

Geography

Mexico is the northernmost country in Latin America. It lies just south of the United States, with the Rio Grande forming part of the border between the two countries. To the south, Mexico borders the countries of Belize and Guatemala. The Pacific Ocean forms Mexico's western border, while the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea form its eastern borders.

More than two-thirds of Mexico consists of mountains and high, rolling plateaus. Two great mountain ranges extend along the coasts. They are called the Sierra Madre Occidental in the west and the Sierra Madre Oriental in the east. A series of volcanoes, known as the *Volcanic Axis*, extends across the southern portion of Mexico.



Project

Learn about the geography of Mexico by coloring a map.

Materials

- blank Mexico map
- Instructions for Coloring
- colored pencils (not crayons)
- black pen
- map of Mexico showing geographical features

Directions

1. Follow the Instructions for Coloring for the blank Mexico map. Use a geographical map of Mexico as a reference.

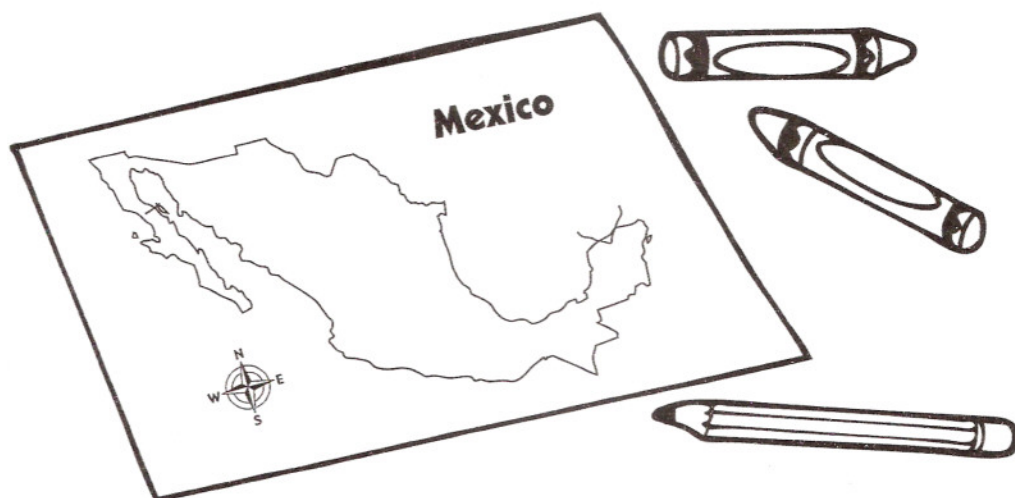
For the Teacher

1. Copy one Mexico map (page 5) per student.
2. Copy one Instructions for Coloring (page 4) per student.
3. Provide students with a geographical map of Mexico.



Instructions for Coloring

1. Draw in and color the river between Mexico and the United States blue. Label it *Rio Bravo del Norte*, its Mexican name.
2. Draw in and color the mountain range on the western coast brown and label it *Sierra Madre Occidental*. Draw in and color the mountain range on the east orange and label it *Sierra Madre Oriental*. Use the Glossary at the back of the book to see what the words "oriental" and "occidental" mean.
3. Color the area between the mountains green and label it *Plateau of Mexico*. This area is home to the majority of Mexican people, and it is the chief agricultural region. Add some cornstalks.
4. Mexico's three highest peaks, *Orizaba*, *Popocatepetl*, and *Ixtacihuatl*, are all volcanoes. *Paricutin* is another volcano. Label their locations and connect the volcanoes with a thick red line. This is the *Volcanic Axis*, a series of volcanoes that extends across the southern edge of the Plateau of Mexico. Many of these volcanoes are active! Draw some smoke coming out of the volcanoes.
5. Color the coastline along the *Gulf of Mexico* purple. The northern part of this region is dry and covered with low thorny bushes and trees. Draw a thorny bush. As you go south, rainfall increases. The southern-most portion is a tropical rain forest. Draw a big green tree.
6. Label and color the *Sierra Madre del Sur* yellow. The Aztecs found much of their gold in the eastern portion of this area. Draw a gold nugget. Look up the definition of the word "sur" in the Glossary.
7. Label and color the *Yucatán Peninsula* pink. This area is a low limestone plateau. Limestone dissolves in water. The great pits that formed in the limestone by rain became sacred wells of the Maya. Draw a well.
8. Locate and label the capital, *Ciudad de México* (Mexico City). Mark it with a big star.



Mexico

