



## Mexico

The country of Mexico is the third largest nation in terms of land area, and second largest nation in terms of population in North America. As of 2006, Mexico's population was well over 100,000,000 people. Mexico is located south of the United States and north of the nations of Belize and Guatemala. The Rio Bravo (called Rio Grande in America) forms much of the border between the United States and Mexico. Spanish is the official language of Mexico. Did you know that many of our words such as tornado, tomato, taco, armadillo, and banana come from the Spanish language? In fact, much of our land came from Mexico too. The states of Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, California, and Arizona were all part of Mexico before the Mexican War.

Mexico is a land full of contrasts. Northern parts of Mexico are dominated by the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts. The Sonoran Desert is the world's most biologically diverse desert and contains the world's entire supply of Saguaro Cacti. The central portion of Mexico is dominated by the mountainous Mexican Plateau. The southern parts are characterized by rainforests. Mexico's rainforests are high in biodiversity and feature animals such as jaguars, cougars, and exotic parrots. Mexico features high mountain ridges on its Pacific Coast and on its eastern sides. Its highest point is known as Pico de Orizaba, located near the city of Puebla. Pico de Orizaba rises 18,701 feet above sea level. It is the third highest mountain in North America, as well as the continent's highest volcano. Pico de Orizaba is classified as a dormant volcano, as it last erupted in 1846.

Mexico is well known as a popular tourist destination. People from all over the world come to bask on its beautiful beaches in Cancun and Acapulco. In addition, Mexico has dozens of important archaeological sites that preserve ancient Mayan ruins. The most famous site is Chichen Itza, a major Mayan City that lasted over 600 years on the Yucatan Peninsula.

As you can tell, there is a lot to do in Mexico and a lot of really neat things to see. For more information, stop by your local library and check out a book on Mexico, or, visit one of hundreds of websites dedicated to illustrating all that is wonderful about Mexico.

**1.) Where does Mexico rank among North American nations in terms of size?**

- A. 1st
- B. 2nd
- C. 3rd
- D. 4th

**2.) Which of the following words is probably NOT derived from the Spanish language?**

- A. tomato
- B. ketchup
- C. banana
- D. armadillo

**3.) Circle all of the following states that used to be part of Mexico.**

- A. Colorado
- B. Wisconsin
- C. Arizona
- D. Illinois

**4.) Which of the following statements is NOT true?**

- A. The Sonoran Desert is located in northern Mexico.
- B. The Chihuahuan Desert contains all of the world's Saguaro Cacti
- C. There are rainforests in southern Mexico.
- D. Central Mexico is dominated by the Mexican Plateau.

**5.) Which of the following forms the border between Mexico and the United States?**

- A. Rio Grande
- B. Rio Bravo
- C. All of the Above
- D. None of the Above

**6.) Which of the following IS NOT true about Pico de Orizaba?**

- A. It is the highest mountain in Mexico
- B. It is the highest volcano in North America
- C. It is the third highest mountain in North America
- D. It is the third highest volcano in North America

**7.) Where is Chichen Itza?**

- A. Guatemala
- B. northern Mexico
- C. Yucatan Peninsula
- D. Near Puebla

**8.) Which of the following would be most unlikely?**

- A. Finding a jaguar in a Mexican rainforest.
- B. Finding groves of Saguaro cacti in the Sonoran Desert.
- C. Watching a volcanic eruption from Pico de Orizaba.
- D. Watching people sunbathing in Acapulco.

**9.) Which nation DOES not border Mexico?**

- A. United States
- B. Canada
- C. Guatemala
- D. Belize

**10.) What would be a good title for this passage?**

- A. The story of Pico de Orizaba
- B. The Mexican people
- C. Mayan Ruins
- D. An Introduction to Mexico