

*North American*  
**GEO QUEST**  
A 13 part *Hist-ography Series*



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Presents

*North American*  
**GEO QUEST**  
*Series*



A 13 Part *Hist-ography Series*

**MEXICO**

**Baja Peninsula • Central Mexico • Mexico West  
Northern Mexico • Yucatan Peninsula**

*INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

The purpose of this video series is to provide students with a stimulating overview of both the history and the geographical regions of the United States, the Provinces of Canada, and Mexico. Specifically developed to enhance the social studies curriculum, **North American GeoQuest** is a 13-part **Histo-geography series**.

Filmed on location, these videos present *spectacular photography* along with *dynamic computer graphics*. Other features include; important historical figures, commerce, capital cities, significant points of interest and more! These videos also inform students of the relationships between the geologic, geographical and historical effects upon a region's past and present developments. Some geologic and geographical developments include the formation of mountains, lakes, volcanoes and glaciers and how these strongly influence a region's culture and history.

By understanding the profiles of these regions, students will acquire the knowledge that will define a *balance between the past and present*. Furthermore, as students study these videos, they will learn the geography of North America and about their own *heritage and those of others*. As a complementary device with the video, this instructional guide suggests exercises to help aid teachers, parents and students. These exercises will reinforce and further develop a student's level of comprehension. The instructional guide provides:

### DVDs Allow:

- students to actively participate in the learning experience
- for greater flexibility and interactive learning
- for custom user interfaces
- for a level of control over learning
- for the learner to become more engaged
- for the enhancement of the learning process by combining media and text

### Vocabulary!

### Chronology!

### Discussion Points/Activities!

## GEOQUEST 13 Part Series

*Pacific Region*

*Mountain West Region*

*Midwest Region*

*Southwest Region*

*Mississippi River Region*

*New England Region*

*Great Lakes Region*

*Mid-Atlantic Region*

*Southeast Region*

*Washington D.C.*

*Eastern Canadian Provinces*

*Western Canadian Provinces*

*Mexico*

## Available Fall 2002 - Central America Geoquest

- Belize • Costa Rica • El Salvador
- Guatemala • Honduras • Nicaragua • Panama

### Suggested Usage:

Geography, History, Social Studies,  
Language Arts, Commerce, Environment

Intermediate, Jr. High, General

Approx. 22 minutes each video 1998

Permission granted to copy the following  
exercises provided in this guide for educational use ONLY.

On the dotted line, list the name of the regions as discussed in the video. Then, use this map as part of discussion point #5 to indicate other significant points of interests.



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# MEXICO

Descendants of the ancient indian cultures, were the first known inhabitants to occupy this land. Later, the first European settlers, mostly from Spain, began to explore this region during the mid 1500's.

Throughout its early history Mexico had been dominated by numerous Indian cultures. Migrating from Asia, these ancient people settled throughout Mexico and into the southern tip of South America. For many years archeologists have studied one of the most famous of Mexican indian tribes, the Mayas. These studies indicate that Mayan society was very well educated and had developed an organized system in hieroglyphic writing, advanced math, agricultural methods and other related disciplines. After the decline of the Mayan civilization another dominate tribe, the Aztecs, surfaced in Mexico. The Aztecs built and finally settled in the city of Tenochtitlan, known today as Mexico City. Like the Mayas, the Aztecs developed sophisticated systems to eventually become a powerful empire. While these were the two primary tribes, smaller Indian cultures also existed throughout the region. Regardless of size, virtually all of these communities practiced human sacrifices to request favors from the Gods. These early tribes claimed this land, until the arrival of Spanish conquistador, Hernando Cortez in 1521.

Along with its rich history Mexico also has geographical significance. From its colorful sunsets, mystical deserts, grandiose canyons/mountains, and ancient Indian ruins, Mexico offers the ultimate diversity in natural wonders. Each year, millions of travelers visit this region to capture its unique artistry .

As we study Mexico, we not only begin to witness the results of nature but also the birth of a nation. Embedded in rich tradition, this region cultivates the knowledge from the past, which re-examines the present, to further inform the future.

**AZTECS:** Descendants of the Paleo-Indians, this Indian tribe created one of the most powerful empires in Central America, from the 15th to 16th centuries, until the arrival of Spanish conquistador, Hernando Cortez.

**CALENDAR STONE:** A circular stone sculpture which represents the Aztec universe. Measuring 12 feet in diameter, this stone was used in ceremonies honoring the sun god Tonatiuh. Included in its carvings, are the days of the Aztec month and religious symbols related to the worship of the sun god.

**EL CASTILLO:** Also known as "The Castle", this Mayan pyramid is located at Chichen Itza in the middle of the Yucatan Peninsula. At the fall equinox, thousands of travelers visit the pyramid to witness the sun's pattern of a serpent slithering down its ancient steps.

**FLOWER WARS:** Throughout history, most Indian cultures in Mexico practiced human sacrifice. Instead of being killed, the soldiers captured during Indian tribal wars, otherwise known as "flower wars", were used as a human sacrifice. These human offerings would hopefully bring special favors from the ancient Indian Gods.

**HACIENDA:** Most commonly described in Spanish speaking countries as a large estate, plantation or dwelling. After Cortez destroyed the Aztec empire, many Spanish settlers established haciendas throughout Mexico. Built on thousands of acres of land, many of these haciendas produced crops for its owners, through the labor of Indian peasant slaves.

5. Draw a map (if you like, use a computer or the map provided on page 8) of Mexico, indicating significant points of interest. For example, the capital cities, i.e. Guadalajara, Jalisco; important events, i.e. The Mexican War in 1846-48, or the names of early explorers, i.e. Hernando Cortez etc..

6. Mexico is well known for its Indian influence. Name some of these cultural influences, i.e. architecture, and explain why these influences remain so vital to the growth of this region?

7. If possible, arrange a trip near your community to visit museums, cultural centers, state parks etc. to stimulate your imagination to explore the beautiful history of Mexico.

## Discussion Points/Activities

1. Today such conveniences as computers, telephones, automobiles, electricity, etc. are used to enhance our modern day lives. Explain how these enhancements differ to those used during the time early Indian tribes discovered Mexico. Use this information for the following study points/activities.

2. Imagine what it would be like to be a member of an early Indian tribe. Discuss issues which may have concerned these early tribes: weather conditions, commerce, regional terrain, food/vegetation, dealing with foreign policy issues with Mexico, Spain, France, etc..

3. Both geographical and historical information has been documented throughout the world. Explain why this type of information is important when studying Mexico, and how it relates to our everyday lives? Furthermore, how do the disciplines of geography and history interact or relate with other areas of study in your school's curriculum?

4. Since tensions must have existed between the U.S. and Mexico (*i.e. The Alamo, Mexican War*) assemble the students into small groups to negotiate or debate the interests of these groups.

**HERNANDO CORTEZ:** In the early 1500's, Cortez a Spanish conquistador, landed at the port city of Vera Cruz and eventually conquered the Aztec Empire.

**MAYAS:** An indian culture which occupied the Yucatan Peninsula from 250-900 a.d. As a developed civilization, the Mayas improved upon the inherited practices from earlier societies to further advance the methods used in agriculture, astronomy, architecture (pyramids) and hieroglyphic writing.

**MAYAN TRAIL:** This popular route is used by travelers to circle the Yucatan Peninsula while viewing the most important Mayan cities.

**MEXICO:** Known as the far south region of the North American Continent. Officially called the "United Mexican States" divided into 38 states, with the nation's capitol in Mexico City.

**MIGUEL HIDALGO:** A priest and a leader of the Mexican Revolution in 1810.

**NORTH AMERICA:** The third largest continent in the world consisting of Canada, the United States, Mexico and Central America.

**TEMPLE MAYOR:** Discovered in 1970 while digging a subway tunnel, this main Aztec Pyramid, located in Mexico City, housed many artifacts including the calendar stone.

**TEOTIHUCAN:** Located about 30 miles northeast of Mexico City, this area is the home of great ancient pyramids and other mass structures, making it known as one of the largest archeological sites in Mexico.

**STELLE:** Stone tablets discovered at the Mayan ruins of Coba, near the coastal city of Tulum on the Yucatan Peninsula. These stone tablets produced hieroglyphic writings detailing the stories of kings and wars fought during the history of the Mayan people.

# Chronology of MEXICO

**10,000 years ago:** Descendants of the Paleo-Indians cross the Bering Strait land bridge between Alaska and Russia, eventually migrating into the area known today as Mexico.

**600 B.C.:** Rise and fall of Teotihuacan.

**250-900:** The Mayas occupy the Yucatan Peninsula and develop one of the first major tribal societies.

**early 1300's:** The Aztecs begin to build the city of Tenochtitlan.

**1400-1500's:** The rise and fall of the Aztec empire.

**early 1500's:** Spanish conquistador , Hernando Cortez conquers the Aztec empire.

**1530:** Guadalupe is founded.

**1810:** Guadalupe is named city headquarters by Fr. Miguel Hidalgo a leader of the Mexico revolution .

**1836:** At the Alamo, 187 Texans, while seeking Texas independence, battle 5,000 Mexican soldiers.

**1846-48:** Mexican War begins between the U.S. and Mexico over the territory existing along the U.S.-Mexican border.

**1970:** The discovery of Temple Mayor, the main Aztec pyramid. Also included in this discovery is the calendar stone used by the Aztecs.

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