

1.1 Physical Geography

TECHTREK

myNGconnect.com For online maps of the region and Visual Vocabulary

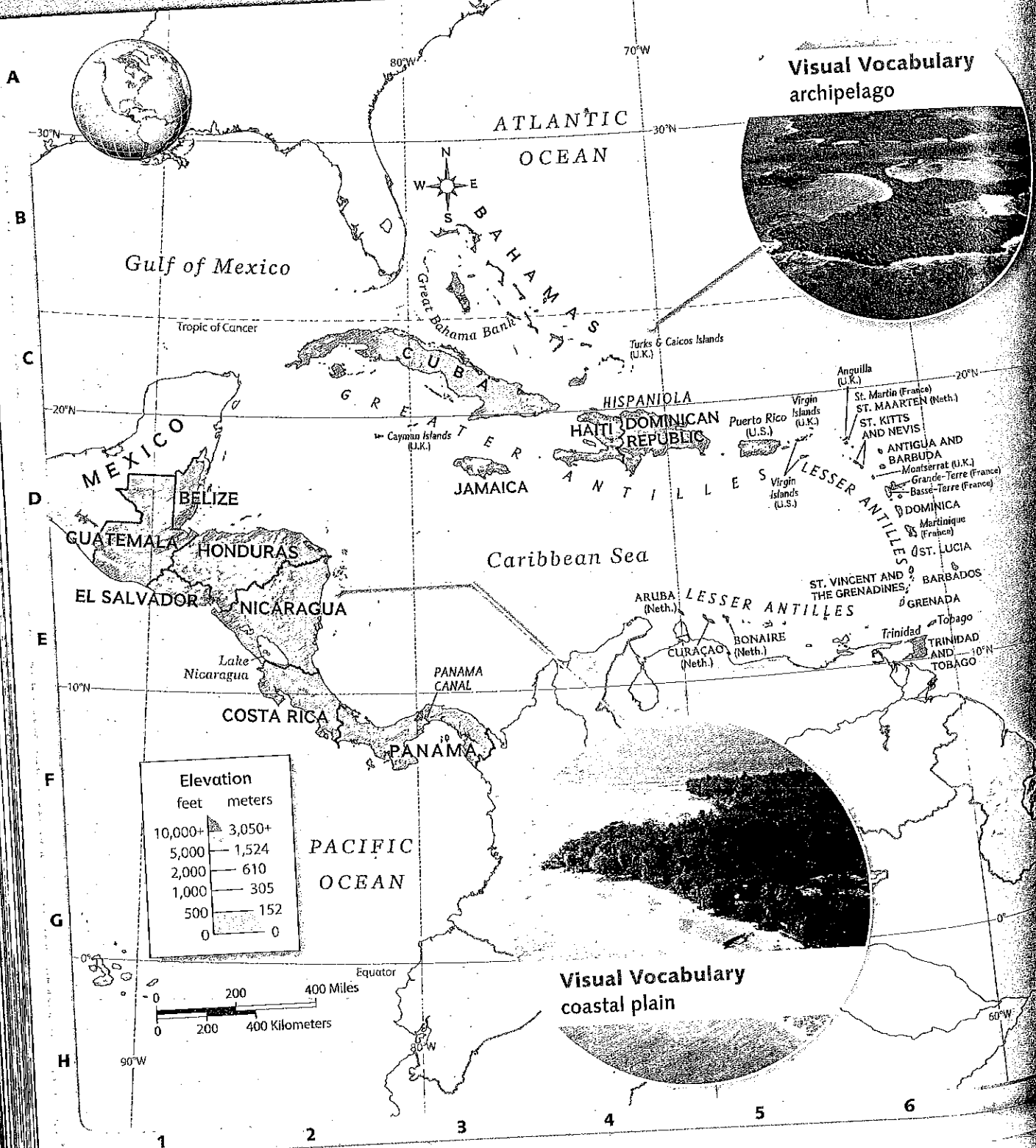


Maps and Graphs

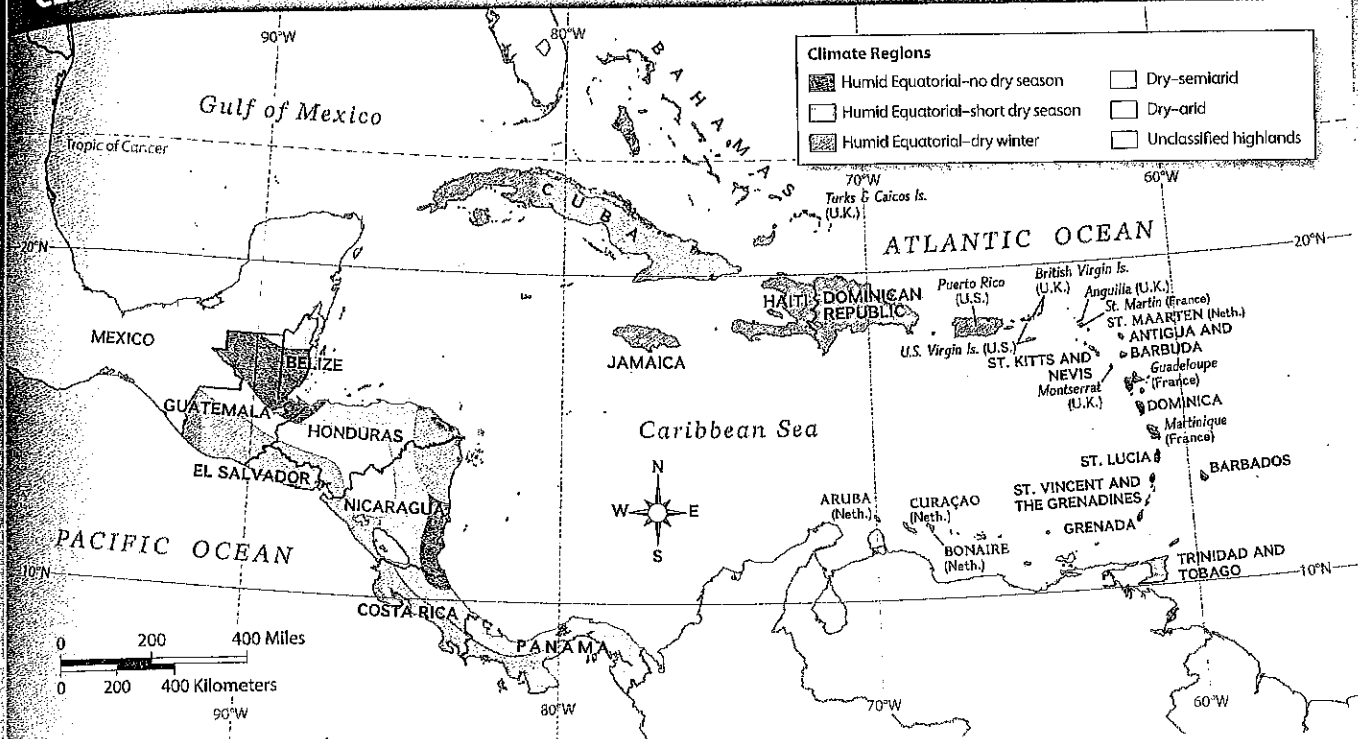


Digital Library

CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN PHYSICAL



CLIMATE



Main Idea Mountains, coastal plains, and rain forests are the main landforms that support the region's economy.

Central America and the Caribbean islands are located between the continents of North America and South America. The physical geography of the region supports the agriculture and tourism that are so valuable to the region's economy.

Central America

Central America is an **isthmus**, a narrow strip connecting two large land areas. A range of volcanic mountains spreads across the seven countries of the region. The climate in the mountains is cool and the rich volcanic soil is ideal for growing coffee beans, an important export. The **coastal plains**, which are the lowlands next to the seacoast, and the tropical **rain forests**—heavily wooded forests that may receive more than 100 inches of rain per year—provide resources that boost the economy.

The Caribbean Islands

The Caribbean islands curve in an **archipelago**, or chain of islands, between the Atlantic Ocean and the **Caribbean Sea**. Sugarcane, grown on coastal plains, is the leading crop. The climate is mild in winter and hot in summer, and attracts visitors year-round.

Before You Move On

Summarize In what ways do the main landforms of the region support the economy?

ONGOING ASSESSMENT MAP LAB

- 1. Location** Based on the physical map, where are the mountainous regions of Central America located?
- 2. Interpret Maps** What is the climate like on the Central American and Caribbean coasts?
- 3. Turn and Talk** Discuss with a classmate the differences in climate in the mountains and on the coastal plains. Where would you like to live?