

Year: 4

Subject: Geography

Unit of Study: The Americas

Linked Literature:

Where in the world do we live?

We do like to be beside the seaside

Volcanoes, Earthquakes and Mountains

Rivers and local study

The Americas

Vocabulary	
biome	A large area of plants and animals in a similar habitat, like a forest or desert
arid	To have little or no rain
Equator	An imaginary line around the centre of the planet, halfway between the north and south poles
Tropic of Cancer	The northernmost line around the planet where the sun can be directly overhead
Tropic of Capricorn	The southernmost line around the planet where the sun can be directly overhead
peninsula	A piece of land projecting out into a body of water
colony	A group of people of one nationality living in a foreign place
trade	To exchange something for something else

I need to know (continued):

Central America contains lots of mountains and rainforests, and the north of Mexico is covered in desert. It is near the boundaries of several tectonic plates, meaning earthquakes and volcanic activity are common. The Yucatan peninsula extends into the Atlantic. Underneath this peninsula is a massive crater, that is thought to have been caused by an asteroid that killed off the dinosaurs. The temperature of these countries, being near the equator, allows them to grow a number of crops and plants that we don't have in the UK. It also means they can suffer from tropical storms and hurricanes.

In Britain, we make money in lots of ways from lots of different types of jobs. In Central America, most jobs were related to farming—but Mexico is too arid for this, and so has to buy their crops from other countries. Because the north of Mexico is desert, almost everyone lives in the south. Most jobs in Mexico are to provide services to other countries—similar to the UK. This can include working with money, transporting goods and people, and trading. In both Central America and Mexico people have been leaving the countryside to go to the cities—Mexico City is now the 10th biggest city in the world. Lots and lots of young people moved to look for jobs and places to live, but there isn't always enough space in the cities to find something. In the UK, 83% of our people live in or around cities but this happened over several hundred years and not all at once, like has happened in Central America.

I need to know:

North and South America are two continents west of Europe, across the Atlantic Ocean. They are very large, and there are a lot of different biomes across them from the southernmost point to the northernmost point.

Central America, a part of the continent of North America, is very near the equator. This means it is very hot. Some parts of this area are arid and some are wet, meaning that there are lots of rainforests. All rainforests in the world are within two other invisible lines called the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. There can be wet and dry seasons at different times of the year. Winter can be quite mild, while summer is very hot.

There are a number of countries in Central America: Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua,

In 1492, Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas under pay from the Spanish. They found gold, and the Spanish sent lots of people over to the New World to set up colonies. This means that a lot of the language and customs come from Spain, but many smaller communities still live the way their ancestors did, before the Spanish arrived. The UK is made up of people that have come from all over the world, but have all mixed together. Our traditions have changed over time to become closer together and less separate.

Mexicans lead lots of different lifestyles depending on their background. Most people are very poor and uneducated, but some are well-educated and rich. There are not many people in-between. Many people live with grandparents, parents and children in the same small house. Family is very important. They hold very big wedding celebrations, and similar celebrations when a girl becomes 15. Mexicans follow Roman Catholic celebrations, but are well known for Dia De Los Muertes (the Day of the Dead) and Cinco de Mayo.

Lots of Mexican food relies on maize, beans and squash. Rice is also common. Poor people do not eat much red meat or fried food. For dessert they like sweet bread (like buns) and chocolate, which originally came from the area.

I need to do:

Use selected maps, atlases, globes and digital/ computer mapping to locate countries

Analyse evidence and draw conclusions e.g. make comparisons between locations using photos/pictures/maps

Temperature in different locations, population

Identify and explain different views of people including themselves

Give increased detail of views,

Prior knowledge:

The earth's crust is made up of tectonic plates that move slowly
Where tectonic plates meet there can be earthquakes and volcanoes, and they can create mountains

The water cycle is an important part of our planet's ecosystems

Rivers usually start in a high place and flow to the ocean

People usually live near rivers, for a variety of reasons



Where are the Americas?

What are the differences in physical geography between Central America and the UK?

What are the differences in human geography between Central America and the UK?

What is culturally different in Mexico to the UK?

Why are our cultures different?

Can I share my learning?