



What should I already know?

- I live in or near the town of Cinderford in Gloucestershire.
- Gloucestershire is in England, which is a country. England, which is in the United Kingdom, is in the continent of Europe.
- Our climate is **temperate**
- The seven continents and five oceans including North and South America

Chihuahuan Desert

Part of the desert lies in northern Mexico. The desert has hot summers and cold winters. The desert is home to thousands of species, including hundreds of types of cactus, the Mexican wolf and the roadrunner. The land is being changed by farming. Farm animals eat all the grass leaving just shrubs. The Mexican pronghorn has almost completely disappeared because it's lost its habitat.

Lacandon Jungle

The tropical rainforests of Mexico are warm and wet all year. The jungle contains many endangered animals: jaguars, spider monkeys and scarlet macaws. The rainforest has been destroyed by slash-and-burn agriculture. The ash from the fires makes the soil fertile but only for a couple of years before farmers have to burn down more.

Features of Mexico

Human

Mexico has many villages, towns and cities. The capital city in Mexico is Mexico City, one of the biggest cities in the world. Mexico City began as the home of an ancient empire and grew into a massive, modern metropolis. Many tourists visit Mexico, especially the coast and Mayan and Aztec ancient structures. Mexico's main exports include vehicles and electrical machinery. The main language is Spanish.

Physical

There are deep canyons, peninsulas, tall mountains, dry deserts, national parks and forests. There is a long coastline, which attracts many tourists. Central Mexico is mountainous, with peaks reaching over 16,000 feet in elevation. Many of these peaks are volcanic - volcanic soil is very fertile. Because of this soil and the fresh water from the mountains, the valleys of central Mexico were home to some of the oldest settled civilizations in the world.



Technical vocabulary

desert	large, extremely dry area of land with sparse vegetation
temperate	a region with mild temperatures
roadrunner	a bird that can run up to 20 miles an hour
shrubs	a small to medium woody plant
habitat	the place where an animal or plant normally lives
tropical	places near the equator that are hot and moist year-round.
endangered	seriously at risk of extinction
slash-and-burn	farmers burn down parts of the rainforest to make room for crops
fertile	land capable of producing lots of crops or vegetation
metropolis	the capital or chief city of a country or region
canyon	a deep, steep-sided valley that usually has a river at the bottom
peninsula	a land form mostly surrounded by water and connected to the mainland which it extends from
humid	high level of water vapour in the atmosphere
biodiverse	having a big variety of plant and animal species
biomes	an area which has similar plants, animals and climate

Values

Challenge	What challenges are farmers facing in Mexico?
Commit	How can we commit to the environment?
Conquer	How do farmers conquer the challenges they face?
Celebrate	Should we celebrate the work that farmers are doing?

What will I know by the end of the unit?

- Mexico is in the continent of North America (and subcontinent of Central America).
- The Tropic of Cancer effectively divides the country into temperate and tropical zones
- Mexican society is characterized by extremes of wealth and poverty.
- Along the coast it is hot and humid, unbearably so in the summer. Inland communities are much dryer and more temperate. Mexico City, with its much higher elevation of 7545 ft (2300 meters) above sea level, can reach freezing temperatures in the winter.