Chapter 10: Mexico

Section 1: Geography of Mexico

Section 2: Place of Three Cultures
• What are the main physical characteristics that affect daily life in Mexico’s heartland region?
• How do Mexico’s four coastal plains regions differ?
Chapter 10, Section 1

The Heartland Region

Natural Hazards

- Mexico’s central plateau, or area of high, flat land, is geologically unstable.
- Mexico is located at intersection of four tectonic plates.
- Some mountains are active volcanoes.
- Frequent earthquakes shake the land.

Climate Factors

- The mountains block rainfall in much of the central plateau.
- The southern end of the plateau receives more rain than the arid north.
- High elevation keeps temperatures mild year-round.
Northern Pacific Coast
- It has a hot and arid climate.
- **Irrigation**, or artificial watering, gives this region some of the best farmland in Mexico.

Southern Pacific Coast
- The Sierra Madre del Sur mountain range edges a narrow coast.
- There is little farmland, but a spectacular setting and tropical climate favor tourism.

Gulf Coastal Plain
- Vast deposits of petroleum and natural gas are under the plain and Gulf of Mexico.
- It is one of the major oil-producing regions of the world.

Yucatán Peninsula
- Rainfall dissolves the limestone bedrock, producing underground caverns that sometimes collapse, forming sinkholes.
- Mayan ruins attract tourists and archaeologists.
Chapter 10, Section 1

Section 1 Review

The geological instability of the central plateau
   a) is slowly dividing the plateau in half.
   b) produces dangerous volcanoes and earthquakes.
   c) causes heavy rainfalls.
   d) has created a flat, low land.

Mayan ruins have attracted tourists and archaeologists to which region?
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Chapter 10, Section 2

A Place of Three Cultures

- How did Mexico become a Spanish colony?
- What were key political events in the development of democracy in Mexico?
- What social problems face Mexico today?
- What are the main characteristics of the Mexican economy?
• The Aztecs had built a powerful empire in central Mexico.
• Tenochtitlán occupied the site of modern Mexico City.
• Hernán Cortés, a Spanish adventurer, marched his soldiers into Tenochtitlán in 1519.
• Within two years, the Aztec empire was destroyed.
• The territory won by Cortés became the colony of New Spain.

• Four social classes emerged in New Spain: the *peninsulares*, the *criollos*, the *mestizos*, and the Indians.
• Indians provided labor on Spanish-owned *haciendas*, large estates run as farms or cattle ranches.
• The Spanish king rewarded the conquistadors by granting them both haciendas and the Indians who worked them in a system known as *encomienda*.
• Under *encomienda*, Indians lived a slave-like existence.
• *Criollo* resentment of the privileges of *peninsulares* erupted into conflict in the early 1800s.
• Mexico achieved independence by 1821, but was not democratic.
• The Mexican Revolution began in 1910 when Peasants and middle-class Mexicans rebelled.
• The new Mexican government was a federal republic with an elected president and congress.
• The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) controlled Mexican politics until the election in 2000.
After the Mexican Revolution, the government divided haciendas among landless peasants in policy of land redistribution.

The government awarded most of the redistributed land in ejidos, land held collectively by members of a rural community. In an ejidos, farmers generally practice subsistence farming, only growing enough to meet their own needs.

One third of Mexico’s farms are huge commercial farms called latifundios, which, along with some ejidos, raise cash crops—crops raised for sale and profit.

Many landless, jobless peasants travel from place to place as migrant workers.

Cities offer better job opportunities and chances for education than the countryside, but most urban dwellers in Mexico are very poor and struggle to survive.
Since NAFTA was passed, manufacturing has increased and unemployment has declined in Mexico.

Major Industries
- Petroleum extraction and tourism are important to Mexico’s economy.
- The state-owned oil company provides revenue that rises or falls along with oil prices.
- Climate, scenery, and cultural history make tourism an important source of income for Mexico.
- Tourism is a cleaner alternative to industry; Mexicans call tourism the “smokeless industry.”

Border Industries
- **Maquiladoras**, factories that assemble products for export to the United States, are clustered along the United States-Mexico border.
- People have raised concerns about work and pay in maquiladoras, but employment has increased and workers’ skills have improved.
- Concerns have been raised about pollution from factories and the damage to health and the environment.
How did Hernán Cortés affect the Aztec empire?
   a) He traded European goods with the Aztecs.
   b) He conquered the Aztec empire for Spain.
   c) He exchanged ideas and technology with the Aztecs.
   d) He gave the Aztecs tribute from the Spanish king.

What are two of the most important industries in Mexico?
   a) diamond mining and electronics
   b) petroleum extraction and timber cutting
   c) steel and tourism
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