Guided Reading Activity

Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands

Lesson 2 History of the Region

Essential Question: Why does conflict develop?

Mexico’s History

Directions: Complete the time line with key events in Mexico’s history.

A History of Central America

Directions: Use your textbook to help you fill in the blanks to describe the history of Central America.

1. The Maya lived in ____________ and ______________ in addition to Mexico. They remained in the region even after their civilization collapsed and they abandoned their great cities.

2. In the 1500s, the ______________ moved south after conquering Mexico and seized control of most of Central America. Britain took control of the area that is now ______________ in the early 1800s.

3. Central America gained ______________ soon after Mexico. They first united to form one government, but by 1840 they had separated into five independent countries: ______________, ______________, ______________, ______________, and ______________.
4. Around 1900 the United States helped ________________ gain independence from Colombia because the United States wanted to build a ________________ there.

5. The 1900s were a time of ________________ for most of Central America and many countries experienced ________________. Only two countries remained peaceful: ________________ and ________________.

**History of the Caribbean Islands**

**Directions:** Use your textbook to decide if each statement is true or false. Write T or F in the blank. If a statement is false, rewrite it correctly.

____ 1. The history of the Caribbean islands is almost identical to that of Mexico and Central America

____ 2. The numbers of native people of the Caribbean dropped after the arrival of the Europeans because of disease, overwork, and starvation.

____ 3. The European landowners brought in hundreds of thousands of European workers to work in sugar plantations.

____ 4. The Columbian Exchange was the name for the transfer of goods and people between Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

____ 5. Haiti was the first area in the Caribbean to gain independence.
6. The Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Puerto Rico won independence in 1844.

7. Following independence, rule by *caudillos* and poverty have remained problems in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

8. Fidel Castro became the leader of Cuba following a revolution in 1959.

9. During Castro’s rule, Cuba and the United States enjoyed a strong and positive relationship.

10. Because of their small size and few resources, many Caribbean islands depend on aid from the governments that used to run them as colonies.