analyzing the Diagram

Mexico has zones of different climates that result from different altitudes.

**Location** In which altitude zone is Mexico City located?



▲ A skilled seamstress makes clothing in a maquiladora in northern Mexico.

Northern Mexico has seen an economic boom. **Monterrey**, Mexico's main producer of steel and cement, has long been an important industrial city. In this and other cities, many companies from the United States and elsewhere have built **maquiladoras** (mah•KEEL•ah•DOHR•as), or factories that assemble parts made in other countries. As a result, thousands of Mexicans have flocked to cities such as **Tijuana** (tee•WAH•nah) and **Ciudad Juárez** (see•ooh•DAHD HWAH•rayz), located along the U.S.–Mexico border. The growth in these border cities has raised the standard of living in northern cities through factory work and increased trade. However, this quick growth has also brought concerns about damaging the environment, pollution, and dangers to the health and safety of workers.

**Central Mexico** More than half of Mexico's people live in the central region, the country's heartland. Why do they call this area home? The climate is one reason. Although central Mexico lies in the Tropics, its high elevation keeps it from being hot and humid. Temperatures are mild, and the climate is pleasant year-round. A second reason is the fertile soil. This soil was created by volcanic eruptions over the centuries and allows for productive farming.

Large industrial cities such as Mexico City and **Guadalajara** (GWAH•duhl•uh•HAHR•uh) also prosper in central Mexico. About 22 million people live in Mexico City and its suburbs, making it one of the largest cities in the world. Mexico City has been the largest city in the Americas since before the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s.

**Southern Mexico** The South is the poorest economic region of the country. The mountains towering in the center of this region have poor soil. **Subsistence farms**, or small plots where farmers grow only enough food to feed their families, are common here. In contrast, the coastal lowlands of this area have good soil and plentiful rain. Wealthy farmers grow sugarcane or bananas on **plantations**, large farms that raise a single crop for sale.

Both coasts of Mexico also have beautiful beaches and a warm climate. Tourists from all over the world flock to such resort cities as **Acapulco** and **Puerto Vallarta** on the Pacific coast and **Cancún** on the Yucatán Peninsula.

✓ **Reading Check** How does the economic region of northern Mexico differ from that of southern Mexico?

## Mexico's Economy Today

With many resources and workers, Mexico has a growing economy. Did you know that Mexico's economy ranks among the top 15 in the world? As in the past, agriculture is important. Farmers raise food to feed people at home—and also to ship around the world. Corn, beans, wheat, and rice are the main crops grown for food. Exports include coffee, cotton, vegetables, fruits, livestock, and tobacco.





In recent years, Mexico has **industrialized**, or changed its economy to rely less on farming and more on manufacturing. Factories in Mexico now make cars, consumer goods, and steel. The labels on your clothing might even say “Made in Mexico.”

Mexico has large deposits of petroleum and natural gas in the Gulf of Mexico and along the southern coast. As a result, Mexico is among the world’s major oil-producing nations.

Mexico is also home to important service industries such as banking and tourism. **Service industries** are businesses that provide services to people rather than produce goods.

**NAFTA** As you learned in the last unit, Mexico, the United States, and Canada entered into NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, in 1994. Remember that under this agreement, most goods traded between these countries are free of tariffs, or special taxes. This means a homemaker in Canada would probably choose to buy a tablecloth made in Mexico rather than to pay more for a taxed tablecloth produced in Europe.

Some Americans have been afraid that belonging to NAFTA means American jobs will “go south.” They fear that the lower rate of pay for labor in Mexico will encourage many manufacturers to move their businesses to Mexico rather than keep them in the United States. The debate about the overall effect of NAFTA is still going on.

 **Reading Check** Why are some Americans afraid jobs will “go south”?

## Section 1

# Assessment

### Defining Terms

- 1. Define** land bridge, peninsula, latitude, altitude, hurricane, vaquero, maquiladora, subsistence farm, plantation, industrialize, service industry.

### Recalling Facts

- 2. History** How did the vaqueros of Mexico influence American ranching?
- 3. Location** Why is Mexico a land bridge?
- 4. Economics** Why have many Mexicans moved to the cities of the north?

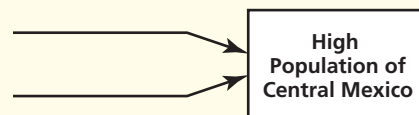
### Critical Thinking

- 5. Understanding Cause and Effect** How has NAFTA affected the people in Canada and the people in Mexico? Do you think NAFTA has been good or bad for the people in border cities of the United States? Explain.

- 6. Analyzing Information** Why is Mexico part of both North America and Latin America?

### Graphic Organizer

- 7. Organizing Information** Create a diagram like this one, and then list two facts that explain the large population of central Mexico.



## Applying Social Studies Skills

- 8. Analyzing Diagrams** Study Mexico’s altitude zones on page 193. At which elevation do you think most people live? Why do they live here?

# Social Studies Skill

## Reading a Physical Map

A map that shows the different heights of the land is called a **physical map**. Physical maps use colors and shading to show relief—or how flat or rugged the land surface is. Colors are also used to show the land's elevation—or height above sea level. Green often shows the lowest elevations (closest to sea level). Yellows, oranges, browns, and reds usually mean higher elevations. Sometimes the highest areas, such as mountain peaks, are white.

4. What color on the map means 2,000–5,000 feet (600–1,500 m)?
5. Briefly describe the physical landscape of the area shown on the map, moving from west to east.

## Learning the Skill

To read a physical map, apply these steps:

- Read the map title to identify the region shown on the map.
- Use the map key to find the meaning of colors and symbols.
- Identify the areas of highest and lowest elevation on the map.
- Find important physical features, including mountains, rivers, and coastlines.
- Mentally map the actual shape of the land.

## Practicing the Skill

Look at the map to answer the following:

1. What country is shown on the map?
2. What mountain ranges are labeled?
3. What is the elevation of the green areas on the map (in feet and meters)?



### Mexico: Physical



## Applying the Skill

Look at the physical map of Latin America on page 180. Describe the physical landscape of the region, moving from east to west.



Practice key skills with **Glencoe Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 1**.



Section  
**2**

# Mexico's History

## Guide to Reading

### Main Idea

Mexico's culture reflects a blend of its Native American and Spanish past.

### Terms to Know

- jade
- obsidian
- maize
- hieroglyphics
- mural
- hacienda

### Reading Strategy

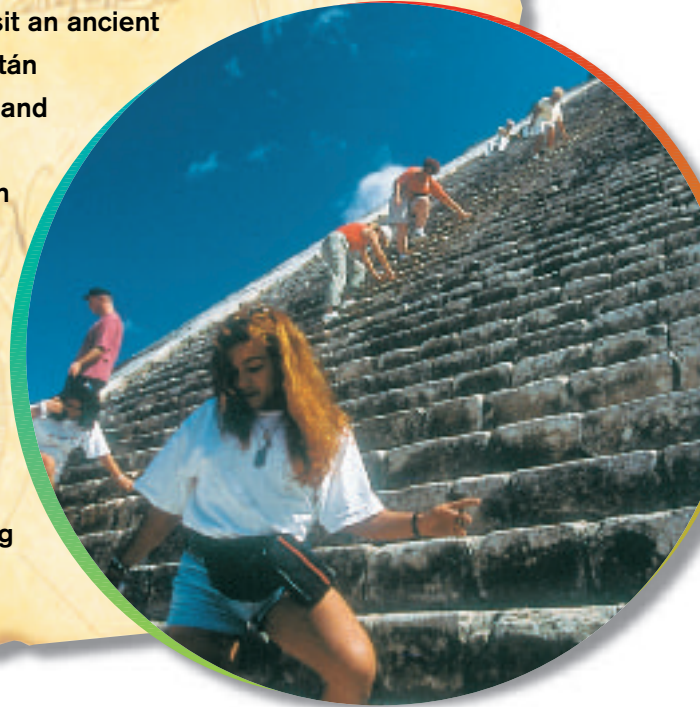
Create a chart like this one, and then provide one example of how Native Americans and Europeans influenced Mexican culture.

Ethnic Groups	Influence on Mexican Culture
Native Americans	
Europeans	



## Exploring our World

Thousands of people visit an ancient temple in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula on the spring and fall equinoxes. On those two days, the setting sun casts a shadow on the stairs of the temple's north face. The area that is not shadowed looks like the ancient Native American god called Kukulcan, or the Feathered Serpent, going down the temple stairs.



**T**he first people to arrive in Mexico were the ancestors of today's Native Americans. Mexico's Native American heritage has shaped the country's culture. So has Mexico's European heritage, brought by the Spaniards who conquered the area in the 1500s.

## Native American Civilizations

Native Americans came to Mexico thousands of years ago. From about 1200 B.C. to the A.D. 1500s, these people built a series of brilliant, highly advanced civilizations on Mexican soil. Of these, the Olmec, Mayan, and Aztec civilizations are the best-known. Look at the map on page 198 to see where the Olmec, Mayan, and Aztec civilizations thrived.

**The Olmecs** The Olmecs built the first civilization in the Americas around 1200 B.C. They decorated their cities with large carved stone statues, some standing about 10 feet (3 m) high and weighing over 20 tons (18 t). They also carved smaller and more personal objects like jewelry out of **jade**, a local shiny stone that comes in many shades of



green as well as other colors. All these items were carved with **obsidian**, a hard, black glass created by the volcanoes in the area. Obsidian was used because the Olmecs had no metals.

The Olmecs were the first to grow **maize**, or corn, to feed their many people. In addition to cities and ceremonial centers, they built large drainage systems to direct rainwater away from their fields and settlements. The Olmecs lasted longer than any other Native American civilization, finally disappearing about 400 B.C.

**The Maya** The people called the Maya lived in the rain forests of the Yucatán Peninsula and surrounding areas from about A.D. 250 to 900. Religion held Mayan society together. Mayan priests needed to measure time accurately to hold religious ceremonies at the correct moment. They studied the heavens and developed a calendar of 365 days.

The Maya built huge stone temples in the shape of pyramids with steps. One of these structures, the temple of Kukulcan, showed careful planning. Each side of Kukulcan had 91 steps, totaling 364. The platform at the temple's top made one more step for a grand total of 365—just like the days in the year.

The Maya also developed **hieroglyphics**, a form of writing that uses signs and symbols. They had a complex number system. Artists decorated temples and tombs with elaborate **murals**, or wall paintings.

Around A.D. 900, Mayan civilization declined. Why? Historians do not know. Some suggest that the Maya overused the land and could not grow enough food. Others suggest that warfare or the spread of disease caused their decline. The Maya did not disappear, however. Their descendants still live in the same area and speak the Mayan language.



## Mexico's Native American Civilizations



**Applying Map Skills**

- Which civilization lived mostly on the Yucatán Peninsula?
- What was the chief city of the Aztec civilization?

Find NGS online map resources @ [www.nationalgeographic.com/maps](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/maps)





**The Aztec** Around A.D. 1200, a people called the Mexica moved into central Mexico from the north. The Spanish later called these people the Aztec. The Aztec conquered a large empire in central Mexico. Their capital, **Tenochtitlán** (tay•NAWCH•teet•LAHN), was magnificent. Mexico City—Mexico’s capital—stands on this ancient site today.

Tenochtitlán was originally built on two islands in the middle of Lake Texcoco. Long dikes connected it to land. The city had huge stepped pyramids. Merchants traded gold, silver, and pottery in busy marketplaces. Farmers grew their crops in structures called “floating gardens,” or rafts filled with mud. The rafts eventually sank to the lake bottom and piled up, forming fertile islands.

The Aztec people and many of their traditions survive today in Mexico. The food, crafts, and language of Mexico have roots in Aztec culture. Even the name of the country comes from the word the Aztec called themselves—the *Mexica*. The flag of modern Mexico honors this ancient civilization. In the center of the flag is the Aztec symbol of an eagle with a snake in its beak.

 **Reading Check** What Native American cultures flourished in Mexico?

## Spanish Mexico

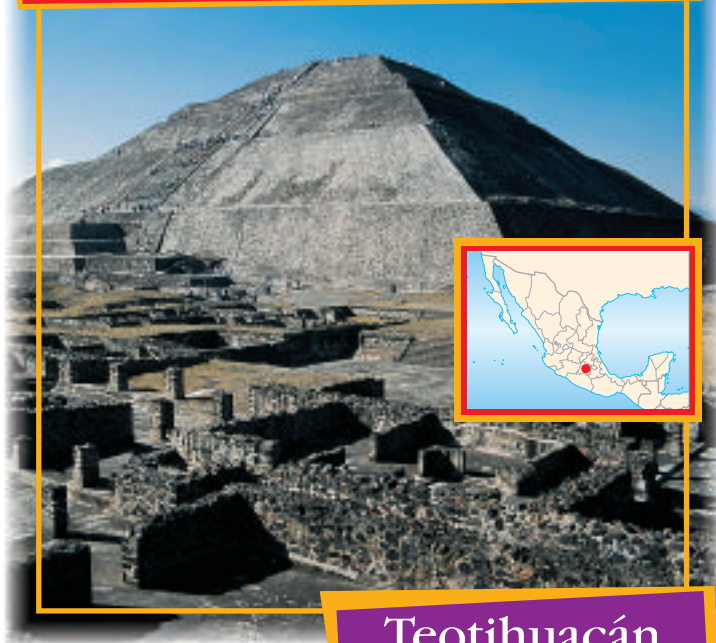
In 1519 Mexico’s history changed dramatically. A Spanish army led by Hernán Cortés landed on Mexico’s Gulf coast. He and about 600 soldiers marched to Tenochtitlán, which they heard was filled with gold. Some Native Americans who opposed the harsh rule of the Aztec signed treaties with the Spanish and joined them. The Spanish had swords, muskets, cannons, and horses. This enabled them to defeat the Aztec Empire, which contained about 6 million people, within two years.

Spain made Mexico a colony, or an overseas territory, because Mexico’s rocky land held rich deposits of gold and silver. Many Spanish settlers came to live in Mexico. Some raised cattle on large ranches called **haciendas** (ah•see•EHN•duhs). Others started gold and silver mines. The Spaniards made Native Americans work on the ranches and in the mines. Thousands of Native Americans died from mistreatment. Many thousands more died of diseases such as the common cold and smallpox, which they caught from Europeans. Spanish priests came to Mexico and in their own way tried to improve the lives of Native Americans. Because of their work, many Native Americans accepted the priests’ teachings. Today about 90 percent of Mexico’s people follow the Roman Catholic religion.

 **Reading Check** Why was Mexico a valuable colony for Spain?

 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

On Location



## Teotihuacán

Hundreds of years before the appearance of the Aztec or the Spanish, Native Americans built monuments, such as the Temple of the Sun in the city of Teotihuacán. Teotihuacán was located near what is now Mexico City.

**History** How was the small Spanish army able to defeat the Aztec?



## Social Studies Online

**Web Activity** Visit *The World and Its People* Web site at [twip.glencoe.com](http://twip.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 6—Student Web Activities** to learn more about Mexico's history.

# Independence and Revolution

The people of Mexico resented Spanish rule. In 1810 they rallied behind a Catholic priest, Miguel Hidalgo. He led an army of peasants in revolt. Spanish officials brought charges against Hidalgo and executed him, but the rebellion did not stop. Mexicans won their independence from Spain in 1821. In 1824 they set up a republic with an elected president.

Soon after independence, Mexico lost some valuable territory. Mexico's northern province of Texas fought for and won its own independence from Mexico and asked to join the United States. In 1846 the United States fought Mexico in a dispute over the southern boundary of Texas. In the treaty ending the war, Mexico gave up its claims to Texas. Mexico lost other valuable territory to the United States that included what are today the states of California, Utah, and Nevada.

For many decades, rich families, army officers, and Catholic Church leaders held most of the power and wealth in Mexico. In 1910 Mexican peasants revolted. Emiliano Zapata, who commanded a rebel army, stated the goals of this revolution. He wanted to give to the poor "the lands, woods, and water that the landlords or bosses have taken from us." Zapata's forces seized many large haciendas and divided the land among the poor. In Mexico's northwest area, Francisco "Pancho" Villa also tried to help the poor, mostly Native American peasants.

**Reading Check** Who led the 1910 revolution in Mexico?

## Section 2

# Assessment

### Defining Terms

1. **Define** jade, obsidian, maize, hieroglyphics, mural, hacienda.

### Recalling Facts

2. **History** Describe three achievements of the ancient Maya.
3. **History** Which European country conquered and colonized Mexico?
4. **History** What were Emiliano Zapata's goals?

### Critical Thinking

5. **Sequencing Information** Put the following events in the correct chronological order: Cortés conquers the Aztec, Mexico wins independence from Spain, the Mexica move into central Mexico, Zapata leads a revolution.

6. **Understanding Cause and Effect** How did the arrival of Europeans affect the Native Americans in Mexico?

### Graphic Organizer

7. **Organizing Information** Create a chart like this one. In each column, list the major advancements of each civilization.

Olmec	Maya	Aztec



## Applying Social Studies Skills

8. **Analyzing Maps** Refer to the map of Mexico's Native American civilizations on page 198. Which Native American group settled the farthest south?

# Making Connections

ART

SCIENCE

CULTURE

TECHNOLOGY

## The Aztec Calendar Stone

It is hard to imagine how a huge stone filled with carved figures can serve as a calendar. Known commonly as the Sun Stone, the Aztec calendar is full of both scientific and religious information.

### History

In 1790 workers in the heart of the *zócalo*, or main square, of Mexico City uncovered a massive circular stone. Mexico City sits on top of Tenochtitlán, the ancient capital of the Aztec Empire. Some 300 years earlier, the Aztec at Tenochtitlán had carved the 25-ton (23-t) basalt rock calendar. Using stone tools, they created a monument that measured 12 feet (3.6 m) in diameter and 3 feet (0.9 m) thick.

The face of the Aztec sun god appears at the center of the calendar stone. The sun god was thought to be one of the most important Aztec

gods. Seven rings surround the sun god. In the closest ring are four squarelike spaces, each with a symbol that represents the four past ages of the world—the time that existed before humans appeared. Circling these symbols is a ring with signs representing the 20 days of the Aztec month.

### Meaning of the Calendar

The Aztec calendar stone is actually two calendars in one. One calendar is a religious calendar based on a 260-day cycle. The Aztec believed that their lives depended on fulfilling their gods' demands. The calendar told Aztec priests when to make offerings and hold rituals for each god. It also divided the days among the gods. According to the Aztec view, this kept the universe in balance. An imbalance could lead to a power struggle among the gods and bring about the end of the world.

The second calendar is an agricultural calendar based on a 365-day solar cycle. The Aztec were very efficient farmers. They used this calendar to keep track of the seasons and ceremonies related to agricultural cycles.



## Making the Connection

1. What does the Aztec agricultural calendar reveal about the scientific understanding of the Aztec?
2. Why was it important for the Aztec to divide the days among the gods?
3. **Making Comparisons** How do the two calendar systems of the Aztec differ?

◀ Today the Aztec calendar stone is displayed in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.



## Section

# 3

# Mexico Today

### Guide to Reading

### Main Idea

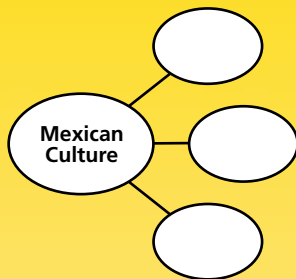
Mexicans enjoy a rich and lively culture but face many serious challenges.

### Terms to Know

- plaza
- adobe
- federal republic
- migrant worker
- national debt
- smog

### Reading Strategy

Create a diagram like this one. In each of the smaller ovals, write a feature of Mexican culture. Add as many smaller ovals as you need.

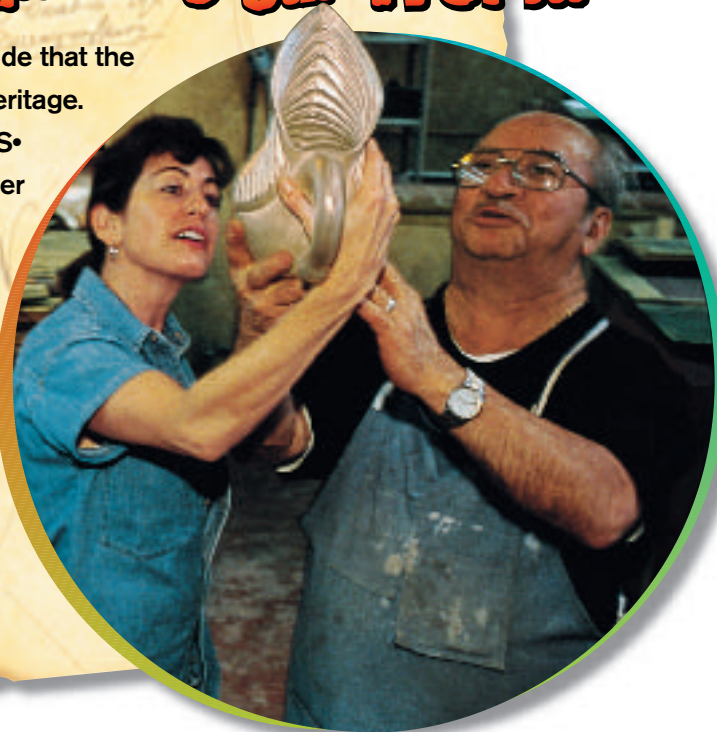


## Exploring our World

Mexican art reveals the pride that the people take in their rich heritage.

The people of Taxco (TAHS•koh) call their city the “silver capital of the world.”

Though the nearby hills no longer hold any silver, the city remains a home to craftspeople who make silver jewelry, cups, and trays. Here, a designer and silversmith examine a new pitcher design.



**M**exico—the third-largest country in area in Latin America, after Brazil and Argentina—has a large and dynamic population. About 75 percent of all Mexicans live in the country’s bustling cities.

### Mexico’s Cities and Villages

In the center of Mexico’s cities, you often find large **plazas**, or public squares. Around each city’s plaza stand important buildings such as a church and a government center. When you look at the buildings, you can see the architectural style of Spanish colonial times. Newer sections of the cities have a mix of towering glass office buildings and modern houses. In the poorer sections of town, people build small homes out of whatever materials they can find. These materials may include boards, sheet metal, or even cardboard.

Rural villages also have central plazas. Streets lead from the plazas to residential areas. Many homes are made of **adobe** (uh•DOH•bee), or sun-dried clay bricks. The roofs might be made of straw or of colored tile, in the Spanish style.

**Reading Check** What do you find in the center of Mexico’s cities and villages?

## Mexican Culture

Mexican artists and writers have created many national treasures. In the early 1900s, Mexican painters produced beautiful murals—just as Native American painters had done centuries before. Among the most famous of these mural painters were José Clemente Orozco, David Alfero Sequieros, and Diego Rivera. Rivera’s wife, Frida Kahlo, became well-known for her paintings, which revealed her inner feelings. Modern writers such as Carlos Fuentes and Octavio Paz have written poems and stories that reflect the values of Mexico’s people.

**Food** If you have tasted Mexican food, you know that it is a rich blend of flavors. Corn—first grown in Mexico—continues to be an important part of the Mexican diet. Chocolate, tomatoes, beans, squash, and chilies were all Native American foods as well. When the Spanish came, they brought beef, chicken, cheese, and olive oil, which Mexicans added to their cooking.

Today Mexicans use these different cooking traditions in popular foods such as tacos and enchiladas. Both dishes combine a flat bread called a tortilla with meat or beans, vegetables, cheese, and spicy chilies.

**Celebrations** Throughout the year, Mexicans enjoy celebrations called fiestas (fee•EHS•tuhs). These special days include parades, fireworks, music, and dancing. Mariachi (MAHR•ee•AH•chee) bands may play such traditional instruments as the violin, guitar, horn, and bass at fiestas. More likely, though, you will hear the fast-paced rhythms and singing of Latino bands, which have influenced the United States.

National holidays include Independence Day (September 16) and Cinco de Mayo (May 5). Cinco de Mayo celebrates the day in 1862 that Mexicans defeated an invading French army in battle. November 2 is a

### EXPLORING CULTURE

#### Art

Mexican artist Diego Rivera is one of the most famous mural painters of the twentieth century. He believed that art belonged to the people. In Mexico City, Rivera’s murals line the courtyard of the Ministry of Education building and cover the walls of the National Palace. With their characteristically vivid colors and distinctive style, Rivera’s murals tell the story of the work, culture, and history of the Mexican people.

**Looking Closer** How did Rivera’s work support his belief that art belongs to the people?

*Mexico Through the Centuries* ▶





special religious celebration called the “Day of the Dead.” On this day, families gather in cemeteries where they honor their departed loved ones by laying down food and flowers.

**✓ Reading Check** What are some important celebrations in Mexico?

## Mexico’s Government

Mexico, like the United States, is a **federal republic**, where power is divided between national and state governments. A strong president leads the national government. Mexico’s national government differs in that it has much more power than the state governments. The president of Mexico is head of the executive branch of government. He or she can serve only one six-year term but has more power than the legislative and judicial branches.

### Fiestas

On September 16, Mexicans have parades to celebrate the women and men who helped win Mexican independence.

**Culture** What is the purpose of fiestas?

For many decades, one political party, called the Party of Institutional Revolution (PRI), led Mexico. All the presidents and most other elected officials came from this party. In recent years, economic troubles and the people’s lack of political power led to growing frustration. In the year 2000, the newly elected president of Mexico, Vicente Fox, came from a different political party—for the first time in more than 70 years.

Mexico’s government faces many difficult challenges. People in Mexico are demanding more political freedom to make decisions that affect their everyday lives. Traffic in illegal drugs is of concern to the government as well. Nearly 40 percent of Mexico’s 100 million people live below the poverty line. To fight the country’s pressing problems, from poverty to drugs, a strong central government is needed. To increase democracy in Mexico, however, Fox must give power back to local and state agencies. Fox will have to help his country find the balance between these two levels of government.

**✓ Reading Check** What form of government does Mexico have?

## Mexico’s Challenges

Mexico has tried to use its resources to improve the lives of its people. These actions have had strong effects on Mexican life—and have created some challenges for the future.

**Population** Mexico’s population has increased rapidly in recent decades. Because many people have moved to the cities to find jobs, the cities have grown quickly. A large number of people have had to

take jobs that pay low wages. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people crowd together in slums, or poor sections of the cities.

Those Mexicans who cannot find any work in their country may become **migrant workers**. These are people who travel from place to place when extra workers are needed to plant or harvest crops. They legally and sometimes illegally cross Mexico's long border to work in the United States. Though the pay is low, the migrant workers can earn more in the United States than in Mexico.

Another challenge concerning Mexico's people involves the descendants of the ancient Maya Indians. The present-day Maya live in the southernmost state of Mexico called **Chiapas**. Turn to the map on page 191 to see where Chiapas is located. This state is one of the poorest states in Mexico. Over 75 percent of the people there live below the poverty level. Most of the wealth in Chiapas is concentrated in a very small number of ranching families who are of Spanish descent. Diseases and illness that result from poverty and lack of health care cause thousands of deaths every year. Many Maya are fighting for independence from the central government because they lost hope in the Mexican government.

**Foreign Debt** For decades, the Mexican government refused to let foreign companies build factories in Mexico. Leaders feared that the companies would take their profits to their own country, thus draining



## Mexico: Population Density





money out of Mexico. In the 1990s, the government changed this policy. Mexican officials were still concerned that money would be lost, but hoped that the new factories would create more jobs for Mexicans.

To help its economy grow, Mexico borrowed money from foreign banks. The government then had to use any money it earned in taxes to pay back the loans. As a result, Mexico's leaders did not have enough funds to spend on the Mexican people when the economy began to struggle. Many Mexicans grew angry. Yet, if the government did not make the loan payments, banks would refuse to lend more money for future plans. Because there are still loans to be repaid, Mexicans will face this situation for many years. The problem of repaying a **national debt**, or money owed by the government, is one that is being faced by many countries in the world today.

**Pollution** As Mexico's population boomed, its cities grew very large. At the same time, the economy industrialized. Both of these changes contributed to rising pollution in Mexico.

The mountains that surround Mexico City trap the exhaust fumes from hundreds of thousands of cars. People in this city wake each day to a thick haze of fog and chemicals called **smog**. Many people wear masks when they leave their homes to go to work or school. In northern Mexico, many factories release dangerous chemicals into the air or water. One environmental group says that the Rio Grande is now one of the most polluted rivers in North America.

 **Reading Check** What challenges does Mexico face?

## Section 3

# Assessment

### Defining Terms

1. **Define** plaza, adobe, federal republic, migrant worker, national debt, smog.

### Recalling Facts

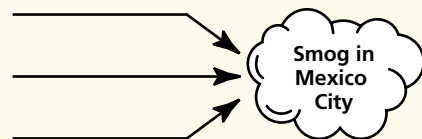
2. **Culture** What percentage of Mexico's population lives in urban areas?
3. **Government** Explain how Mexico's government is similar to the government of the United States. How is it different?
4. **Government** Why did Mexico's government refuse to allow foreign factories in Mexico?

### Critical Thinking

5. **Analyzing Information** What has resulted from the Mexican government's policy of borrowing from foreign banks?
6. **Summarizing Information** What problems have resulted from Mexico's expanding population?

### Graphic Organizer

7. **Organizing Information** Create a diagram like this one. On the arrows, list three factors that have led to the smog problem of Mexico City. Be sure to consider physical characteristics of the area when listing the factors.



## Applying Social Studies Skills

8. **Analyzing Maps** Look at the population density map on page 205. What is the population of Guadalajara? What is the population density of the area surrounding Mérida?



## Section 1

## Mexico's Land and Economy

## Terms to Know

land bridge  
peninsula  
latitude  
altitude  
hurricane  
vaquero  
maquiladora  
subsistence farm  
plantation  
industrialize  
service industry

## Main Idea

Mexico's mountainous landscape and varied climate create different economic regions.

- ✓ **Location** Mexico is part of a land bridge that connects North and South America.
- ✓ **Location** Much of Mexico lies in the Tropics, but the climate in some areas is cool because of high elevation.
- ✓ **Economics** Landforms and climate combine to create three economic zones in Mexico.
- ✓ **Movement** Mexico's economy is growing, and many people are moving to the northern cities.

## Section 2

## Mexico's History

## Terms to Know

jade  
obsidian  
maize  
hieroglyphics  
mural  
hacienda

## Main Idea

Mexico's culture reflects a blend of its Native American and Spanish past.

- ✓ **History** Mexico's Native American civilizations—the Olmec, Maya, and Aztec—made many contributions to Mexico's culture.
- ✓ **Culture** Mexico's people reflect the country's Native American and Spanish roots.
- ✓ **History** The Spanish ruled Mexico from the 1500s to 1821, when Mexico won its independence.
- ✓ **History** The poor people in Mexico revolted against the rich and powerful church and military leaders in 1910.

## Section 3

## Mexico Today

## Terms to Know

plaza  
adobe  
federal republic  
migrant worker  
national debt  
smog

## Main Idea

Mexicans enjoy a rich and lively culture but face many serious challenges.

- ✓ **Location** About 75 percent of Mexicans live in cities today.
- ✓ **Culture** Mexicans enjoy celebrations called fiestas, which can include parades, fireworks, and music.
- ✓ **Government** Mexico's government is a federal republic.
- ✓ **Economics** Challenges facing Mexico include problems caused by population growth, foreign investment and debt, and pollution.

# Assessment and Activities



## Using Key Terms

Match the terms in Part A with their definitions in Part B.

### A.

1. altitude
2. hurricane
3. vaquero
4. maquiladora
5. jade
6. adobe
7. plaza
8. smog
9. mural
10. subsistence farm

### B.

- a. factory that assembles parts from other countries
- b. cowhand
- c. sun-dried clay bricks
- d. wall painting
- e. height above sea level
- f. fog mixed with smoke
- g. produces only enough to support a family's needs
- h. fierce tropical storm
- i. public square
- j. shiny stone that comes in many shades of green



## Reviewing the Main Ideas

### Section 1 Mexico's Land and Economy

11. **Location** How does Mexico's latitude affect its climate?
12. **Economics** What are Mexico's major exports?
13. **Movement** How have maquiladoras affected northern Mexico's cities?

### Section 2 Mexico's History

14. **History** What was the capital city of the Aztec civilization?
15. **History** What effects did Spanish conquest have on Native Americans?
16. **History** When did Mexico win its independence from Spain?

### Section 3 Mexico Today

17. **Government** What are people in Mexico demanding from the Mexican government?
18. **Culture** What does Cinco de Mayo celebrate?

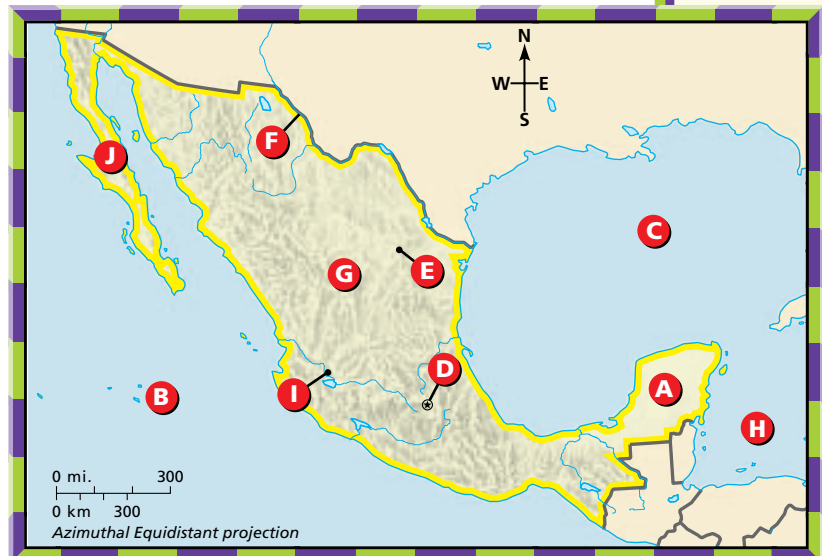


## Mexico

### Place Location Activity

On a separate sheet of paper, match the letters on the map with the numbered places listed below.

1. Pacific Ocean
2. Mexico City
3. Plateau of Mexico
4. Yucatán Peninsula
5. Baja California
6. Rio Grande
7. Gulf of Mexico
8. Guadalajara
9. Monterrey
10. Caribbean Sea





## Social Studies **Online**

**Self-Check Quiz** Visit *The World and Its People* Web site at [twip.glencoe.com](http://twip.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 6—Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the Chapter Test.



### Critical Thinking

- 19. Understanding Cause and Effect** Why have Mexico's leaders encouraged free trade agreements with other countries?
- 20. Problem Solving** If you were Mexico's president, what would you do to rid Mexico of the problems of illegal drugs and poverty?



### Comparing Regions Activity

- 21. Culture** People from different regions may have different ways of measuring time. The Aztec Stone, for example, was both a religious and an agricultural calendar. Compare the Aztec Stone to another region's calendar that is no longer in use, such as the ancient Egyptian or Roman calendar. How are they alike? How are they different?



### Mental Mapping Activity

- 22. Focusing on the Region** Create a simple outline map of Mexico. Refer to the physical map on page 196 and then label the following:
- Pacific Ocean
  - Gulf of Mexico
  - Yucatán Peninsula
  - Baja California
  - Mexico City
  - Rio Grande
  - Sierra Madre Occidental



### Technology Skills Activity



- 23. Developing a Multimedia Presentation** Imagine that you work for Mexico's Economic Development Office. Create a multimedia presentation to present to a group of foreign investors. Use a software application such as PowerPoint® to showcase positive features like climate, resources, and labor supply. Your goal is to show investors that Mexico is a good place for them to invest their money.

## Standardized Test Practice

**Directions:** Read the paragraph below, and then answer the question that follows.

The Aztec civilization was organized into classes. At the top was the emperor. His power came from his control of the army and the religious beliefs of the people. Next came the nobles, followed by commoners. Commoners included priests, merchants, and artists. Below commoners were the serfs, or workers who farmed the nobles' fields. Slaves, the lowest class, included criminals and people in debt, as well as female and child prisoners of war. Male prisoners of war were sacrificed to the Aztec gods. The Aztec believed that live human sacrifices were needed to keep the gods pleased and to prevent floods and other disasters.

- 1. Which of the following statements is an opinion about the information given above?**
- F The Aztec civilization was organized into classes.
- G Male prisoners of war were sacrificed to the Aztec gods.
- H Slaves included children.
- J The Aztec should not have sacrificed people to the gods.

**Test-Taking Tip:** This question asks you to identify an opinion. An opinion is a person's belief. It is not a proven fact (such as answer F). Opinions often contain subjective words, such as *easier*, *best*, or *should*.