

Chapter
21

Central America and the West Indies



The World and Its People NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



To learn more about the people and places of Central America and the West Indies, view *The World and Its People* Chapter 7 video.

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Our World Today online

Chapter Overview Visit the *Our World Today: People, Places, and Issues* Web site at tx.owt.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 21—Chapter Overviews** to preview information about Central America and the West Indies.

CONTENTS

▼ Guadeloupe, an island in the Lesser Antilles

Why It Matters

Building Trust

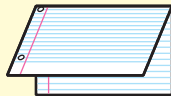
Ever since the Monroe Doctrine warned European nations against interfering with the affairs of countries in the Americas, U.S. presidents have worked to develop a special relationship with our near neighbors.

FOLDABLES™ Study Organizer

TX TAKS Practice

Compare-Contrast Study Foldable Make this foldable to help you determine how Central America and the West Indies are similar and different.

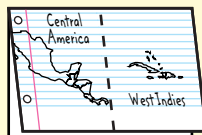
Step 1 Fold one sheet of paper in half from top to bottom.



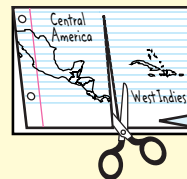
Step 2 Fold it in half again, from side to side.



Step 3 Unfold the paper once. Sketch an outline of Central America and the West Indies across both tabs and label them as shown.



Step 4 Cut up the fold of the top flap only.



This cut will make two tabs.

Reading and Writing As you read the chapter, write facts under the appropriate tabs of your foldable. Use what you write to compare and contrast the people and places of Central America and the West Indies.

Central America

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

Central America is made up of seven nations that are home to a variety of peoples, exotic animals, and diverse landforms.

Terms to Know

- isthmus
- hurricane
- plantation
- subsistence farm
- canopy
- eco-tourist
- literacy rate
- republic
- parliamentary democracy

Reading Strategy

Create a chart like this one, listing each country in Central America and two key facts about each country.

Country	Key Facts



Exploring our World

Unusual animals found nowhere else on the earth roam the floor and canopy of Central America's rain forests. The small frog here seems as if it would be a snack for other, larger animals. Do not be fooled by the enlargement of the photo, however. Many frogs like this one hold a deadly poison in their skin, which would quickly kill anything that tried to eat them.



Central America, part of Middle America, is an **isthmus**, or a narrow piece of land that links two larger areas of land—North America and South America. Most of the countries on the isthmus have two coastlines—one on the Pacific Ocean and one on the Caribbean Sea. This narrow region is actually part of North America. Seven countries make up Central America: Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.

A Rugged Land

Like Mexico, Central America sits where plates in the earth's crust meet. The collision of these plates produces volcanoes and earthquakes in the region. The Central Highlands, which curve like a backbone through inland Central America, are actually a chain of volcanic mountains. Because of their ruggedness, the Central Highlands are difficult to cross. This causes serious problems for transportation and communication and has also kept many of the region's people isolated from one another. The volcanoes of the Central Highlands do bring some benefits to farmers, though. Volcanic material has made the soil very fertile.

Central America is mostly tropical, although the mountainous areas are cool year-round. The Caribbean Lowlands have a hot, tropical rain forest climate throughout the year. Here you can expect about 100 inches (254 cm) of rain each year. Breezes from the Caribbean Sea provide some cooling relief. These breezes can be replaced by deadly hurricanes during the summer and fall, though. **Hurricanes** are fierce storms with winds of more than 74 miles (119 km) per hour.

✓ Reading Check How have the volcanoes in Central America been helpful?

The Economy

The economies of the Central American countries depend on farming and harvesting wood from their rain forests. Central America has two kinds of farms. Wealthy people and companies own **plantations**—commercial farms that grow crops for sale. Major crops include coffee, bananas, cotton, and sugarcane. Plantations export their harvest to the United States and other parts of the world. Farmers in Guatemala and Costa Rica also grow flowers and ornamental plants for export.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Central America and the West Indies: Political



Applying Map Skills

TAKS Practice

- Which countries in Central America border only one body of water?
- What two countries occupy the island of Hispaniola?

Find NGS online map resources @ www.nationalgeographic.com/maps

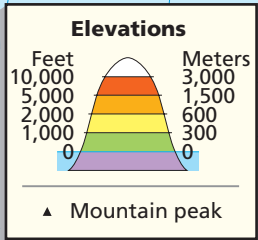
Many farms in Central America are not plantations but **subsistence farms**, or small plots of land where poor farmers grow only enough food to feed their families. Subsistence farmers typically raise livestock and grow corn, beans, and rice.

Rain Forests Under Central America's green **canopy**, or topmost layer of the rain forest, which shades the forest floor, valuable resources and ancient ruins of past empires can be found. The dense forests offer expensive woods—mahogany and rosewood, for example. Unusual animal and plant species also thrive here. Scientists research the plants to develop new medicines.

Both local and foreign-owned companies have set up large-scale operations in the rain forests. Lumber companies cut down and export the valuable trees. Other companies and local farmers also cut or burn the trees to clear land for farming. Without trees to provide nutrients and hold the soil in place, rains wash it and its nutrients away. As a result, the land soon becomes poor. The businesses and farmers then move on, clearing trees from another piece of land.



Central America and the West Indies: Physical



Applying Map Skills

TAKS Practice

1. What are the names of the two lowlands on either side of the Central Highlands?
2. What island is located at about 18°N, 67°W?

Find NGS online map resources @ www.nationalgeographic.com/maps

Many Central Americans worry about the rapid destruction of the rain forests. Some countries are responding to this crisis by helping workers replant cleared areas. Costa Rica has set aside one-fourth of its forests as national parks. It uses the rain forests to attract **eco-tourists**, or people who travel to other countries to enjoy natural wonders.

Industry Missing from the skylines of most major Central American cities are the smokestacks of industry. The few industries that exist generally focus on preparing foods. In Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, some factories produce clothing for export.

Guatemala, which has some oil reserves, exports crude oil. Costa Rica produces computer chips, other electronic goods, and medicines. With its varied economy, Costa Rica enjoys one of the highest standards of living in Latin America. It also has one of the highest **literacy rates**, or percentage of people who can read and write.

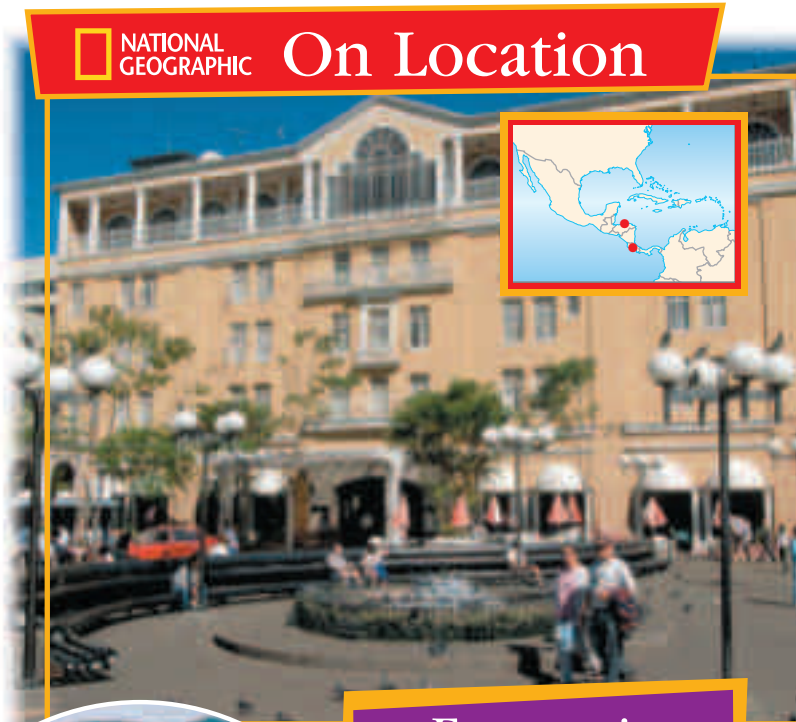
The Panama Canal The economy in Panama is based on farming—as the economy is throughout Central America—but Panama also earns money from its canal. The **Panama Canal** stretches across the narrow **Isthmus of Panama**. Ships pay a fee to use the canal to shorten travel time between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Turn to page 562 to see how the canal works.

The United States built the canal and owned it for more than 80 years. Panama was given final control of the canal on December 31, 1999. Panama hopes to use this waterway to build its economy. Nearly half of Panama's 2.9 million people live and work in the canal area.

✓ Reading Check What are the major crops grown on Central America's plantations?

The History and People of Central America

Native Americans settled Central America thousands of years ago. The Olmecs were the first civilization in the area, from about 1200 B.C. to 400 B.C. The Maya flourished in the rain forests of the north from about A.D. 250 to 900. Look at the Native American civilizations map on



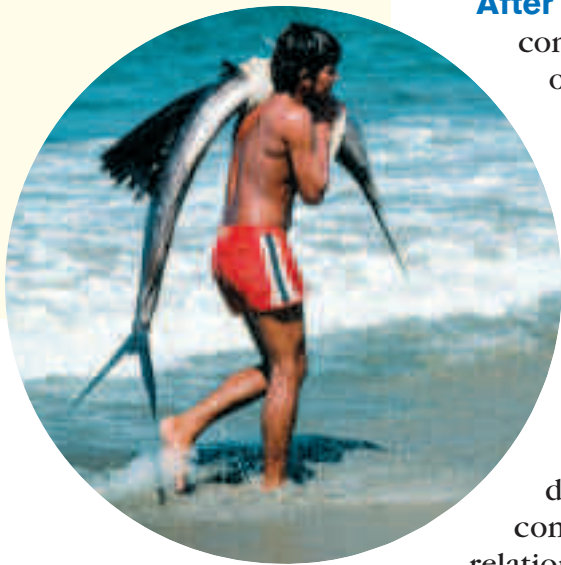
Economic Highs and Lows

San José, Costa Rica's capital (top), has shopping malls and fast-food chains like many North American cities. In 1998 Hurricane Mitch caused massive mudslides that buried whole villages and destroyed crops in Honduras (bottom).

Issues During what seasons do hurricanes strike Central America?

What a Catch!

The deep blue waters of Lake Nicaragua are home to the world's only freshwater sharks and swordfish. Now the lake holds one less swordfish. Amadeo Robelo, who lives in Granada, Nicaragua, just spent three hours battling the powerful fish. Amadeo enjoys fishing with his father on weekends. His father wants Amadeo to become part of Nicaragua's middle class—something new in a region where you are either one of the few with wealth or one of the many who live in poverty.



page 542. In **Tikal** (tee•KAHL), Guatemala, and **Copán** (koh•PAHN), Honduras, the Maya created impressive temples and sculptures. Before Columbus arrived, Tikal was the site of the highest structure in the Americas, a 212-foot (64.6-m) temple rising from the floor of the rain forest. The Maya were a very highly developed civilization. Their religion focused on the careful study of time and the stars, astronomy, and mathematics. The Maya developed a calendar and kept records on stone slabs. Then the Maya mysteriously left their cities. Many of their descendants still live in the area today.

In the 1500s, Spaniards established settlements in Central America. For the next 300 years, Spanish landowners forced Native Americans to work on plantations. The two cultures gradually blended. Native Americans started to speak the Spanish language and follow the Roman Catholic faith. Native Americans taught the Spanish about local plants for medicines and how to trap animals for food and hides.

Most Central American countries gained independence from Spain by 1821. The two exceptions are Panama and Belize. Panama was part of the South American country of Colombia for decades. In 1903 the United States helped Panama win its independence in exchange for the right to build the Panama Canal. Belize, a British colony until 1981, was the last Central American country to gain independence.

After Independence

Most Central American countries faced constant strife after they became independent. A small number of people in each country held most of the wealth and power. Rebel movements arose as poor farmers fought for changes that would give them land and better lives. Civil wars raged in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala as recently as the 1980s and 1990s.

In Guatemala from 1960 to 1996, government military forces fought rebel groups living in the highlands. About 150,000 people died, and the civil war severely weakened Guatemala's economy. Tens of thousands of Guatemalans left the country to look for work in the United States.

In contrast, Costa Ricans have enjoyed peace. A stable democratic government rules, and the country has avoided conflict for most of its history. As a result of these peaceful relations, the country has no army—only a police force to maintain law and order.

Today each country in Central America has a democratic government, with voters choosing government officials. Six countries are also **republics**, with elected presidents as head of the government. Belize is a British-style **parliamentary democracy**, in which an elected legislature chooses a prime minister to head the government.

Daily Life Nearly 38 million people live in Central America. About one-third of this number live in Guatemala, the most heavily populated country in the region. Only about 300,000 people live in Belize, the region's least populous country. Spanish is the official language

throughout the region, except for English-speaking Belize. Many Central Americans also speak Native American languages, such as Mayan. Guatemala's population, for instance, is largely Native American and has more than 20 different Native American languages. Most Central Americans follow the Roman Catholic religion.

About 50 percent of all Central Americans live on farms or in small villages. At least one major city, usually the capital, is densely populated in each country. Guatemala's capital, **Guatemala City**, ranks with **San José**, Costa Rica, as one of the most populous cities in Central America. People living in urban areas hold manufacturing or service industry jobs, or they work on farms outside the cities. Those living in coastal areas may harvest shrimp, lobster, and other seafood to sell in city markets or for export.

Whether rural or urban, most people enjoy a major celebration called **Carnival**. This festival comes before Lent, a solemn period of prayer and soul-searching before the Christian celebration of Easter. During Carnival—and at other times—bands play salsa, a mixture of Latin American popular music, jazz, and rock. Do you like baseball? It is a national sport in Nicaragua and very popular in Panama, too. Most people throughout the region also enjoy *fútbol*, or soccer.

 **Reading Check** Why is the government of Belize different from that of other countries in Central America?

Section 1 **Assessment**

Defining Terms

1. **Define** isthmus, hurricane, plantation, subsistence farm, canopy, eco-tourist, literacy rate, republic, parliamentary democracy.

Recalling Facts

2. **Economics** What is the difference between plantation and subsistence farming?
3. **Culture** What are the major religion and language of Central America?
4. **Place** Which country in Central America is the most heavily populated? The most sparsely populated?

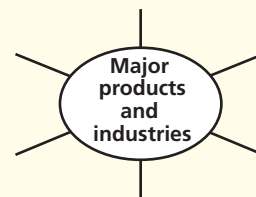
Critical Thinking

5. **Making Comparisons** How have the differences in government stability affected the citizens of Guatemala and Costa Rica?

6. **Analyzing Cause and Effect** Explain why rain forest soil does not keep its nutrients long.

Graphic Organizer

7. **Organizing Information** Create a diagram like this one. On the lines list the major products and industries of Central America.



Applying Social Studies Skills

8. **Analyzing Maps** Refer to the political map on page 557. Which countries of Central America border Mexico? Which border the Pacific Ocean?

Making Connections

CULTURE

GOVERNMENT

PEOPLE

TECHNOLOGY

The Panama Canal Locks

Before the Panama Canal was built, ships had to sail around the southern tip of South America to go from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and vice versa. The canal provides a shortcut that reduces that trip by about 7,000 miles (11,270 km).

Digging the Canal

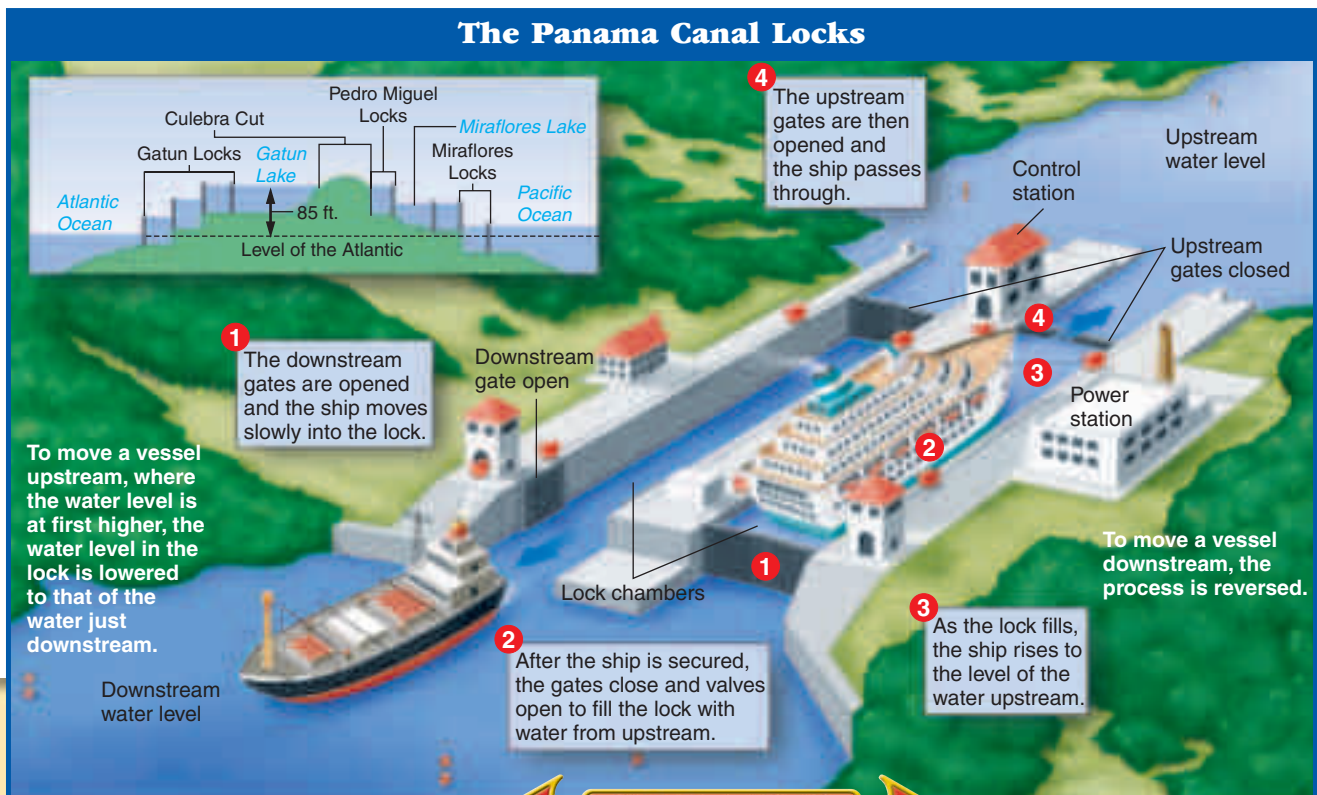
The first attempts to build a canal across Panama were begun in 1881 by a private French company. Huge expenses, poor planning, and the effects of diseases such as malaria and yellow fever stopped construction. In 1904 the United States government took over. Doctors had recently learned that bites from infected mosquitoes caused malaria and yellow fever. Workers drained swamps and cleared brush to remove the mosquitoes' breeding grounds. Then the digging began. The canal's course ran through hills of soft volcanic soil. Massive landslides regularly occurred before the 50-mile (80-km) canal was completed in 1914.

An Engineering Masterpiece

To move ships through the canal, engineers designed three sets of locks—the largest concrete structures on the earth. They allow ships to move from one water level to another by changing the amount of water in the locks. Together, the locks can raise or lower ships about 85 feet (26 m)—the height of a seven-story building. The diagram below shows you how these locks work.

Making the Connection

1. Why was a canal through Panama desirable?
2. What function do locks perform?
3. **Understanding Cause and Effect** How did medical advances affect the building of the Panama Canal?



CONTENTS

The West Indies

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

The islands of the West Indies rely on tourism to support their economies.

Terms to Know

- commercial crop
- bauxite
- cooperative
- communist state
- embargo
- free trade zone
- commonwealth

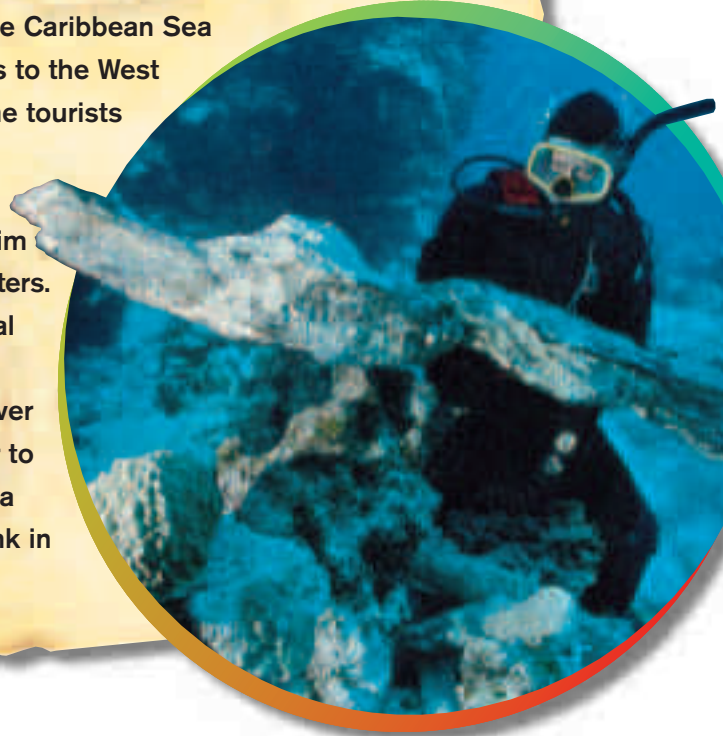
Reading Strategy

Create a diagram like this one. In each oval, list a country in the West Indies and features that are specific to it. Where the ovals overlap, list features that are similar to both countries.



Exploring our World

The warm waters of the Caribbean Sea lure millions of tourists to the West Indies every year. Some tourists go scuba diving so they can see the colorful fish, which swim in the islands' clear waters. Others shop at the local stores, buying hand-crafted goods. This diver uses a metal detector to look for objects from a Spanish ship that sank in the 1600s.



A number of islands dot the Caribbean Sea and form groups known as archipelagos that make up the West Indies. Study the map on page 557 to become familiar with the names of these island groups.

Mountaintop Islands

When you look at the islands of the West Indies, you are really looking at the tops of mountains. Many West Indian islands are part of an underwater chain of mountains formed by volcanoes. A typical volcanic island has central highlands ringed by coastal plains. The volcanic soil in the highlands is rich.

Other islands are limestone mountains pushed up from the ocean floor by pressures under the earth's crust. Limestone islands generally are flatter than volcanic islands. The sandy soil found on many limestone islands is not good for farming.

Climate The West Indies lie in the Tropics. Most islands have a fairly constant tropical climate. Sea and wind, more than elevation, affect the climate here. Northeast breezes sweep across the Caribbean Sea,

taking on the temperature of the cooler water beneath them. When the winds blow onshore, they keep temperatures pleasant.

For half the year, hurricanes threaten the West Indies. The word *hurricane* comes from the Taíno, an early Native American people who lived on the islands. They worshiped a god of storms named Hurakan. (Two other terms that we have borrowed from the Taíno include *canoe* and *hammock*, a bed made by stringing ropes or plant fibers between two trees.)

 **Reading Check** What formed the islands of the West Indies?

The Economy of the West Indies

Farming and tourism are the main economic activities in the West Indies. Wealthy landowners grow crops such as sugarcane, bananas, coffee, and tobacco for export. Many laborers work on the plantations that grow these **commercial crops**. Commercial crops are grown to sell, not to be eaten by the grower. The Caribbean islands face an economic danger by depending on one commercial crop. If the crop fails, no income is earned. If too much of the crop is produced worldwide, overall prices fall and the economy is in serious trouble. Most of the islands do not have large amounts of minerals, although several islands have some resources. Jamaica, for example, mines **bauxite**, a mineral used to make aluminum. The country of Trinidad and Tobago exports oil products. In Puerto Rico, companies make chemicals and machinery. Haiti and the Dominican Republic have textile factories that make cloth.

 **Reading Check** What are the two major industries in the West Indies?

History and Culture

When Christopher Columbus reached San Salvador in the Bahamas in 1492, who met him? As you probably guessed, it was a Native American group—the Taíno. The Taíno and other Native Americans lived on the islands long before the coming of Europeans.

The Spaniards established the first permanent European settlement in the Western Hemisphere in 1496. That settlement is now the city of Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic. During the next 200 years, the Spaniards, the English, the French, and the Dutch also founded colonies, or overseas settlements, on many of the islands. They found the soil and climate perfect for growing sugarcane.

By the mid-1600s, most Native Americans had died from European diseases and harsh treatment. The Europeans then brought enslaved Africans to work on sugar plantations. When the slave trade ended in the early 1800s, plantation owners still in need of workers brought them from Asia, particularly India. The Asians agreed to work a set number of years in return for free travel to the West Indies and low wages.

Independence During the 1800s and 1900s, many Caribbean islands won their freedom from European rule. The first to become independent were the larger island countries, such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. Later, smaller islands such as Barbados





Economic Activities

Schoolgirls on Barbados walk past vast sugar plantations that European countries started in the colonial period (left). A steel-drum band entertains tourists in Trinidad (above).

Region What attracts so many tourists to the islands of the West Indies?

and Grenada became nations. Many countries—like Haiti and the Dominican Republic—are republics. Others—like Jamaica and the Bahamas—are British-style parliamentary democracies.

Daily Life About 60 percent of West Indians live in cities and villages. The other 40 percent live and work in the countryside. Many islanders have jobs in the hotels or restaurants that serve the tourist industry.

If you visit the Caribbean, you are likely to hear lively music. The bell-like tones of the steel drum, developed in Trinidad, are part of the rich musical heritage of the region. Enslaved Africans created a kind of music called calypso. Jamaica's reggae and calypso music combine African rhythms and American popular music. Cuban salsa blends African rhythms, Spanish styles, and jazz.

On several islands, you will hear a different sound—the crack of a baseball bat. People in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba have a passion for baseball. Soccer and cricket are other popular sports.

✓ Reading Check Where was the first permanent European settlement in the West Indies?

Island Profiles

The islands of the West Indies share many similarities, but they also have differences. Some of these differences can be seen in Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico.

Believe It! Or Not!

Bee Hummingbird

How small is this bird? The bee hummingbird of Cuba measures only 2 inches (5.1 cm) from head to tail. That is small enough to make it the tiniest bird in the world. The bird's wings move so fast—80 beats per second—that the human eye cannot see them. At two grams, the bee hummingbird weighs less than a penny.



Cuba One of the world's top sugar producers, Cuba lies about 90 miles (145 km) south of Florida. Most farmers work on **cooperatives**, or farms owned and operated by the government. In addition to growing sugarcane, they grow coffee, tobacco, rice, and fruits. In **Havana**, Cuba's capital and the largest city in the West Indies, workers make food products, cigars, and household goods.

Cuba is a **communist state**, where the government has strong control over the economy and society. Cuba is the only communist state in the Western Hemisphere. A dictator, President Fidel Castro, leads the country. Cuba won its independence from Spain in 1898. The country had a democratic government, although military leaders sometimes seized power. In 1959 Castro led a revolution that took control of the government. He set up a communist state and turned to the Soviet Union for support. When he seized property belonging to American companies, the United States government responded. It put in place an **embargo**, or a ban on trade, against Cuba.

Cuba lost its major source of aid when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Since then, Cuba's leaders have been unable to meet even the basic needs of their people. Some Americans believe that the United States should help the Cuban people by ending the trade embargo with Cuba. Other Americans, especially Cuban Americans, many of whom fled Castro's regime, strongly oppose reopening trade. They believe that such trade would only help an oppressive Communist dictator stay in power.

Haiti On the western half of the island of Hispaniola, you will find the country of Haiti. Led by a former slave, Francois-Dominique Toussaint-Louverture, Haiti fought for and won its independence from France in 1804. It was the second independent republic in the Western Hemisphere (after the United States). It became the first nation in the history of the world to be founded by former slaves. About 95 percent of Haiti's 7 million people are of African ancestry.

Civil war has left Haiti's economy in ruins, and most Haitians are poor. In the 1980s, the staple of the people's diet was the Creole pig. Creole pigs were also important as a source of income. When it came time to send a child to school, a pig could be sold to pay for books, fees, and a uniform. When planting season came, selling a pig paid for seeds and tools. Having a pig around often meant the difference between life and death when health emergencies arose. Creole pigs were known as the "peasants' savings bank." In 1983 a swine flu outbreak forced the government to destroy the population of Creole pigs to prevent an epidemic in the Americas. A plan to substitute pigs from the United States failed. Unlike the Creole pigs, which had foraged for their own food, the U.S. breeds required expensive feed, which Haitian farmers could not afford. The imported pigs required housing with cement floors, while most Haitian peasants lived in homes with dirt floors. The U.S. pigs were not used to Haiti's tropical climate. Within a short time, most of the U.S. pigs had died. Today, the Haitian government, with U.S. help, has begun a program to help communities replace the destroyed Creole pig population and try to lessen the poverty of the families.

Dominican Republic The Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, filling the eastern part. Though they share the same island, the two countries have different histories and little contact. Haiti was a French colony. The Dominican Republic was settled by Spaniards, who brought enslaved Africans to work on sugar plantations. Sugar is still an important crop to the Dominicans. Tourism is growing, too, and many Dominicans sell goods in the country's free trade zone. **Free trade zones** are areas where people can buy goods from other countries without paying taxes.

Puerto Rico To be or not to be a state in the United States, that is the question that Puerto Ricans ask themselves every few years. The last time they voted on the question, they said no. How did Puerto Rico become part of the United States? The island was a Spanish colony from 1508 to 1898. After the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States won control of Puerto Rico. Since 1952 the island has been a **commonwealth**, or a partly self-governing territory, under American protection. By law, Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States. They can come and go from the island to the United States as they wish. Today around 3 million Puerto Ricans live in the United States. The island itself holds about 3.9 million and boasts a high standard of living compared to most other Caribbean islands.

Our World Today Online

Web Activity Visit the **Our World Today: People, Places, and Issues** Web site at tx.owt.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 21—Student Web Activities** to learn more about Puerto Rico.



✓ Reading Check What is a commonwealth?

 **TAKS Practice**

Section 2 Assessment

Defining Terms

- 1. Define** commercial crop, bauxite, cooperative, communist state, embargo, free trade zone, commonwealth.

Recalling Facts

- 2. Economy** What are the two main economic activities in the West Indies?
- 3. History** Name four groups who have influenced the culture of the Caribbean region.
- 4. Government** How is Cuba different from every other country in the Western Hemisphere?

Critical Thinking

- 5. Drawing Conclusions** Explain why you think Puerto Ricans might be satisfied remaining a commonwealth, rather than becoming a state.

- 6. Making Predictions** What is the danger of a country's depending on only one crop?

Graphic Organizer

- 7. Organizing Information** Complete a chart like the one below with facts about Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Country	Haiti	Dominican Republic
Location		
Colonized by		
Economy		



Applying Social Studies Skills

- 8. Cause and Effect** Create a cause and effect chart that explains why the U.S. pigs did not adapt to Haiti.

Social Studies

Skill



Interpreting an Elevation Profile

You have learned that differences in land elevation are often shown on physical or relief maps. Another way to show elevation is on **elevation profiles**. When you view a person's profile, you see a side view. An elevation profile is a diagram that shows a side view of the landforms in an area.

- Look at the measurements along the sides of the profile. Note where sea level is located and the height in feet or meters.
- Now read the labels on the profile to identify the heights of the different landforms shown along with their elevation.
- Compare the highest and lowest points.

Learning the Skill

Suppose you could slice right through a country from top to bottom and could look at the inside, or *cross section*. The cross section, or elevation profile, below pictures the island of Jamaica. It shows how far Jamaica's landforms extend below or above sea level.

Follow these steps to understand an elevation profile:

- Read the title of the profile to find out what country you are viewing.
- Look at the line of latitude written along the bottom of the profile. On a separate map, find the country and where this line of latitude runs through it.

Practicing the Skill

Use the elevation profile below to answer the following questions.

1. At what elevation is Kingston?
2. What are the highest mountains, and where are they located?
3. Where are the lowest regions?
4. Along what line of latitude was this cross section taken?

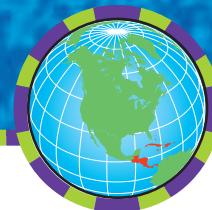
Applying the Skill

Turn to page 13 in the **Geography Handbook**. Use the elevation profile of Africa to answer questions 2-4 above about *that* continent.



Jamaica: Elevation Profile





Section 1

Central America

Terms to Know

isthmus
hurricane
plantation
subsistence farm
canopy
eco-tourist
literacy rate
republic
parliamentary
democracy

Main Idea

Central America is made up of seven nations that are home to a variety of peoples, exotic animals, and diverse landforms.

- ✓ **Region** Central America includes seven countries: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.
- ✓ **Region** Volcanic mountains run down the center of Central America with coastal lowlands on either side.
- ✓ **Economics** Most people in the region farm—either on plantations or subsistence farms.
- ✓ **Culture** Most countries in Central America have a blend of Native American and Spanish cultures.

The Panama Canal ►



Section 2

The West Indies

Terms to Know

commercial crop
bauxite
cooperative
communist state
embargo
free trade zone
commonwealth

Main Idea

The islands of the West Indies rely on tourism to support their economies.

- ✓ **History** Christopher Columbus landed in this region in 1492.
- ✓ **History** Most of the islands were at one time colonies of European countries.
- ✓ **Economics** Farming and tourism are the major economic activities in the West Indies.
- ✓ **Culture** The cultures of the West Indies mix Native American, European, African, and Asian influences.
- ✓ **Government** Most governments in the West Indies are democratic, but a dictator rules Communist Cuba.

Assessment and Activities



Using Key Terms

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

A.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. isthmus | 6. bauxite |
| 2. literacy rate | 7. commonwealth |
| 3. plantation | 8. embargo |
| 4. eco-tourist | 9. free trade zone |
| 5. commercial crop | 10. republic |

B.

- large commercial farm
- mineral ore from which aluminum is made
- ban on trade
- narrow piece of land connecting two larger pieces of land
- area where people can buy goods from other countries without paying taxes
- person who travels to another country to enjoy its natural wonders
- country with an elected president
- percentage of adults who can read and write
- partly self-governing territory
- product grown to sell rather than to eat



Reviewing the Main Ideas

Section 1 Central America

- Region** What seven countries make up Central America?
- Economics** Why are the Central American rain forests being destroyed?
- History** In what Central American countries did the Maya live?
- Culture** What percentage of Central Americans live on farms or in small villages?

Section 2 The West Indies

- Economics** What two activities form the basis of the West Indian economies?
- Region** Many of the Caribbean islands were formed by what type of tectonic activity?
- Culture** What types of music can you find in the West Indies?
- History** What was the first nation in the world to be founded by formerly enslaved people?
- Economics** Why are commercial crops sometimes a risky business?

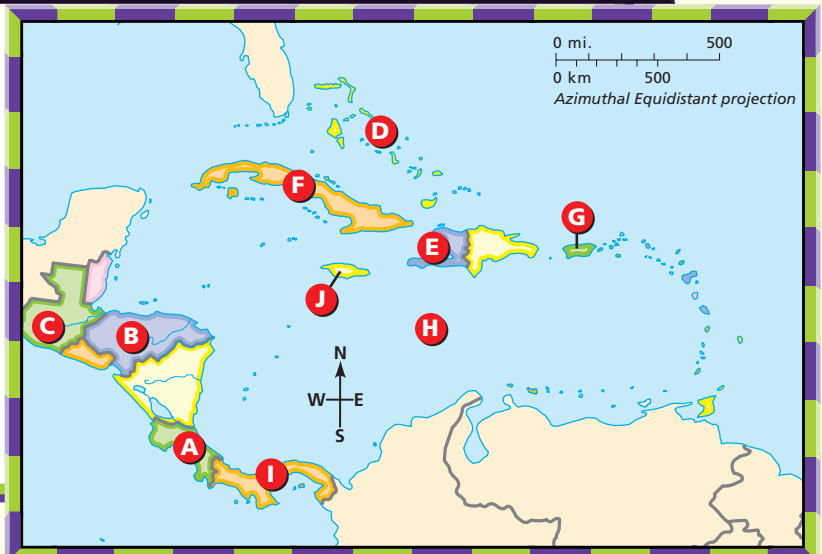
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

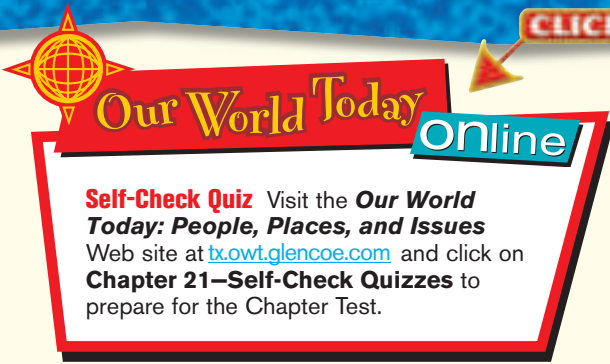
Central America and the West Indies

Place Location Activity

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

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Guatemala | 6. Panama |
| 2. Caribbean Sea | 7. Bahamas |
| 3. Cuba | 8. Haiti |
| 4. Puerto Rico | 9. Jamaica |
| 5. Costa Rica | 10. Honduras |

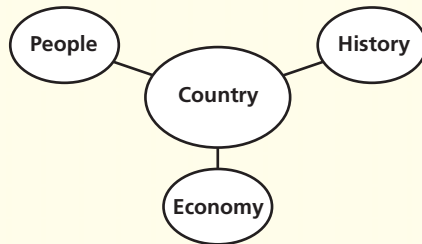




Self-Check Quiz Visit the *Our World Today: People, Places, and Issues* Web site at tx.owt.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 21—Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the Chapter Test.

Critical Thinking

- 20. Analyzing Information** Explain why Cuba's location is an important factor in the United States's relationship with that nation.
- 21. Categorizing Information** Create a diagram like this with details about the people, history, and economy of a country in Chapter 21.



Current Events Journal

- 22. Writing an Itinerary** Write an itinerary, or travel plan, for a cruise ship that makes five stops in the Caribbean. Include a map showing the route and descriptions of the sites and activities at each stop.

Mental Mapping Activity

- 23. Focusing on the Region** Create an outline map of Central America and the West Indies, and then label the following:
- Pacific Ocean
 - Cuba
 - Caribbean Sea
 - Puerto Rico
 - Guatemala
 - Jamaica
 - Panama
 - Bahamas

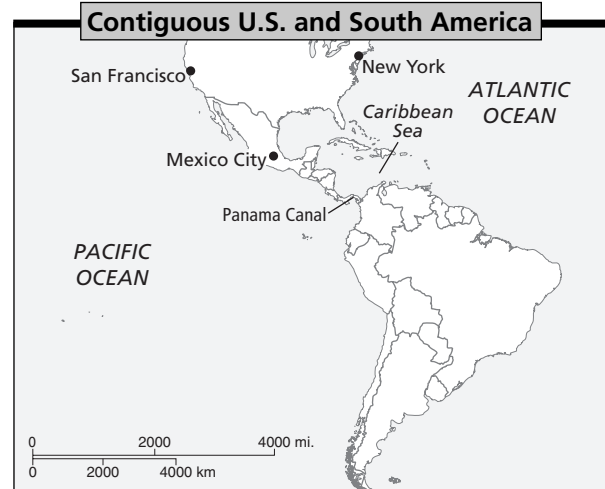
Technology Skills Activity

- 24. Building a Database** Create a database about Central America, using the **Country Profiles** in the Unit 7 **Regional Atlas** for your database. Make a record for each country. Each record should have a field for the following: population, landmass, and capital city. Sort the records from largest to smallest for population. What generalizations can you make based on these data?



TAKS Test Practice

Directions: Study the map below, and then answer the question that follows.



- 1. Which of the following was true before the Panama Canal was completed?**
- A A ship sailing from New York to California had to travel nearly 10,000 additional miles.
 - B A ship sailing from New York to California had to travel nearly 5,000 additional kilometers.
 - C The completion of the canal increased trade between Mexico City and San Francisco.
 - D Mexico City was extremely far away from New York City.

Test-Taking Tip: The scale shows you the actual distance between places on a map. Use your finger or a piece of paper to mark off the distance of the scale. Then, use your finger or piece of paper to gauge the distance between two places on the map.