Main Idea São Paulo is the largest city in the Southern Hemisphere and a major contributor to Brazil's economy.

São Paulo, Brazil, has grown from a quiet mission town to one of the world's **megacities**, or cities with more than 10 million people. It is a cultural and industrial center of South America.

Early Growth

Portuguese missionary priests founded São Paulo in 1554. They built a mission and school, which remained the focus of the town for many years. São Paulo was also a point of departure for military expeditions. Its hilltop location provided a natural defense and panoramic views of the surrounding area.

In the late 1600s, gold was discovered in the nearby mountains of the state of Minas Gerais. This resource proved extremely valuable, and by the mid-1700s, Brazil was producing nearly half of the world's supply of gold. Roughly 50 years later, gold deposits were mostly depleted. However, coffee production soon replaced gold mining as the main economic activity. By the mid-1800s, coffee had become a significant export crop. Wealth gained from coffee production transformed São Paulo and contributed to its rapid growth in industry and population.
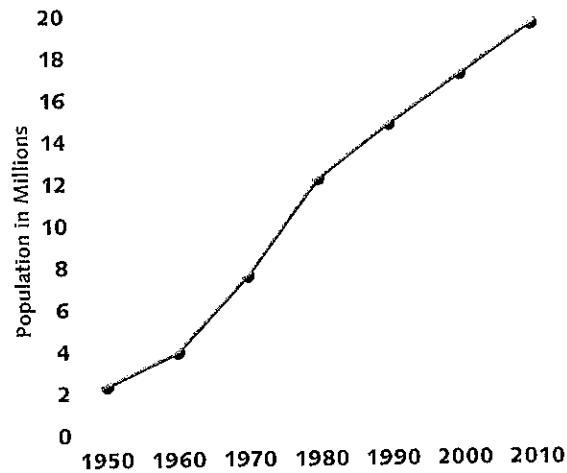
In just 20 years between 1880 and 1900, the population of São Paulo jumped from 35,000 to 240,000. Some of the population growth came from rural to urban migration. However, much of the city's growth was the result of immigration from Asia and Europe.

The Modern City

In the mid-1900s, São Paulo became the industrial center of Brazil. By the 1950s, the automotive industry was well

developed. Jobs in the industry attracted workers from other parts of Brazil and other South American countries. São Paulo continues to manufacture and export one million cars each year.

In addition to manufacturing industries, tourism has contributed to the city's economic growth. Today, São Paulo attracts people from countries all over the world. Visitors to São Paulo enjoy the city's beaches, its shopping district, its diverse collection of restaurants, and a bustling nightlife.

One result of the rapid expansion of São Paulo's economy is the explosive population growth since 1950. Many people who migrated there made their homes in **slums**, or overcrowded and

POPULATION GROWTH IN SÃO PAULO (1950–2010)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2010

poverty-stricken urban areas. Slums, or *favelas*, as they are called in Brazil, developed on the outskirts of the city. Slums are not unique to São Paulo, but are characteristic of large cities that experience rapid population growth.

Before You Move On

Summarize What industries are most important in São Paulo today?

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

DATA LAB

1. **Interpret Graphs** According to the graph, during what two decades did São Paulo experience the most rapid rate of growth? What accounts for that increase?

2. **Analyze Data** Using the data in the graph, how much larger in millions of people was São Paulo in 2010 than it was in 1950? How would you describe population growth in São Paulo since the 1990s?

3. **Make Inferences** In what ways might explosive population growth and the development of slums be related?

> **Critical Viewing** This fashion show in São Paulo demonstrates the modern energy of the city. What details in the photo tell you where the models are posing?