

## Chapter 10

### Geography of Mexico

- Hernan Cortes - Spanish explorer who conquered Mexico
  - Described physical features of Mexico as: Crumpled piece of paper
- Mountain ranges –
  - Sierra Madre Occidental – \_\_\_\_\_ coast
  - Sierra Madre Oriental – – \_\_\_\_\_ coast
  - Plateau (area of high, flat land) lies between
- The Heartland Region
- Natural Hazards
  - Central plateau is geologically unstable
  - Mexico is located at the intersection of \_\_\_\_\_ tectonic plates – North American, Caribbean, Pacific, and Cocos plates
- Climate Factors
  - Low precipitation to the north, moderate to the south
  - Higher elevation keeps temperatures mild, even though it is in the tropics

#### The Four Coastal Regions

1. Northern Pacific Coast
  - Dry, hot, and little population
  - Some of countries best farmlands – because of irrigation
  - Baja California – mostly mountainous desert
2. Southern Pacific Coast
  - Smaller mountain ranges
  - Little farmland
  - Large tourism business
3. Gulf Coast Plain
  - Vast deposits of petroleum and natural gas along the plain and offshore
  - One of world's major oil-producing regions
4. The Yucatan Peninsula
  - Generally flat
  - Limestone bedrock that creates underground caverns, Landscape is dotted with \_\_\_\_\_

- A Place of Three Cultures
- Plaza de las Tres Culturas
  - The Three Cultures – is located on the site of an Aztec center that fell to the Spanish in a 1521 battle
  - In the center there are restored ruins of an Aztec temple pyramid
    - One side has a 1609 Spanish church
    - Another side has twin office buildings of glass and concrete
    - A busy eight-lane highway runs past the plaza
- 3 Cultures
  1. Native American
  2. Spanish
  3. mestizo
- Aztecs and Spaniards
- Early 1400's, Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlan was center of an empire
  - Built on an island in a lake, current site of Mexico City
- The Spanish Conquest
  - Hernan Cortes, with 600 soldiers, marched into Tenochtitlan in 1519
  - Spaniards destroyed the Aztec empire within 2 years
  - Became colony of New Spain
- New Spain
  - Four social classes emerged
    1. Peninsulares – born in Spain
    2. Criollos – Spanish ancestry born in America
    3. Mestizos – mix of Native American and Europeans
    4. Indians – Native to America
- Road to Democracy

What events led to the eventual development of Democracy in Mexico?

- Resentment between classes
  - \_\_\_\_\_ – a criollos priest
  - Sparked a war for independence
- Independence did not mean democracy

- 100 years to achieve democracy
- End of 1800's, Mexico stable enough to attract foreign capital and industry
  - Oil reserves developed
- Gap between rich and poor grew even bigger

#### The Mexican Revolution

- 1910, peasants and middle-class Mexicans rebelled, standing up to the military dictator
  - By 1920, a new president and a new constitution
- Social Conditions
  - Rural Life
    - After the revolution, the government began program of buying out landowners and breaking up large haciendas – \_\_\_\_\_
    - **Ejidos** – farmland owned by members of a rural community practiced **subsistence farming**
    - 1/3 of Mexican farms are \_\_\_\_\_ (large commercial farms)
    - 3-4 million rural families are **migrant workers**
  - Urban Life
    - ¾ of Mexico's population live in cities
    - Better opportunity for jobs
    - Majority of people are very poor
  - Economic Activities
  - 1993, **NAFTA** (North American Free Trade Agreement) was designed to compete with the European Union, a free-trade network in Europe
  - Major Industries
    - Petroleum
    - \_\_\_\_\_ – the "smokeless industry"
  - Border Industries
    - \_\_\_\_\_ - factories that assemble products almost exclusively for consumers in the U.S.
      - Responsible for large amount of air and water pollution