



Core Knowledge®

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Girl celebrating the  
Day of the Dead

# The Culture of Mexico



## Teacher Guide

Maya city of Chichén Itzá



Señor Coyote and the rabbit



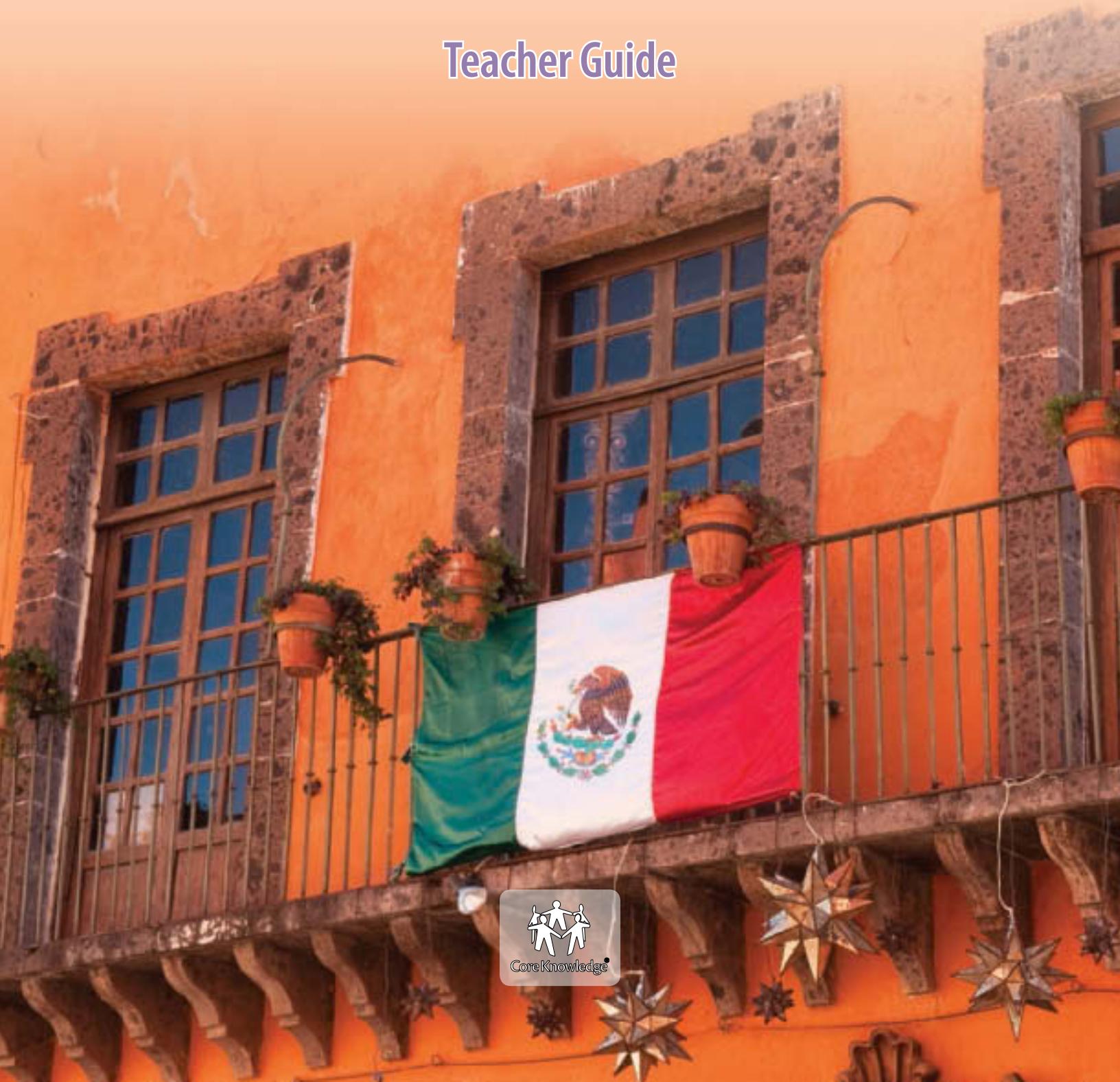
City of Guanajuato





# The Culture of Mexico

Teacher Guide



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# The Culture of Mexico

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**The Culture of Mexico  
Teacher Guide**

Core Knowledge History and Geography™ 1

## UNIT 6

# Introduction

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

#### The Big Idea

Mexico is a country with a rich and varied heritage that combines indigenous, Spanish, and other influences to create a vibrant culture today.

This unit introduces students to Mexico, the country on the southern border of the United States, and illustrates the impact of past civilizations on life in Mexico today. These past civilizations include those of the Maya and Aztec peoples, whom students learned about in the previous Grade 1 Core Knowledge History and Geography™ (CKHG™) unit, *Early Civilizations of the Americas*.

# What Students Should Already Know

Students in Core Knowledge schools should be familiar with the following:

- what maps and globes represent and how to use them
- what rivers, lakes, and mountains are and how they are represented on maps and globes
- the locations of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the North and South Poles, and the seven continents
- the names and locations of their continent, country, state, and community
- the use of map keys, symbols, and directions (north, south, east, west) on a map
- the locations of the Indian and Arctic Oceans, North America (Canada, the United States, Mexico, and the countries of Central America), the equator, and the Northern and Southern Hemispheres
- the meaning of *peninsula, harbor, bay, and island*
- the importance of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
- the development of writing and its impact on civilization
- the geography of Africa: the Sahara and the flooding of the Nile
- the Code of Hammurabi and why laws and rules are important
- religion in ancient Mesopotamia: worship of many gods
- important pharaohs: Tutankhamen, Hatshepsut
- Egyptian religion: pyramids, mummies, animal gods, the sphinx
- religions as the basis of significant events and ideas in world history
- Judaism: belief in one god, Exodus, Israel, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Star of David, Torah, synagogue
- Christianity: developed from Judaism, Jesus as the Messiah, Christmas, Easter, symbol of the cross
- Islam: origin in Arabia, Allah, Muhammad, Mecca, Koran, mosque, Ramadan, Eid Al-Fitr, symbols of crescent and star
- the concept of religious freedom
- the route from Asia to North America taken by some of the first peoples of the Americas
- alternative theories about how early people migrated
- the everyday life of the nomadic hunters and gatherers who crossed the Bering Strait land bridge

## What Students Should Already Know CONTINUED

- how and why some early peoples changed from hunting and gathering to raising crops
- how the development of farming led to the building of permanent settlements
- how the Maya built their cities in the rainforests
- Maya accomplishments in architecture, astronomy, writing, religion, math, and farming
- possible reasons for the mysterious disappearance of the Maya civilization
- the everyday life and social system of the Aztec
- how the Aztec built their city on a lake
- Aztec accomplishments in engineering, medicine, and education
- how the Aztec were fierce warriors
- how the Inca built their cities up in the mountains
- where the Inca lived
- the achievements of the Inca
- why people of early civilizations looked to religion to help them understand how the world was created
- how stories get passed down through generations
- the Maya creation myth
- how the Maya, Aztec, and Inca people of today still follow their ancestors' traditions

## What Students Need to Learn

- the location of Mexico relative to Canada and the United States
- the locations of Central America, the Yucatán Peninsula, the Gulf of Mexico, the Rio Grande, and Mexico City
- the mix of indigenous and Spanish heritages in Mexican culture
- representative traditions: the fiesta and the piñata
- the reason that September 16 ("El Dieciseis de Septiembre") is Mexican Independence Day and a national holiday

## AT A GLANCE

The most important ideas in Unit 6 are:

- The location of Mexico relative to other nations on the North American continent
- The geographical features that are part of or that border Mexico—the Yucatán Peninsula, the Rio Grande, Mexico City, and the Gulf of Mexico
- Mexican culture has Spanish and indigenous influences.
- Two examples of Mexican culture are the fiesta and the piñata.
- Mexican Independence Day celebrates the Mexicans' desire for independence from Spain, in the same way that the Fourth of July celebrates the date that the United States declared independence from Great Britain.

**Note to Teacher:** Students in Core Knowledge schools have already learned about the significance of the Fourth of July holiday in Kindergarten; they will study the American Revolution in greater detail at the end of Grade 1.

## WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

### Background: Setting the Stage

#### Geography

Mexico is the third-largest country, by area, on the North American continent and the third-largest country in Latin America. Mexico's northern neighbor is the United States. The Rio Grande, known in Mexico as the Río Bravo, makes up about two-thirds of the border with the United States.

On the east, Mexico is bordered by the Gulf of Mexico; on the west, it is bordered by the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean. On its southern border are the Central American countries of Guatemala and Belize. (Central America is the name given to the narrow land bridge that connects North America and South America. In addition to Guatemala and Belize, the region includes five other independent countries: El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.)

About 75 percent of Mexico is a wide plateau that stretches between the Sierra Madre Occidental on the west and the Sierra Madre Oriental on the east. The former is an extension of the Sierra Nevada mountain range that extends southward from eastern California, and the latter is an extension of the Rocky Mountains.

#### Yucatán Peninsula

The Yucatán Peninsula lies on the eastern side of Mexico along the Gulf of Mexico and extends into Belize and Guatemala. Much of the area is rainforest with a hot and humid climate. However, the soil is fertile, and the area supported farmers as early as 1500 BCE. Between 300 and 900 CE, the Maya were building an advanced civilization in the area.

## Rio Grande

The name *Rio Grande* means grand, or large, river. It rises in the Rocky Mountains in southwest Colorado and flows into New Mexico. From there, it continues on a southeasterly course to form the portion of the border between Texas and Mexico. The river empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The Rio Grande is a source of water for irrigation in both the United States and Mexico.

## Mexico City

Mexico City, the capital of modern Mexico, is in the Valley of Mexico toward the south-central end of the great plateau. The current city is built on the foundation of Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec Empire. The Aztec city was originally built on islands in Lake Texcoco, but today the lake is gone, and the city sits on land reclaimed from the lake.

Mexico City, with more than eighteen million people, is one of the world's largest metropolitan centers. It is the center of Mexico's industrial development, as well as the nation's political, commercial, and cultural center. Because it was established soon after the Spanish conquest of the Aztec in the 1500s CE, this city has a rich heritage of Spanish colonial architecture.

## Culture

When Columbus landed on the island of San Salvador in the Bahamas on October 12, 1492, there were an estimated twenty million indigenous people living in what is today the country of Mexico. The modern Mexican population is composed of about 55 percent *mestizos*, people of indigenous and Caucasian ancestry; another 30 percent are of solely indigenous ancestry; and the remaining 15 percent are of European descent.

While Spanish is the official language of the country, there are many indigenous dialects. For example, some four million Maya live in the Yucatán Peninsula and speak languages related to ancient Mayan, rather than Spanish.

Artifacts of indigenous civilizations are prominently displayed in Mexican museums. The abandoned ceremonial centers of the Maya in the Yucatán Peninsula are providing valuable information to archaeologists about this civilization and its achievements. The more easily reached centers have become popular tourist attractions. Throughout much of Mexico, the architecture of the Spanish colonial period is evident in churches, town plazas, and government buildings.

Everyday reminders of the mix of Spanish and indigenous heritages can be found in Mexican food. A staple of the Mexican diet is the corn tortilla—a thin, round flatbread made from ground maize, or corn. The indigenous peoples of what is now Mexico were the first to grow maize; it found its way to what is now the United States along indigenous trade routes.

Foods that combine Spanish and indigenous influences are tacos, burritos, and chimichangas. A taco is a tortilla that can be filled with cold foods such as beans, cheese, and beef or chicken, whereas a burrito is a tortilla wrapped around a warm mixture of rice, beans, and chicken, beef, or cheese. A chimichanga is a tortilla stuffed with beans, meat, and cheese that is then rolled and fried.

## Representative Traditions: Fiesta and Piñata

The influence of Spanish and indigenous customs is also much in evidence during holy days and holidays. *Fiesta* means “party.” Fiestas are celebrated on national and religious holidays. There may be parades, music, decorations, and food.

The piñata is a special part of Christmas celebrations for children. A piñata is a large container, sometimes in the shape of an animal, made from paper and glue and brightly decorated. It is filled with candies, small toys, and coins and is fastened to a rope. The rope is tied to a tree branch or otherwise suspended from above. While blindfolded, children take turns trying to break it open by hitting it with a long pole or stick.

Piñatas first appeared in Italy during the Renaissance. The custom moved across Europe, and the Spanish made the piñata a part of their Easter festivities. When the Spanish established their colonies in the Americas, the custom again traveled. In time, Mexicans made it part of their Christmas celebrations and added it to games played at birthday parties.

## Mexican Independence Day

Like the United States of America, Mexico threw off its colonial status and became an independent country. While actual independence from Spain did not occur until 1821, Mexicans celebrate September 16, 1810 (“El Dieciseis de Septiembre”), as their independence day.

On September 15, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla began the fight for independence. He was a priest in a poor parish in the town of Dolores, north of Mexico City. In addition to providing spiritual comfort, he worked to improve the living and working conditions of his parishioners.

Convinced that things would not change until Spanish rule had ended, Hidalgo joined a secret society dedicated to achieving independence. When the plot was discovered, Hidalgo rang his church’s bell, gave a stirring speech to the assembled parishioners, and declared the beginning of the revolution. His declaration is known as *El Grito de Dolores*, or the Cry of Dolores.

On September 16, the fight began. Hidalgo soon found himself at the head of an army of sixty thousand, equipped only with knives and clubs. For several months, Hidalgo and his followers marched toward Mexico City, capturing towns and cities and gaining supporters as they fought their way toward the capital. Several provinces came under their control.

However, by 1811, those who thought they had the most to lose from independence, the middle and upper classes, turned on Hidalgo. Fielding a large army, the government stopped Hidalgo’s forces. He was shot and killed, but the movement continued under another priest, José María Morelos, until 1815. Morelos’s forces captured enough territory to give him reason to declare Mexico independent, but again the middle and upper classes supported the government and the movement was smashed.

In 1821, a revolution occurred in Spain itself, and the ideas of the new liberal ruling party frightened the leaders of Mexico. The wealthy classes joined together to support Agustín de Iturbide’s bid for power. With their support, he declared independence, and his forces went on to defeat the Spanish, thus creating the independent country of Mexico.

Each year on September 15, the president of Mexico rings a bell and recites Hidalgo’s speech.

### Teacher Components

*The Culture of Mexico Teacher Guide*—This Teacher Guide includes a general unit introduction, followed by specific instructional guidance. Primary focus objectives, geographical and/or historical background information for teachers, Core Vocabulary, a lesson introduction, and the Student Book text to be read aloud—in the form of actual replicated Student Book pages—are included for each chapter. The Read Aloud sections of the Student Book are divided into segments so that the teacher can pause and discuss each part of the Read Aloud with students. It is important to discuss the images that accompany the text with the students too.

The instructional guidance for each chapter also includes a Check for Understanding and, when appropriate, Additional Activities, such as virtual field trips, short film clips, and art activities, that may be used to reinforce students' understanding of the content. These Additional Activities are intended to provide choices for teachers and should be used selectively.

**A Culminating Activity, Unit Assessment, Performance Task Assessment, Student Activity Pages, and instructions for the My Passport for each student are included at the end of this Teacher Guide in Teacher Resources, beginning on page 60.** The Activity Pages are numbered to correspond with the chapter for recommended use and also indicate the recommended order. For example, AP 1.1 is a letter to parents designed to be used at the start of the unit.

- » The Culminating Activity is a multistep activity that provides students an opportunity to review unit content knowledge prior to the Unit or Performance Task Assessments. Students will have a chance to play a unit-related game, learn and sing a song about the unit, or create a collaborative classroom mural and/or museum of craft projects they have made to represent artifacts from the time period and culture studied. At the end of the Culminating Activity, students will also assemble and discuss a mini-book version of the Student Book that they can take home to share with family members.
- » The Unit Assessment tests knowledge of the entire unit, using a standard testing format. The teacher reads aloud multiple-choice questions or fill-in-the-blank statements, and students are then asked to answer these questions by circling a picture representing the correct response on the Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet.
- » The Performance Task Assessment allows students to apply and demonstrate the knowledge learned during the unit by drawing and talking about images representing key content.
- » My Passport is a tangible reminder and souvenir of the various places and events that students using the CKHG series at their grade level will have visited and learned about over the course of the school year. Note that prior to reading Chapter 1 of each unit aloud, you will be prompted to ask your students to pretend that they are boarding an airplane in real time to travel to a particular place in the world; this approach will be used in units that focus on modern-day culture, including geography. For units that focus on historical events, you will be prompted to ask students to pretend they are boarding a “time machine” to travel “back in time” with you to visit each historical

period and culture studied. Guidance will be provided at the end of every unit, directing teachers how to assist students in creating and updating their passport. The passport template can be downloaded from [www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources). Teachers will need to make sufficient copies for each student before conducting the passport activity.

- » The Activity Pages are designed to reinforce and extend content taught in specific chapters. The Teacher Guide lessons provide clear direction as to when to use specific Activity Pages. Teachers will need to make sufficient copies of the Activity Pages they choose to use for all students in their class.

**Optional:** *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™* Art Resource Packet for Grade 1—art resources that may be used with the cross-curricular art activities described in the Additional Activities of Chapter 3 if classroom internet access is not available. You can purchase the Grade 1 Art Resource Packet, available at:

[www.coreknowledge.org/store](http://www.coreknowledge.org/store)

## Student Component

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The *Culture of Mexico* Student Book includes four chapters, intended to be read aloud by the teacher as the students look at images on each page.

As you will note when you examine the Student Book, minimal text is included on each page. Instead, colorful photos and engaging illustrations dominate the Student Book pages. The design of the Student Book in this way is intentional because students in Kindergarten–Grade 2 are just learning to read. At these grade levels, students are learning how to decode written words, so the complexity and amount of text that these young students can actually read is quite limited.

While some advanced students may be able to read words on a given page of the Student Book, as a general rule, students should not be expected or asked to read aloud the text on the Student Book pages. The text in the Student Book is there so that teachers and parents can read it when sharing the Student Book with students.

The intent of the Grades K–2 CKHG lessons is to build students' understanding and knowledge of specific historical time periods, people, and events, as well as of associated geographical concepts and skills. It is for this very reason that in Grades K–2 CKHG, the historical and geographical knowledge of each lesson is delivered to students using a teacher Read Aloud, accompanied by detailed images. Cognitive science research has clearly documented the fact that students' listening comprehension far surpasses their reading comprehension well into the late elementary and early middle school grades. Said another way, students are able to understand and grasp far more complex ideas and text that they hear read aloud than they would ever be able to read or comprehend when they read to themselves. For a more thorough discussion of listening and reading comprehension and the underlying cognitive science research, teachers may want to refer to Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, noting in particular the Speaking and Listening section of the appendix.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to this appendix can be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

### Pacing

The *Culture of Mexico* unit is one of nine world and American history and geography units in the Grade 1 CKHG series that we encourage teachers to use over the course of the school year. We have intentionally left the pacing and timing needed to teach the content presented in the Teacher Guide and Student Book very flexible. Teachers can choose how much they read aloud and discuss in a single instructional period, as well as how often each week they use the CKHG materials.

In many instances, it is likely that the teacher will be able to read aloud and discuss a complete chapter from the Student Book in a single instructional period. At other times, teachers may choose to spread the Read Aloud and discussion of a longer chapter over two instructional periods.

At the end of this unit introduction, you will find a blank Pacing Guide on page 12 that you may use to plan how you might pace reading aloud and discussing each chapter, as well as when to use the various other resources in this unit. We strongly recommend that you preview this entire unit and create your pacing guide before teaching the first lesson. As a general rule of thumb, we recommend that you spend no more than ten to fifteen days teaching *The Culture of Mexico* unit so that you have sufficient time to teach the other units in the Grade 1 CKHG series.

### Reading Aloud

Within each Read Aloud, the text to be read aloud to students is in roman text in the Teacher Guide (like this); instructions intended only for the teacher are in boldface (**like this**). Core Vocabulary words appear in boldface color (**like this**). You may sometimes wish to preview one or two of these vocabulary words before a segment of the Read Aloud. In most instances, however, it may be more effective to pause and explain the meaning of the words as they are encountered when reading aloud.

It is important to note that students at this grade level are not expected to give definitions of the Core Vocabulary words. Rather, the intent is for the teacher to model the use of Core Vocabulary in the Read Aloud and in discussions about the Read Aloud to expose students to challenging, domain-specific vocabulary. If students hear these words used in context by the teacher over the entire unit, they will gain an increasingly nuanced understanding of these words. With support and encouragement by the teacher, students may even begin to use these same words in their own oral discussions of the unit.

Interspersed throughout the Read Aloud, you will note instances in which instructional guidance is included. This guidance may call the teacher's attention to Core Vocabulary and idiomatic or figurative language that may be confusing and therefore require explanation. In other instances, Supports may direct the teacher to call attention to specific aspects of an image—as shown on a page in the Student Book. And, in some instances, a Challenge, usually a more demanding task or question, may be included for teachers' optional use.

You will also notice within the Read Aloud segments that the Teacher Guide directs you to pause occasionally to ask questions about what students have just heard. By using this carefully scaffolded approach to reading aloud and discussing a portion of the content a bit at a time, you will be able to observe and ensure that all students understand what they have heard before you proceed to the next section of the Read Aloud.

## Turn and Talk

Specific instances in the Read Aloud portion of the lesson are designated as Turn and Talk opportunities. During these times, teachers should direct students to turn and talk to a partner to discuss specific things. These types of discussion opportunities will allow students to more fully engage with the content and will bring to life the topics and events being discussed.

## Big Questions and Core Vocabulary

At the beginning of each Read Aloud segment in the Teacher Guide, you will find a Big Question. The answer to each Big Question is included as part of the text in each chapter of the Student Book. At the end of each Read Aloud segment, you will be prompted to formally reask the Big Question for students to discuss during the Check for Understanding. Key vocabulary, phrases, and idioms are also identified in each lesson of the Teacher Guide.

Read Aloud Chapters	Big Questions	Core Vocabulary
Chapter 1: Mexico, Past and Present	How would you describe Mexico City?	culture, ruins, Spanish, square, cactus, native languages
Chapter 2: The Geography of Mexico	What would you see if you traveled through Mexico?	coast, gulf, border, dams, peninsula, coral reefs, volcanoes, plateau
Chapter 3: Celebrations in Mexico	What kinds of celebrations take place in Mexico?	independence, fiesta, sombreros
Chapter 4: Señor Coyote and the Cheese: A Mexican Folktale	What happens in the story of Señor Coyote and the Cheese?	coyote, tortillas, feast

## Activity Pages

### Activity Pages



AP 1.1

AP 1.2

AP 1.3

AP 1.4

AP 2.1

The following activity pages can be found in Teacher Resources, pages 90–94. They are to be used with the lesson specified for additional class work or in some instances may be sent home to be make parents aware of what children are studying. Be sure to make sufficient copies for your students before conducting the activities.

- Chapter 1—Letter to Family (AP 1.1)
- Chapters 1, 2—World Map (AP 1.2)
- Chapters 1, 2—Map of Mexico (AP 1.3)
- Chapter 1—The Mexican Flag (AP 1.4)
- Chapter 2—Around the World (AP 2.1)

## Additional Activities and Website Links

An Additional Activities section, related to material the students are studying, may be found at the end of most chapters in this Teacher Guide. Even though there are multiple suggested activities, it is advised that you choose activities based on your students' interests and needs, as well as on the instructional time available. Many of the activities include website links, and you should check the links before using them in class.

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Language Arts

- "Medio Pollito"

### Visual Arts

- Diego Rivera—Piñata
- Diego Rivera—The History of Mexico

### Music

- "La Cucaracha"

## Books

Ada, Alma Flor. Illus. by Angela Domínguez. *Let Me Help! (¡Quiero Ayudar!)* New York: Lee & Low Books, 2013.

Alarcón, Francisco. Illus. by Maya Christina Gonzalez. *From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems (Del Ombligo de la Luna y Otros Poemas de Verano)*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2005.

Andrews-Goebel, Nancy. Illus. by David Diaz. *The Pot That Juan Built*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2011.

Baby Professor. *Munching on Churros in Mexico—Geography Literacy for Kids | Children's Mexico Books*. Newark, DE: Speedy Publishing LLC, 2017.

Coburn, Jewell Reinhart. Illus. by Connie McLennan. *Domitila: A Cinderella Tale from the Mexican Tradition*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2014.

Cumpiano, Ina. Illus. by José Ramírez. *Quinito, Day and Night (Quinito, Día y Noche)*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2013.

Cumpiano, Ina. Illus. by José Ramírez. *Quinito's Neighborhood (El Vecindario de Quinito)*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2018.

De Mariscal, Blanca López. Illus. by Enrique Flores. *The Harvest Birds (Los Pájaros de la Cosecha)*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2001.

Fine, Edith Hope. Illus. by René King Moreno. *Under the Lemon Moon*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2010.

Gonzalez, Maya Christina. *My Colors, My World (Mis Colores, Mi Mundo)*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2007.

Johnston, Tony. *P is for Piñata: A Mexico Alphabet (Discover the World)*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2008.

Kimmel, Eric A. Illus. by Valeria Docampo. *Medio Pollito/Half Chick: A Spanish Tale*. New York: Two Lions, 2010.

Marín, Guadalupe. Illus. by Diego Rivera. *My Papa Diego and Me (Mi Papá Diego y Yo)*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2015.

McDonnell, Ginger. *Next Stop: Mexico (TIME FOR KIDS® Nonfiction Readers)*. Huntington Beach, CA: Teacher Created Materials, 2011.

Mora, Pat. Illus. by Rafael López. *Yum! ¡Mmmm! ¡Qué Rico! Americas' Sproutings*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2007.

Perkins, Chloe. *Living in Mexico*. New York: Simon Spotlight, 2016.

Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Danza! Amalia Hernández and Mexico's Folkloric Ballet*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2017.

Torres, Jennifer. Illus. by Renato Alarcão. *Finding the Music (En Pos de la Música)*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2018.

Wade, Mary Dodson. *Cinco de Mayo (Rookie Read-About Holidays)*. Chicago: Children's Press, 2003.

## THE CULTURE OF MEXICO PACING GUIDE

's Class

**Note to Teacher:** *The Culture of Mexico* is intended to be taught as the sixth unit of Grade 1 CKHG.

### Week 1

**Day 1**

**Day 2**

**Day 3**

**Day 4**

**Day 5**

#### ***The Culture of Mexico***

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### Week 2

**Day 6**

**Day 7**

**Day 8**

**Day 9**

**Day 10**

#### ***The Culture of Mexico***

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### Week 3

**Day 11**

**Day 12**

**Day 13**

**Day 14**

**Day 15**

#### ***The Culture of Mexico***

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# Mexico, Past and Present

## Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Name the different cultures that influence life in Mexico today. **(SL.1.2, SL.1.3)**
- ✓ Describe the Mexican flag. **(SL.1.2, SL.1.3)**
- ✓ Retell an Aztec legend about why the Aztec settled in a particular place in Mexico. **(SL.1.4)**
- ✓ Describe how Mexican names are formed. **(SL.1.2, SL.1.3)**
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *culture, ruins, Spanish, square, cactus, and native languages.* **(L.1.4, L.1.5)**

## Materials Needed

- |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity Pages</b><br><br>AP 1.1<br>AP 1.2<br>AP 1.3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• globe</li> <li>• a single copy of <i>Early Civilizations of the Americas</i> Student Book</li> <li>• individual student copies of <i>The Culture of Mexico</i> Student Book</li> <li>• individual student copies of Letter to Family (AP 1.1)</li> <li>• teacher and individual student copies of World Map (AP 1.2)</li> <li>• teacher and individual student copies of Map of Mexico (AP 1.3)</li> <li>• crayons for each student</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## What Teachers Need to Know

In ancient times, the civilizations of the Aztec, Maya, and Inca flourished in what are now Mexico, Central America, and South America, respectively. The three civilizations shared many common elements. People practiced farming, developed social structures, raised armies, and worshipped many gods. Despite these commonalities, the three civilizations were as diverse as the terrains in which they lived.

The Maya, known for developing a system of mathematics, thrived in the rainforests of what are now the Yucatán Peninsula, Belize, Honduras, and Guatemala from about 200 to 900 CE. Maya cities were built with large centers that included great temples and often ball courts. Houses did not exist in the city centers, indicating that these centers were meant for religious purposes. Most Maya earned a living as farmers. Priests acted as the ruling class. The Maya civilization disappeared around the year 900 CE; some of their cities were in ruins by the time Spanish arrived in the 1600s.

The Aztec, also referred to as the Mexica, began as a group of nomadic peoples who settled on Lake Texcoco in central Mexico around the year 1325. From 1325 to 1521, the Aztec built a large and densely populated capital city at Tenochtitlán, located on islands in a swampy lake in the middle of a semiarid basin in central Mexico (where Mexico City is today).

The Inca, like the Aztec, built an empire through conquest. From about 1438 to 1525, the Inca ruled an empire that stretched from what is now Ecuador through parts of what are now Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and

Argentina. The Inca were skilled engineers, who built a vast system of roads and bridges to unite their empire, located high in the Andes Mountains, and who reached the peak of their dominance in the 1400s and early 1500s. Runners called *chasquis* carried messages throughout the Inca world.

After Christopher Columbus's expeditions in what became known as the West Indies, the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella sent soldiers, administrators, and colonists to settle the islands. The Spanish had the advantage of weapons and horses that the indigenous populations did not have. They also unknowingly brought diseases that decimated the indigenous populations. Hoping to find gold, the Spanish soon turned to exploring the mainland.

In 1519, Hernán Cortés and some five hundred conquistadores left Cuba for the mainland, landing on the Yucatán Peninsula. His goal was to gain control of the wealth of the mighty Aztec Empire. In 1521, the conquistadores captured Tenochtitlán, the Aztec city. A few years later, Spanish conquistadores, led by Francisco Pizarro, destroyed the Inca Empire, as well.

This long and varied history of the Maya, Inca, Aztec, and Spanish peoples is reflected today in Mexico's culture, which combines the traditions, art, landmarks, and influences of these old civilizations with life in the modern world.

**Note to Teacher:** It is important for students to understand that indigenous cultures and Spanish culture all have had an influence on today's culture in Mexico, but students will not learn about Cortés and Pizarro and the conquistadores in the CKHG instructional materials until Unit 7, *Early Explorers and Settlers*.

## THE CORE LESSON

### Introduce *The Culture of Mexico and Chapter 1: “Mexico, Past and Present”*

Show students the cover of the *Early Civilizations of the Americas* Student Book, and ask students if they remember the names of the different early civilizations that they studied in this unit (*Maya, Aztec, and Inca*).

Activity Page



AP 1.2



Using the globe and/or a display copy of the World Map (AP 1.2), point to the continents of North and South America, and ask students to name these continents. Continue by pointing to the area of South America in which the Inca civilization flourished long ago (see map on page 18 of *Early Civilizations of the Americas*). Then point to the areas in North America where the Maya and Aztec civilizations existed (see maps on pages 7 and 12 in the Student Book). Tell students that in this unit, they will learn about the country of Mexico, which is the modern name for much of the area where the Maya and Aztec lived long ago.

Distribute the World Map (AP 1.2) and crayons. Have students locate North America and the United States; direct students to color the United States green.

Next, ask students to point to the area in North America on the map that is north of the United States. Tell students that this part of North America is the country of Canada. Ask students to color Canada purple. Tell students that most people who live in Canada speak English, but in some parts of Canada, people speak French.

Then ask students to point to the area in North America on the map that is south of the United States. Remind students that this area is the modern-day country of Mexico. Ask students to color the country of Mexico yellow.



Next, distribute the Map of Mexico (AP 1.3). Tell students that in this chapter, they will be visiting Mexico City in the country of Mexico. Assist them in locating Mexico City on the map. Ask them to color the star, which represents Mexico City as the country's capital, in red.

**Tell students that in this unit, they will not need to pretend to use a special time machine to travel back in time because they are going to visit the country of Mexico as it is today. Ask students to pretend instead that they will be traveling to Mexico City by plane. Then ask them to buckle their seat belts and prepare for takeoff. Tell students to pay attention to what they see in Mexico City after they arrive by plane.**

**Note to Teacher:** Prior to this lesson, you may want to research how long a flight to Mexico City would be from the airport closest to where you live. Share this information with students to give them a sense of how close to or far away from Mexico they live.

**Distribute copies of the Student Book to the class. Ask students to look at the cover and describe what they see. Tell students that the title of this unit is *The Culture of Mexico*.**

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain to students that the word **culture** refers to the language and way of life, including beliefs and practices, of a specific group of people. Culture also includes holidays celebrated by this group of people, the manner in which they dress, and the art they create.

Sum up by stating that in this unit, students will learn about the Mexican people's way of life—the languages they speak, what they believe, the holidays they celebrate, the art they create, and more.


Core Knowledge® HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Girl celebrating the Day of the Dead



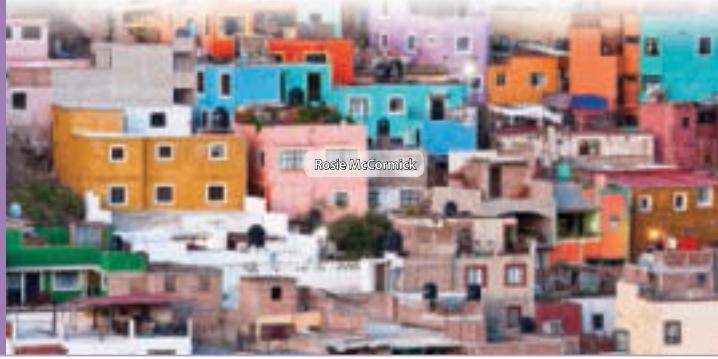
# The Culture of Mexico



Maya city of Chichén Itzá



Señor Coyote and the rabbit



City of Guanajuato

Rosie McCormick

## Big Question

How would you describe Mexico City?

## Core Vocabulary

culture    ruins    Spanish    square    cactus    native languages

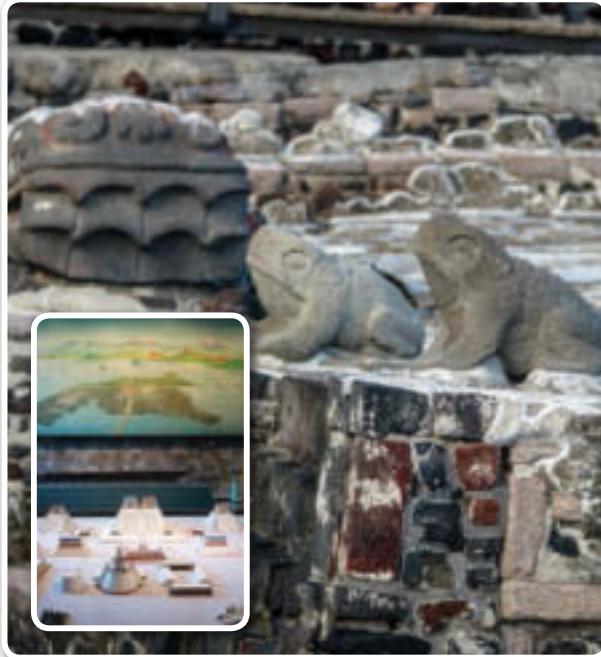
### Chapter 1: “Mexico, Past and Present”

Ask students to turn to page 2 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Tell them that the title of this chapter is “Mexico, Past and Present.”

CHAPTER  
1

#### Mexico, Past and Present

Imagine you are walking through modern-day Mexico City, one of the biggest cities in the world. Suddenly, you come upon the ruins of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán. What you have discovered is that hundreds of years ago, the Aztec built cities with palaces and temples. Mexico City is built on the ruins of the Aztec city, Tenochtitlán.



2

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **ruins** are what is left of something, like a building, after a long, long time. The building is not the same as it was when it was first made; parts of it may have fallen apart or broken.

**SUPPORT**—Remind students that the Aztec were a people who lived long ago in what is now Mexico. Students will learn more about interactions between the Aztec and Spanish explorers and settlers in the next CKHG unit.

**Note to Teacher:** Tenochtitlán is pronounced (/tay\*nawch\*tee\*tlahn/).

Activity Page



**SUPPORT**—Have students again locate Mexico City on the Map of Mexico (AP 1.3).

AP 1.3

**Direct students to look at the inset photo on page 2.** Explain that this photo is from a museum exhibit and that it shows a model of the city of Tenochtitlán.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How long ago did the Aztec build their cities?

» The Aztec built their cities hundreds of years ago.

**LITERAL**—Where is modern-day Mexico City built?

» Mexico City is built on the ruins of the Aztec city, Tenochtitlán.

**Now ask students to look at the images on page 3 as you read aloud.**

Later, you see a beautiful church built by the Spanish who came to Mexico from Europe in the 1500s. You stop to gaze at the church.



But that's not all you see. As day turns to night, you come across modern buildings made of steel and glass. This is the Mexico City of today. It is a city that honors its past and its future.

3

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that the **Spanish** are people who come from Spain in Europe.

Activity Page



AP 1.2



**SUPPORT**—**Help students find Europe and Spain on the World Map (AP 1.2).**

Explain that people came from Spain to what is now Mexico at the same time that the Aztec were living there. Note that the Spanish had to travel across the Atlantic Ocean to reach Mexico. Help students find Mexico on the map. Invite one or more students to use their fingers to trace a route across the ocean from Spain to Mexico on your display map.



**Background for Teachers:** The modern glass building pictured on this page is the Museo Soumaya, or Soumaya Museum, in Mexico City. This unconventional building is one of the most visited museums in Mexico. The building is covered with sixteen thousand aluminum hexagons on the outside and contains more than sixty-six thousand pieces of art within.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the article “Why Museo Soumaya Is a Mexico City Must-See” and accompanying photographs of the museum and collection may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Who built the beautiful church long ago—in the 1500s—that you can still see in Mexico City?

» Long ago, the Spanish built the beautiful church that you can still see in Mexico City.

**INFERRENTIAL**—How would you describe the Mexico City building you see in the bottom image on page 3?

» Answers may vary but may include descriptions of a tall, modern building made of glass and steel with an unusual, twisted shape, etc.

**EVALUATIVE**—How does Mexico City honor its past and its future?

» Mexico City honors its past and its future by keeping beautiful buildings from the past, like the Spanish church, while also building modern structures of steel and glass.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 4 as you read aloud.**

The Aztec culture, the Spanish culture, and the culture of Mexico today are all around you. As you move through the crowded streets, you hear Spanish being spoken. You also hear Nahuatl, a language spoken by the Aztec. You smell foods such as beans and chilies, which are eaten by people today, just as they were by the Aztec of long ago. It has been a great day of exploration. Now it is time to get some sleep!



4

**Note to Teacher:** *Nahuatl* is pronounced (/nah\*waht\*I/).

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What three cultures are all around you as you move through the streets?

- » As we move through the streets, the Aztec culture, the Spanish culture, and the modern culture of Mexico are all around us.

**Now ask students to look at the image on page 5 as you read aloud.**

The next day you are up bright and early. Every morning in the Zócalo, the main square in Mexico City, a band plays music, and soldiers raise the Mexican flag. The flag has three wide stripes—one green, one white, and one red.



5

**Note to Teacher:** *Zócalo* is pronounced (/zoh\*cah\*low/).

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **square** is an open area with buildings on four sides.

**Direct students' attention to the building in the image on page 5.** Ask if the building looks like it is from Mexico's past or present. (*the past*) Explain that the building is a large church built by the Spanish.

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What colors are on the Mexican flag?

» The Mexican flag is green, white, and red.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 6 as you read aloud.**

As you walk across the square, you notice that on the white stripe in the flag, there is an image of an eagle sitting on a cactus plant, eating a snake. This image tells the story of how the Aztec came upon an eagle perched on a prickly pear cactus, eating a snake. For them this was a sign that they had found the place where they should live. The Aztec settled in what is today Mexico City.



**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **cactus** is a desert plant that has sharp spines, or points, instead of leaves.

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—How did the Aztec know where they should live?

- » The Aztec knew where to live because they saw an eagle on a cactus eating a snake. They thought this was a sign that they had found the place where they should live.

**Now ask students to look at the image on page 7 as you read aloud.**

In Mexico, you meet people who have two Spanish last names. Just as in Spain, many children are given their father's family name and their mother's family name. The father's family name comes before the mother's family name. For example, a boy might be called Carlos Miranda Lopez. Miranda is his father's family name, and Lopez is his mother's family name.



7

**SUPPORT**—Make sure students understand that having two family names is not the same as having a middle name. Carlos Miranda Lopez has two family names but no middle name.

**SUPPORT**—Children in the class with two last names or with hyphenated last names may want to share that they, too, have names from both their father's and mother's families.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How many last names do many people in Mexico have?

- » Many people in Mexico have two last names.

**LITERAL**—Where do the two last names come from?

- » People in Mexico have their father's family name and their mother's family name.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 8 as you read aloud.**

You also discover that children in Mexico learn many of the same subjects in school as you do. They learn math, science, history, geography, art, technology, and physical education. But instead of English, they learn Spanish. Many children also speak native languages that have existed in Mexico for hundreds of years! You have learned a lot about Mexico during your visit.



8

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **native languages** are languages spoken by people whose ancestors or long ago families lived in what is now Mexico before the Spanish came. Families may speak a native language at home and use Spanish at school and at work. Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec, is a native language.

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What subjects do students learn in school in Mexico?

- » In Mexico, students learn math, science, history, geography, art, technology, physical education, and Spanish.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

**TURN AND TALK**—How would you describe Mexico City?

- » Mexico City is one of the biggest cities in the world. It has Aztec ruins, a Spanish church, modern buildings, and squares where people gather. You can hear different languages spoken and listen to a band in the main square.

Activity Page **Note to Teacher:** Distribute copies of Letter to Family (AP 1.1) for students to take home.



AP 1.1

## Additional Activities



### Create a Strip Story of the Aztec Legend (SL.1.4, SL.1.5)

**Materials Needed:** internet access, drawing paper, crayons or colored pencils, sufficient copies of *Early Civilizations of the Americas* Student Book

**Background for Teacher:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the Aztec legend may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Read the legend of Tenochtitlán's founding aloud, beginning with the fourth paragraph and the phrase, "For about 200 years ..."

Have groups of students retell the legend by drawing a series of pictures of the important events in the story. For example, they might show the Aztec moving from one place to another, the god telling the priests about the eagle, and the discovery of the eagle on the cactus. Within each group, you might suggest that different students draw different parts of the story.

**Note to Teacher:** Students may want to refer to the illustrations on pages 12 and 13 of the *Early Civilizations of the Americas* Student Book.

Post each group's drawings in sequence on the bulletin board.

### Color the Mexican Flag

Activity Page



**Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of The Mexican Flag (AP 1.4), crayons or colored pencils, sufficient copies of *The Culture of Mexico* Student Book

AP 1.4

Have students turn to pages 5 and 6 in their *The Culture of Mexico* Student Books and find the Mexican flags in the images. Have students point to each feature of the flag: the red stripe, the white stripe, the green stripe, the eagle with the snake.

Distribute The Mexican Flag (AP 1.4). Have students color the flag following the examples in their Student Books.

## CHAPTER 2

# The Geography of Mexico

### Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Locate Mexico on a map of North America. **(RI.1.6)**
- ✓ Identify the Rio Grande as the river that is the border between the United States and Mexico. **(SL.1.2, SL.1.3)**
- ✓ Identify Mexico City, the Yucatán Peninsula, Central America, and the Gulf of Mexico. **(SL.1.2, SL.1.3)**
- ✓ Find mountains on a map of Mexico. **(RI.1.6)**
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *coast, gulf, border, dams, peninsula, coral reefs, volcanoes, and plateau.* **(L.1.4, L.1.5)**

### Materials Needed

- Activity Pages**
- 
- AP 1.2
  - AP 1.3
  - AP 2.1
  - individual student copies of *The Culture of Mexico Student Book*
  - teacher and individual student copies of World Map (AP 1.2)
  - teacher and individual student copies of Map of Mexico (AP 1.3)
  - teacher and individual student copies of Around the World (AP 2.1)
  - crayons

### What Teachers Need to Know

Mexico is the third-largest country, by area, on the North American continent and the third-largest country in Latin America. Mexico's northern neighbor is the United States. About two-thirds of Mexico's border with the United States is formed by the Rio Grande, known in Mexico as the Río Bravo. South of Mexico lies Central America, the narrow land bridge that connects North America and South America. Important landforms and bodies of water include the central plateau, mountains—the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental—the Yucatán Peninsula, the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of California, and the Pacific Ocean.

### THE CORE LESSON

#### Introduce “The Geography of Mexico”

Use this chapter introduction as an opportunity to review the geographical knowledge and skills that students using the CKHG series learned in Kindergarten and earlier Grade 1 units.



Divide the class into three teams. Explain to students that they will play a game called “Around the World” where each team will try to be the first to travel around the world. Display Around the World (AP 2.1), and explain that you will ask each team a geography question when it is its turn. Team members should talk to one another before responding. If the team responds correctly, it will have a chance to color in one square on its trip around the world on AP 2.1. If the team answers incorrectly, move on and ask the same question of the next team. The first team to travel all around the world with its path of squares colored is the winner.

Choose one player on each team to be the only person who provides the team’s official answer to a question after consulting with his or her team members. Choose another member on each team to be responsible for coloring a square on Around the World (AP 2.1) for each correctly answered question.

Allow students to refer to their individual copies of the World Map (AP 1.2) while you display a larger version that all students can see. Ask the first team to either locate the place you name or, alternatively, name the place that you point to on the map. Vary the type of question—locating or naming—in each round of play.

Choose from the following questions:

- Which continent is south of North America? (*South America*)
- Which country is north of the United States? (*Canada*)
- Which ocean is west of the United States? (*Pacific Ocean*)
- Which ocean is east of South America? (*Atlantic Ocean*)
- Which ocean is south of Asia? (*Indian Ocean*)
- Which ocean is north of Asia and Europe? (*Arctic Ocean*)
- Which continent is east of Europe? (*Asia*)
- Which continent is north of Africa? (*Europe*)
- Which continent is also an island? (*Australia*)
- What continents does the equator pass through? (*South America, Africa, Asia*)
- What is the name of the land that connects North America and South America? (*Central America*)
- Point to Florida. What type of land is this? (*a peninsula*)
- What continent do we live on?
- What country do we live in?
- What state do we live in?
- What is the name of our community?

**Note to Teacher:** Students should be expected to name their state and community but not to locate them on the map, since a world map is being used.

Now point to Mexico and the United States on the World Map (AP 1.2), explaining that Mexico is a next-door neighbor to the United States. Tell students that in this chapter, they will be learning about the geography of Mexico, such as the different oceans, rivers, and mountains they would see if they traveled around Mexico.

## Big Question

What would you see if you traveled through Mexico?

## Core Vocabulary

coast      gulf      border      dams      peninsula      coral reefs      volcanoes      plateau

## Chapter 2: "The Geography of Mexico"

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 9 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud. Tell students that the title of this chapter is "The Geography of Mexico."

CHAPTER  
2

### The Geography of Mexico

The United States, Canada, Mexico, and the countries of Central America are on the continent of North America. Canada is to the north of the United States, and Mexico is to the south.

On Mexico's western coast are the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean. These two bodies of water are separated by a long strip of land, the Mexican state of Baja, California. To the east are the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

9

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that the **coast** is the area of land located next to the ocean.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **gulf** is a large area of ocean that is partly surrounded by land.

**Note to Teacher:** *Baja* is pronounced (/bah\*hah/).

Activity Page



AP 1.3



**SUPPORT**—**Have students take out their Map of Mexico (AP 1.3).** Using your display map, help students point to each of the following locations as you read them aloud, one by one: Gulf of California, Pacific Ocean, Baja California, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea. Explain to students that Baja California is a state in Mexico; it is not in the state of California in the United States.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What country lies to the south of the United States?

- » Mexico lies to the south of the United States.

**LITERAL**—What country lies to the north of the United States?

- » Canada lies to the north of the United States.

**LITERAL**—What bodies of water surround Mexico?

- » The Gulf of California, the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea surround Mexico.

**Now ask students to look at the image on page 10 as you read aloud.**

Part of the border between Mexico and the United States is a river that has two names. Mexicans call the river Río Bravo, and people in the United States call it Rio Grande. Both names mean that it is a large and mighty river. In fact, it is the longest river in Mexico and the fifth longest in all of North America.



10

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **border** is an imaginary line that marks the edge of a place. Part of the imaginary line that separates Mexico and the United States follows the path of the Río Bravo, or Rio Grande.

Activity Page



**SUPPORT**—Have students take out their **Map of Mexico (AP 1.3)**, and help them find the **Rio Grande**. Ask them to trace the river with their fingers.



AP 1.3

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What are the two names of the river between the United States and Mexico?

- » The river between the United States and Mexico is called the Río Bravo in Mexico and the Rio Grande in the United States.

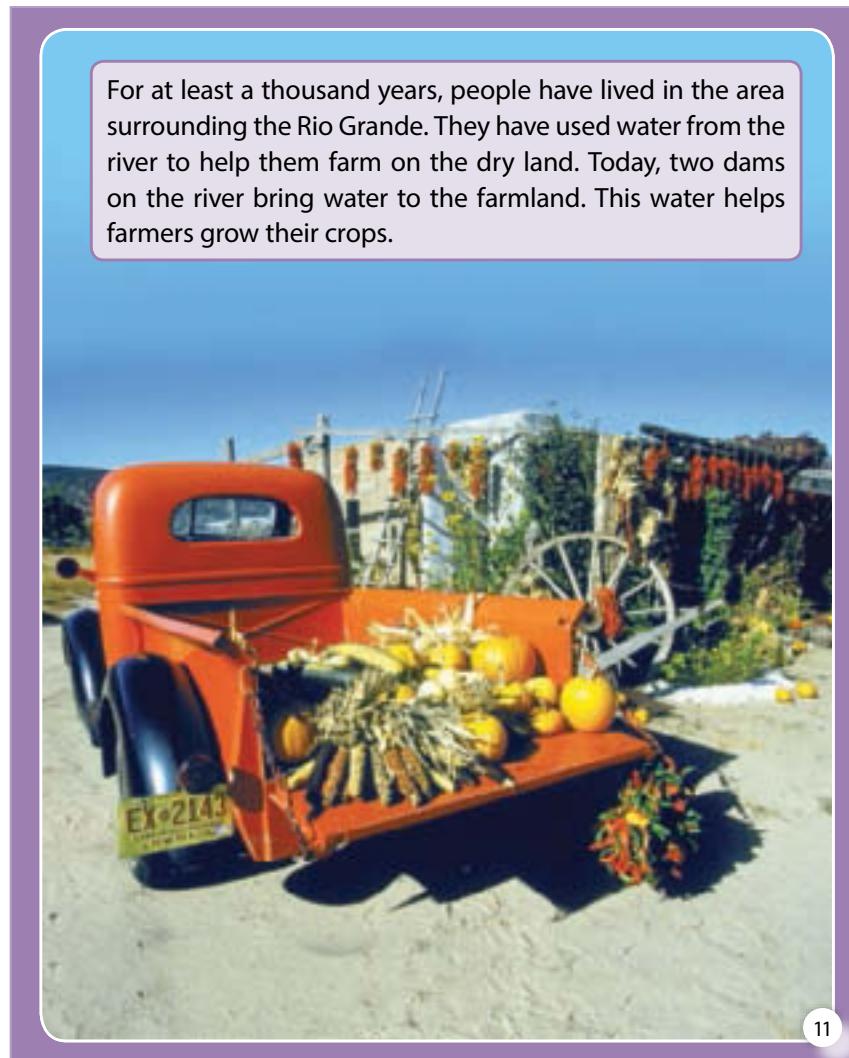
**LITERAL**—What is the longest river in Mexico?

- » The longest river in Mexico is the Río Bravo/Rio Grande.

**CHALLENGE**—What types of plants do you see in this image?

- » The plants are a type of cactus, called a prickly pear cactus. This is the same type of plant described in the Aztec legend, in which an eagle was said to be sitting on a prickly pear cactus, eating a snake.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 11 as you read aloud.**



**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **dams** are walls that are built across a stream or river to hold back the water.

**Ask students to look at the back of the truck in the image.** Challenge students to identify the foods the truck is carrying. (*corn or maize, pumpkins, peppers*)

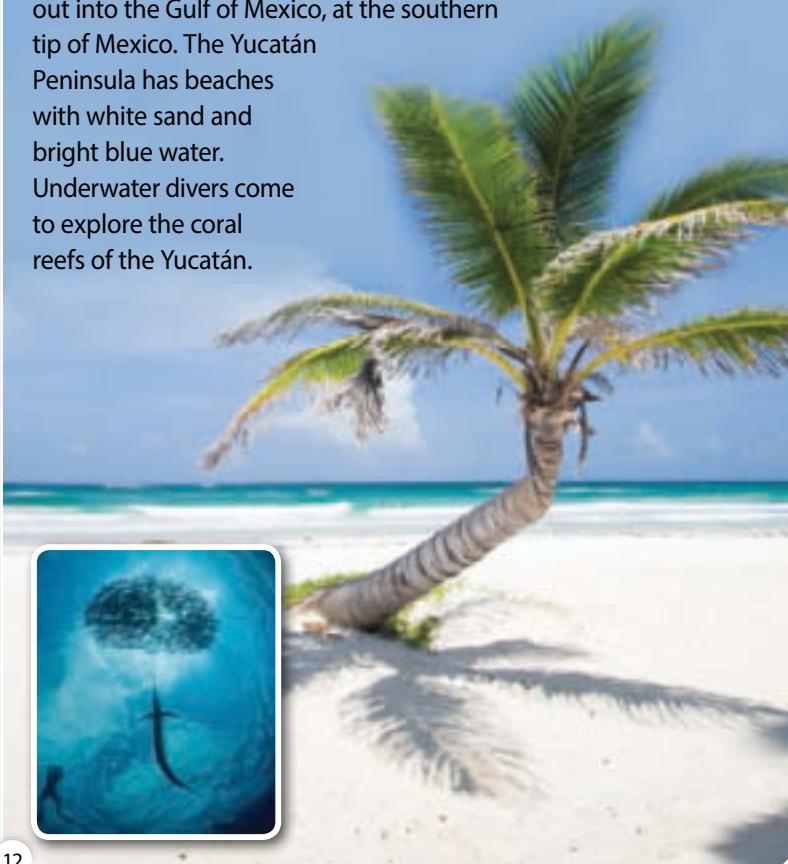
**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—How does the Rio Grande help people who live nearby?

- » The Rio Grande helps people who live near it by providing water for growing crops.

**Now ask students to look at the images on page 12 as you read aloud.**

Every year, thousands of people from all over the world visit the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. A peninsula is a piece of land with water around it on almost all sides. The Yucatán Peninsula sticks out into the Gulf of Mexico, at the southern tip of Mexico. The Yucatán Peninsula has beaches with white sand and bright blue water. Underwater divers come to explore the coral reefs of the Yucatán.



12

**Note to Teacher:** *Yucatán* is pronounced (/yu\*kuh\*tahn/).

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **peninsula** is a piece of land that is surrounded by water on three sides.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **coral reefs** are large, often colorful, underwater structures made from the skeletons of small sea creatures. These reefs are usually found in warm, shallow water. People love to dive and see coral reefs because of the many beautiful fish that swim around them and because they are beautiful too.

Activity Page



AP 1.3



**SUPPORT**—**Help students find the Yucatán Peninsula and the Gulf of Mexico on the Map of Mexico (AP 1.3).**

**Ask students the following questions:**

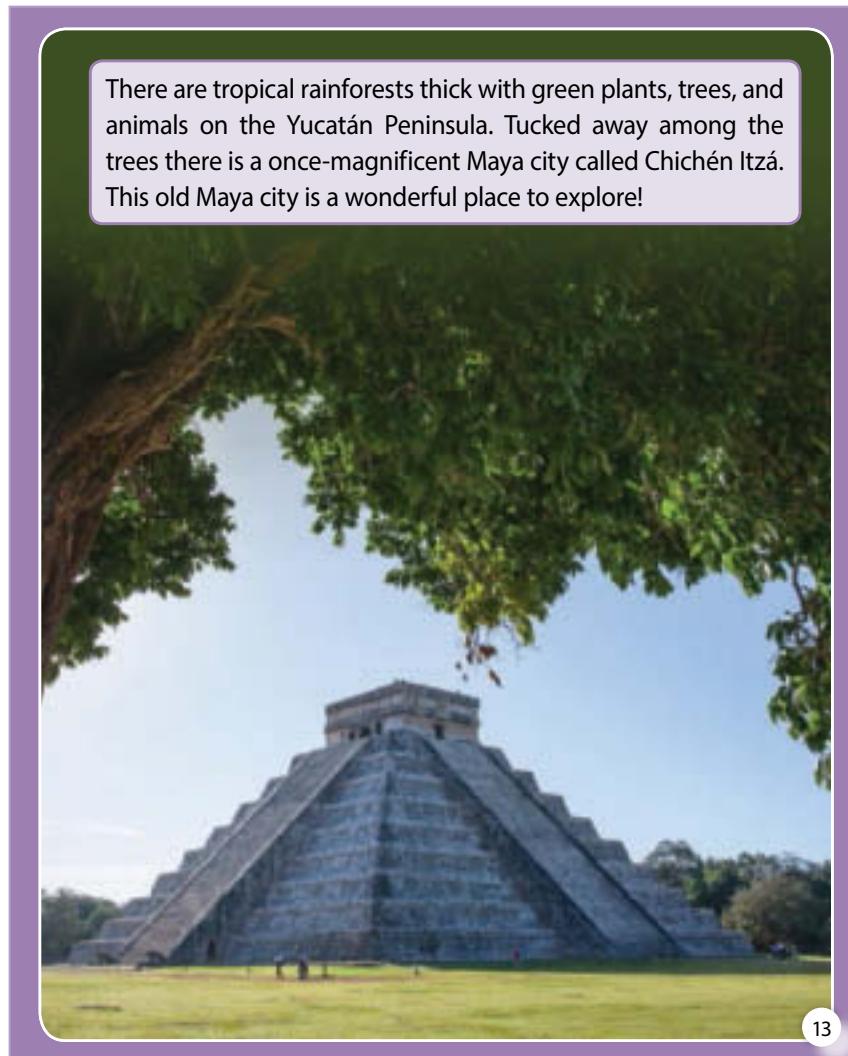
**LITERAL**—Where is the Yucatán Peninsula?

- » The Yucatán Peninsula is at the southern tip of Mexico, sticking into the Gulf of Mexico.

**INFERRENTIAL**—Why might people want to visit the Yucatán Peninsula?

- » People might want to visit the Yucatán Peninsula to take a vacation, play in the sand and water, or see the coral reefs.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 13 as you read aloud.**



**Note to Teacher:** *Chichén Itzá* is pronounced (/chee\*chain/eet\*sah/).

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What is tucked away—or hidden—among the trees on the Yucatán Peninsula?

- » A Maya city called Chichén Itzá is tucked away among the trees on the Yucatán Peninsula.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 14 as you read aloud.**

Much of Mexico is covered by mountains. Some mountains are dangerous because they are volcanoes. Volcanoes sometimes erupt, or explode, and spit out fire and rocks. There are about three thousand volcanoes in Mexico. Mount Popocatépetl is one of the highest volcanoes in Mexico. It is almost eighteen thousand feet tall. The name means "smoking mountain."



**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **volcanoes** are mountains that are made when melted rock from deep underground erupts, letting out lava, gas, and ash.

**Note to Teacher:** *Popocatépetl* is pronounced (/poh\*poh\*ca\*tep\*etl/).

**SUPPORT**—**Direct students to look at the image, and explain that it shows Mount Popocatépetl venting, or letting out, smoke and ash.** You can see the clouds near the top. In this image, Mount Popocatépetl is not erupting, even though it is letting out some smoke.

Activity Page



AP 1.3



**SUPPORT**—**Ask students to look at the map key on your display map, and help them find the symbol for mountains.** Then ask them to locate the various mountains on the Map of Mexico (AP 1.3).

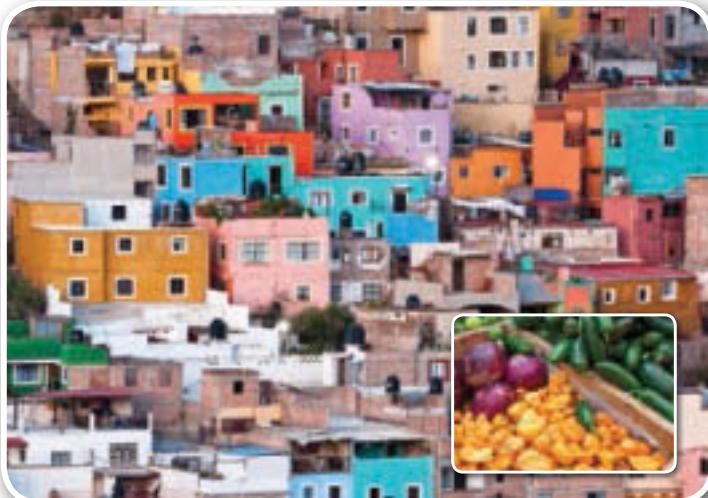
**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What is special about Mount Popocatépetl?

- » Mount Popocatépetl is one of the highest volcanoes in Mexico.

**Now ask students to look at the images on page 15 as you read aloud.**

Between the mountain ranges on the east and west coasts of Mexico, there is a large plateau. A plateau is usually a high, flat area of land. This Mexican plateau has hills, mountains, and volcanoes. Mexico City and the colorful city of Guanajuato are located on the plateau. This is also where most of the Mexican people live. The Mexican plateau has Mexico's best farmland.



15

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **plateau** is a high, flat area of land.

**Note to Teacher:** *Guanajuato* is pronounced (/gwah\*nah\*hwah\*tuh/).

Activity Page



**SUPPORT**—Help students find Mexico City on their Map of Mexico (AP 1.3).



AP 1.3

**Direct students to look at the image at the top of the page.** Ask students to identify the kind of plant shown in the foreground. (*cactus*)

**Direct students to look at the inset image at the bottom of the page.** Explain that the image shows some of the foods grown in Mexico. The long green items on the top right and the orange items along the bottom are types of peppers. The round purple items are onions.

## Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—Where do most of the Mexican people live?

- » Most of the Mexican people live on the Mexican plateau.

**EVALUATIVE**—Why do you think most Mexican people live on the plateau?

- » Most Mexican people live on the plateau because it has the best farmland, so it is the best place to get and grow food.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

**TURN AND TALK**—What would you see if you traveled through Mexico?

- » If I traveled through Mexico, I would see the Rio Grande, dams, farmland, the Yucatán Peninsula, beaches, the Maya city of Chichén Itzá, rainforests, mountains and volcanoes, and modern cities, such as Mexico City and Guanajuato.

## Additional Activities

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### Geography and Landmarks in Mexico (RI.1.6)

Activity Pages    **Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of World Map (AP 1.2), teacher and individual student copies of Map of Mexico (AP 1.3), crayons or colored pencils



AP 1.2

Distribute World Map (AP 1.2). Ask students to find North America. Have them locate the United States and then find Canada to the north and Mexico to the south.

AP 1.3

Point out that the three largest countries in North America are the United States, Mexico, and Canada and that the United States has only two countries on its borders.

Distribute or have students take out the Map of Mexico (AP 1.3). Have students take out their crayons or colored pencils.

As you read geographic labels on the class map, point to their locations, and have the students color them as directed.

- Color the Gulf of Mexico, the body of water located to the east of Mexico, blue.
- Color the Yucatán Peninsula, located in southern Mexico, yellow.
- Trace the Rio Grande, the river that forms some of the northern border between the United States and Mexico, in blue.
- Find the mountains that run along the west side of the country. Trace or color the mountains brown.
- Find the mountain range that runs along the east side of Mexico. Trace or color the mountains brown.
- Find Central America. Color it orange.



## Virtual Field Trip: Visit Mexico (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)

Activity Page



AP 1.3

**Materials Needed:** internet access, capability to display internet video in classroom, sufficient copies of Map of Mexico (AP 1.3), sufficient copies of *The Culture of Mexico* Student Book

**Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the video may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Have students take out their Map of Mexico (AP 1.3) and find Mexico City. Ask students what they would expect to see if they visited Mexico City. Encourage students to review the images in Chapter 1 of *The Culture of Mexico* Student Book for ideas.

Tell students that you are going to take them to see Mexico City and other parts of the country without leaving the classroom. Show the video *Mexico City: Ancient to Modern* (7:25). The video follows a couple as they explore Mexico City, the Aztec ruins of Tenochtitlán, and the Maya ruins of Palenque and Becan; listen to howler monkeys; and visit some local people. The video includes some scrolling text that you will need to read aloud for the class.

After the video, ask students what they liked best or found most interesting in the video. List students' answers on the board or chart paper.



## Virtual Field Trip: Visit Chichén Itzá (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)

Activity Page



AP 1.3

**Materials Needed:** internet access, capability to display internet video in classroom, sufficient copies of Map of Mexico (AP 1.3), sufficient copies of *The Culture of Mexico* Student Book

**Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the video may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Have students take out their Map of Mexico (AP 1.3) and find the Yucatán Peninsula. Remind students that the Yucatán was home to important Maya cities, such as Chichén Itzá.

Direct students to look at the image of Chichén Itzá on page 13 of *The Culture of Mexico* Student Book. Explain that the image shows only one part of the city, a Maya temple.

Tell students that you are going to take them to Chichén Itzá and the surrounding area. Show the video *The Day Tripper's Guide to Chichén Itzá* (02:55). The video allows students to virtually visit the Maya city of Chichén Itzá. In addition, the host visits a natural sinkhole that people can swim in. Its setting gives a great feel for the tropical environment on the Yucatán Peninsula.

After the video, ask students the following question:

- What are the buildings in Chichén Itzá made with?
  - » The buildings in Chichén Itzá are made with stone.
- What is the land around the sinkhole like?
  - » The land around the sinkhole has lots of trees and plants.



## Virtual Field Trip: Scuba Diving Along the Coral Reef (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)

**Materials Needed:** internet access; capability to display internet in classroom; paper; crayons, colored pencils, or markers

**Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the video and pictures may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Remind students that they have learned about the coral reefs in the Gulf of Mexico off the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. Coral reefs are large, often colorful, underwater structures made from the skeletons of small sea creatures. These reefs are usually in warm, shallow water.

Show students the pictures of scuba gear. Explain that this equipment allows people to scuba dive underwater and swim along coral reefs. Point out some of the equipment:

- The tank holds oxygen, which is brought through a tube to the mouthpiece so that the scuba diver can breathe.
- The face mask allows the scuba diver to see well underwater—the water in the ocean is salty and would hurt a person’s eyes without it.
- The wet suit protects the scuba diver from coral, which can be very sharp.
- Fins help the diver swim like a fish does.

Once students have been introduced to the equipment, tell students that you are going on a virtual field trip to explore a coral reef. Invite them to mime putting on the equipment: wet suit, tank, mouthpiece, mask, and—finally—fins or flippers. Then play *Exploring the Coral Reef: Learn About Oceans for Kids* (9:00).

The video allows students to virtually scuba dive to visit a coral reef. The video clearly covers coral reefs, the fish that live among them, nurse sharks, sea turtles, and more.

**Note to Teacher:** Although this video shows a tropical coral reef clearly, its location is not noted, so it may not be a reef off the coast of Mexico.

When the video is finished, invite students to draw a coral reef and the fish that live there. Encourage them to include themselves in scuba gear in the image.

## CHAPTER 3

# Celebrations in Mexico

### Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Name three important Mexican holidays. **(SL.1.2)**
- ✓ Describe Mexican celebrations for the Day of the Dead, Independence Day, and Cinco de Mayo. **(SL.1.4)**
- ✓ Describe a game Mexican children play at birthday parties. **(SL.1.4)**
- ✓ Describe what mariachi music is. **(SL.1.4)**
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *independence*, *fiesta*, and *sombreros*. **(L.1.4, L.1.5)**

### Materials Needed

- individual student copies of *The Culture of Mexico* Student Book

### What Teachers Need to Know

This chapter covers celebrations in Mexico, including Independence Day (“El Dieciseis de Septiembre”), the Day of the Dead, and Cinco de Mayo. Similar to the United States, when Mexico threw off its colonial status and declared itself an independent country, it took some time (over ten years) to achieve actual independence (in Mexico’s case, from Spain). Mexicans celebrate September 16, 1810, as their independence day.

The Day of the Dead, on November 1–2, celebrates loved ones who have died. Mexicans dress up in costumes, wear elaborate face paint, and decorate the graves of loved ones with flowers, candles, and offerings of food and candy.

Cinco de Mayo is widely enjoyed in the United States as a way to celebrate Mexican culture and food, often by those of non-Mexican heritage. In Mexico, Cinco de Mayo is celebrated most widely in the province of Puebla, where on May 5, 1862, an important battle against the French was won during the Franco-Mexican War.

### THE CORE LESSON

#### Introduce “Celebrations in Mexico”

Ask students to brainstorm the names of some holidays that they celebrate. Ask them to describe how they celebrate these holidays. Review the meaning of the word *culture* (*the language and way of life, including beliefs and practices, of a specific group of people*). Point out that different cultures have

different holidays and celebrate in different ways. Tell students that in this lesson, they will learn about the holidays that Mexican people celebrate.

## Big Question

What kinds of celebrations take place in Mexico?

## Core Vocabulary

independence      fiesta      sombreros

### Chapter 3: "Celebrations in Mexico"

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 16 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud. Tell students that the title of this chapter is "Celebrations in Mexico."

CHAPTER  
3

#### Celebrations in Mexico

Every year, on September 16, the president of Mexico stands on the balcony of the National Palace in Mexico City. He shouts, "Viva Mexico! Viva la independencia!" In English this means, "Long live Mexico! Long live independence!" The president does this to remind people of Mexico's fight for independence from Spain. Mexicans celebrate their independence on this day.



16

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **independence** is freedom from the control of others. The people in Mexico were once controlled by another country, called Spain. That means the people

in Spain, a country far away from Mexico, made the rules and laws in Mexico, telling the people who lived in Mexico what they could and could not do. The Mexican people did not like this. Independence Day is a holiday that celebrates Mexico's freedom from Spanish control.

**Note to Teacher:** "Viva Mexico! Viva la independencia!" is pronounced (/vee\*vah/may\*hee\*koh/vee\*vah/lah/ihn\*deh\*pen\*den\*see\*uh/).

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What happens on September 16 in Mexico?

- » On September 16, the president of Mexico reminds people of Mexico's fight for independence from Spain. Mexicans celebrate their independence on this day.

**Now ask students to look at the image on page 17 as you read aloud.**

The war for independence lasted eleven years. Finally, in 1821, Mexico won independence from Spain. Now, Independence Day is celebrated with red, white, and green fireworks, as well as parades and the ringing of church bells.



17

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How do Mexicans celebrate Independence Day?

- » Mexicans celebrate Independence Day with red, white, and green fireworks; parades; and the ringing of church bells.

**CHALLENGE**—How is the celebration of Mexican Independence Day like the celebration of Independence Day in the United States?

- » The two countries' Independence Day celebrations are alike because both include fireworks and parades.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 18 as you read aloud.**

Mexicans celebrate the Day of the Dead on November 1 and 2. On those days, they remember their family members and friends who have died. They dress up in incredible costumes and wear makeup!



18

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Which people do Mexicans remember on the Day of the Dead?

- » On the Day of the Dead, Mexicans remember family members and friends who have died.

**LITERAL**—How do Mexicans dress to celebrate the Day of the Dead?

- » Mexicans wear costumes and makeup to celebrate the Day of the Dead.

**Now ask students to look at the images on page 19 as you read aloud.**

On the evening of November 1, families visit the graves of their loved ones. They bring food and candles. They clean the graves and put flowers on them. At six p.m., church bells begin to ring, and they continue to ring every thirty seconds all through the night. Mexicans eat skull-shaped candy during the two days of remembrance and celebration. They bring the candy to the graves as gifts.



19

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What are some things Mexicans do on the Day of the Dead?

- » On the Day of the Dead, Mexicans visit, clean, and decorate the graves of people who have died. They bring flowers, candles, and candy to leave at the graves. They also eat skull-shaped candy.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 20 as you read aloud.**

On the fifth of May—el Cinco de Mayo—Mexicans have a big celebration, or fiesta. There are colorful parades and marching bands. Men, women, and children dance in the streets. There are delicious holiday foods. But why is this day special?

After Mexico became independent from Spain, Mexico fought a battle with France, and won!

France was a powerful country. This was a big victory for Mexico!



20

**Note to Teacher:** *El Cinco de Mayo* is pronounced (/ell/seen\*koh/day/my\*oh/).

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **fiesta** is a Spanish word that means “party.”

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—How do Mexicans celebrate Cinco de Mayo?

- » On Cinco de Mayo, Mexicans have colorful parades with marching bands. They also eat delicious holiday foods.

**LITERAL**—Why do Mexicans celebrate Cinco de Mayo?

- » Cinco de Mayo is the date that Mexico fought a battle with France and won.

**Now ask students to look at the image on page 21 as you read aloud.**

A popular birthday party game in Mexico includes a piñata and a stick. A piñata is a colorful, fun model made from paper and glue, filled with candy, toys, or other treats. The idea of the game is to take turns trying to hit the piñata with the stick until it breaks open and the treasures inside fall out. This may seem easy, but each person is blindfolded as they try!



21

**Note to Teacher:** *Piñata* is pronounced (/peen\*yah\*tah/).

**SUPPORT—Direct students to look at the image on the page, and challenge them to find the piñata.**

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What is a piñata?

» A piñata is a colorful model made from paper and glue and filled with treats.

**LITERAL**—What makes hitting the piñata difficult?

» Hitting the piñata is difficult because people are blindfolded as they try to break it open.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 22 as you read aloud.**

Mariachi is a popular style of music in Mexico. Musicians play mostly stringed instruments, such as guitars and violins, but trumpets can be included too. Often, male mariachi musicians wear sombreros and short jackets. For many people, mariachi has a happy, cheerful sound.



22

**Note to Teacher:** *Mariachi* is pronounced (/mah\*ree\*ah\*chee/).

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **sombreros** are tall, wide hats that are traditional in Mexico. The wide brim of the hat provides shade to the person wearing it. **Ask students to look at the image on the page, and point out the sombrero.**

**Ask students the following question:**

**LITERAL**—What types of instruments are used to play mariachi music?

- » Stringed instruments—such as guitars and violins—and trumpets are used to play mariachi music.



### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

**TURN AND TALK**—What kinds of celebrations take place in Mexico?

- » In Mexico, there are celebrations for Independence Day, the Day of the Dead, and Cinco de Mayo. Mexican children also celebrate their birthdays with parties and piñatas.

## Additional Activities

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### Review of Mexican Celebrations (SL.1.4)

**Materials Needed:** internet access, capability to display internet videos in the classroom

 **Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the videos may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Review the three holidays that students have learned about in this chapter: Independence Day, the Day of the Dead, and Cinco de Mayo.

For each holiday, show the brief video. After each video, use the following questions to guide a short discussion.

*September 16th: Mexican Independence Day* (02:43)

- How long was Mexico under Spanish rule?
  - » Mexico was under Spanish rule for three hundred years.
- How long did Mexico's fight for independence last?
  - » Mexico's fight for independence lasted eleven years.
- How do Mexicans celebrate Independence Day?
  - » Mexicans celebrate Independence Day by listening to the "Grito de Dolores" and by having fireworks, parades, and festivals.

*What Is Day of the Dead?* (1:50)

**Note to Teacher:** You will need to read aloud the on-screen text in this video and define some of the words for students.

- What two cultures are represented in Mexico's Day of the Dead celebrations?
  - » Mexico's Day of the Dead celebrations represent Aztec and Spanish cultures.
- How do Mexicans celebrate the lives of their deceased loved ones?
  - » Mexicans celebrate the lives of their deceased loved ones by enjoying their loved ones' favorite food, drinks, and activities; cleaning and decorating their loved ones' graves; and building small altars for their loved ones.
- What are two popular symbols of the Day of the Dead?
  - » Two popular symbols of the Day of the Dead are skeletons and skulls.

*Learn About Cinco de Mayo* (01:36)

- What does *Cinco de Mayo* mean?
  - » *Cinco de Mayo* means "Fifth of May."

- Where is Cinco de Mayo celebrated the most?
  - » Cinco de Mayo is celebrated the most in Texas and California and in the Mexican state of Puebla.
- How is Cinco de Mayo celebrated?
  - » Cinco de Mayo is celebrated by dressing up, eating Mexican foods—such as enchiladas and burritos—and listening to music.



## Make a Piñata

**Note to Teacher:** Use one of the methods below to make a piñata. The piñata can be used as part of the Culminating Activity, A Mexican Fiesta!, described on page 61.

### Paper Bag Piñata

**Materials Needed:** paper lunch bags, masking tape, newspaper, colorful tissue paper strips, scissors, glue sticks, treats, string

Make a horse-head piñata from two paper bags decorated with tissue paper fringe. Have students fill one bag with crumpled newspaper to make the horse's nose. Open the second paper bag, and set it bottom-side down on a table. Have students work together using masking tape to affix the stuffed nose to the side of the empty bag about one-third of the way down from the top. Leave room at the top of the empty bag to fold it closed. Place treats in the empty bag, fold the top, and tape it closed.

Have students decorate the piñata by gluing pieces of colorful tissue paper to the bags to make a horse's head. They may also add eyes, ears, etc. Students may work in shifts at a center so that they each get a chance to contribute. Finally, attach a string to the top part of the bag for hanging the piñata.

### Papier-Mâché Piñata

**Materials Needed:** 1 balloon per piñata plus an extra one in case it pops, strips of newspaper, water, 1–2 cups of flour, bowl, spoon, whisk, tissue or crepe paper, glue sticks, masking tape, string, candies or other treats

Blow up balloon to use as a form for the piñata. Tie the end.

In a bowl, mix water and flour to form a watery paste. Stir or whisk mixture until it is smooth.

Have students tear newspaper into strips of approximately one by six inches. Students will briefly dip their strips in the flour and water paste, running their strip between two fingers to take off the excess paste before smoothing the strip on the balloon. Students can take turns applying strips of paper to one or more balloons until the surface is covered. Leave a space at the top that will be large enough to insert candy.

Allow the papier-mâché to dry (depending on the weather and thickness, this can take from one day to several). When dry, pop and extract the balloon, then have students decorate the piñata by gluing on colorful tissue or crepe paper.

When decorated, fill with candy and seal the top with masking tape. Affix a string so the piñata can be hung when ready to use.



## The Art of Diego Rivera (RI.1.6)

**Materials Needed:** internet access, capability to display or project images of *The Piñata* and *The History of Mexico* by Diego Rivera, or *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™* Art Resource Packet for Grade 1

**Background for Teachers:** Diego Rivera was a well-known artist of the 1900s. Born in 1886 and raised in Mexico City, Rivera studied art from the age of twelve. Although he studied classical painting, Rivera soon developed his own style. Rivera worked in bright colors and primarily painted large-scale murals. He is known for taking his art out of galleries and into public places so that more people could experience it.

**Alternate Art Activity for The Art of Diego Rivera: If you do not have classroom access to the internet, you can purchase the *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™* Art Resource Packet for Grade 1, available at:**

[www.coreknowledge.org/store](http://www.coreknowledge.org/store)

**Use the art resources to discuss key features of *The Piñata* and *The History of Mexico* as outlined in the following activity.**

This activity is based on the painting *The Piñata* and the mural *The History of Mexico* by Diego Rivera. Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the painting and mural may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

### *La Piñata*

Show the painting to students, and give them a few minutes to study it. Tell them that the artist uses color to call attention to the images in the painting.

Notice how Mexican modern artist Diego Rivera (1886–1957) used color to build a coherent, circular sense of movement in *La Piñata*. The reds, particularly, swirl and sweep, describing the children's billowing clothing and the curving red bricks. Red ribbons also float clockwise as the piñata breaks apart.

Rivera conveys the children's enthusiasm for the small gifts and candies that the blindfolded boy frees from the decorated papier-mâché container. The spiraling focus draws our eyes to the central action—and to the children's quest for treats.

Rivera's use of warm color underscores the joyful essence of the scene even more than his somewhat abstract and fanciful composition does.

**SUPPORT**—Remind students that artists frequently use colors to convey a feeling or mood and to evoke emotional responses from viewers. In art, we divide warm colors, those that suggest heat or happiness, from cool colors, which tend to evoke a more somber or sad tone. Warm colors, such as red, orange, and yellow, usually suggest heat—a summer day, flames of a fire, or happy emotions. Cool colors include green, blue, and purple. Artists might use these to describe a winter scene or to convey a chilly, distant feeling.

Use the following questions to discuss the painting.

- What is happening in the painting?
  - » Children have broken open a piñata and are scooping up candy.

Tell children the name of the painting.

- How do you think the children feel?
  - » Most seem excited, though there are children on the right who are not having fun.

**SUPPORT**—Direct students to look at the colors used in the painting.

- Which primary colors does Rivera use most in this painting?
  - » Answers may vary, but red and yellow should be mentioned.

**SUPPORT**—Remind students that red, yellow, and blue are commonly referred to as the primary colors, and that ...

blue + yellow = green

blue + red = purple

red + yellow = orange

Green, purple and orange are known as secondary colors.

- Can you find all the areas where Rivera used red in his painting? Look for dark and light reds.
  - » Answers will vary.
- Do you see any secondary colors?
  - » Children should identify orange, green, and purple, which are created by mixing primary colors.

### *The History of Mexico*

Now show the mural to students, and give them a few minutes to study it.

Tell students that Diego Rivera was famous for painting murals with many scenes. The scenes in the murals are all related and tell a story. This mural is one of many he painted in the Palacio Nacional in Mexico City. It tells the history of Mexico. The story begins at the bottom of the painting, which shows indigenous people before the Spanish arrived. Higher up on the mural, you can see things that happened later in Mexico's history. Ask the following questions:

- What people lived in Mexico before the Spanish arrived?
  - » The Aztec lived in Mexico before the Spanish arrived.
- Can you find the eagle eating a snake?
  - » Students should be able to find the eagle in the center of the mural.

Ask students to look above the eagle, where they will see a man holding a paper. He is reading a speech. Ask students:

- What do you think the man is doing?
  - » Students may recognize the president of Mexico reading a speech and shouting "Viva Mexico! Viva la independencia!" on Independence Day.

## Mariachi Music

**Materials Needed:** internet access; capability to display an internet video in the classroom

 **Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the video *Best Mariachi Music* may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Remind students that mariachi music is a type of traditional Mexican music that they have learned about in Chapter 3. Tell students that you are first going to play some mariachi music and then ask them some questions about what they hear:

- What types of instruments do you hear?
  - » Students may be able to name trumpets, guitars, and violins.

Tell students that different types of music have their own qualities. Some music is slow and quiet, while other music is fast and loud. Some music has a heavy beat. These things can affect how music makes you feel, the way a slow, quiet lullaby can make you feel sleepy.

- How does mariachi music make you feel?
  - » Answers may vary, but children may say it makes them feel happy or excited.
- Why do you think mariachi music makes you feel that way?
  - » Answers will vary depending on students' first answers, but students may note that the quick, bright notes of the trumpets and violins are the reason it makes people feel happy and excited.

Consider playing the music for a work time or a cleanup time to give students a little more exposure to this traditional Mexican art.

# Señor Coyote and the Cheese: A Mexican Folktale

### Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Retell the story “Señor Coyote and the Cheese.” (**SL.1.2, SL.1.3**)
- ✓ Explain the lesson in the story “Señor Coyote and the Cheese.” (**SL.1.2, SL.1.3**)
- ✓ Describe the characters in the story “Señor Coyote and the Cheese.” (**SL.1.2, SL.1.3**)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *coyote, tortillas, and feast.* (**L.1.4, L.1.5**)

### Materials Needed

- individual student copies of *The Culture of Mexico Student Book*

### What Teachers Need to Know

Folktales are an important part of most cultures. They are entertainment, but they are also a way to teach lessons and pass on cultural values. A common theme in folktales across cultures is the character who is in great danger and who must use his or her wits to get out of the situation. In many cultures, there is a particular character or type of animal that frequently gets into these dilemmas. In Mexican folktales, that character is often a rabbit. Another animal character that occurs in several Mexican folktales is the hardworking ant who gets an impossible job done.

In Mexico, folktales are told at home and at gatherings as a way to pass the time and as a way to hand down cultural values from one generation to the next.

## THE CORE LESSON

### Introduce “Señor Coyote and the Cheese: A Mexican Folktale”

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Tell students that today they will hear a story that is a Mexican folktale. Explain that a folktale is a story that has been told for many years in a particular culture, passed on by word of mouth, that is, by one person telling the story, and then those who hear it, repeat it to others.

Folktales often include animals as characters, and in these stories the animals can talk. Another characteristic of many folktales is that one animal character is smaller or weaker than another animal character. Many times the smaller animal is in danger—usually of being eaten by the larger animal. However, the small animal may be very clever and may figure out a way to save itself by tricking the larger animal.

**Note to Teacher:** Kindergarten students in Core Knowledge schools will already be familiar with this type of story, having listened to similar stories, folktales, and fables, such as “The Three Little Pigs” and “The Lion and the Mouse,” as part of the Kindergarten *Core Knowledge Sequence*.

### Big Question

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What happens in the story of Señor Coyote and the Cheese?

### Core Vocabulary

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coyote    tortillas    feast

## Chapter 4: “Señor Coyote and the Cheese: A Mexican Folktale”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 23 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud. Tell students that the title of this chapter is “Señor Coyote and the Cheese: A Mexican Folktale.”

CHAPTER  
4

### Señor Coyote and the Cheese: A Mexican Folktale

Señor Coyote stared up at the beautiful, bright moon in the sky and yawned. Then he scratched his tummy.

“I’m hungry!” said Coyote to the moon.

It was then that he saw a little white rabbit.



23

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **coyote** is a doglike, wild animal native to North America. A coyote is bigger than a fox but smaller than a wolf.

**SUPPORT**—Tell students that *señor* means “mister” in Spanish. The ~ (tilde) over the ‘n’ changes the sound of the letter, so *señor* is pronounced (/sehn\*yor/).

**SUPPORT**—Ask students to point to the coyote in the image. Then have students point to the rabbit.

Ask students the following question:

**LITERAL**—How is the coyote feeling at the beginning of the story?

- » At the beginning of the story, the coyote is feeling hungry.

**Now ask students to look at the image on page 24 as you read aloud.**

Señor Coyote crept toward the little white rabbit who was sitting on the edge of a small lake.

"Ha! I think you will fill my tummy quite nicely," said Coyote to the rabbit.

"Oh!" said the little white rabbit. "I have something even better. Can you see the delicious, yellow cheese in the lake? It's just waiting for someone to eat it. Sadly, I cannot reach it."



24

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What does the little white rabbit say is in the lake?

- » The rabbit says cheese is in the lake.

**INFERRENTIAL**—Look at the image on the page. What do you think the rabbit really sees in the lake?

- » The rabbit really sees the moon's reflection in the lake.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 25 as you read aloud.**

Coyote looked out across the lake. He saw yellow cheese in the water. Coyote licked his lips. He loved cheese.

"But perhaps you can't swim," said the little white rabbit.

"Why, I am an excellent swimmer," said Coyote proudly.

"Then you must swim out and get the cheese," suggested the little white rabbit. "While you are doing that, I will get some tortillas, and when you get back we will have a feast!"



25

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **tortillas** (/tor\*tee\*yahs/) are round flatbreads made from cornmeal or wheat flour. They are a traditional Mexican food.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **feast** is a big, fancy meal.

**Ask students the following question:**

**INFERRENTIAL**—Why does the little white rabbit tell the coyote to swim out for the cheese?

- » The rabbit sends the coyote to get the cheese so the rabbit can leave.

**Now ask students to look at the image on page 26 as you read aloud.**

Coyote dipped a paw in the water.

"Wait! How can I be sure you will be here when I get back?" he asked.

"I have been dreaming about tasting that cheese for hours," said the little white rabbit. "I will be right here when you get back!"

Coyote nodded and then jumped into the lake.



26

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What does the rabbit tell the coyote, when the coyote asks if the rabbit will be there when he comes back?

- » The rabbit says he has been dreaming about tasting the cheese for hours, so he will be right there when the coyote gets back.

**INFERRENTIAL**—Do you think the rabbit is telling the truth? Why?

- » Accept any reasonable response.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 27 as you read aloud.**

Coyote kept his eyes on the cheese as he swam through the water. But for some strange reason he could not quite reach it. The cheese was always just ahead of him. Coyote even tried twice to grab the cheese, but he could not. Instead he swallowed lots of water, and eventually grew tired. In the end, he swam back to the shore.



27

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Did the coyote get the cheese? Why or why not?

- » The coyote did not get the cheese. It was always ahead of him.

**INFERRENTIAL**—Why couldn't the coyote reach the cheese?

- » The coyote couldn't reach the cheese because it was not cheese; it was only the reflection of the moon in the water.

**Now ask students to look at the image on page 28 as you read aloud.**

"At least there's the little white rabbit to munch on," thought Coyote as he shook the water from his fur.

But the little white rabbit was nowhere to be found. All that Coyote could see was a beautiful, round, yellow moon in the night sky.



28

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What did the coyote expect to find when he returned from his swim?

- » The coyote expected to find the rabbit and to eat him for dinner.

**INFERRENTIAL**—Why didn't the coyote find the rabbit?

- » The rabbit had escaped.



### **CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION**

**TURN AND TALK**—What happens in the story of Señor Coyote and the Cheese?

- » Coyote is hungry and finds a rabbit. He plans to eat the rabbit, but the rabbit is clever and doesn't want to be eaten. The rabbit convinces the coyote that the moon's reflection in the lake is cheese and that if the coyote gets the cheese, the rabbit will get tortillas, and they will share their food and have a feast. The rabbit tricks the coyote and runs away while the coyote is trying to catch the moon's reflection in the water.

## Additional Activities

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### “Medio Pollito” (SL.1.2)

**Materials Needed:** internet access, capability to display or project a video retelling of “Medio Pollito” or a copy of Eric A. Kimmel’s picture book version (see Books, page 11)

 **Background for Teachers:** “Medio Pollito” is a folktale of Spanish origin that has also become a part of Mexican culture.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the video may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Tell students that they will listen to a folktale that is popular in Mexico. Like many folktales, this one has a message to teach people how to behave. Listen for the message as you listen to the story.

Play the video *Eric Reads “Medio Pollito,”* or read the picture book to students.

**Note to Teacher:** *Medio Pollito* is pronounced (/meh\*dee\*yoh/poh\*yee\*toh/).

After the story, ask the following question:

What is the message in the story?

- » The message in the story is that you should help others because they will be grateful and help you in return.

# Teacher Resources

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**Looking for more teaching ideas using CKHG or to connect with other teachers? Check out the Core Knowledge Community at <https://www.coreknowledge.org/community/>. You will find a Teacher Workroom with ideas for different activities, chat rooms where you can communicate with other Core Knowledge teachers, and a map of the United States so that you can see who else may be using Core Knowledge near you!**

## Culminating Activity: *The Culture of Mexico*

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### A Mexican Fiesta!

**Materials Needed:** internet access for music and dance videos; Mexican foods, such as tortilla chips, salsa, guacamole, tacos, and enchiladas; maracas and tambourines; piñata from earlier activity and broomstick or yardstick

 **Background for Teachers:** Plan a class party (a fiesta) to celebrate the end of the unit. Read through the suggested activities below, and choose which you will include in the fiesta.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to music and dance videos may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Say the following, to students: In Mexico, a fiesta is a festival or celebration. We are going to have our own fiesta to celebrate what we have learned about Mexico. Our fiesta will include activities that people in Mexico enjoy when they celebrate: dancing, singing, playing games, feasting, and listening to music.

**Note to Teacher:** Be sure to follow your school's policy regarding food distribution and allergies.

#### A Mexican Feast

Refreshments for the party might include tortilla chips and salsa or guacamole, tacos, enchiladas, or other traditional Mexican foods.

#### Dancing

Teach students the Mexican Hat Dance to perform at the fiesta. Students can dance along with the students in *The Mexican Hat Dance* video.

#### Singing

Coordinate with the music teacher to teach students "La Cucaracha." If available, have students play tambourines and maracas as they sing. You can also have students watch and listen to the video of the Santa Cecilia Mariachi Band playing "La Cucaracha."

#### Music

Play the video of traditional Mexican mariachi music, *Mexican Party*, as background music during your fiesta.

#### Games

Have students play with the piñata created earlier in the unit, taking adequate safety precautions.

**Note to Teacher:** Many games that students in the United States are familiar with are also popular in Mexico. Students might play *avion* (hopscotch), *escondidas* (hide and seek), *piedra, papel o tijeras* (rock, paper, scissors), or *la cuerda* (jump rope).

You may wish to schedule the fiesta ahead of time and invite parents or other grade-level students to attend.

## Classroom Mural

**Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of coloring book pages; crayons, markers, or colored pencils; butcher-block paper; tape, glue, or stapler

 **Background for Teachers:** Print out coloring pages about Mexico. Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the links to suggested pages may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Organize the class into small groups. Distribute the coloring pages evenly across the groups. Have each group color its assigned pages.

Hang a piece of butcher-block paper on the wall. Work with students to affix their colored pages to the butcher-block paper to create a collage.

Once the collage is completed, invite each group of students to tell the rest of the class about the images they colored. What do the images represent?

You may wish to schedule the presentations for a separate day and invite parents or other grade-level students to attend. Students could dress up in costumes for their presentations.

## My Book About *The Culture of Mexico*

**Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of My Book About *The Culture of Mexico* (see pages 64–78), crayons for each student, stapler

**Note to Teacher:** To save instructional time, you may want to preassemble and staple a book for each student prior to class.

Distribute a copy of My Book About *The Culture of Mexico* and crayons to each student. Explain that this is a mini-book version of the Student Book that they have been using in class.

Tell students that they will have a chance to personalize the cover of the book by writing their name and drawing a picture on the cover. Ask students to think about the different things that they have learned about the culture of Mexico that they might draw on the cover. Prompt students (if needed) to consider drawing any of the following images:

- the ruins of Tenochtitlán
- the buildings of Mexico City
- the Mexican flag
- the Rio Grande
- Chichén Itzá
- Mount Popocatépetl
- a costume for Day of the Dead
- a piñata
- mariachi musicians
- rabbit
- coyote

Allow students approximately ten to fifteen minutes to draw their cover.

Then divide students into four groups. Assign one chapter to each group of students, telling students that with the members of their group, they should look at just their chapter images and quietly talk about what is depicted, as well as any information they heard read aloud.

Tell students that they will have about five minutes to talk to one another in a small group and then you will call the entire class back together, asking one member from each group to explain their chapter to the rest of the class. All students should follow along in their own book as the images and pages for each chapter are discussed.

Prompt and elaborate what students say about each chapter to make sure the following points are made:

### **Chapter 1**

- Mexico City is the largest city in Mexico.
- It mixes past and present with old Spanish buildings and modern steel and glass buildings.
- Many languages are spoken in Mexico City.
- In Mexico City, the cultures of the Aztec, the Spanish, and modern Mexicans are mixed together.

### **Chapter 2**

- Mexico has many different landforms: volcanoes, mountains, a plateau, coast, and peninsulas.
- Mexico has many different bodies of water: the Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean, and Rio Grande.
- There are coral reefs near the Mexican coast.

### **Chapter 3**

- In Mexico, people celebrate Independence Day and the Day of the Dead.
- Some people in Mexico celebrate el Cinco de Mayo.
- Many people in Mexico celebrate their birthdays.

### **Chapter 4**

- Coyote is hungry and wants to eat the little white rabbit.
- Little white rabbit does not want to be eaten and tricks coyote into swimming into the lake to get cheese that is really a reflection of the moon.
- Little white rabbit runs away while coyote is distracted, and coyote goes hungry.

Tell students that they may take their book home. Encourage students to talk about the book at home with their family in the same way that they have in class.

**My Book**

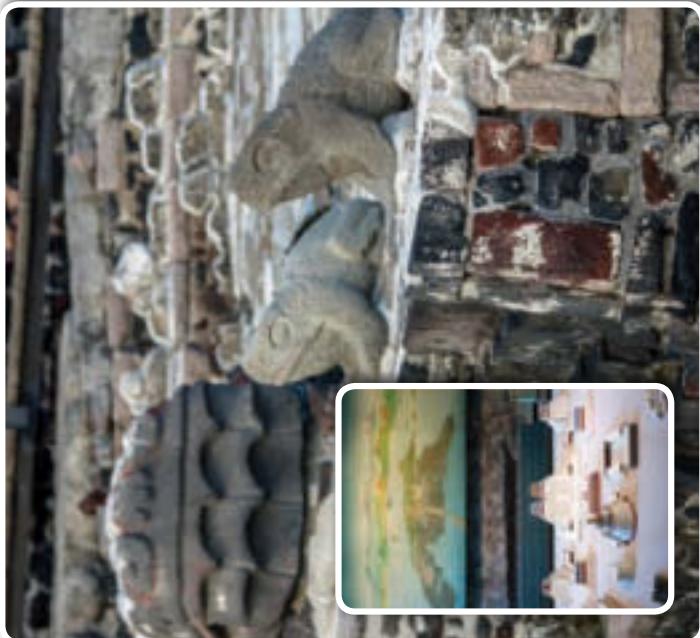
**About**

*The Culture of Mexico*

**by** \_\_\_\_\_

## Mexico, Past and Present

Imagine you are walking through modern-day Mexico City, one of the biggest cities in the world. Suddenly, you come upon the ruins of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán. What you have discovered is that hundreds of years ago, the Aztec built cities with palaces and temples. Mexico City is built on the ruins of the Aztec city, Tenochtitlán.



2



Later, you see a beautiful church built by the Spanish who came to Mexico from Europe in the 1500s. You stop to gaze at the church.



3

But that's not all you see. As day turns to night, you come across modern buildings made of steel and glass. This is the Mexico City of today. It is a city that honors its past and its future.



5

The Aztec culture, the Spanish culture, and the culture of Mexico today are all around you. As you move through the crowded streets, you hear Spanish being spoken. You also hear Nahuatl, a language spoken by the Aztec. You smell foods such as beans and chilies, which are eaten by people today, just as they were by the Aztec of long ago. It has been a great day of exploration. Now it is time to get some sleep!



4

In Mexico, you meet people who have two Spanish last names. Just as in Spain, many children are given their father's family name and their mother's family name. The father's family name comes before the mother's family name. For example, a boy might be called Carlos Miranda Lopez. Miranda is his father's family name, and Lopez is his mother's family name.



7

As you walk across the square, you notice that on the white stripe in the flag, there is an image of an eagle sitting on a cactus plant, eating a snake. This image tells the story of how the Aztec came upon an eagle perched on a prickly pear cactus, eating a snake. For them this was a sign that they had found the place where they should live. The Aztec settled in what is today Mexico City.



6

You also discover that children in Mexico learn many of the same subjects in school as you do. They learn math, science, history, geography, art, technology, and physical education. But instead of English, they learn Spanish. Many children also speak native languages that have existed in Mexico for hundreds of years! You have learned a lot about Mexico during your visit.



## The Geography of Mexico

The United States, Canada, Mexico, and the countries of Central America are on the continent of North America. Canada is to the north of the United States, and Mexico is to the south.

On Mexico's western coast are the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean. These two bodies of water are separated by a long strip of land, the Mexican state of Baja, California. To the east are the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.





Part of the border between Mexico and the United States is a river that has two names. Mexicans call the river Río Bravo, and people in the United States call it Rio Grande. Both names mean that it is a large and mighty river. In fact, it is the longest river in Mexico and the fifth longest in all of North America.



There are tropical rainforests thick with green plants, trees, and animals on the Yucatán Peninsula. Tucked away among the trees there is a once-magnificent Maya city called Chichén Itzá. This old Maya city is a wonderful place to explore!



13

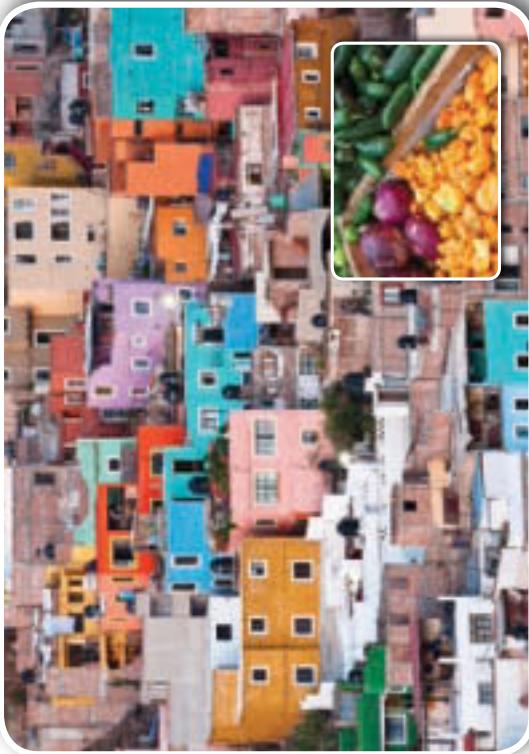
Every year, thousands of people from all over the world visit the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. A peninsula is a piece of land with water around it on almost all sides. The Yucatán Peninsula sticks out into the Gulf of Mexico, at the southern tip of Mexico. The Yucatán Peninsula has beaches with white sand and bright blue water. Underwater divers come to explore the coral reefs of the Yucatán.



12

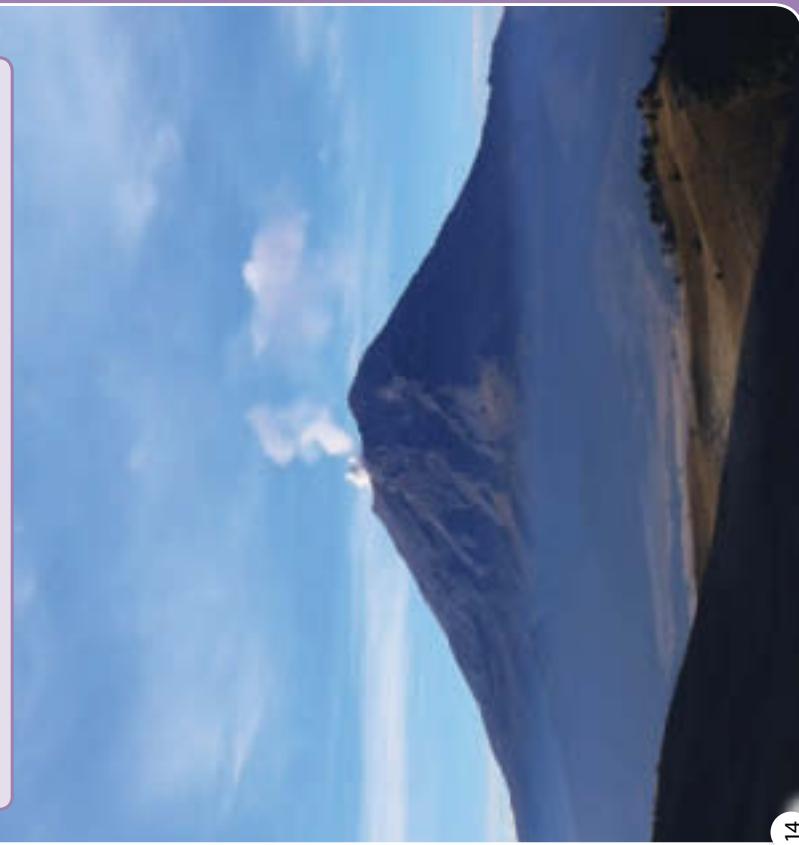


Between the mountain ranges on the east and west coasts of Mexico, there is a large plateau. A plateau is usually a high, flat area of land. This Mexican plateau has hills, mountains, and volcanoes. Mexico City and the colorful city of Guanajuato are located on the plateau. This is also where most of the Mexican people live. The Mexican plateau has Mexico's best farmland.



15

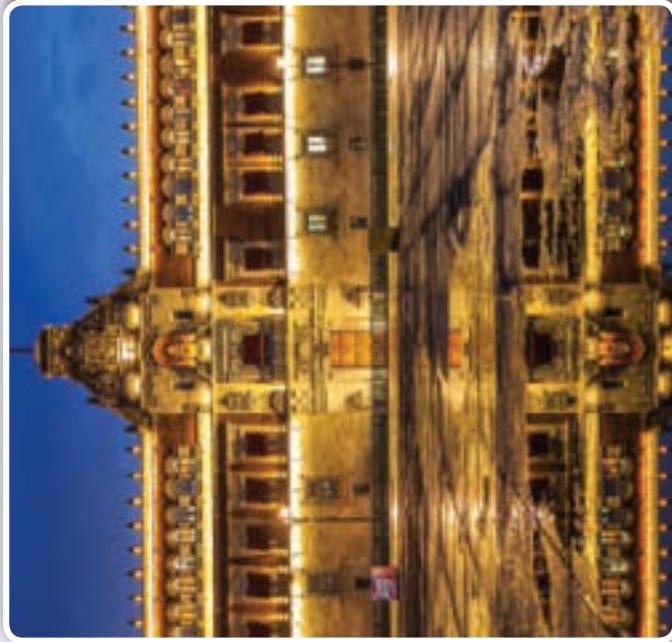
Much of Mexico is covered by mountains. Some mountains are dangerous because they are volcanoes. Volcanoes sometimes erupt, or explode, and spit out fire and rocks. There are about three thousand volcanoes in Mexico. Mount Popocatépetl is one of the highest volcanoes in Mexico. It is almost eighteen thousand feet tall. The name means "smoking mountain."



14

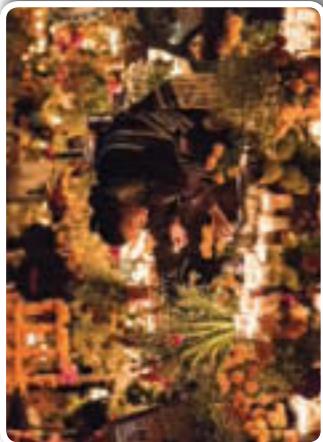
## Celebrations in Mexico

Every year, on September 16, the president of Mexico stands on the balcony of the National Palace in Mexico City. He shouts, "Viva Mexico! Viva la independencia!" In English this means, "Long live Mexico! Long live independence!" The president does this to remind people of Mexico's fight for independence from Spain. Mexicans celebrate their independence on this day.



The war for independence lasted eleven years. Finally, in 1821, Mexico won independence from Spain. Now, Independence Day is celebrated with red, white, and green fireworks, as well as parades and the ringing of church bells.





On the evening of November 1, families visit the graves of their loved ones. They bring food and candles. They clean the graves and put flowers on them. At six p.m., church bells begin to ring, and they continue to ring every thirty seconds all through the night.

Mexicans eat skull-shaped candy during the two days of remembrance and celebration. They bring the candy to the graves as gifts.



19

Mexicans celebrate the Day of the Dead on November 1 and 2. On those days, they remember their family members and friends who have died. They dress up in incredible costumes and wear makeup!



18

A popular birthday party game in Mexico includes a piñata and a stick. A piñata is a colorful, fun model made from paper and glue, filled with candy, toys, or other treats. The idea of the game is to take turns trying to hit the piñata with the stick until it breaks open and the treasures inside fall out. This may seem easy, but each person is blindfolded as they try!



On the fifth of May—el Cinco de Mayo—Mexicans have a big celebration, or fiesta. There are colorful parades and marching bands. Men, women, and children dance in the streets. There are delicious holiday foods. But why is this day special? After Mexico became independent from Spain, Mexico fought a battle with France, and won!



Mariachi is a popular style of music in Mexico. Musicians play mostly stringed instruments, such as guitars and violins, but trumpets can be included too. Often, male mariachi musicians wear sombreros and short jackets. For many people, mariachi has a happy, cheerful sound.



## **Señor Coyote and the Cheese: A Mexican Folktale**

Señor Coyote stared up at the beautiful, bright moon in the sky and yawned. Then he scratched his tummy. "I'm hungry!" said Coyote to the moon. It was then that he saw a little white rabbit.



Señor Coyote crept toward the little white rabbit who was sitting on the edge of a small lake.

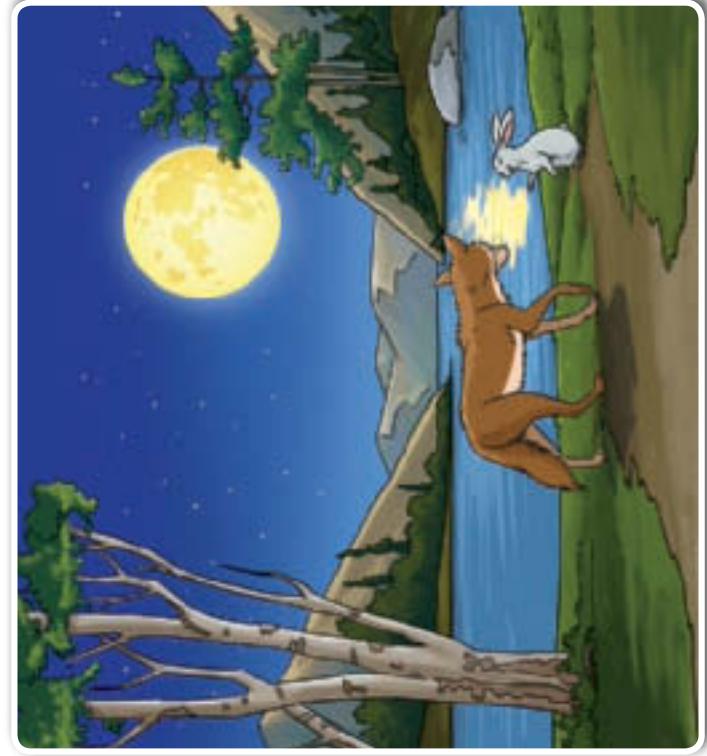
"Ha! I think you will fill my tummy quite nicely," said Coyote to the rabbit.

"Oh!" said the little white rabbit. "I have something even better. Can you see the delicious, yellow cheese in the lake? It's just waiting for someone to eat it. Sadly, I cannot reach it."

Coyote looked out across the lake. He saw yellow cheese in the water. Coyote licked his lips. He loved cheese.

"But perhaps you can't swim," said the little white rabbit.

"Why, I am an excellent swimmer," said Coyote proudly. "Then you must swim out and get the cheese," suggested the little white rabbit. "While you are doing that, I will get some tortillas, and when you get back we will have a feast!"



Coyote kept his eyes on the cheese as he swam through the water. But for some strange reason he could not quite reach it. The cheese was always just ahead of him. Coyote even tried twice to grab the cheese, but he could not. Instead he swallowed lots of water, and eventually grew tired. In the end, he swam back to the shore.



27

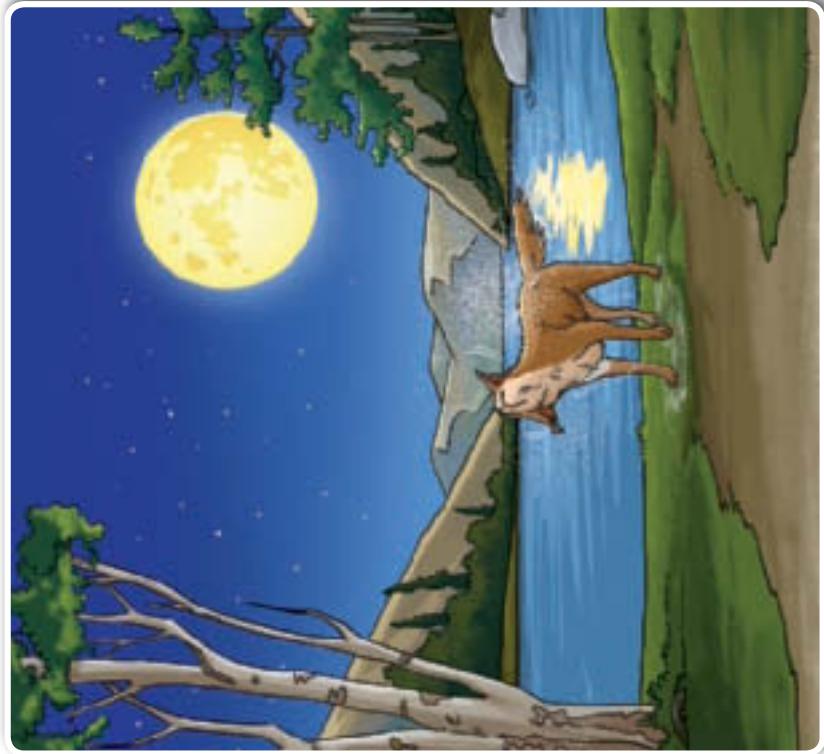
Coyote dipped a paw in the water.  
"Wait! How can I be sure you will be here when I get back?" he asked.  
"I have been dreaming about tasting that cheese for hours," said the little white rabbit. "I will be right here when you get back!"  
Coyote nodded and then jumped into the lake.



26

"At least there's the little white rabbit to munch on," thought Coyote as he shook the water from his fur.

But the little white rabbit was nowhere to be found. All that Coyote could see was a beautiful, round, yellow moon in the night sky.



## Unit Assessment Questions: *The Culture of Mexico*

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**Make sufficient copies of the Student Answer Sheet for each student; see pages 81–84 of this Teacher Guide. Read each sentence or question aloud with the answer choices. Instruct students to point to each picture on the answer sheet as you read the choice aloud. Reread the question or sentence and answer choices aloud a second time, and tell students to circle the picture that shows the correct answer.**

1. What image decorates the Mexican flag?
  - a) an eagle eating a snake
  - b) a cactus near a river
  - c) a sombrero
2. Where in North America is Mexico?
  - a) south of the United States
  - b) west of Canada
  - c) north of the United States
3. The Yucatán is a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) river
  - b) peninsula
  - c) volcano
4. Popocatépetl is a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) river
  - b) peninsula
  - c) volcano
5. During birthday celebrations, Mexican children wear blindfolds and use sticks to try to break a container full of candies known as a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) piñata
  - b) sombrero
  - c) mariachi
6. What do Mexicans do on the Day of the Dead?
  - a) They dance.
  - b) They watch fireworks.
  - c) They visit their loved ones' graves.
7. What do people in Mexico do to celebrate Independence Day?
  - a) They visit their loved ones' graves.
  - b) They go to church.
  - c) They watch fireworks.

- 8.** What is one type of traditional Mexican music?
  - a)** mariachi
  - b)** piñata
  - c)** sombrero
- 9.** Which character plays a trick in “Señor Coyote and the Cheese”?
  - a)** the coyote
  - b)** the rabbit
  - c)** the moon
- 10.** What forms part of Mexico’s border with the United States?
  - a)** the Rio Grande
  - b)** the Yucatán Peninsula
  - c)** Mexico City

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *The Culture of Mexico***



**1. b.**



**1. c.**



**2. a.**



**2. b.**



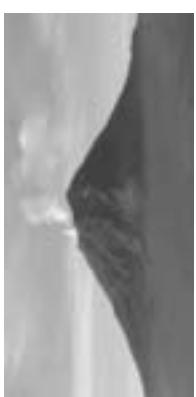
**2. c.**



**3. a.**



**3. b.**



**3. c.**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *The Culture of Mexico***

**4.** **a.**



**b.**



**c.**



**5.** **a.**



**b.**



**6.** **a.**

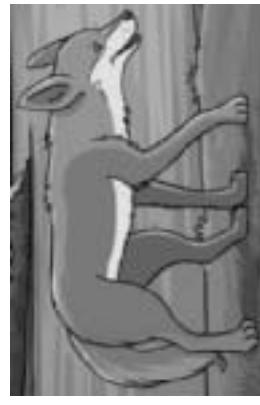
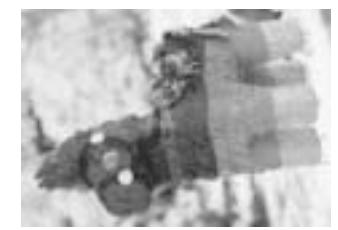


**b.**



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *The Culture of Mexico***



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

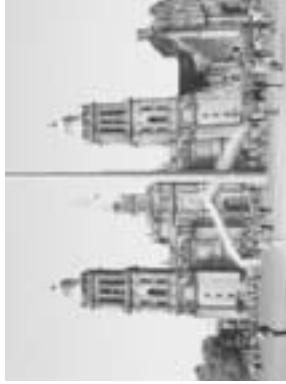
**Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *The Culture of Mexico***

**10.**



**b.**



 **c.**

## Performance Task: *The Culture of Mexico*

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**Materials Needed:** four blank 5" x 8" index cards per student, pencils, assorted thin-tipped colored markers, individual student copies of *The Culture of Mexico* Student Book

**Teacher Directions:** In this unit, students learned about the culture of Mexico and that its largest city, Mexico City, mixes ancient, Spanish, and modern architecture, culture, and language. They learned that the physical geography of Mexico includes mountains and volcanoes, a plateau, peninsulas, the coast, and the Rio Grande. They also learned about celebrations on Independence Day, the Day of the Dead, Cinco de Mayo, and birthdays. Finally, students learned a folktale about a rabbit that outsmarts a coyote.

Have students reflect back on what they learned during this unit by flipping through the pages of the Student Book. Tell students to imagine they are traveling to visit Mexico. They will share the sights, sounds, and smells of this ancient, foreign land with their friends and family back home by creating four different postcards on 5" x 8" index cards. Remind students that postcards are like condensed versions of large travel posters. The postcards should show the most important or most interesting details about the culture of Mexico. Students should identify in their postcards the most important aspects of Mexico that they have learned about that make it an exciting place to visit and think about.

Have students draw images of the culture of Mexico on one side of each card and dictate a brief message about the culture of Mexico for the other side.

**Note to Teacher:** We suggest that you allocate two instructional periods for the completion of this performance-based assessment. Students will work at different paces. The teacher should circulate throughout the room and be available to discuss each card and take dictation as individual students finish each postcard.

Prompt each student to talk about his or her drawing by saying, "Tell me about what you drew and what it tells about life in Mexico." It is not necessary for the teacher to write verbatim what the student says but rather to capture bullet points that can later be used with the Performance Assessment Rubric that follows.

## Performance Task Scoring Rubric

**Note to Teacher:** Students should be evaluated on the basis of their postcard drawings, along with what they say that they have drawn and why, using the rubric.

Above Average	<p>Response is accurate and detailed. Student demonstrates strong understanding of the culture of Mexico, identifying four of the following details in drawing and/or dictation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mexico City is the largest city in Mexico.</li><li>• It mixes past and present with ancient ruins, an old cathedral, and modern buildings.</li><li>• Many languages are spoken in Mexico City.</li><li>• Mexico has many different landforms: volcanoes, mountains, a plateau, coasts, and peninsulas.</li><li>• Mexico has many different bodies of water: the Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific Ocean, and the Rio Grande.</li><li>• In the Gulf of Mexico, there are coral reefs near the coast.</li><li>• In Mexico, people celebrate Independence Day and the Day of the Dead.</li><li>• Some people in Mexico celebrate el Cinco de Mayo.</li><li>• A piñata is a fun party game.</li><li>• In the Mexican folktale, “Señor Coyote and the Cheese,” the little white rabbit tricks the coyote.</li></ul>
Average	Response is mostly accurate and somewhat detailed. Student demonstrates solid understanding of the culture of Mexico, noting three of the details listed above.
Adequate	Response is mostly accurate but lacks detail. Student demonstrates a very basic understanding of the culture of Mexico, noting two of the details listed above.
Inadequate	Response is incomplete and demonstrates a minimal understanding of the content in the unit, noting only one of the details listed above.

## Directions for Making My Passport

If this is the first Grade 1 CKHG unit you have completed with your students, please download and print the Grade 1 My Passport. Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the passport PDF may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

To save instructional time, prepare a passport for each student in advance: Download and print the Passport PDF pages. Photocopy the pages back to back, according to the specifications on your printer. Staple pages together.



## Introducing My Passport to Students

**Materials Needed:** sufficient folded copies of Grade 1 My Passport, pencils, glue sticks, thin-tipped markers\*, an actual passport if available

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the My Passport may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

\*If you prefer, you may take a photograph of each student and print a small copy to distribute to each student instead of having them use the markers to draw a picture of themselves.

Tell students that when people travel, especially to countries outside of the United States, they bring a little booklet with them that is called a passport.

Show students an actual passport, if available, as you continue to explain that a passport has many pages inside. On the first page, there is usually a photograph of the person to whom the passport belongs, as well as personal identification information, such as when the person was born and where the person lives. Explain that as people visit each new place/country, they show the page with their identification information to an official as they visit each place and then receive a stamp in their passport to show that they have visited that place.

Explain to students that today they are going to make a pretend passport that they will use as they “travel” to different places and times in history this year using CKHG. Distribute materials to each student. Examine and discuss the cover of the passport.

Have students turn to the first page inside, and tell them that this page has space for their own personal identification information. Explain each portion of this page, guiding students in personalizing their passport by either drawing a picture of themselves or gluing a photograph in the designated space. Guide students in completing the remaining information, such as their name, date of birth, and remaining information.

**SUPPORT**—Provide prompts for students as needed by writing examples of their correct date of birth and how to spell the name of their town, state, country, and continent.

Next, have students examine the remaining passport pages as you read the titles at the top of each page. Explain that each page lists the name of one of the places they will “visit” as they use the Grade 1 CKHG materials this year. Tell students that once they finish each unit, they will have a chance to place small pictures of the place they visited in their passport as a reminder or souvenir of each place they have visited.

Collect all passports, and keep them in a safe place until you are ready to have students complete the passport page for *The Culture of Mexico*.

## My Passport Activity for *The Culture of Mexico*

**Materials Needed:** personalized copies of Grade 1 My Passport for each student, sufficient copies of *The Culture of Mexico* Passport Images, pencils, and glue sticks for each student

**Note to Teacher:** Please download and print *The Culture of Mexico* Passport Images. Use this link to download and print the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the Culture of Mexico Passport Images may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

You will need to print sufficient copies of each page and then cut the images apart on the dotted lines prior to class.

Tell students that today they will each complete the page in their passport that is about the culture of Mexico. Ask students to turn to page 9 of their passport.

Show students the individual Passport Images from *The Culture of Mexico*, and ask students to name or describe each image. Explain that you will give each student a copy of every image. Direct students to use their glue sticks to carefully glue each image onto *The Culture of Mexico* page of the passport in whatever order they would like.

As students finish, encourage them to share their passport with a partner, showing and describing the images on *The Culture of Mexico* page and what they represent. Suggest students talk to one another about what they saw and what they liked best about their travel to Mexico.

If time permits, encourage partners to look back at the images on the passport pages for previous units to discuss similarities and differences between those places and Mexico.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Page 1.1

Use with Chapter 1

### Letter to Family

Family Member,

During the next few weeks, as a part of our study of Core Knowledge History and Geography, your child will be learning about the culture, including the geography, of Mexico. They will learn that the largest city in Mexico, Mexico City, is built on the ruins of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán. They will learn about the Spanish and modern influences on the city and on the culture of Mexico.

Students will learn about the physical geography of Mexico and its location south of the United States. They will listen to a Mexican folktale in which a clever rabbit gets the better of a hungry fox. They will learn that important celebrations in Mexico include Mexican Independence Day, the anniversary of the day Mexico declared independence from Spain; the Day of the Dead, a day of remembrance for loved ones who have died; and Cinco de Mayo, a regional celebration of a victory in a battle with France.

The page is titled "The Culture of Mexico". At the top left is the Core Knowledge logo. To the right of the title is a black and white photograph of a girl with skull makeup, captioned "Girl celebrating the Day of the Dead". Below the title are two smaller images: one of the "Maya city of Chichén Itzá" and another of "Señor Coyote and the rabbit". At the bottom is a large, grainy black and white photograph of a dense urban area in Mexico, identified as "City of Guanajuato". A caption "Rosa McCormick" is visible in the lower left corner of this photo.

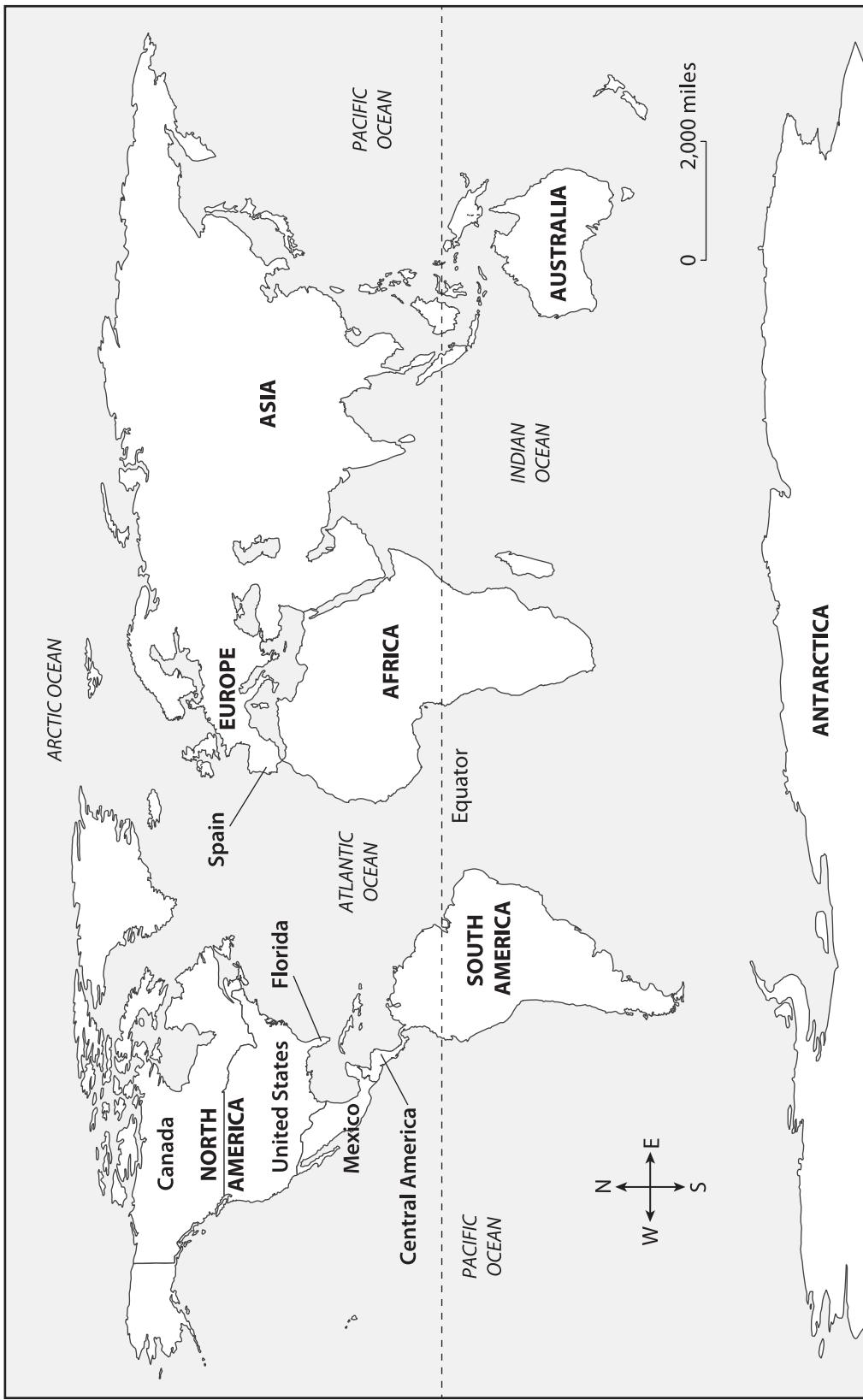
These practices are presented as historical and cultural information in an age-appropriate way rather than in a manner that suggests the value or correctness of any particular set of beliefs. The goal is to build knowledge about different countries and cultures and to foster understanding and respect for practices and beliefs that may be different from those with which students are familiar.

Sometimes students have questions regarding how the beliefs or practices they are learning about relate to themselves and their own experiences. In such instances, we will encourage each student to discuss these topics with you. We recognize that the best place to find answers to those types of questions is with your family and the adults at home.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

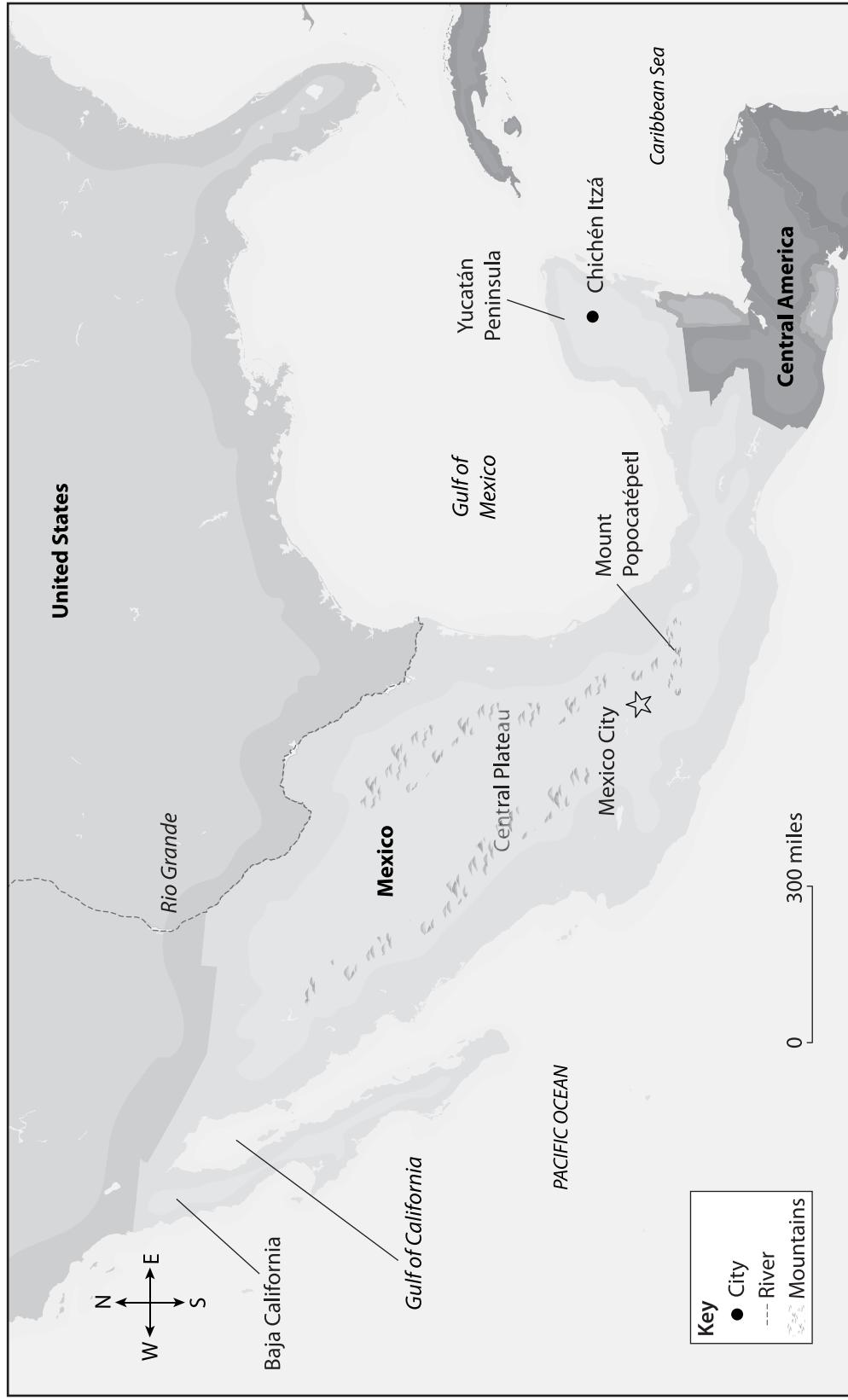
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**World Map**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

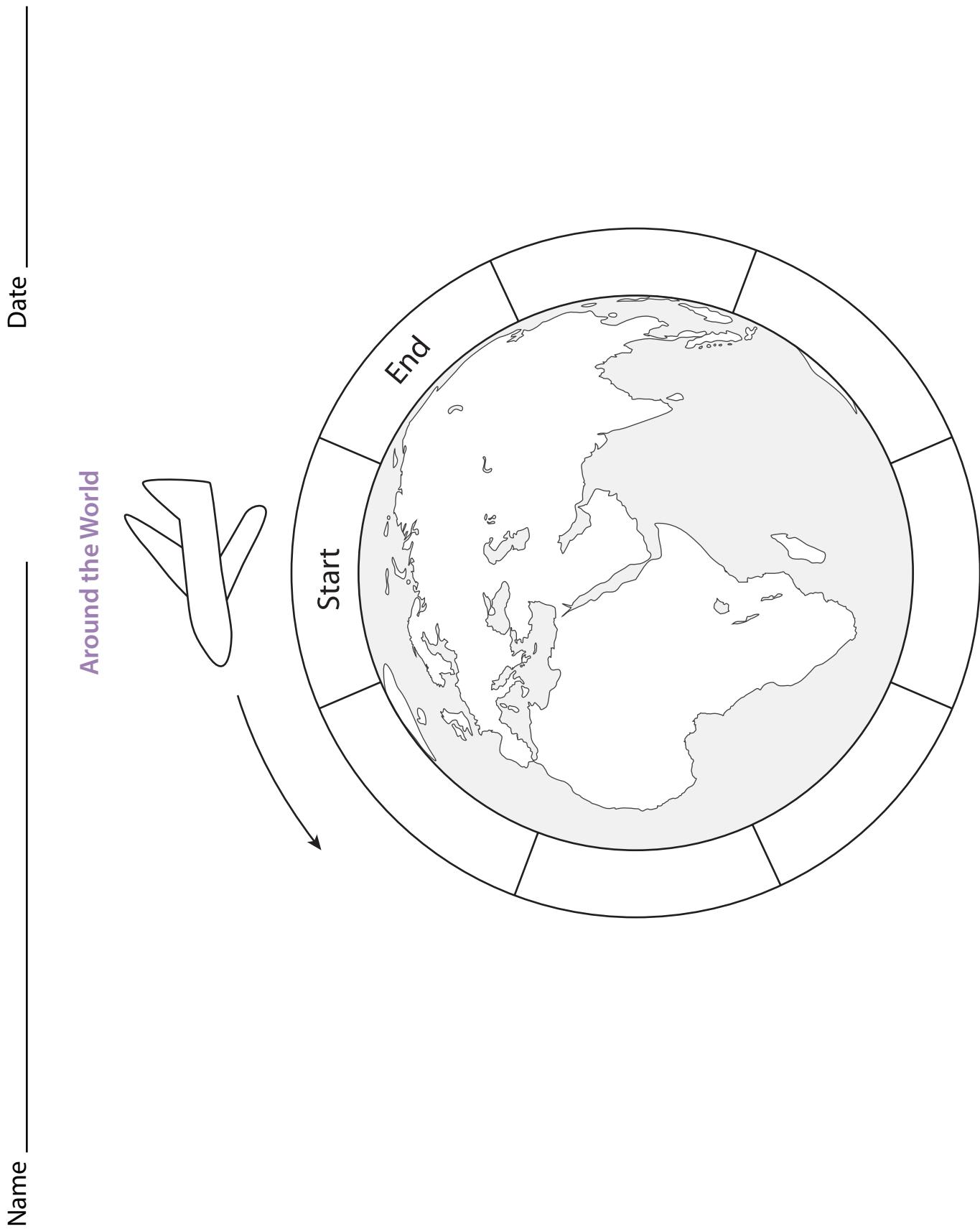
**Map of Mexico**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Mexican Flag



Name \_\_\_\_\_



## **Answer Key: *The Culture of Mexico***

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### **Unit Assessment**

**(pages 79–80)**

- 1. a 2. a 3. b 4. c 5. a 6. c 7. c 8. a 9. b 10. a**





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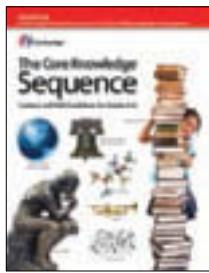
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Core Knowledge **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY™**

## The Culture of Mexico

Core Knowledge History and Geography 1



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