

Nombre: _____ Apellido: _____
Culture: México

México

Instructions: Read the following article about México. Then, answer the questions that follow!



Geography

Mexico is a land of extremes, with high mountains and deep canyons in the center of the country, sweeping deserts in the north, and dense rain forests in the south and east.

Mountains cover much of Mexico. Between the Sierra Madre Oriental Mountain range in the west and the Sierra Madre Occidental Mountain range in the east lie the small mountain ranges on the

Central Plateau. These regions are rich with valuable metals like silver and copper.

The stretch of land called the Yucatán Peninsula juts into the Gulf of Mexico from Mexico's southeastern tip. It was once the home of the Mayan civilization, an ancient culture whose amazing structures can still be visited to today.

Nature

Few places on earth support as many plant and animal species as Mexico does. Located partway between the Equator and the Arctic Circle, it is a refuge for animals fleeing from extreme cold in the north and intense heat in the south.

In northern Mexico, deserts are full of plant and animal species that have found ways to survive in the harsh environment. On Mexico's west coast, gray whales swim thousands of miles each year from Alaska to breed in the waters off Baja California.

The rainforests and coastal wetlands of eastern Mexico are home to thousands of tropical plant species and exotic animals like jaguars and quetzal birds.



History

The Olmec people, Mexico's first complex society, emerged in the southeastern part of the country around 1200 B.C. They were later followed by the Maya, Toltec, and Aztec peoples.

Mexico's ancient civilizations built great cities and huge pyramids, created remarkable works of art, and even studied the stars and

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planets to determine when to plant crops and hold ceremonies.

In the early 1500's the Spanish conquistadors arrived in Mexico. The Aztec people got sick from smallpox and other diseases that the Spanish brought with them. The Spanish also seized and destroyed the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlán. The Spanish ruled Mexico until September 6, 1821.



People and Culture

Mexico is the product of rich Indian heritage, three centuries of Spanish rule, and a shared border with the world's richest country, the United States. Today, most Mexicans are *mestizos*, which means they have a mix of Indian and Spanish blood.

Throughout its history, Mexico has been home to great artists. The Maya and other Indians made impressive murals, sculptures, and jewelry. Modern Mexican artists include great painters, photographers, sculptors, and muralists.

Mexicans take sports seriously. In ancient times, losers of a ritual ball game were once put to death. In some dangerous sports, like bullfighting and rodeo (which was invented in Mexico), competitors still put their lives on the line.

Government and Economy

Mexico is a country with great problems and great potential. It is rich in natural resources like oil, silver, copper, and agricultural products. But political and economic failings have kept much of the population in poverty.

The Mexico-United States border is the largest economic divide on Earth. For many Mexicans, the best chance for a better life lies in the much more prosperous United States. Hundreds of thousands of Mexicans come to the United States each year legally and illegally, in search of work.



Fast Facts

Population: 1.6 billion
Capital: Mexico, D.F.
Languages: Spanish
Currency (money): Peso

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Answer the following questions based on the information in the article on Mexico.

1. Mexico has many mountain ranges. (T)
2. There are no rainforests in Mexico. F
3. Where did the Mayan civilization flourish? (F)
Yucatan Peninsula
4. What mammal breeds in the waters off the west coast of Mexico? grey whales
5. What exotic bird lives in Mexico? quetzal
6. The Aztecs are the 1st known civilization in Mexico. T (F)
7. The ancient civilizations of Mexico were very *primitive*. T (F)
8. When did the Spainairds invade Mexico? early 1500's
9. When did Mexico finally regain its' independence? 1821
10. What is a *mestizo*? mix of Spanish + indigenous
11. In ancient games, the losers were put to death. (T) F
12. The rodeo was invented in Texas. T (F)
13. Mexico is a wealthy country. T (F)

We will answer these questions together in class!!!

billón	capital	centroamérica	peso	seis
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1. México está en centroamérica.
2. La capital de México es México, D.F.
3. El seis de septiembre es el día de Independencia de México.
4. La población es un billón.
5. La moneda (currency) es el peso.