

The Cultural Geography of Latin America



CHAPTER FOCUS

Geographic Setting

More than 70 percent of the people of Latin America live in urban areas.

▲ **Photograph:** Carnival, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Geographic Themes

Section 1 Population Patterns

REGION The people of Latin America represent diverse ethnic groups, with more than one-half being of mixed ethnic heritage.

Section 2 History and Government

MOVEMENT Latin American countries were once European colonies.

Section 3 Cultures and Lifestyles

PLACE Roman Catholicism has influenced Latin American culture.

Population Patterns

SETTING THE SCENE

Read to Discover . . .

- the ethnic diversity of Latin America.
- the population density and distribution in Latin America.
- the urbanization of Latin America.

Key Terms

- mestizos
- mulatto
- dialect
- primate city

Identify and Locate

Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Honduras, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Caracas, Santiago, Patagonia, Mexican Plateau, Barbados, Bahamas, Suriname, Mexico City, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Montevideo

Acapulco, Mexico

¡Hola! ¿Cómo están?

I am 15 years old and I live in Mexico City with my family, but every Christmas we drive to my uncle's house in Acapulco. The beaches are beautiful. On Christmas morning Santa brings toys for the younger children, but I look forward to January 5 when the Three Kings bring us clothes. For Christmas dinner, we usually eat Mexican specialties such as romeritos or red snapper a la Veracruzana. I hope you visit someday.

Lorena Lopez



Lorena Lopez comments on two of the many holiday celebrations enjoyed by people in Latin America. Each of these festivals reflects the diverse backgrounds of the region's population. In spite of this diversity, there are common threads binding the people into a single culture region.

MOVEMENT

Human Characteristics

About 500 million people live in Latin America—about 9 percent of the world's population. Latin Americans come from many different backgrounds and are members of various ethnic groups. There are Native Ameri-

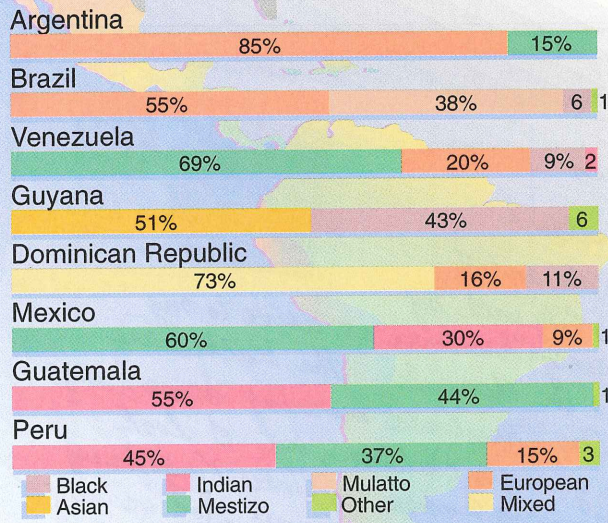
cans, Europeans, Africans, Asians, and mixtures of these groups.

Ethnic Diversity

Native Americans were the first to settle present-day Latin America. They built great civilizations long before the Europeans even knew of their region's existence. Chief among them were the Aztec of Mexico, the Maya of the Yucatán Peninsula and surrounding areas of Central America, and the Inca of the highlands of Peru. Over the centuries, the Native American cultures blended with the cultures of the other groups that later conquered and settled the region. Many Native American cultural characteristics, however, still remain. Today most Native Americans in Latin America live in Mexico, Central America, and the



ETHNIC GROUPS IN SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES



Source: 1998 World Almanac

CHART STUDY



The people of Latin American nations have varied ethnic backgrounds, and this ethnic variety is increasing as people from around the world settle in the region. What is the largest group in Guyana?

Andes area of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Many Native Americans live in isolated villages and continue to practice the traditional ways of their ancestors. In areas where they are a large part of the population, Native American peoples have worked to preserve their own cultures.

Europeans first arrived in present-day Latin America in the late 1400s. Since that time, millions of immigrants have come to the region. Most of the early European settlers were Spanish and Portuguese. Until the 1800s, about 2,000 Spaniards and Portuguese came each year. Over the years, however, many other groups came as well—Italians, British, French, and Germans. In modern times, so many Europeans settled in Argentina and Uruguay that these countries became known as immigrant nations. Descendants of the Europeans continue to follow many of the ways of life their ancestors brought with them.

Africans first came to Latin America in the 1500s. They arrived as enslaved people, forcibly brought by the Europeans to work the plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean Islands. Their labor helped build the economy, and their culture remains a vital part of the Latin American way of life.

Asians first settled Latin America during the 1800s. They, too, worked on plantations. Unlike the Africans, however, the Asians came voluntarily. Today the Caribbean Islands and some countries of South America have large Asian populations. In Guyana, about one-half of the population is of Asian descent. Many Chinese make their homes in Peru, Mexico, and Cuba, and many Japanese live in Brazil.

A Blending of Peoples

More than 50 years ago, a Latin American author, Germán Arciniegas, wrote these words about her fellow Latin Americans:

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— — — — —

For four hundred years [immigrants] from the four corners of the earth . . . have been mixing with the [Native Americans] of these lands. It is the most amazing experiment in the intermingling of [peoples] that history has ever witnessed. . . .

— — — — —

— — — — —

The writer's words continue to ring true today. The blending of peoples can be seen throughout Latin America. In some countries, such as Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador, **mestizos**—people of mixed Native American and European descent—make up the biggest part of the population. In other countries, such as Cuba and the Dominican Republic, **mulattoes**—people of mixed African and European descent—form a large percentage of the population.

Language

Germán Arciniegas, who spoke about the blending of races and cultures in Latin America, also said this about the languages of the region:

... *Ours has been a dual world, one part of which speaks Portuguese—Brazil—and the other ... Spanish—Spanish America. But inland, in the heart of the [region], other accents are heard.*

Most of the countries of Latin America adopted the languages of the countries that colonized them. The official language of Brazil, for example, became Portuguese; of Haiti and Martinique, French; and of Jamaica and Guyana, English.

Today Spanish is the official language of most of the countries of Latin America. In most cases, however, the Spanish spoken is no longer that of Spain. Over the years, it has been changed by the addition of certain Native American words. The word *chicle* (CHIK•uhl), for example, which means “chewing gum,” comes from a Native American language. Each nation also has its own dialects, forms of a language peculiar to a particular place or group. Meanings of words and the words themselves often differ from one place to another.

Millions of Latin Americans speak Native American languages such as Quechua (KECH•wuh), Guaraní, and Mayan. Some Latin Americans speak only a Native American language. Many others speak both a Native American language and their country’s official European language. Peru, for example, has two official languages—Spanish and Quechua.

REGION

Population Density and Distribution

About 500 million people live in Latin America. As in other regions of the world, they are not evenly distributed across the region. Some parts of the region are more populated than others. The same holds true in individual countries.

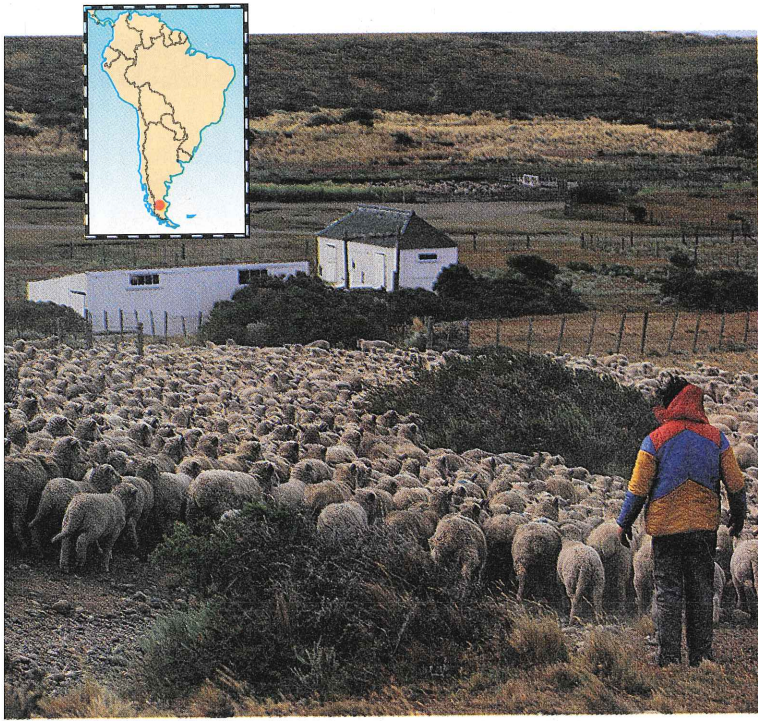


Population Distribution

Much of the land of Latin America is not densely populated. Most Latin Americans live on only about one-third of its land. A significant number of people are clustered in two general areas—around the coasts of South America or in a broad strip of land that reaches south from central Mexico into Central America.

More than 66 percent of Latin Americans—331 million—live in South America. Most of them live in or around cities on or near the coast in what one geographer calls “the populated rim of South America.”

Geographers often divide this rim into two major parts. The larger of the two parts in size and number of people stretches along the eastern edge of South America—from the mouth of the Amazon River in Brazil to the grasslands around Buenos Aires, Argentina. The smaller



Geographic Themes

Region: Patagonia, South America

A shepherd tends his flock in the sparsely populated region of Patagonia in southern South America. *What two areas of Latin America are heavily populated?*

part includes land along the coast and in the Andes. It stretches along the western side of South America from Caracas, Venezuela, to Santiago, Chile.

The populated rim of South America is often interrupted. For example, the eastern coast between the mouth of the Amazon River and Caracas, an area that has hot and rainy weather most of the time, is sparsely populated. Another sparsely populated area is in the far south in the Andes and Patagonia, where the climate and the land are harsh.

The next largest number of Latin Americans—132 million—live in Middle America, most of them in the Mexican Plateau and along the Pacific coast of Central America, largely in the highlands. In these areas, the land is fertile and the climate is relatively mild.

Population Density

Population density varies greatly in Latin America. About 97.5 million people live in

Mexico—more than 3 times as many as in all of Central America. Mexico is the most populated Spanish-speaking nation in the world. It is also the second most heavily populated country in Latin America after Brazil. The land area of Brazil, however, is more than 3 million square miles (7.8 million sq. km), while that of Mexico is about 700,000 square miles (1.8 million sq. km). Thus, population density is much greater in Mexico. In Mexico there are 132 people per square mile (51 per sq. km). In Brazil there are 50 people per square mile (19 per sq. km). In contrast, the most sparsely populated country is Suriname, with only 7 people per square mile (3 per sq. km).

Caribbean countries are small, and have areas not suitable for settlement or for farming. In addition, most Caribbean countries have a high birthrate. The combination of a small land area and a growing number of people creates high population density. Barbados, with 1,596 people per square mile (616 per sq. km), has the highest density in the area. The Bahamas, in contrast, contain only 76 people per square mile (29 per sq. km).

In South America, population densities are relatively low. Even Ecuador, with the highest population density of the continent, has only about 114 people per square mile (44 per sq. km). Suriname has the lowest density—7 people per square mile (3 per sq. km).

In most Latin American countries, population density varies by region. Few people live where a harsh climate, poor soil, or the physical landscape make life difficult. About four-fifths of all Mexicans, for example, live in the southern half of the Mexican Plateau. Three-fourths of the people of Argentina live in Buenos Aires or the nearby Pampas. In most of the island countries of the Caribbean, however, people tend to be more evenly distributed.

MOVEMENT

Urbanization

In the past most Latin Americans lived in the countryside and worked the land. Now most live in urban areas.



One-Way Migration

Living conditions are poor in many rural areas of Latin America. As a result, each year thousands of Latin Americans migrate to the cities. There they hope to find a new life—a better education, higher-paying jobs, broader markets, and decent health care. Most people do not find what they seek, largely because they cannot read or write or do not have the skills needed to qualify for the available jobs. Nevertheless, they stay.

The resulting urban population explosion has brought problems. Latin American urban areas lack the resources to meet the needs of their people. Most migrants are now living under the very conditions they wanted to escape. They cannot get a decent job—if they can get any job at all. They have little or no money and are forced to live in slums and shantytowns, often without water or sanitary facilities.

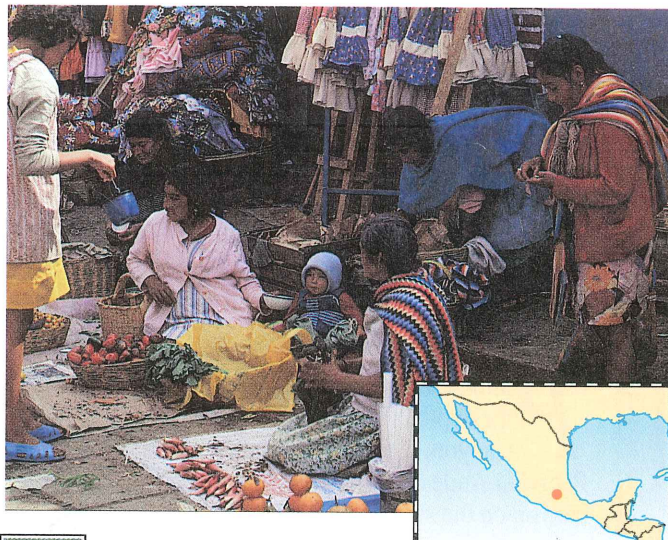
The Cities

As a result of people moving to the cities, today most Latin American nations are urbanized. More than 30 Latin American cities have populations of more than 1 million. Four cities rank among the 15 largest urban areas in the world—Mexico City, Mexico; São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Many Latin American cities have become what some geographic experts call **primate cities**, cities with a concentrated urban population that dominate the economy, culture, and government. Caracas, Venezuela; Montevideo, Uruguay; and Santiago, Chile, all are primate cities. So are Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Havana.

Many of the cities of Latin America were founded in the 1500s and 1600s by the Spanish. Each city, large and small, is unique and offers benefits people could not find in the countryside. At the same time, however, the cities are crushed by rapid population growth.

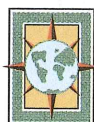
Some of the fastest-growing cities in the world are in Latin America. For example, some experts predict that by 2015, Mexico City will have a population of 32 million. The city is the nation's capital and functions as Mexico's



Geographic Themes

Movement: Mexico City, Mexico

Like most Latin American cities, Mexico City has seen a tremendous population increase that has strained local resources. *From what area do most of Latin America's new city dwellers come?*



leading business, industrial, and cultural center. It has broad avenues, a skyline dominated by modern, high-rise office towers, and a fairly new and efficient subway system. Yet Mexico City also is one of the most polluted cities in the world. It, too, shares the other urban problems of most rapidly growing cities—poverty, slums, and crime.

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** *mestizos*, mulatto, dialect, primate city.
- 2. Locating Places** In what two general areas do most Latin Americans live?
- 3. Place** What are the two most densely populated countries of Latin America?
- 4. Place** What 4 Latin American cities are among the world's 15 largest urban areas?

Critical Thinking

- 5. Analyzing Information** Latin America has been called the "melting pot of the Western Hemisphere." What reasons can you give for this?



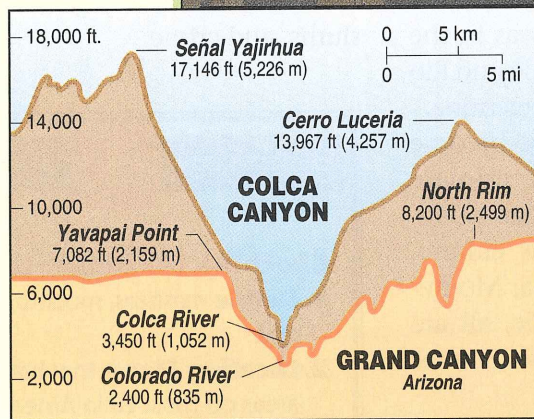
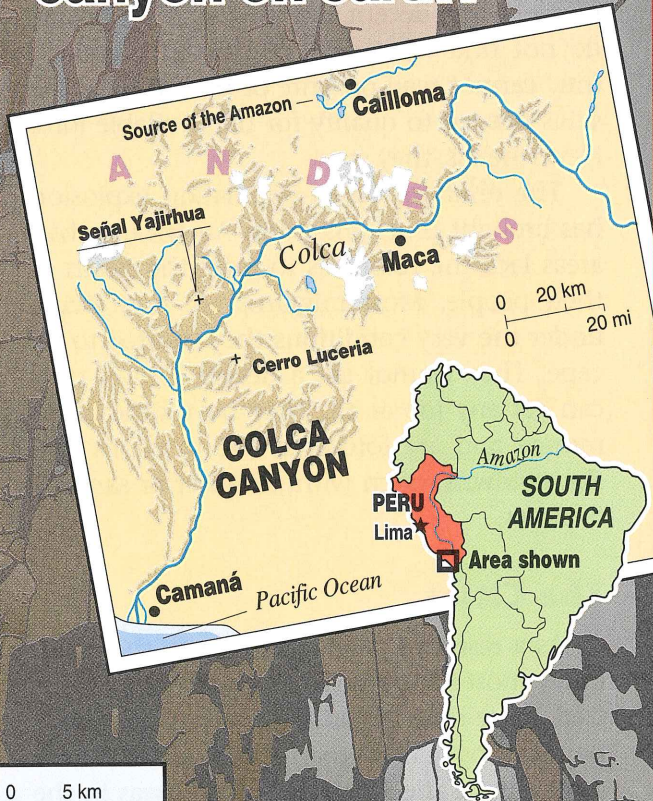
Where is the deepest canyon on earth?

Plummeting more than twice the depth of Arizona's Grand Canyon, a gorge through the Peruvian Andes is the deepest canyon on the surface of the earth.

From its lower rim, Colca Canyon, carved by the Colca River, descends 10,500 feet (3,200 m). The river cuts a trench through the high mountains as it makes its way down to the Pacific Ocean.

Accessible only by boat, the V-shaped gorge is one of the world's great natural challenges. The first recorded expedition of the roaring river canyon wasn't made until 1981. Rafters have to navigate churning white-water currents and breakneck plunges—the most precipitous one dropping 3,000 feet (914 m) over 50 miles (80 km).

Unlike the Grand Canyon—the largest on earth—visited by millions every year, the isolated heart of Colca Canyon has been seen by only a handful of people. Boulders thunder unheard down its barren walls. Floods, avalanches, and earthquakes are constantly changing its features.



Designed by BILL PITZER



History and Government

SETTING THE SCENE

Read to Discover . . .

- the Native American civilizations of Latin America.
- the European empires of Latin America.
- the status of modern government in Latin America.

Key Terms

- *chinampas*
- *quipu*
- *conquistador*
- viceroy
- *fazenda*
- *caudillo*

Identify and Locate

Yucatán Peninsula, Lake Texcoco, Tenochtitlán, Cuzco, Ecuador, Chile, Lima, Brazil, Haiti, Mexico, Cuba

Latin America has a long and often violent history. Its past includes Native American civilizations, European colonial empires, and struggles for independence.

REGION

Native American Empires

Native Americans came to the Western Hemisphere thousands of years ago, probably across the Bering Strait that now separates Alaska and Siberia. Years before Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas in 1492, three Native American civilizations—the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca—emerged.

The Maya

The Maya created an empire in Central America and southern Mexico. They built many cities, the greatest of which was Tikal, located in present-day Guatemala. Pyramid-shaped temples, terraces, and courts stood in these cities. Priests and nobles ruled the cities and surrounding areas. The Maya based their economy on trade and agriculture.

Skilled in mathematics, the Maya used a number system based on 20 and developed a symbol for the mathematical concept of zero. Basing their calculations on the orbit of the earth around the sun, they created a calendar of a little more than 365 days.

The Aztec

The Aztec were originally wanderers. In the 1300s they finally built a permanent capital city called Tenochtitlán on an island in the center of a large lake. Farmers grew crops of beans and maize on *chinampas*, floating artificial islands. They made the islands by building large rafts and covering them with mud from the bottom of the lake.

The Aztec developed a complex political system headed by an emperor. They worshiped many gods and goddesses and held ceremonies to win the deities' favor and guarantee good harvests.

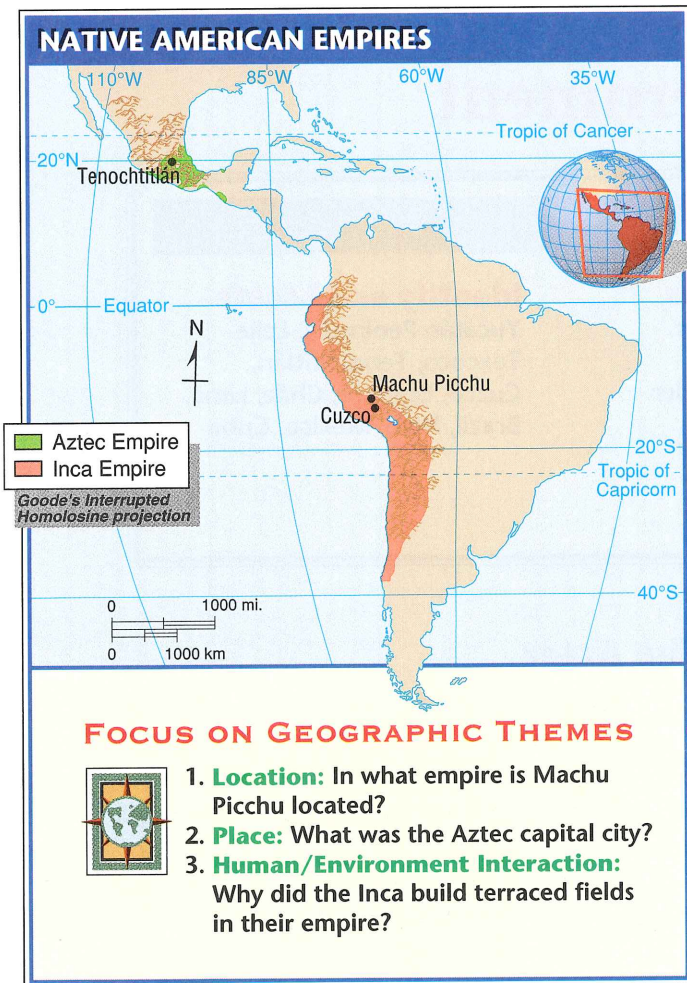
The Inca

At about the same time the Aztec were building their empire, the Inca were establishing a civilization. The Inca empire stretched along the Andes from Ecuador to Chile. The Inca built their capital, Cuzco, in Peru and ruled their lands through a central government headed by an emperor.

Incan farmers cut terraces into the slopes of the Andes to keep the soil from washing away, and built irrigation systems to bring water to desert areas along the coast. They also domesticated the alpaca and the llama, which they used both for food and for wool.

The Inca, known for their building skills, constructed stone temples and fortresses. Inca





buildings often were adorned with gold and silver. The Inca had no written language. They kept records and sent messages using a *quipu* (KEE•poo), a rope with knotted cords of various lengths and colors.

MOVEMENT

European Empires

In the late 1400s, European explorers set out to find new trade routes to Asia. In the process, the explorers reached the Americas. Spain and Portugal vied for land in the Americas. To avoid conflicts, the Pope drew an imaginary line—the Line of Demarcation—that ran from the North Pole to the South Pole. All lands east of the line were to belong to Portu-

gal, all those to the west of the line to Spain. Thus, Portugal claimed present-day Brazil, and Spain claimed Central America and the rest of South America.

Spanish Conquests

The European search for trade routes eventually turned into a search for riches—and for opportunities to convert Native Americans to Christianity. Spanish *conquistadors*, or conquerors, overpowered the Aztec and Inca empires, seizing their wealth for Spain.

Spain soon established colonies from Mexico to Bolivia and set out to mine gold and silver in its new lands. To provide bases for exploration and for mining, the Spaniards built cities and towns, many of them on the sites of Native American cities.

In the tropics, the Spaniards set up plantations. In the highlands, where it was cooler, they established farms and huge cattle ranches. The Spaniards at first used Native Americans to work the plantations. When hundreds of thousands of Native Americans died from being forced to work in the hot tropical climate and from European diseases, the Spaniards brought in enslaved Africans to replace the Native Americans.

The Spanish monarch appointed viceroys from distant Spain to govern the colonies and make sure that Spanish law was enforced. A strict social structure emerged in the Spanish colonies. Europeans were at the top of society, and Native Americans and Africans were at the bottom.

The Portuguese and Brazil

The Portuguese, meanwhile, had claimed Brazil as early as 1500. Although the land seemed to contain no precious metals, it did have brazilwood, a tree from which red dyes could be made. The land also was good for raising livestock. On the coastal lowlands, which were well-suited for raising sugarcane, the Portuguese built sugar plantations called *fazendas*. Like the Spaniards, the Portuguese relied on enslaved peoples to work the plantations, first Native Americans and then Africans.

Independence

Beginning in the late 1700s, many people in Latin America began to resent European rule. Upper-class Latin Americans born in the Americas resented the strict social structure, which limited their rights. Native Americans and Africans also wanted their freedom. Feelings of patriotism were strengthened by revolutions in the United States and France.

The first Latin American country to rid itself of European rule—Haiti—was ruled by the French. Unrest first erupted there in 1794 when enslaved Africans led by a former slave named François Toussaint-Louverture (TOO•SAN LOO•vuh•TYUHR) revolted. In 1804, Haiti finally became independent.

Mexico was the first Spanish-ruled nation in Latin America to gain freedom. The struggle for independence went on for many years, and in 1824, Mexico became an independent republic.

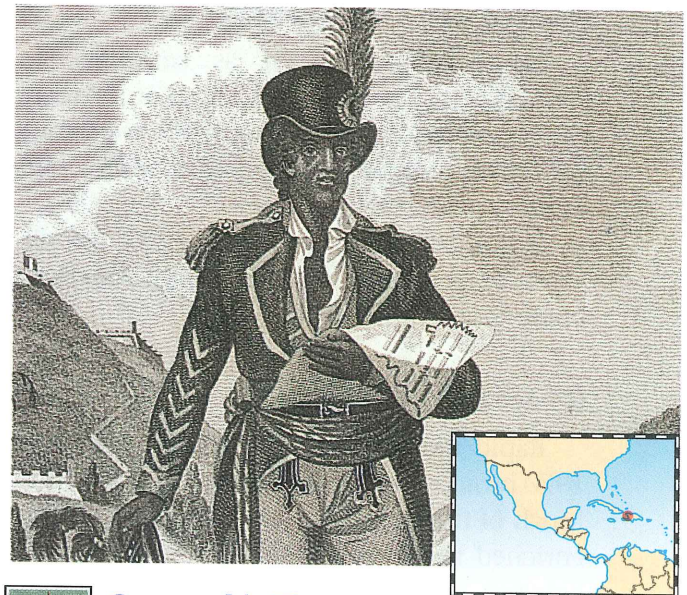
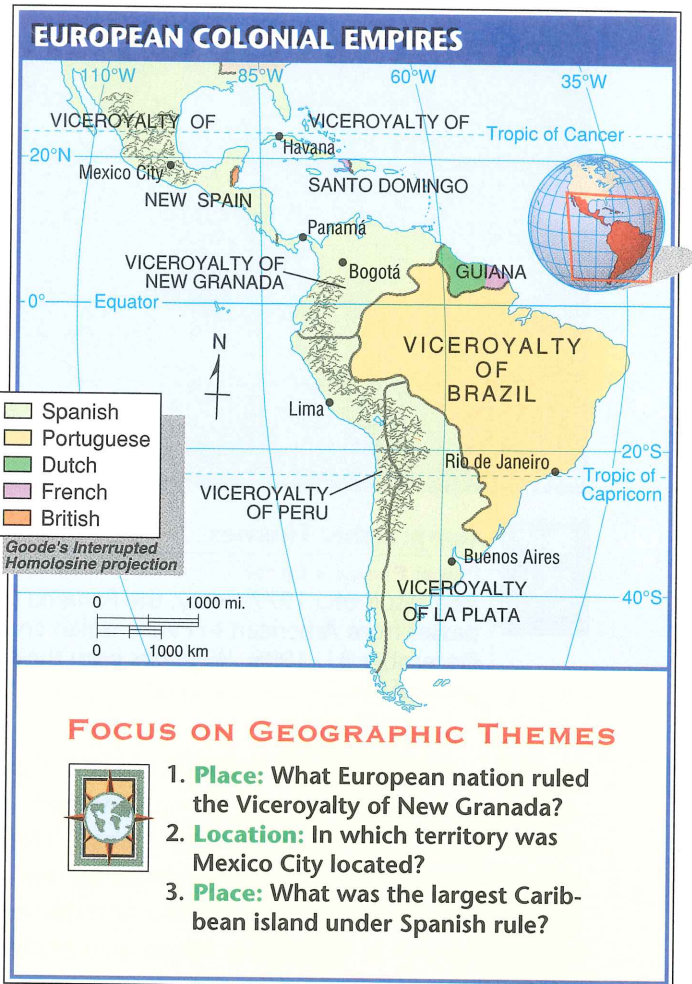
Other countries of Latin America sought to gain independence. By the mid-1800s most of them had achieved their goal under such leaders as Simón Bolívar of Venezuela and José de San Martín of Argentina. Only one nation—Brazil—became independent without revolution. In 1822 it became the only independent South American country to choose monarchy—rule by a king or queen—as its form of government.

With the exception of Haiti, independence was longer in coming to the islands of the Caribbean. Cuba, for example, did not win its independence from Spain until 1898, and many of the other islands did not gain their independence until well into the 1900s.

REGION

Dictatorships and Democracies

Wars of independence created political and economic confusion in the countries of Latin America. Leaders of the newly independent countries wanted to build stable governments and prosperous economies. In

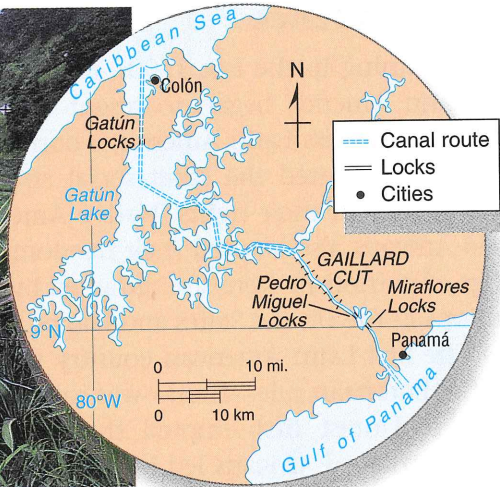


Geographic Themes

Movement: Haiti

Toussaint-Louverture led an independence movement to bring colonial rule in Haiti to an end. *What foreign events inspired his efforts?*





Geographic Themes

Place: Panama Canal

As a result of a 1977 treaty, the Panama Canal passes from American to Panamanian control on December 31, 1999. *What has been the dominant political trend in Latin America since the 1970s?*

most countries, however, political control was still in the hands of a small group of wealthy landowners, army officers, and clergy. The huge size of many of the new countries and such physical barriers as mountains and dense rain forests made communications and trade difficult.

Power of the Strong

New leaders, known as *caudillos*, or “strong men,” promised to solve Latin America’s problems. Almost all caudillos were military rulers supported by wealthy landowners eager to protect their interests.

In the later 1800s and early 1900s, caudillos ruled as dictators in many Latin American countries.

Desire for Change

Rapid industrialization between 1940 and 1970 brought social changes to Latin America. Much of the region’s newfound wealth simply enriched the upper classes. The growing gap between rich and poor spread unrest among farmers and workers. Military governments resisted demands for reform and fought political unrest with terror. Nonetheless, democracy was a political goal in most nations, the great-

est exception being the Communist rule of Fidel Castro in Cuba.

Military leaders were unable to solve the rising political and economic problems of the 1970s, and their tactics inspired calls for democratic reform. By the mid-1990s, new democratic governments had begun to replace the old, harsh political systems.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** *chinampas*, *quipu*, *conquistador*, *viceroy*, *fazenda*, *caudillo*.
- 2. Locating Places** Where were the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations located?
- 3. Movement** How did the Line of Demarcation affect Spanish and Portuguese colonization in the Americas?
- 4. Region** What changes took place in Latin America under Spanish and Portuguese rule?

Critical Thinking

- 5. Determining Cause and Effect** Why did Latin Americans seek independence in the late 1700s and early 1800s?



Geography and History



BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA'S GATEWAY

As you read, examine how Buenos Aires became a leading Latin American metropolis.

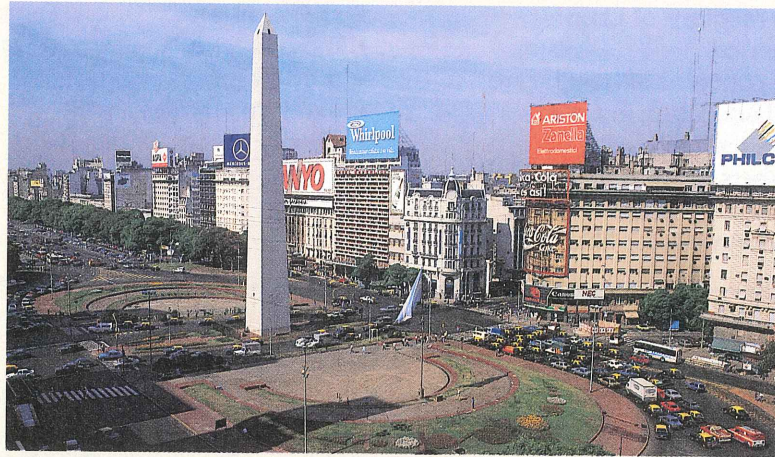
The metropolitan area of Buenos Aires spreads over 1,421 square miles (3,680 sq. km). The city is a leading Latin American banking, business, and cultural center. Around the central business district, residential neighborhoods called *barrios* fan out to the northwest, west, and southern city limits. City residents number more than 12.2 million: more than one-third of all Argentinians are *porteños*, or "port dwellers."

Location

Buenos Aires is located at the mouth of Argentina's widest river, on the edge of Argentina's fertile Pampas. For nearly two centuries, however, Buenos Aires's broad harbor remained little more than a backwater smuggling port and slave market. As a Spanish colony, *la grand aldea*, "the big village," could not engage in trade with any country except Spain.

In the early 1800s, with the onset of independence movements in Latin America, Buenos Aires set up its own government. By mid-century, Argentina was an independent nation; Buenos Aires became its capital in 1880.

Between 1880 and 1940, Buenos Aires enjoyed a golden age. Beef, lamb, wool, and



Few skyscrapers dominate the skyline of Buenos Aires, but the city has broad avenues and many parks and plazas. As a result, Buenos Aires has a sense of openness and peace. The Avenida 9 de Julio, the widest street in the world, runs north and south through the city's central business district. It links the president's residence with the Congress Building, site of the national legislature.

wheat were brought from the fertile Pampas to markets in Buenos Aires, and from there shipped to markets around the world. Ships docked in the harbor, and goods and produce were unloaded and routed to marketplaces in Argentina's interior. Building and construction changed *la grand aldea* into a gracious metropolis of broad avenues and European-like architecture. Immigrants swelled the city's population.

Contemporary Buenos Aires handles more than 80 percent of Argentina's trade. Meat packing, food processing, and textile, rubber, and electrical manufacturing employ hundreds of thousands of workers.

Like most huge urban areas, Buenos Aires struggles with overpopulation and poverty. Although immigration has dwindled, thousands of rural migrants come annually seeking work. Even though the city is prosperous, it is struggling to create jobs for its poor.

Checking for Understanding

1. Why is Buenos Aires called Argentina's Gateway?
2. **Location** How did Buenos Aires's location help it to become a center of commerce?



Cultures and Lifestyles

SETTING THE SCENE

Read to Discover . . .

- the religions of Latin America.
- the concerns of health care and education in Latin America.
- the arts of Latin America.
- what life and leisure in Latin America is like.

Key Terms

- malnutrition
- mosaic
- modernism
- extended family
- *fútbol*
- jai alai

Identify and Locate

Santo Domingo, Caracas, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília

The culture of Latin America is rooted in its history. Beginning with the Native Americans, each group that settled the region had an impact on cultural development. As the peoples intermingled, so did their cultures.

MOVEMENT

Religion

When the Spaniards and the Portuguese came to Latin America, they brought with them Roman Catholicism. Since then the Roman Catholic Church has had a strong influence in the region.

Roman Catholicism

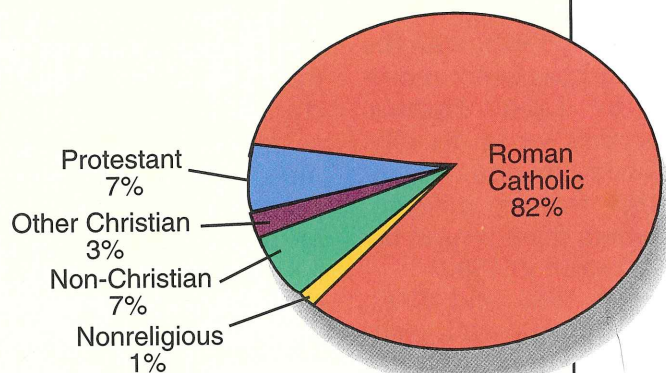
During colonial times, Roman Catholicism was the official religion of the Spanish colonies and Brazil. Priests had come to the Americas with the conquistadors. Priests worked to convert Native Americans to Christianity, and when European settlers came, the priests saw to their spiritual needs as well.

Before long, church leaders were playing an important part in political affairs, and the Roman Catholic Church had become wealthy. When the fight for independence came, church leaders backed the European powers. This led some Latin Americans to question the

Latin America: Religions

Roman Catholic	408,968,000
Protestant	34,816,000
Other Christian	12,035,000
Non-Christian	34,000,000
Nonreligious	10,000,000

Source: 1998 *World Almanac*





Geographic Themes

Place: Guadalajara, Mexico

Nicknamed the “Pearl of the West,” Guadalajara’s modern buildings and colorful shops convey a sense of excitement and progress. *What are two areas of concern for the people of Latin America?*

Church’s privileges and to work to reduce its power.

The Roman Catholic Church remains strong in Latin America today, but it does not have the influence it once did. Church leaders have shifted their support from the wealthy and powerful to the poor and oppressed. In recent years, the Church has been active in movements for land reform and for improvements in education and health care.

Growth of Protestantism

Some of the Europeans who came to Latin America in the 1800s were Protestant. In time Protestant missionaries, primarily from the United States, came and built hospitals, schools, and colleges. After years of being a minority religion, in the 1960s Protestantism began to attract large numbers of Latin Americans. If Protestantism keeps growing at its current rate, many Latin Americans will be Protestants by the year 2015.

PLACE

Health Care and Education

Health care and education are two major areas of concern in Latin America. While advances have been made over the years, much remains to be done.

Health Care

Because of medical advances, better health care services, improved diets, and better sanitation, more Latin Americans are living longer. In addition more infants are surviving, and there are fewer epidemic diseases. Health care, however, is still poor in many rural and urban areas. In some places, **malnutrition**, poor nutrition because of badly balanced diet or not enough food, is a major problem. Many people do not have enough money to spend on the right kind of foods.

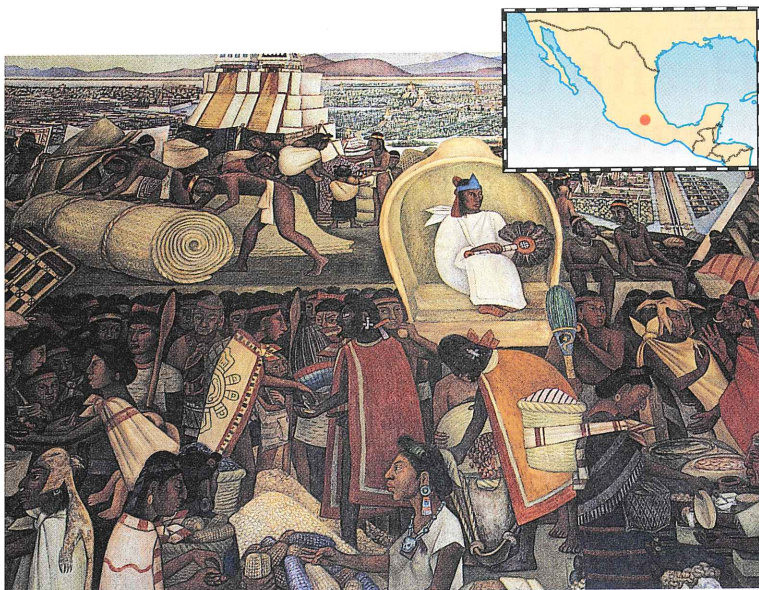


Educational Opportunities

Education in Latin America remains a challenge. The literacy rate is low in many countries, and there are too few schools and teachers. More than half the teachers, especially in rural areas, do not have teaching degrees. In addition, many children cannot go to school because their families need the money the children earn by working.

Latin American education, however, has improved in recent years. In the past, only the children of the wealthy went to school. Today all children can go for free for 12 years, and there are private schools for those who can afford them. Also, more children than ever before can read and write. In some countries the literacy rate has risen to more than 90 percent.

Students who pass special examinations can go on to colleges or universities. Institutions like the University of Santo Domingo and the Central University of Caracas provide higher education at little or no cost. Some students attend vocational and agricultural schools. Latin American leaders have encouraged students—as well as adults—to attend these schools.



Geographic Themes

Place: Mexico City, Mexico

Diego Rivera and other 20th-century Mexican artists painted murals that showed key events in Mexico's history. *What themes have been popular among modern Latin American artists and writers?*

PLACE

The Arts and Literature

For hundreds of years, the arts and literature of Latin America were dominated by European standards. Today's Latin American artists have developed unique styles, many of which reflect their diverse ethnic heritages.

Traditional Arts and Literature

Native Americans produced the earliest Latin American art forms. They left a legacy of weavings, wood carvings, pottery, and metalwork. They built temples decorated with colored murals and **mosaics**—pictures or designs made by setting small bits of colored stone, glass, or tile in mortar. Native Americans also created the region's earliest music and dance.

During colonial times, almost all arts were European-inspired. During this time, however, Africans brought to the region the rhythms, songs, and dances out of which calypso, reggae, and samba evolved.

Most colonial-era paintings had religious themes. Murals mixed the brightly colored abstract designs of the Native Americans with realistic European styles. Churches built in Spanish and Portuguese designs often were enlivened by the ethnic details added by Native American and African artists.

After independence, Latin American painters and composers began mixing European and Native American themes. In the late 1800s a literary movement known as **modernism** developed, in which writers and poets focused on artistic expression for its own sake.

Art and Literature

In the 1900s Mexican artists, such as Diego Rivera, began using art to educate. They created huge murals that combined modern forms with traditional Native American designs to present the daily life and history of their countries. Latin American writers also began to show more interest in social and political subjects.

During the last 50 years, Latin American artists and writers have become recognized in-

ternationally. The Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, who designed many of the buildings in the Brazilian capital of Brasília, is known worldwide for his curved sculptures and his use of Native American designs in mosaics. Audiences in many countries have applauded the skillful footwork of dance companies like the Ballet Folklórico of Mexico, which performs traditional Native American and Spanish dances. Writers like Gabriela Mistral and Pablo Neruda of Chile, Octavio Paz of Mexico, Miguel Angel Asturias of Guatemala, and Gabriel García Márquez of Colombia have all won Nobel Prizes for Literature.

REGION

Life and Leisure

Latin Americans place great emphasis on social status and family life. They also cherish values such as personal honor and individual freedom.

Way of Life

Latin Americans have a strong sense of family. Each person is part of an **extended family** that includes aunts, uncles, and other relatives besides parents and children. Life and most social events are often centered in the family and home. In Latin America a person's quality of life depends on his or her social class, nationality, and place of residence. A large gap exists between the lower class and the middle and upper classes, however.

Leisure Time and Celebrations

Latin Americans enjoy sports, especially **fútbol**, or soccer. In many South American countries, it is the national sport and a way of life. Latin Americans also appreciate baseball, basketball, and volleyball. A traditional favorite among many Mexicans and Cubans is **jai alai** (HY•LY), a fast-paced game much like handball that is played with a ball and a long curved basket that is strapped to a player's wrist.

Other Latin American pastimes are musical events, dances, the theater, movies, and parties. Most Latin Americans celebrate their in-



Geographic Themes

Place: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

In Latin America, every village has some kind of soccer field, and the larger cities have stadiums. In Rio de Janeiro, the stadium can seat 220,000 fans. *What other competitive sports are popular in Latin America?*

dependence days and religious holidays. The festival known as Carnival, for example, is celebrated just before the beginning of Lent, the Christian holy season that comes before Easter. The biggest Carnival is held each year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** malnutrition, mosaic, modernism, extended family, *fútbol*, jai alai.
- 2. Locating Places** In what country did artists begin using art to educate?
- 3. Region** What was the official religion of the Spanish colonies and Brazil?
- 4. Place** Why is the literacy rate improving in some Latin American countries?

Critical Thinking

- 5. Drawing Conclusions** How have medical advances affected population growth?



MAP & GRAPH SKILLS

Interpreting a Population Pyramid

Demography is the study of population. Demographers measure population density (how many people live in a given area), distribution (where people live), and migration patterns (who is moving where). Demographers also illustrate age distribution by a **population pyramid**.

REVIEWING THE SKILL

A population pyramid is a bar graph that shows the percentages of males and females by age group. Its shape indicates whether the population is increasing or decreasing. If a population is growing, the pyramid is wider at the base because children will be more numerous than adults. If the graph appears almost rectangular, it indicates a stable population.

To interpret a population pyramid:

- Identify the age groups and percentages shown on the graph.
- Look for differences among males and females, and compare the various age groups.
- Use the data to draw conclusions about age distribution in the given countries.

PRACTICING THE SKILL

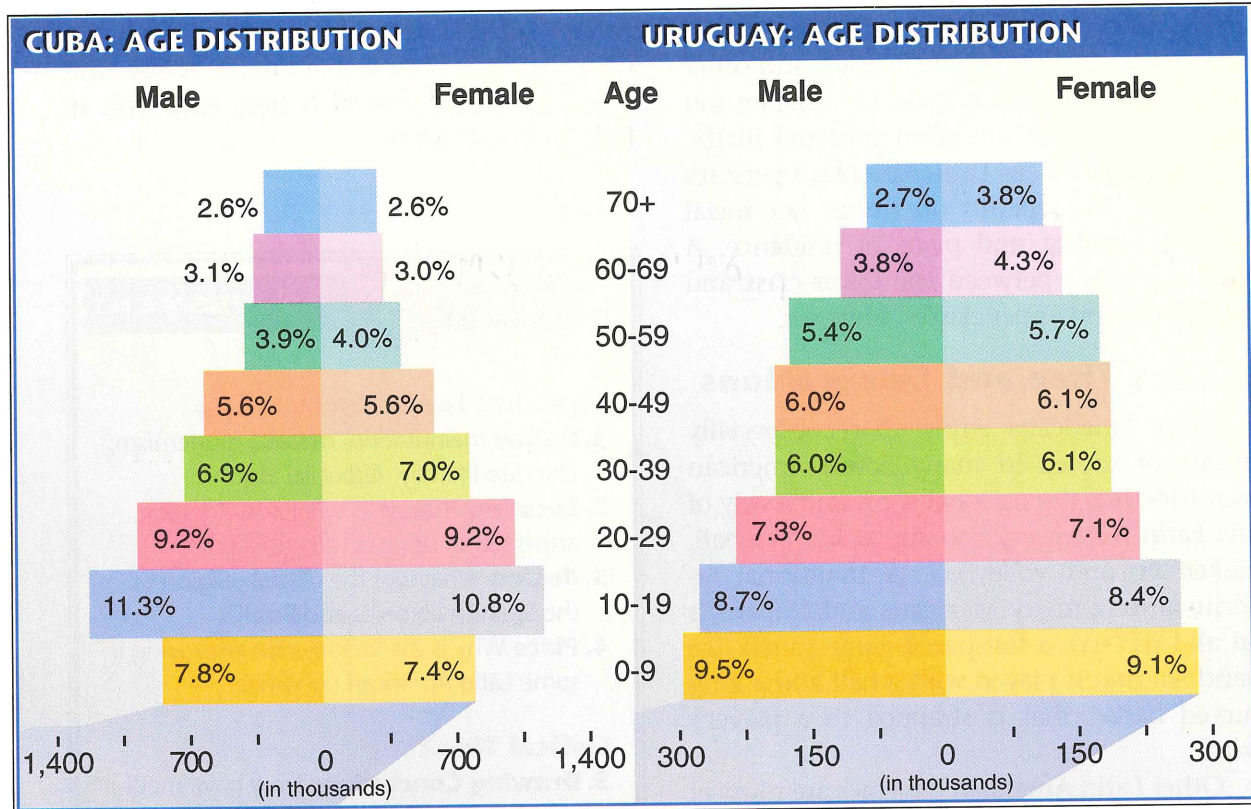


Use the graphs to answer the following questions:

1. What countries are shown in the graphs?
2. What percentage of Uruguay's male population is between the ages of 20–29?
3. What percentage of Cuba's total population is between the ages of 40–59?
4. Which country has a declining population?
5. In which country is there a greater percentage of older women than men?
6. Which country has the most even distribution of men and women?



The **Glencoe Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 2** provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.

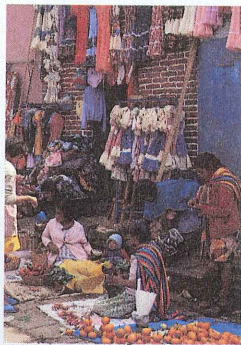


1

SECTION

KEY TERMS

SUMMARY

Population Patterns

Outdoor market in Mexico City

mestizos (p. 176)
mulatto (p. 176)
dialect (p. 177)
primate city (p. 179)

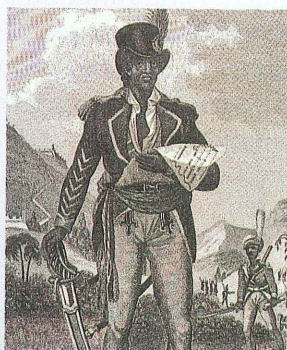
- Latin America's ethnically diverse population includes Native Americans, Europeans, Africans, Asians, *mestizos*, and mulattoes.
- The Latin American population is not evenly distributed.
- Latin America's urban population has increased rapidly as people have moved from rural to urban areas.

2

SECTION

KEY TERMS

SUMMARY

History and Government

chinampas (p. 181)
quipu (p. 182)
conquistador (p. 182)
viceroys (p. 182)
fazenda (p. 182)
caudillo (p. 184)

Toussaint-Louverture, Latin American independence leader

- Maya, Aztec, and Inca built highly developed civilizations long before Europeans arrived in the Americas.
- Spain and Portugal controlled most of Latin America for more than 300 years.
- Most present-day leaders want a stable government and an improved quality of life for Latin Americans.

3

SECTION

KEY TERMS

SUMMARY

Cultures and Lifestyles

Soccer fans in Rio de Janeiro's Maracanã Stadium

malnutrition (p. 187)
mosaic (p. 188)
modernism (p. 188)
extended family (p. 189)
fútbol (p. 189)
jai alai (p. 189)

- The major religion of Latin America, Roman Catholicism, was brought to the region by the Spaniards and the Portuguese.
- Many advances have been made in Latin America in health care and education.
- Arts and literature have become less European and more uniquely Latin American.
- Although social class, way of life, and leisure activities may differ, all Latin Americans have a strong sense of family.



Reviewing Key Terms

Choose the vocabulary term that best completes each of the sentences below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- *mestizos* (p. 176)
- *mulattoes* (p. 176)
- *primate city* (p. 179)
- *quipu* (p. 182)
- *conquistadors* (p. 182)
- *caudillos* (p. 184)
- *mosaics* (p. 188)
- *extended family* (p. 189)
- *jai alai* (p. 189)

SECTION 1

1. People of mixed African and European ancestry are known as _____.
2. A _____ dominates a country's economy, culture, and government.
3. People of mixed Native American and European ancestry are known as _____.

SECTION 2

4. The Inca used a rope with knotted cords called a _____.
5. The Aztec and Inca empires were conquered by Spanish _____.
6. In the 1800s many Latin Americans were ruled by dictators called _____.

SECTION 3

7. _____ is a game like handball enjoyed by Cubans and Mexicans.
8. An _____ includes relatives other than a husband, wife, and children.
9. Pictures made from small bits of colored glass set in mortar are called _____.

Reviewing Facts

SECTION 1

10. What is the official language of more than one-half of Latin America?
11. Why are most Caribbean countries so densely populated?

SECTION 2

12. What was the Aztec capital?
13. What was the only independent South American country to choose monarchy?

SECTION 3

14. What are some problems associated with education in Latin America?
15. Who created the earliest dance and music of Latin America?

Critical Thinking

16. **Expressing Problems Clearly** What has been the effect of the migration to cities of large numbers of rural people?
17. **Determining Cause and Effect** What problems did the leaders of the newly independent Latin Americans encounter?
18. **Predicting Consequences** How might the Catholic Church in Latin America be affected if Protestantism continues to grow rapidly?



Geographic Themes

19. **Movement** From where did most of the early settlers of Latin America come?
20. **Region** What European nation controlled most of Latin America?
21. **Place** Where and when is the largest Carnival celebration of Latin America?



Practicing Skills

Interpreting a Population Pyramid

- Refer to the population pyramids on page 190.
22. In Uruguay, at what age do women begin to outnumber men by at least 0.3 percent? What is the difference in percentage at age 70+?
 23. In each country, what is the largest age group?

Using the Unit Atlas

Refer to the cultural geography section of the Unit Atlas on pages 152–153.

- 24. Where are the uninhabited areas?
- 25. What is the language of Brazil? Of Belize?

Projects

Individual Activity

Select a Latin American writer, painter, architect, or some other type of artist. Write a two-paragraph overview of the most important features of his or her work.

Cooperative Learning Activity

Working in groups of three, prepare a chart comparing the major early civilizations of Latin America. Find out the area in which the civilization developed; how government and society were organized; and why the civilization declined.

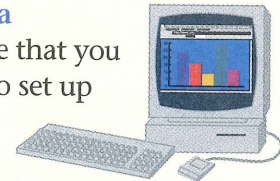
Writing About Geography

Description Select one Latin American city, and imagine that you are a member of a committee organized to attract tourists to that city. Write a travel brochure or visitor’s guide for the city that will accomplish the committee’s goal.

Technology Activity

Developing Multimedia Presentations

Imagine that you own a company about to set up operations in a Latin American country. Select a country and research its culture in relation to business protocol. Develop a video for your employees that demonstrates procedures and key words they will need to know in order to conduct business in the country.



Locating Places

LATIN AMERICA: POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Match the letters on the map with the places and physical features of Latin America. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- 1. Mexico City
- 2. Lima
- 3. Port-au-Prince
- 4. Montevideo
- 5. Havana
- 6. La Paz, Sucre
- 7. Quito
- 8. Brasília
- 9. Buenos Aires
- 10. Bogotá
- 11. Santiago
- 12. Caracas

