

CHAPTER
11

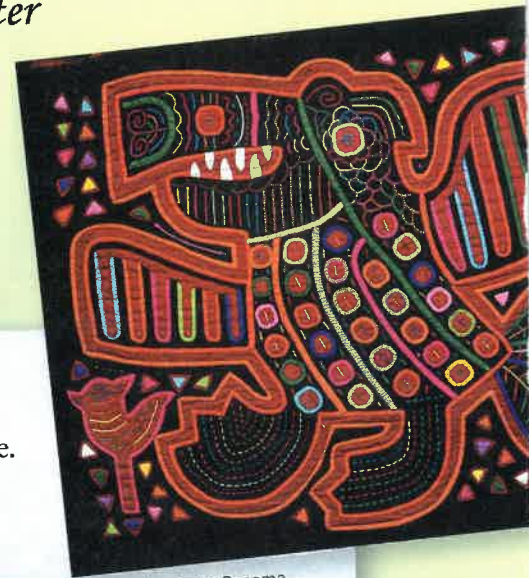
Central America and the Caribbean

Central America and the Caribbean stretch across a large area of land and water between North and South America. Countries there share similar histories and face similar challenges today.

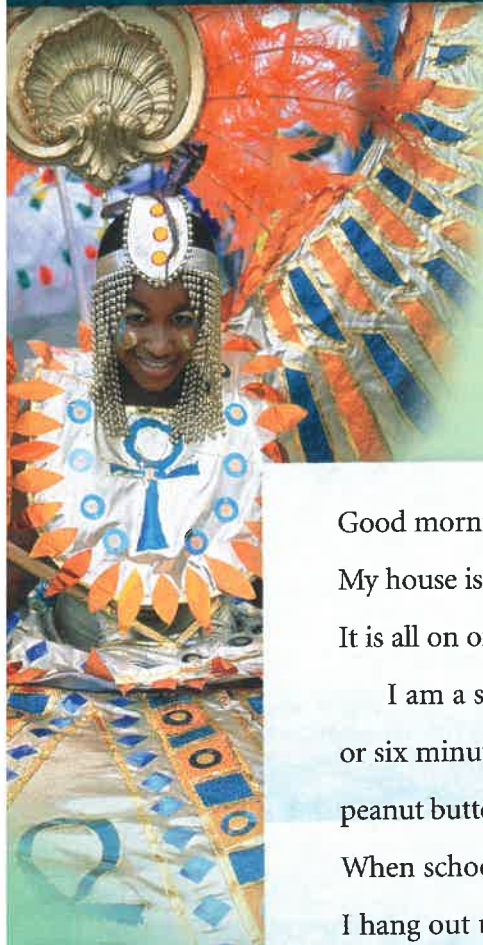
Good morning. I am Aldayne, and I live in Kingston, Jamaica. My house is gray—the door is green and the windows are blue. It is all on one floor, with a yard where we grow roses.

I am a student at Kingley Preparation School, about five or six minutes from my house. I get up at 6:00 A.M. and have a peanut butter sandwich and tea—or sometimes I just have an apple and tea at school. When school is over, I go downtown to my mother's shop—she is a dressmaker. I hang out until 6:00 P.M. when we can go home together. I do my homework and sometimes do errands for her like buying buttons. By the time I get home, all my homework is done. While my mother makes dinner, I clean my shoes, get my clothes together, and get ready for the next day. My favorite dinners are rice and peas with spring chicken, or crispy fried chicken with chips (french fries).

We have three school terms a year starting in September. We go to school for three months and then have one month off. My favorite vacation month is summer when I can go to the country with my father. I go to the river, catch fish, and have cook-outs. When I grow up, I want to be a pilot.



Mola design from Panama



Carnival in
Trinidad



Natural Environments

HOLT

Geography's Impact Video Series

Watch the video to understand the impact of tourism in the Caribbean.

READ TO DISCOVER

1. What physical processes have shaped the landforms of Central America and the Caribbean?
2. What is the climate like in Central America and the Caribbean?
3. What natural resources and environmental hazards are common in the region?

Reading Strategy

VISUALIZING INFORMATION Before you read, preview the Physical-Political Map of Central America and the Caribbean. Make notes about features you see on the map that you think will help you understand what you are about to read. For example, what physical features do you see on the map? As you read, explain how the features on the map relate to the materials in the section.

DEFINE

mangrove
bauxite

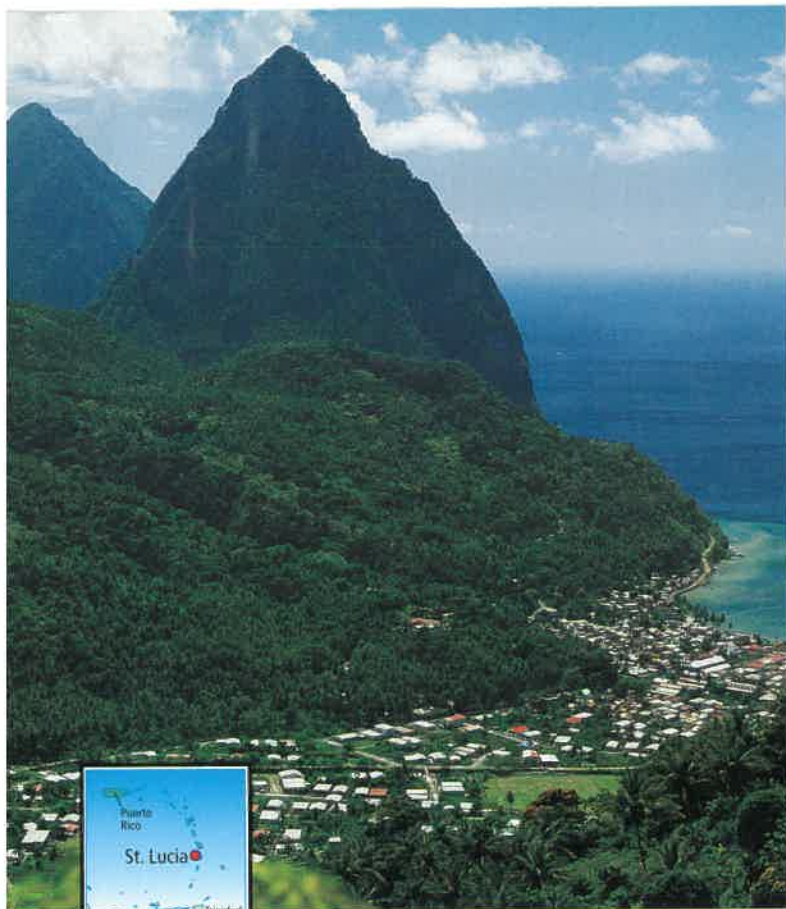
LOCATE

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| West Indies | Jamaica |
| Greater Antilles | Puerto Rico |
| Lesser Antilles | Bahamas |
| Cuba | Martinique |
| Hispaniola | Cayman Islands |



Central America and the Caribbean: Physical-Political





Landforms

Central America is an isthmus that links North and South America. The Pacific Ocean lies to the west. To the east is the Caribbean Sea and a group of islands called the West Indies. These islands extend in an arc from just south of Florida to Venezuela. The major island groups of the West Indies are the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles.

The Greater Antilles include the large islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. North-east of Cuba are some 700 islands that make up the Bahamas. They lie entirely in the Atlantic Ocean. Hispaniola is divided between the countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The Lesser Antilles include more than 20 small island countries and territories. Central America has seven countries. Beginning in the north, these countries are Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.

Narrow coastal plains are found in much of Central America and the Caribbean. Rugged hills or mountains lie in the interior. The rugged terrain

makes travel and communication difficult. The region has few long rivers.

Tectonic processes have shaped the region. Central America, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico lie on the Caribbean plate. West of Central America is the Cocos plate, which dives beneath the Caribbean plate. This action has created mountains throughout most of Central America. Mountains have also formed along the eastern edge of the Caribbean plate. The Caribbean plate meets the North and South American plates there. The tops of these volcanic mountains are islands in the Lesser Antilles.

Some of the mountains along plate boundaries are active volcanoes. Some islands, such as Martinique, were formed from volcanoes. Others, such as Hispaniola, have mountains of old continental rock. Many other islands, such as the Cayman Islands, began as coral reefs. These reefs were gradually uplifted by the collision of tectonic plates. Over time, the reefs became flat limestone islands.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Physical Systems* What physical process is responsible for the creation of many islands in the Lesser Antilles?

INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

The beautiful twin peaks near Soufrière, St. Lucia, rise above the island's lush rain forests. What physical processes do you think created these peaks?

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KEYWORD: SW3 CH11

FOR: Web sites about Central America and the Caribbean



Climates, Plants, and Animals

Central America and the Caribbean islands extend across the sunny and warm tropical latitudes. Tropical wet and dry climates are typical. Temperatures seldom vary more than 10°F between summer and winter. During winter, high pressure generally brings dry weather. A summer rainy season results when low pressure cells begin to move north across the region. Rain can then be expected almost every afternoon. However, the region's physical features cause this general climate pattern to vary.

In Central America, the climate zones follow the terrain. The Caribbean coast gets the full effect of moist trade winds. This results in a tropical humid climate with frequent rain, even in winter. Dense forests are common. The mountainous interior has a cooler highland climate. The eastern side of the mountains gets heavy rain as moist air rises and cools. However, mountain valleys in the west often lie in a rain shadow. These valleys and the western side of the mountains, along the Pacific coast, have drier climates. Scattered trees, shrubs, and tropical grasslands are found here. However, much of this vegetation has been cleared for plantations and ranches.

Throughout the Caribbean, elevation greatly affects climate. Islands with mountains and volcanoes often have heavy rain on their windward side. Rain shadows make other island locations somewhat drier. Lower islands do not produce any orographic effect. The rain that does fall quickly sinks into the limestone bedrock. As a result, the low islands have limited water resources. Bare ground and even cacti are common.

Thickets of **mangrove** trees dominate muddy tropical coastlines in Central America and all around the world. Mangroves are unusual because their roots grow in salt water. Shrimp and dozens of kinds of fish live among these roots. Marine life also thrives in shallow warm water and reefs off the Caribbean coast of Central America and the West Indies.

READING CHECK: *Physical Systems* How do mountains affect climates in the region?

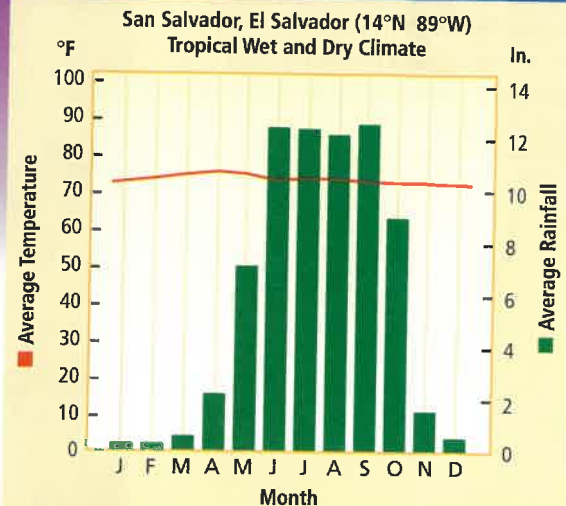
Natural Resources and Environmental Hazards

The region's natural resources include its physical beauty. However, this beautiful environment is also known for its dangerous environmental hazards.

Natural Resources One of the region's greatest natural resources is its warm and sunny climate. That climate attracts millions of tourists from the United States, Canada, and Europe. Fertile soils, particularly in highland valleys, are also important natural resources. Rich fishing grounds lie along the coasts. They provide fish, lobsters, shrimp, and other seafood to coastal and island populations.

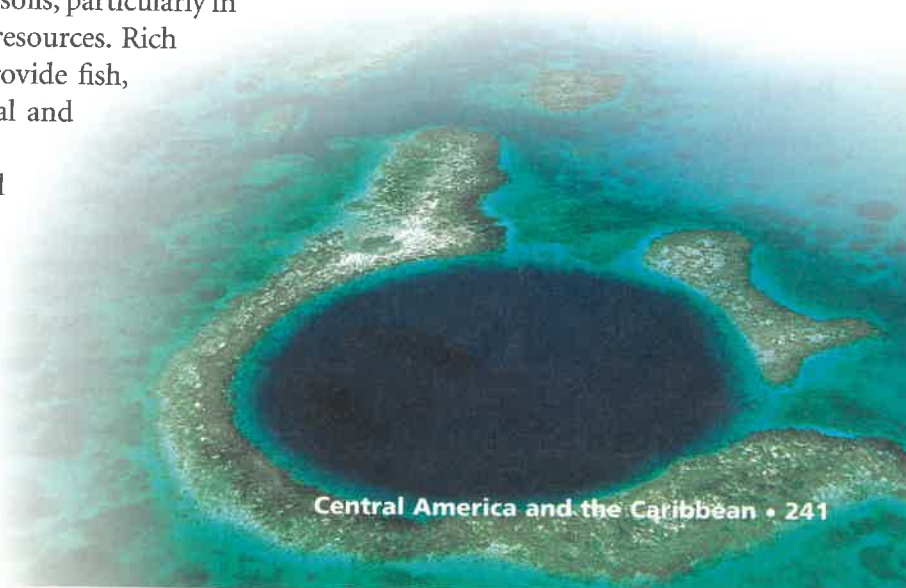
Mineral resources are found in Central America and in the continental rocks of the Greater Antilles. Small gold fields have been discovered throughout Central America. Jamaica has major deposits of **bauxite**, the ore from which aluminum is made. In addition, Cuba and the Dominican Republic produce nickel. Trinidad has oil.

Climate Graph for San Salvador



INTERPRETING THE GRAPH *San Salvador is located at about 2,150 feet (655 m) above sea level, which helps moderate its temperatures. Heavy rains known as temporales fall from May to October. About how much rain does San Salvador receive during these months?*

Blue Hole, a circular limestone sink-hole, lies off the coast of Belize. Many divers come to explore this interesting formation.



On July 29, 1968, Costa Rica's Arenal Volcano erupted, killing more than 70 people and destroying the village of Pueblo Nuevo. Today the volcano regularly produces ash and lava, and tourists often watch its spectacular night-time eruptions.



Environmental Hazards Central America and the Caribbean have some of the most beautiful natural landscapes in the world. However, deadly natural hazards exist in the region as well. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions often occur in Central America and in the Lesser Antilles. These earthquakes and eruptions have caused terrible destruction from time to time. For example, in 2001 two earthquakes just a month apart killed hundreds of people in El Salvador.

Hurricanes are another major hazard in the region. These tropical storms occur mostly in late summer. They bring destructive winds, heavy rains, and flooding. Damage has increased as populations have grown. This is true in the highlands, where farmers have cleared some slopes of forests. The heavy rains cause severe erosion and even mud slides in such areas. These mud slides can destroy homes, roads, and bridges. Crops and farm animals are also lost. In addition, it is difficult for aid to reach people needing food, shelter, and medical help.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Environment and Society* Why does the clearing of forests make hurricanes more destructive?



In 1835 a powerful volcanic eruption in Nicaragua spread ash as far as Mexico City, more than 850 miles (1,400 km) away.



Review

Define mangrove, bauxite

Working with Sketch Maps On a map of Central America and the Caribbean that you draw or that your teacher provides, label the West Indies, Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles, Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Bahamas, Martinique, and Cayman Islands. What parts of the region lie on the Caribbean Plate?

Reading for the Main Idea

1. **Physical Systems** What climate types are found in Central America? What are some factors that influence these climates?

2. **Places and Regions** How and why does the physical geography of Martinique differ from that of the Cayman Islands?

Critical Thinking

3. **Supporting a Point of View** Do you think that the region's climate should be considered a natural resource? Why or why not?

4. **Making Generalizations and Predictions** Where are volcanic eruptions and earthquakes *least* likely to occur: Central America, the Greater Antilles, or the Lesser Antilles? Why?

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Organizing What You Know

5. Copy the chart below and use it to identify important landforms, climates, and natural resources in the region.

| Landforms | Climates | Resources |
|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | | |

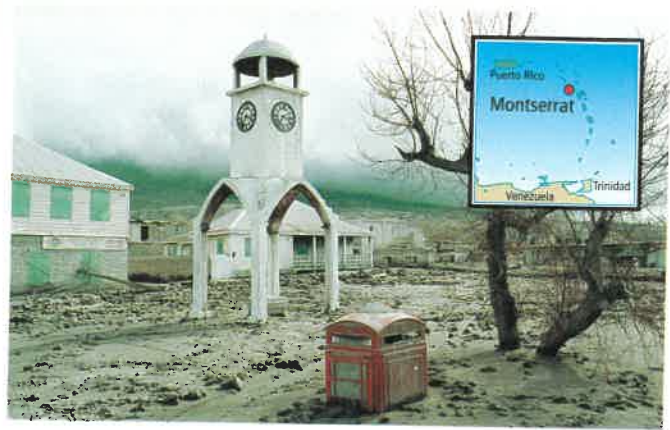
Geography for Life

Montserrat's Soufrière Volcano

You may have seen dramatic movies about volcanoes and other natural disasters that destroy entire cities. In many places around the world, such destruction is not a fictional threat. Take, for example, Montserrat (mawnt-ser-RAHT), a small island in the Lesser Antilles. Montserrat is a possession of Great Britain. On the southern part of the island sits a volcano known as Soufrière (soo-free-ER). For most of Montserrat's history, this volcano has been inactive. Islanders lived a quiet life, and tourism and agriculture provided the basis for the economy.

In 1995, however, the Soufrière Volcano began a series of major eruptions. The eruptions threw superheated clouds of ash, rock, and steam into the air. Debris rained down on the island, and piles of ash collected in many places. Lava and other material raced down the volcano at nearly 100 miles (160 km) an hour, mowing down trees.

As you might expect, the spectacular eruptions completely disrupted life on the island. Thousands of people had to flee their homes and move to the northern part of



The eruption of the Soufrière Volcano buried Montserrat's capital, Plymouth, in mud and ash.

the island. In the evenings, they listened to radio updates on the volcano's daily activity. Hotels, restaurants, and other businesses closed their doors. The capital of Plymouth, located near the volcano, was abandoned and was later buried in mud and ash.

The government set up an exclusion zone on the southern half of the island. Authorities limited access to this zone to short trips. However, eventually some people stayed in the exclusion zone for longer time periods. That was a mistake. In 1997 an eruption killed at least 19 people. Eventually, some two thirds of the population fled the island. Most migrated to other Caribbean islands, Britain, or Canada.

Applying What You Know

- 1. Summarizing** How have the eruptions of the Soufrière Volcano affected the physical and human geography of Montserrat?
- 2. Problem Solving** What, if anything, do you think should be done to make Montserrat safe for its inhabitants?



INTERPRETING THE MAP The eruption of the Soufrière Volcano forced the evacuation of more than half of Montserrat. Why do you think the eruption of the volcano disrupted life on so much of the island?

Section 2

Central America

READ TO DISCOVER

1. How does Central America's history continue to shape the region today?
2. What economic, political, and social conditions exist in the region?

Reading Strategy

READING ORGANIZER As you read, create a concept map on a sheet of paper by using the large and small headings in the section. Find details to support each idea in your concept map. Include key terms and their definitions.

DEFINE

indigenous
mulattoes
cacao
ecotourism

LOCATE

Panama Canal
Colón
Panama City

History and Culture

Together, the seven countries of Central America are only about three fourths the size of Texas. However, the combined population of these small countries is almost double that of Texas. Their colonial history continues to shape the culture of these countries today.

The Maya civilization included parts of present-day Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras. Tikal, in northern Guatemala, was a major Maya settlement that flourished between about A.D. 600 and 900.



Colonization and Independence Nearly all of Central America's native, or **indigenous**, peoples were farmers when Spanish explorers arrived in the early



1500s. Over time, the Central American Indian population declined dramatically. One of the causes of this decline was the spread of European diseases. In addition, the Spaniards enslaved many Indians.

Early Spanish settlement spread from the Pacific coast into the highlands. Settlers built towns around central plazas and Roman Catholic churches. Climates along the Pacific were compatible with Spanish-style agriculture, and large estates developed. A few rich families owned the land, and most of the workers had no land rights. The Spaniards mostly ignored the Caribbean coast. British Honduras (what is now Belize) became the only non-Spanish colony in Central America. Eventually, Europeans brought enslaved Africans from the Caribbean islands to the area.

Independence came to Spanish Central America in the 1820s. Little changed, however. Spanish officials left, but wealthy families continued to run the countries and their economies. Foreign companies, mainly from the United States and Great Britain, built railroads to cross the isthmus. Coffee plantations were founded along with railroads and became very important to the region. Bananas also became an important commercial crop. Large American firms controlled the banana business.

In the early 1900s the United States built the Panama Canal across central Panama. This canal has been an important economic resource. It allows ships to move from the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean. The United States controlled the canal until turning it over to Panama in 1999.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* Which European country had the greatest influence on Central America's development?

People, Languages, and Religion The legacy of the colonial past continues in Central America. Wealth is still concentrated in the hands of a small number of families. The Roman Catholic Church remains important. Spanish is the official language of all the region's countries except Belize, where English is spoken. Many Central American Indian languages are also spoken.

The majority of Central Americans are mestizos. Some are **mulattoes**, people with both African and European ancestors. Small groups of Asians and Africans also live in the region. These groups are largely descended from laborers brought to the region to work on the plantations.

Most of the region's Central American Indians live in Guatemala. That country's population is almost evenly split between mestizos and Indians. The other countries have much smaller Indian populations. The populations of El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama are overwhelmingly mestizo. Indians live on the Caribbean sides of Nicaragua and Panama. People of African descent are a significant group in Belize and Panama.

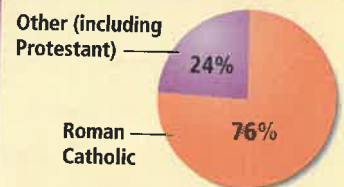
Costa Rica's people are mostly of Spanish descent. Few Central American Indians lived in the area when European colonists first arrived. As a result, the colonists did not have local labor to develop large estates. Instead, small family farms developed in this country.



INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Coffee is one of Guatemala's main export crops. It is grown mostly on large plantations in cool highland areas. To which countries do you think Guatemala exports coffee?

Religions in Costa Rica



Source: The DK World Desk Reference

INTERPRETING THE GRAPH

Roman Catholicism is Costa Rica's main religion. How might the importance of Catholicism in Costa Rica be visible in the country's landscapes?



The Belize Barrier Reef is the largest coral reef in the Western Hemisphere, extending for more than 180 miles (290 km) along the country's coast. The reef is home to manatees, crocodiles, sea turtles, and more than 500 species of fish.

Belize was the last to gain independence in 1981. People of African descent who speak English live along the coast. The inland forests include both Indians and Spanish-speaking settlers from Mexico and Guatemala.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* What ethnic group has shaped the social character of Central America and makes up a majority of its population today?

Economic, Political, and Social Development

Central America continues to depend heavily on the export of coffee and bananas. Sugar, cotton, and **cacao** are also important commercial crops. Cacao is a type of tree from which we get cocoa beans. Those beans are then used to produce chocolate.

The influence of American and other foreign companies on these and other industries remains strong. In most countries, wealthy families have long had ties to foreign companies and to their own country's army. Such ties have often enabled these families to run their countries for their own benefit. However, population growth has strained this arrangement. As the people's need for land and demand for more political power have increased, unrest and violence have arisen. Many Central Americans have immigrated to the United States to escape these economic and political problems.

INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Subsistence agriculture is common in the highlands of El Salvador. Based on the photo, what type of economic system do you think El Salvador has?

Reform and Development The need for land reform has been an important problem in the region. In El Salvador, for example, rich landowners control most of the land. They raise cash crops on large profitable estates. However, most Salvadorans are poor subsistence farmers. They survive by raising corn and beans on small farms. Similar inequalities have troubled



Nicaragua. As a result, both countries suffered through long periods of violence and civil war, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. With these countries now at peace, their governments have a chance to build fairer societies. In fact, El Salvador and Nicaragua have both made important economic progress in recent years.

Guatemala, which has also suffered through long periods of violence and unrest, has attempted land reform. Market-oriented agriculture exists along the country's Pacific coast. Meanwhile, more than half of all Guatemalans live and farm in isolated highland villages. In nearby market towns, they sell what few goods they do not consume. Migrants to the country's northern lowland plains have found some useful land there. However, these migrants are burning forest areas, including national parkland, to clear land for farming.

To some, Panama seems like three different countries in one. In the east, toward South America, is a densely forested region with few people. In the middle lies a more prosperous area surrounding the Panama Canal. The cities at each end of the canal—Colón on the Caribbean and Panama City on the Pacific—are major industrial centers. The country's western areas are more rural, and both small farms and large plantations are common.

Coffee is particularly important to the economies of Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, and Costa Rica. Rugged mountains and valleys dominate Honduras. The rough terrain makes transportation and large-scale farming difficult. As a result, economists often regard Honduras as Central America's least-developed country. Costa Rica, on the other hand, has the highest standard of living in the region. Costa Rica's tradition of democracy, education, and political stability has recently attracted investments by foreign computer companies. Computer chips are now a major export. Costa Rica has also been a leader in developing tourism.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* Which country has the highest standard of living in the region? What are some reasons for this?



INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

The Panama Canal, completed in 1914, is one of the most strategic artificial waterways in the world. How do you think the Panama Canal caused changes in world trade patterns?

A hiker in Costa Rica



FOCUS ON ECONOMICS

Ecotourism in Costa Rica One key to Costa Rica's successful tourism industry is the country's natural beauty. Would you pay to sit on a beautiful white-sand beach, where the rain forest extends nearly to the water's edge? Would you pay to walk in a misty mountain forest, surrounded by exotic birds? These are just two of many opportunities to get truly close to nature in Costa Rica.

INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Visitors to Monteverde cloud forest in Costa Rica can explore the area's incredible diversity of plant and animal life by walking across suspension bridges located high in the rain-forest canopy. **How can ecotourism help promote economic development and environmental conservation at the same time?**



In the mid-1980s, Costa Rica found a way to make money and protect its natural environment at the same time. Its solution was **ecotourism**. This type of tourism focuses on guided travel through natural areas and on outdoor activities. It allows visitors to observe wildlife and learn about the environment. Today protected public or private nature preserves make up nearly 25 percent of Costa Rica's area. For a fee, people can tour these preserves with a naturalist who is an expert on the area's animals, plants, and physical geography.

Ecotourism has provided tremendous economic benefits to Costa Rica. Hotels and other businesses have sprung up around the preserves, providing jobs for the local people. The cost of tours also provides income for the economy. Today tourism is Costa Rica's leading industry. About two thirds of the country's vacationers are ecotourists.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Environment and Society* How is Costa Rica's natural beauty a valuable resource? What policies have helped the country protect this resource?

Section 2 Review

Define indigenous, mulattoes, cacao, ecotourism

Working with Sketch Maps On the map you created in Section 1, label the Panama Canal, Colón, and Panama City. Why has the Panama Canal been an important economic resource?

Reading for the Main Idea

1. **Human Systems** What evidence of Spanish colonization remains in Central America today?

2. **Environment and Society** How is the practice of agriculture similar in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Panama?

Critical Thinking

3. **Identifying Cause and Effect** Why do you think the region surrounding the Panama Canal is generally prosperous and industrial?
4. **Drawing Inferences and Conclusions** How do patterns of land use in Central America affect social, economic, and political conditions in the region?

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Organizing What You Know

5. Copy the chart below. Use it to describe and compare the ethnic makeup of the Central American countries.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Belize | |
| Costa Rica | |
| El Salvador | |
| Guatemala | |
| Honduras | |
| Nicaragua | |
| Panama | |

Section 3

The Caribbean

READ TO DISCOVER

1. What are some important events in the history of the Caribbean?
2. What cultural and population patterns are found in the region?
3. What activities support the economies of the Caribbean countries?

Reading Strategy

TAKING NOTES Taking notes while you read will help you understand and remember the information in this section. Your notes will be useful for reviewing the material. As you read this section, create an outline using the headings from the section. Beneath each heading write the information you learn. Include key terms and their definitions.

IDENTIFY

Santeria
Caricom

DEFINE

commonwealth
creole
voodoo

LOCATE

Santo Domingo
Havana
San Juan

History and Culture

Like Central America, much of the Caribbean's modern identity is linked to the period of European colonization. European settlers and the peoples they brought to the region shaped the cultures of the islands.

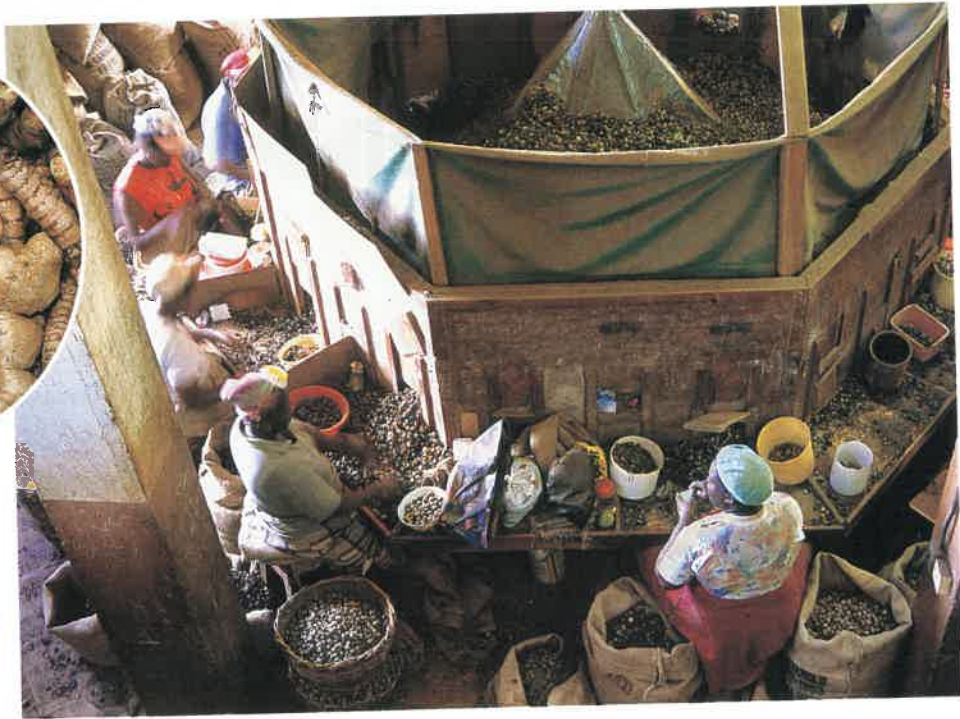
Colonization and Independence In 1492 Christopher Columbus landed on an island in the southern Bahamas. However, he thought that he had reached islands off the coast of Asia that Europeans called the Indies. Columbus was wrong, but the term West Indies stuck. People still use the term to describe the islands of the Caribbean region.

Brimstone Hill Fortress on the island of St. Kitts takes its name from the volcanic stone, known as brimstone, that was used to build its massive walls. The fortress was used by both British and French forces during the colonial period.





European colonists established plantations throughout the Caribbean, and export-oriented agriculture is still common on many islands. In Grenada, nutmeg and ginger are two important export crops.



The Spanish monarchs sponsored the voyage of Columbus, and the first wave of Europeans in the Caribbean was Spanish. They fanned out across the Greater Antilles looking for gold. The settlers brought bananas, citrus fruits, rice, sugarcane, and farm animals to the region.

When the Spanish found little gold, they lost interest in many of the small islands. However, the British, Dutch, and French competed for the islands. They reaped fabulous wealth from the sugar plantations they developed. Spain also developed sugarcane plantations in Cuba. To get workers for their farms, plantation owners turned to Africa. Over time, Europeans brought millions of enslaved Africans to the West Indies.

When slavery ended in the 1800s, former slaves could buy land if it was available. Some remained plantation workers. Others left the region, immigrating to Central America or the United States. Landowners then brought in laborers, mostly from South and East Asia, to work on the plantations.

Haiti won independence from France in 1804. The Dominican Republic gained independence from Spain by the mid-1800s. The United States took Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spain during the Spanish-American War in 1898. However, Cuba then became independent in 1902. Other Caribbean countries did not gain independence until the last half of the 1900s. Puerto Rico remains a **commonwealth** of the United States. A commonwealth is a self-governing territory associated with another country. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. However, Puerto Rico has no voting representation in the U.S. Congress.

People, Languages, and Religions The Caribbean's population is largely descended from the Europeans and Africans who arrived during the colonial period. Most of

Indian, African, and European cultural traditions have combined to shape life throughout the Caribbean. In the Dominican Republic, for example, a blend of both Spanish and African cultures is found.



the region's people are mulatto or otherwise of African descent. Nearly 40 percent of Cubans are of European descent. Haiti and Jamaica have the largest African populations in the region. Many descendants of Asian plantation workers live in Trinidad and Tobago. For example, more than a third of that country's people are East Indian. Small East Indian populations are also found in most other Caribbean countries. Jamaica and several smaller islands in the Lesser Antilles have small populations of Lebanese and Chinese as well. Most of the few Caribbean Indians who remain live in Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Aruba, and the Netherlands Antilles.

The official language in each Caribbean country or territory depends on which European country colonized or controls it today. In most places, the main language is Spanish, English, French, or Dutch. Spanish is spoken in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. English is also an official language in Puerto Rico. French and **creole** are official languages in Haiti. Creole is a blend of European, African, or Caribbean Indian languages. People on many other Caribbean islands often speak a creole language. In Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, many people speak Papiamentu. This creole language combines elements of Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese.

Most people living on the Spanish- and French-speaking islands are Roman Catholic. Protestants make up the majority on the Dutch- and English-speaking islands. African traditions strongly influence religion in some places. In Haiti, for example, **voodoo** is important. Voodoo is a Haitian version of traditional African religious beliefs that are blended with elements of Christianity. Followers believe that good and bad spirits play an important role in daily life. Like voodoo, **Santeria** blends African traditions and Christian beliefs. It began in Cuba and has spread to other islands. In the 1800s Asian workers brought Hinduism and Islam to the islands.

Settlement and Land Use Since 1960 the Caribbean's total population has more than doubled. About 36 million people lived in the region in 2000. About 70 percent of the population lives in Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic's capital, is the region's largest city. More than 3.5 million people live there. Havana, Cuba's capital, is home to more than 2.2 million people.

Population growth has created difficult problems for the region. The Caribbean islands have only one tenth the land area of Central America. Unemployment and underemployment are high. This has led to immigration to the United States, Canada, and Europe. Large Caribbean communities can

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THE ARTS

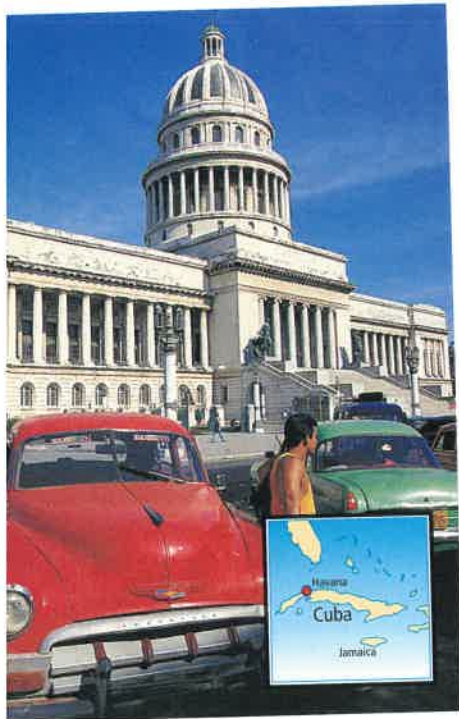
Caribbean Music

Caribbean culture has contributed much to American music and dance. Calypso, a folk music from Trinidad, has ties to the music of Caribbean slaves of the early 1800s. It first became popular in the United States in the 1950s. More recently, reggae, salsa, and merengue have attracted a large American following. Reggae from Jamaica arrived in the 1970s. Salsa has its roots in the African rhythms and Spanish lyrics of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Merengue came to the United States from the Dominican Republic. It has long been part of rural folk music and dance traditions in that island country. Today people across the United States can find places to dance salsa and merengue.

Drawing Inferences and Conclusions What other part of the world has influenced the Caribbean music that has become popular in the United States?



Steel drums, which originated in Trinidad, are a common element in Caribbean music. Steel drums are made from metal shipping drums and are played with rubber-tipped hammers.



Since the 1960s the United States has enforced strict trade restrictions with Cuba because it opposes Cuba's Communist government. As a result, most American cars in the country date from the 1950s.

be found in those places. For example, today more Puerto Ricans live in New York City than in San Juan, Puerto Rico's capital.

This population pressure has increased urbanization. People have had to move to towns and cities in search of new opportunities. Today more than half the region's people live in towns and cities rather than farming communities. Partly because of this, most islands import much of their food.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Places and Regions* What geographic factors have contributed to emigration from the Caribbean?

Economic Development

Except for Cuba, most of the Caribbean countries and territories have market economies. Businesses and farms are privately owned, and their owners decide what and how much to produce. Cuba has a command economy. Its Communist government makes all the decisions about production.

Agriculture and Industry Despite efforts to encourage manufacturing, the region's economy has remained largely agricultural. Sugar, bananas, cacao, citrus fruits, and spices are the region's main exports. Still, overall farm production and employment continue to decline. To promote industry and trade, countries in the region have formed an economic union called **Caricom**, the Caribbean Community and Common Market. Difficulties, however, persist. Haiti, for example, remains one of the world's poorest nations. Its failure to solve its severe economic problems has also contributed to political instability. In 2004 armed rebels forced the country's president to resign.

Cuba, the largest Caribbean island, is not a member of Caricom. In 1959 Fidel Castro came to power and set up a Communist dictatorship. After Castro's 1959 revolution the United States banned trade with Cuba and restricted travel to the island. Only in 2000 did the U.S. government ease its ban on trade to allow Cuba to buy U.S. agricultural products. For years, Cuba produced sugar on government-owned farms to sell to the Soviet Union. However, that country's collapse has led Cuba to focus on the manufacture of farm machinery, steel, cement, clothing, food products, and consumer goods.

Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and several countries in the Lesser Antilles have also developed important mining industries. Puerto Rico has the region's

INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

About three quarters of the land in Barbados is arable, and most of it is used to grow sugarcane. However, in recent years, the government has encouraged farmers to grow a wider range of crops. Based on the photo, how important do you think modern technology is for growing sugarcane in Barbados?





most industrialized economy. This is the result of Puerto Rico's easy access to the American market, low taxes, and special training programs for workers. In addition, wages in Puerto Rico are generally lower than in the United States. This means companies can produce goods less expensively there. Still, unemployment is high when compared to the United States.

Tourism Many island leaders see tourism as the great hope for future economic growth. However, tourism also has its problems. On small islands, golf courses, resorts, and condominiums take land that could be used for farming or industry. Jobs in tourist industries are mostly seasonal, and pay is low. Furthermore, free-spending tourists often raise the cost of living on the islands. Plus, companies from developed countries build and operate most of the tourist facilities. As you might expect, then, most of the profits also go to these foreign companies. Still, tourism does bring needed income and reduces unemployment. Both of those benefits are important for island economies.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Environment and Society* What forms the basis of the economy in most of the Caribbean?

INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Tourism is a huge industry in island countries such as the Bahamas, where it supplies about 60 percent of the country's GDP and employs about 40 percent of the labor force. What problems might such a dependence on tourism cause?

Section
3

Review

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.com **Homework Practice Online**
Keyword: SW3 HP11

Identify Santeria, Caricom

Define commonwealth, creole, voodoo

Working with Sketch Maps

On the map you created in Section 2, label the region's countries and Santo Domingo, Havana, and San Juan. Which city is the largest?

Reading for the Main Idea

1. **Human Systems** What factors help to explain the high rate of emigration from some Caribbean islands?
2. **Human Systems** How and why has the collapse of the Soviet Union affected the economy of Cuba?

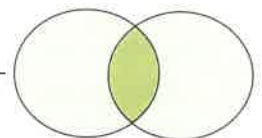
Critical Thinking

3. **Drawing Inferences** Do you agree that emphasizing tourism is a good approach to economic growth in the Caribbean countries? Why or why not?

4. **Summarizing** How is the Caribbean's history reflected in its culture today?

Organizing What You Know

5. Copy the diagram. Use it to describe and then compare important cultural features of both the Caribbean islands and the countries of Central America. Where the circles overlap, identify cultural features that the regions share.



CHAPTER 11

Review

HOLT

Geography's Impact Video Series

Review the video to answer the closing question:
Why do so many visitors to the Caribbean come from the United States and Canada?

Building Vocabulary

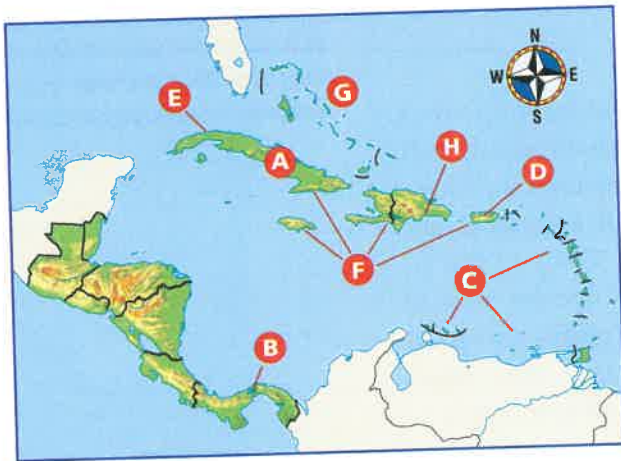
On a separate sheet of paper, explain the following terms by using them correctly in sentences.

| | | |
|------------|--------------|----------|
| mangrove | cacao | voodoo |
| bauxite | ecotourism | Santeria |
| indigenous | commonwealth | Caricom |
| mulattoes | creole | |

Locating Key Places

On a separate sheet of paper, match the letters on the map with their correct labels.

| | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Greater Antilles | Puerto Rico | Santo Domingo |
| Lesser Antilles | Bahamas | Havana |
| Cuba | Panama Canal | |



Understanding the Main Ideas

Section 1

- Physical Systems** What physical process has created the mountains of Central America? How do those mountains affect climates in Central America and the Caribbean islands?

Section 2

- Environment and Society** How are economics and politics linked in Central America?
- Human Systems** What economic activities are important in Central America? How is the economy of the region changing?

Section 3

- Places and Regions** How does Cuba differ economically from other Caribbean countries?
- Human Systems** What non-Caribbean countries have had the most influence in the region? Why?

Thinking Critically

- Comparing** What similarities exist between the physical and human geography of Central America and the Caribbean?
- Identifying Cause and Effect** Why would the construction of railroads in Central America have encouraged the spread of plantations and market-oriented agriculture?
- Making Generalizations and Predictions** What might cultures and economies in Central America and the Caribbean be like today if Europeans and North Americans had never become involved in the region?

Using the Geographer's Tools

- Analyzing Maps** Study the chapter physical-political map and the unit map showing land use and resources. What general conclusions can you draw about the location of plantation agriculture in the region?
- Analyzing Graphs** Review the climate graph for San Salvador in Section 1. Does the city have distinct wet and dry seasons? When do these occur? In which climate type would you expect to find this city?
- Creating Bar Graphs** Using the unit Fast Facts table, create bar graphs comparing the per capita GDPs of the countries in Central America and the Caribbean.

Writing about Geography

Describe and compare the patterns of language and religion that distinguish Central America and the Caribbean as separate cultural regions. Write a short essay about how the two regions differ in these areas of culture. When you are finished with your essay, proofread it to make sure that you have used standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

SKILL BUILDING



Geography for Life

Organizing Geographic Information

Places and Regions Imagine that you are an official in charge of promoting tourism in a Central American or Caribbean country of your choice. Use the textbook, library, and Internet resources to collect information and materials for a tourist brochure. Then use maps, pictures, or other graphics and text information to identify physical and human geographical features that will attract tourists to your country.

Selected Active Volcanoes in Central America



Interpreting Maps

Study the map above. Then answer the questions that follow.

- Based on the map, which country does not have active volcanoes?
 - Nicaragua
 - Guatemala
 - Costa Rica
 - Belize
- Which Central American countries would you expect to be most affected by earthquakes? Why?

Using Language

The following passage contains mistakes in grammar, punctuation, or usage. Read the passage and then answer the following questions. Mark your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

(1) European colonists established large plantations in Central America. (2) They grew crops like tobacco and sugarcane. (3) They forced the Central American Indians to work on plantations. (4) In gold mines elsewhere in the Americas some Indians were sent to work. (5) In addition many Africans were brought to the region as slaves.

- In which sentence is a comma missing?
 - 1
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
- In which sentence does a prepositional phrase need to be moved so that it is closer to the verb it modifies?
 - 1
 - 2
 - 4
 - 5
- Combine sentences 1 and 2 correctly.

Alternative Assessment

PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY

Learning about Your Local Geography

Group Project: Field Work

Plan, organize, and complete a research project about products from Central America and the Caribbean that are available in your community. Divide your community into zones. Have a group member survey stores in each zone to determine which products from Central America and the Caribbean—such as clothing, electronics, and food items—are sold there. Present your group's results on a sketch map of your community, showing the items that your group found in each location. Use the unit map showing land use and resources as a model for how to present your group's findings on your community sketch map.

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Internet Activity: go.hrw.com

KEYWORD: SW3 GT11

Choose a topic on Central America and the Caribbean to:

- create a postcard of an ecotour.
- visit the Panama Canal and learn about its history.
- take the GeoMap challenge to test your knowledge of Central American and Caribbean geography!