

MEXICO



How much do you know about Mexico—our southern neighbor? Like the U.S. and Canada, Mexico is part of the continent of North America.

Mexico is also part of *Latin America*—a political region covering much of the Western Hemisphere south of the U.S. Most people in Latin America speak Spanish or Portuguese—languages based on Latin. Here's more information about Mexico:

FACTS TO KNOW:

AREA: 756,062 sq mi, nearly three times the size of Texas.

POPULATION: 104,900,000. Most are *mestizos*—people of Indian and European (mostly Spanish) ancestry.

GOVERNMENT: Presidential-legislative democracy. Vicente Fox became President in December 2000.

ECONOMY: Free-market economy. Trade with the U.S. and Canada has tripled since 2001, when a free-trade agreement with the two nations took

effect. Mexico has huge oil supplies.

MONETARY UNIT: Peso, worth about 10.3 cents in U.S. currency.

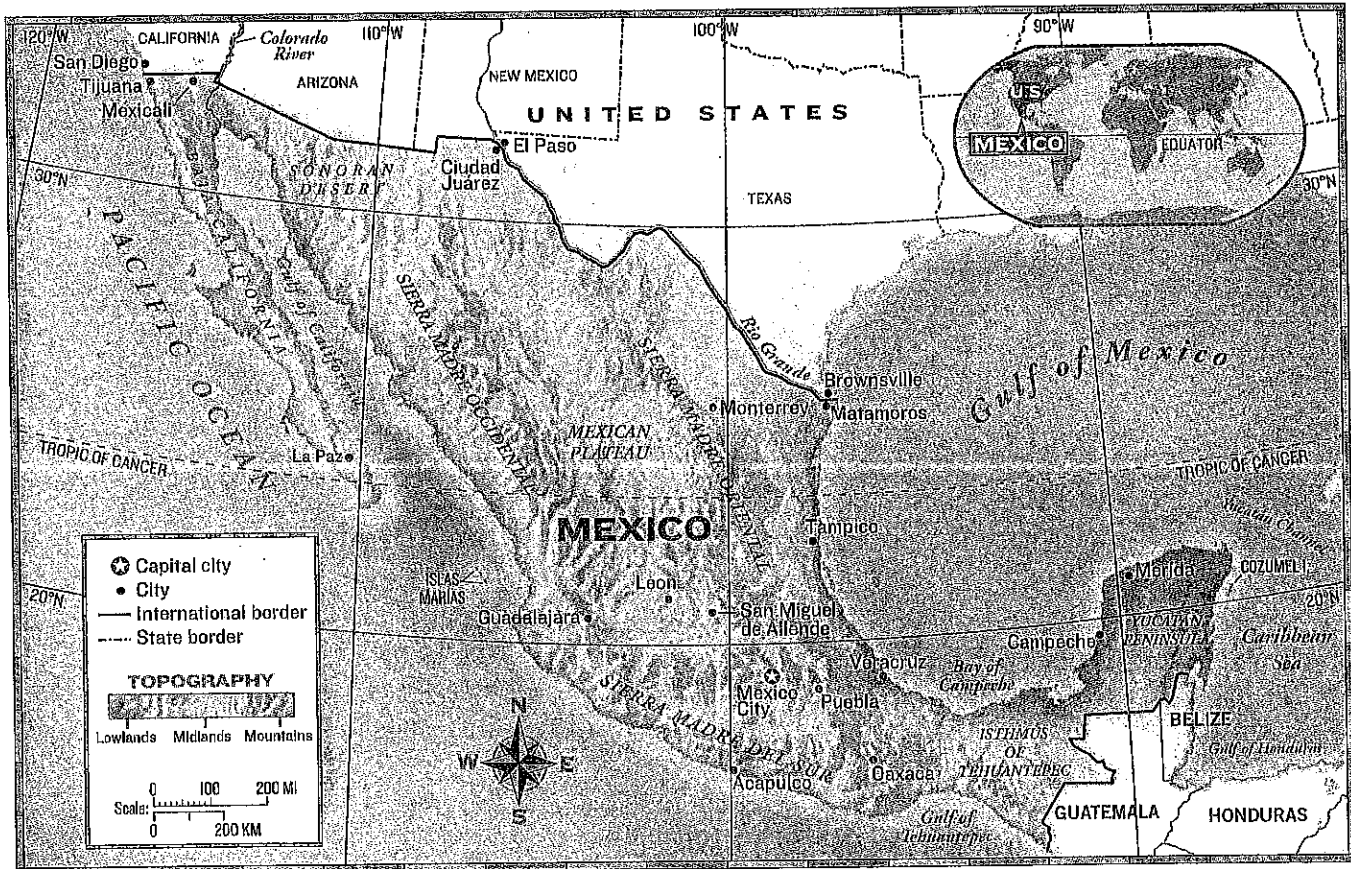
PER CAPITA (PER PERSON) GDP: \$9,000*

RELIGION: More than 90 percent Roman Catholic; 10% Protestant and others.

LITERACY: Men, 94%; women, 91%.

LIFE EXPECTANCY: Men, 73 years; women, 78 years.

*The value of all items produced by a country in a year, divided by the population. (GDP stands for gross domestic product.)



If you need help locating places on a map, see GeoSkills, page 20.

QUESTIONS

1. What river separates Texas and Mexico?

2. Baja California belongs to which country?

3. What is the capital of Mexico?

4. What are the capital city's approximate latitude and longitude?
_____ degrees North; _____ degrees West
5. What named line of latitude crosses Mexico just north of Tampico?

6. The Mexican plateau is bordered by which two mountain chains?

7. The Yucatán Peninsula has what type of topography?

8. To travel from Mexico City to Leon, you would head in which direction?

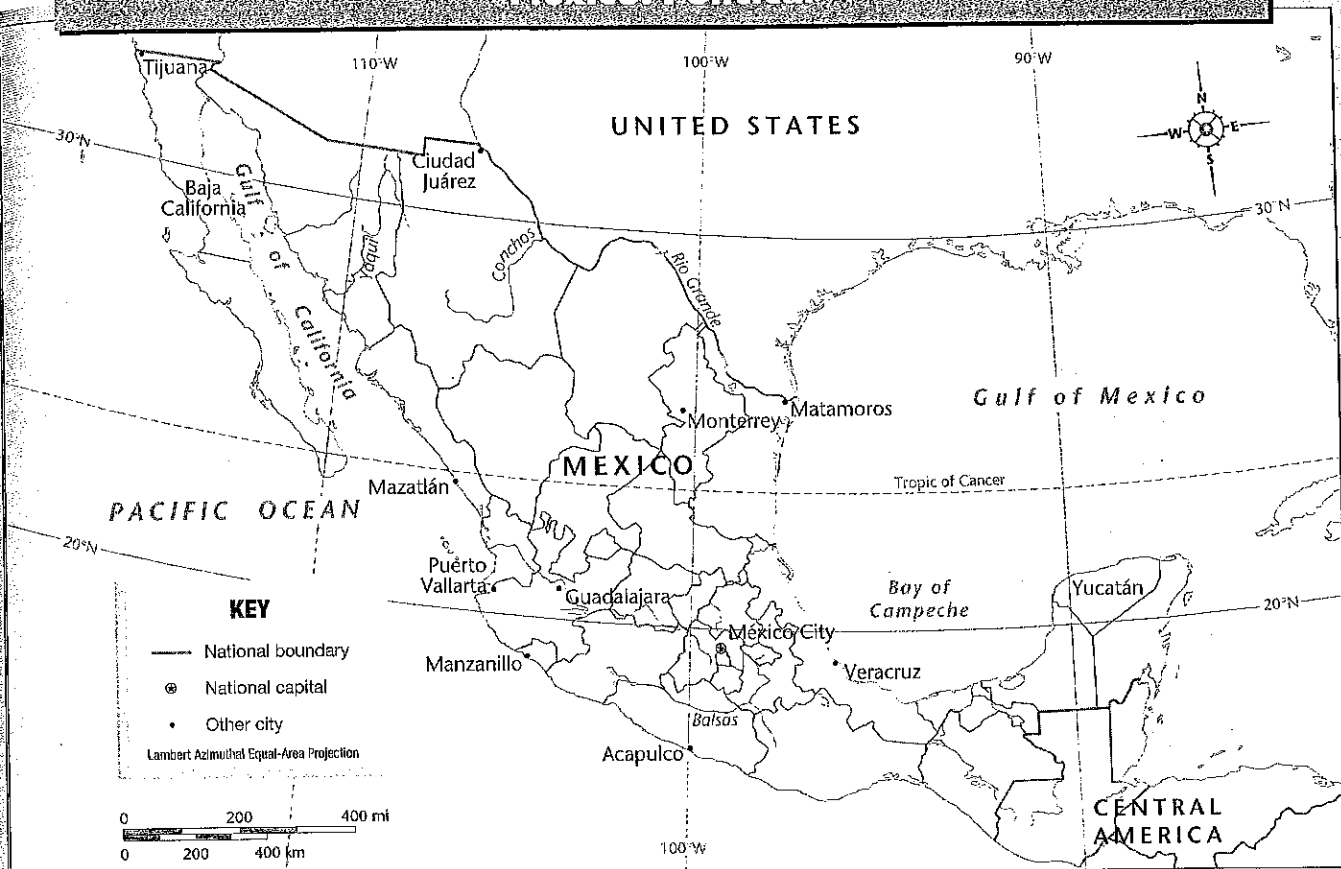
9. Veracruz is how many kilometers west of Campeche?

10. About how many miles is San Miguel de Allende from Mexico City?

JIM McWHIRTER/MAPMAN

Latin America

Mexico: Political



Mexico

Terrain Large central plateau, bordered by the Sierra Madre Occidental mountain range in the west and the Sierra Madre Oriental in the east; dense forests in south;

lowlands on Pacific coast; plains on Gulf Coast

Climate Hot and dry north; temperate central; tropical south, with rainy and dry seasons

Population 98.5 million

Agriculture Corn, beans, wheat, coffee, cotton, citrus fruit, sugar, tomatoes, barley, rice, soybeans; cattle, chickens

Major Industries Steel, chemicals, food and beverages, textiles, electronic goods

Major Ethnic Groups

Mestizo, European, Native American groups

Major Religion Christianity

GEOFACTS

Mexico

Highest Mountain Pico de Orizaba, 18,700 ft (5,700 m)

Longest River Rio Grande (source: Colorado, U.S.), 1,885 mi (3,035 km)

Largest City Mexico City, 8,236,960 people



- 1 What body of water borders Mexico on the west?
- 2 In what direction would you travel to reach the Mexican capital from Tijuana?
- 3 About how many miles apart are the cities of Guadalajara and Monterrey?
- 4 What kind of terrain would you expect to find near the city of Veracruz?