

Name: _____ Class: _____

Central America Notes

1. Central America is a narrow bridge of land south of Mexico that includes 7 countries:
 - Belize
 - Costa Rica
 - El Salvador
 - Guatemala
 - Honduras
 - Nicaragua
 - Panama
2. Although Central America is made up of 7 countries, it is smaller in size than the state of Texas.
3. The Pacific Ocean lies to the west, and the Caribbean Sea lies to the east.

Ring of Fire

1. The chain of mountains that runs through much of Central America is part of a global geographic zone called the Ring of Fire.
2. The **Ring of Fire** is a circle of volcanoes around the Pacific Ocean.
3. The movement of Earth's tectonic plates in this zone causes frequent volcanic eruptions, as well as earthquakes.
4. As a result, eruptions & earthquakes are a constant danger in Central America.
- 5.
6. In Nicaragua alone, there is a line of about 40 active volcanoes along the western coast.
7. Volcanic eruptions in Central America often damage crops and buildings.
8. The ash from the eruptions help keep the soil fertile. This is why most people live along the sides of the mountains. There they earn a living on tiny farms.
9. The mountain areas of Central America are also where many plantations, or large farms, are located. Central America's highland plantations produce much of the world's coffee crop

Belize:

1. Only about 350,000 people live in Belize
2. Belize's jungle areas are home to Mayan ruins
3. Belize is the only Central American country with English as its official language.
4. About 1 million tourist visit each year
5. The Blue Hole a popular spot among recreational scuba divers

Belize's Blue Hole

1. The blue hole was once a _____
2. How deep is it? _____
3. what rare bird live nearby? _____

Costa Rica

1. Costa Rica has a population of 4.5 million
2. There are 800 miles of coastline
3. There are 7 active volcanoes
4. More than 25% of Costa Rica's land is dedicated to national parks

Panama

1. At the southernmost end of Central America is the Isthmus of Panama.
2. The isthmus at its narrowest point measures only about 30 miles wide.
3. Near this point the Panama Canal, a human-made waterway, cuts through the isthmus and links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Panama Canal

1. Before the Panama Canal was completed in 1914, a ship going from New York City to San Francisco had to travel around the southern tip of South America.
2. The whole trip was more than 13,000 miles.
3. By way of the Panama Canal, the trip is only about 5,200 miles.
4. The United States built the Panama Canal at a cost of \$380 million.
5. It took 10 years to complete.
6. Today, the country of Panama owns and operates the canal as an important waterway in world trade.

Caribbean Geography

1. The Caribbean consists of a chain, or archipelago, of many islands in the Caribbean Sea, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean.
2. An archipelago is a chain of many islands.
3. 3 groups of islands make up the Caribbean.
 - a. The Bahamas
 - b. The Greater Antilles
 - c. The Lesser Antilles
 - d. *Greater* and *lesser* in these names refer to the sizes of the islands.

The Greater Antilles

1. 4 large islands
 - a. Cuba
 - b. Hispaniola
 - c. Jamaica
 - d. Puerto Rico
2. Cuba is the largest of the 4 islands
3. About the size of Tennessee
4. Only 90 miles south of Florida
5. Includes 1600 other smaller islands
6. Varied landscape
 - a. Mountains, hills, rolling plains, wide, fertile valleys, rain forests
7. Hispaniola is covered by Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
8. Puerto Rico is the smallest island in the Greater Antilles and is about the size of Delaware.

The Lesser Antilles

1. SE of Puerto Rico
2. Divided into 2 groups
 - a. Leeward Islands
 - b. Windward Islands
3. The NE trade winds are the reason for dividing them.
4. The trade winds are winds that consistently blow from the NE toward the equator. These winds give the Lesser Antilles a mild climate all year long, but also put them in danger of hurricanes.

The Bahamas

1. The Bahamas are the northernmost group of islands in the Caribbean.
2. They are only 50 miles off the eastern coast of Florida.
3. Made up of about 700 hundred islands and 2,400 cays.
4. Cays are small low-lying islands made of sand, limestone, or coral.
5. Coral is a hard, stony substance made up of skeletons of many tiny sea animals.
6. Of the 700 islands in the Bahamas, people live on only about 20.