

MIDDLE AMERICA: MEXICO TO VENEZUELA AND THE CARRIBEAN ISLANDS



#3488

OPEN-CAPTIONED
BENCHMARK MEDIA

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Grade Levels: 7-11

23 minutes

DESCRIPTION

Middle America is a cultural crossroads. African, Native American, and European influences are seen in its religions, foods, architecture, languages, and arts. Includes discussion of terrains and climates, food crops, cultural influences, regional economies, and tourism and environmental problems. Compares some of the Caribbean islands.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Geography

- Standard: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
 - Benchmark: Knows how cultures influence the characteristics of regions (e.g., level of technological achievement, cultural traditions, social institutions) (See Instructional Goal #3)
 - Benchmark: Understands how human characteristics make specific regions of the world distinctive (e.g., the effects of early Spanish settlement in the southwestern United States, the impact of Buddhism in shaping social attitudes in Southeast Asia, the specific qualities of Canada's culture regions resulting from the patterns of migration and settlement over four centuries) (See Instructional Goal #5)
- Standard: Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment
 - Benchmark: Knows the approximate locations of major political and economic cultures (See Instructional Goal #1)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To identify and locate the countries of Middle America.
2. To identify the different types of terrain in Middle America.
3. To compare the various peoples and cultures of Middle America.
4. To identify the agriculture and industry of the Middle-American countries.
5. To illustrate the influences other countries have on Middle America.
6. To introduce the religions of Middle America.

VOCABULARY

1. crossroads
2. aquatic life
3. intertidal basin
4. coral reef
5. volcanic eruption
6. terrain
7. *conquistadors*
8. mestizo
9. arepa
10. stilts
11. territories
12. estuaries

13. mainland
14. shantytowns

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Review prior knowledge of Middle America.
2. Distribute a map of the Middle-American countries. Using maps, globes, and other resources, label each country.
3. Locate the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean on a map.
4. Prepare a graphic organizer on which to record the characteristics of different Middle-American countries.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause video and complete the graphic organizer.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What is a *crossroads*? Why is Middle America considered a crossroads?
2. What cultures have influenced Middle America?
3. What common heritage do the people of Middle America share?
4. What are the two types of island formation? What are two examples of these formations discussed in the video?
5. Christopher Columbus claimed Guadeloupe for Spain in what year?
6. How did the *conquistadors* dominate Middle America? Why did they do this?
7. What caused large numbers of Native Americans to die after the arrival of the *conquistadors* and missionaries?
8. What culture is predominant on most Caribbean islands today?
9. Who are the *mestizo*?
10. What vegetables are attributed to the Native Americans of Mexico?
11. What is an *arepa*?
12. Discuss the different styles of houses in Middle-American countries.
13. Discuss the celebration of Mardi Gras.
14. What major religions have influenced Middle America?
15. What are the major agricultural products of Middle America?
16. What are the major exports of the Middle-American countries?
17. How does the sea support and influence the lives of the people of Middle America?
18. What is an *estuary* and how does it help future fishermen?
19. Discuss the industrialized countries of Middle America.
 - a. Where are they located?
 - b. What heavy industries do they support?
 - c. What ecological problems do these cities have?
20. What are *shantytowns* and why do they exist?
21. What are the popular pastimes of the people of Middle America?

Applications and Activities

1. Plan a trip to one of the countries depicted in the video. Include:
 - a. cost and type of transportation
 - b. points of interest
 - c. currency and exchange rate
 - d. documentation to enter the country
 - e. map of areas to visit
2. Select one of the countries discussed in the video and create a travel brochure. Include:
 - a. a brief history.
 - b. points of interest.
 - c. pictures of tourist attractions.
 - d. address and phone number for tourist information in that country.
3. Research the origin of bananas and coffee in a local supermarket.
4. Locate currency exchange rates and convert \$1, \$10, and \$100 American dollars into various Middle-American currencies.
5. Create a topographical map of the Middle-American countries.
6. Locate current weather information for two Middle-American countries. Track and record the weather patterns for five days.

RELATED RESOURCES

Captioned Media Program

- Central America #2157
- Mexico: An Introduction #2199
- South America #2526
- Europe Explores the Americas: Southern Voyages and Settlements #3356
- Puerto Rico: Progress in the Caribbean #2213

World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and “kid-safe” sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- LONELY PLANET DESTINATIONS <http://www.lonelyplanet.com.au/dest/dest.htm>

Locate maps, statistics, travel information, pictures, facts for travelers, and much more for all regions and countries of the world.

- CENTRAMERICA.COM <http://directory.centramerica.com/>

Search this database on the countries of Central America to find information on business, education, tourism, weather, culture, and more.

- THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION
<http://www.caribtourism.com/>

Information on 32 member countries, which includes weather, maps, calendars of events, and more.

- RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE AMERICAS <http://ladb.unm.edu/retanet/plans/>

Access over 65 lesson plans dealing with Latin America, the Caribbean, and culture studies. Secondary teachers as part of a summer institute at the Latin America Data Base wrote the plans.



**PLEASE RETURN LESSON GUIDE
WITH VIDEO**

**Lesson guide also available
online at *www.cfv.org***

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