SS6G4

The student will describe the cultural characteristics of people who live in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Element A

Describe the results of blending of ethnic groups in Latin America and the Caribbean

How did colonization lead to cultural blending ?

Indian Civilizations

Long before Europeans came to Latin America highly **developed civilizations** lived in the region.

Millions of people were controlled under three main empires:

Aztec
Inca
Maya

Once the Spanish gained control of Latin America they subdued the natives and made them either slaves or virtual peasants. Many of them also died from diseases the Europeans brought with them. the This was the start of cultural blending.

THE BLENDING OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- The languages, customs, beliefs, and even the foods from an area are a result of its history. Latin America also has diversity in its races.

- Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans were the largest groups.

- Members of these groups have intermarried and developed unique cultures over time.

Review Questions

- What happened to many native people when the Europeans arrived?

- What are the three main sources of the cultural groups of Latin America and the Caribbean?

- What caused this diversity in cultures?

THE BLENDING OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- In order to get workers, Europeans brought Africans to the New World and forced them to work as slaves.

- Descendants of these people live there today.

- There are also people of mixed ancestry. Mulattoes in Brazil, Panama, and the West Indies are numerous.

- **Mulattoes** ancestors were both African and European.

- Most of the people in Venezuela are mestizos.

- **Mestizos** ancestors were both European and Native American.

Religion

- The main religion in Latin America and the Caribbean is Roman Catholic.

- However, the practices of Native Americans and Africans have blended with Roman Catholic beliefs.

- Unique festivals such as the "Day of the Dead" in Mexico is one result of Native American and European beliefs.

- This holiday coincides with the Catholic All Saints' Day.

THE BLENDING OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- The groups in Latin America are proud of their heritage.

- There are some problems, though.

- People with European ancestors often have more important jobs, better education and health care, and more money than others.

- Native Americans, blacks, and mestizos have begun to demand equality in their countries.

- In Bolivia, for instance, a Native American was elected president for the first time in 2005.

Element A: Describe the results of blending of ethnic groups in Latin America and the Caribbean

Review Questions

- Why were Africans brought to the New World?

- Where do the mulattoes trace their ancestry?

- Where do the mestizos trace their ancestry?

- What is the predominant religion in Latin America?

- Explain how the "Day of the Dead" is an example of blended culture.

- Even though people in Latin America are proud of their diverse heritage, what problems exist because of it?

Element B

Explain why Latin America is a region based on the languages of Portuguese and Spanish

THE REGION OF "LATIN AMERICA" AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE LANGUAGES

- Christopher Columbus made his first famous voyage to the New World in 1492.

- He was working for the king and queen of Spain trying to find a quick and safe passage to China.

- He hoped such a passage would be profitable to him and the Spanish king and queen.

- Of course, we now know that Columbus did not reach China or anywhere in Asia.

- He had, in fact, "discovered" continents unknown to the Europeans at that time.
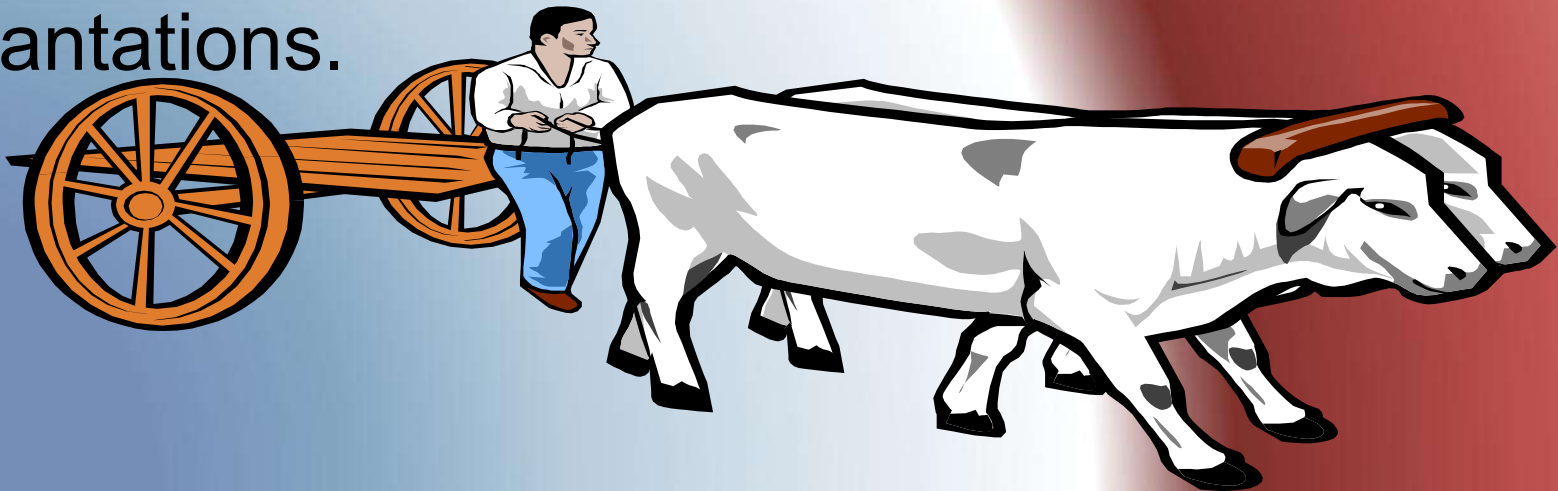
Christopher Columbus

THE REGION OF "LATIN AMERICA" AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE LANGUAGES

- Over the next two hundred years, Spain, its neighbor Portugal, and other European countries sent ships to explore these new lands.

- The Spanish explored, conquered, and settled areas of Florida, Mexico, and large parts of Central and South America.

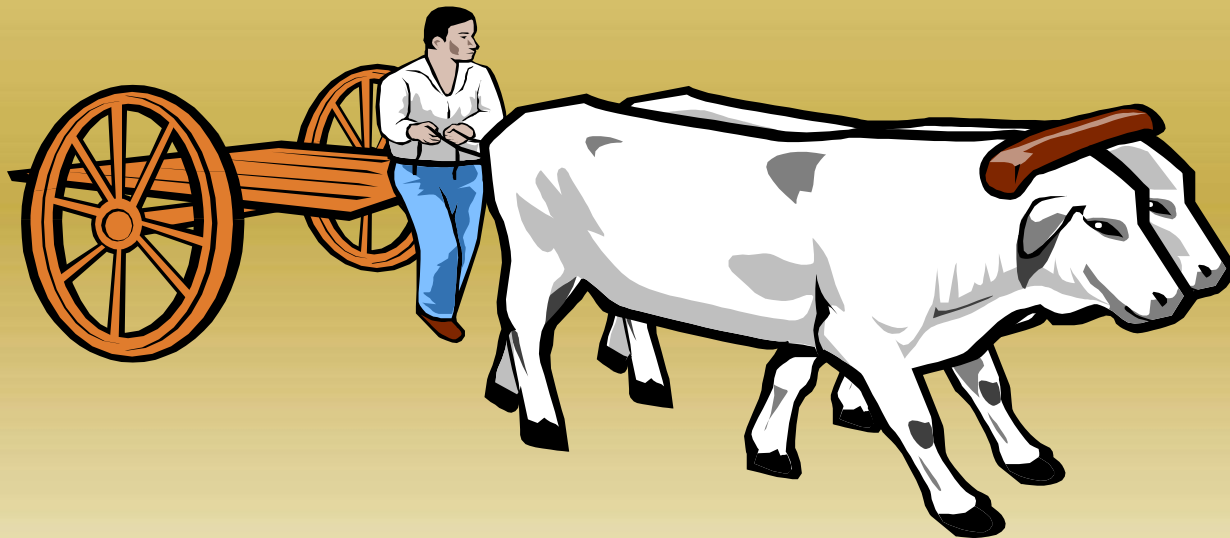- The Spanish also claimed many islands of the West Indies. Portugal's claim was Brazil.

THE REGION OF "LATIN AMERICA" AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE LANGUAGES

- The Portuguese and Spanish followed similar patterns in their history in the region.

- Each conquered the native population and attempted to use these people as a source of slave labor.

- Africans were later imported as slaves to work in mines and large farms such as sugar cane plantations.

THE REGION OF "LATIN AMERICA" AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE LANGUAGES

- The British colonies in North America fought for independence from their mother country, Great Britain.

- In the same way, the regions of Central and South America fought for independence from Spain and Portugal. Spain lost Mexico in the early 1800s.

- By 1898, Puerto Rico, the last Spanish colony in the New World, had been ceded to the United States.

THE REGION OF "LATIN AMERICA" AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE LANGUAGES

- French, English, Dutch, and hundreds of native languages are spoken in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

- Despite this fact, the term Latin America was started in the 1800s to group the countries that spoke mostly languages based on the ancient Latin language (Spanish and Portuguese).

THE REGION OF "LATIN AMERICA" AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE LANGUAGES

- The shared history and culture, and the dominance of Portuguese and Spanish languages, have made the term Latin America one that unites Central and South America and the Caribbean based on its two primary languages.

- The English language is based on an ancient German language.

- So, English-speaking countries of North America are not included in the term Latin America.

Element B Explain why Latin America is a region based on the languages of Portuguese and Spanish

Review Questions

- Explain why Columbus's voyage was so important.

- Which lands in the New World were claimed by Spain?

- Which lands were claimed by Portugal?

- Explain how both the Spanish and Portuguese were similar in their history of conquering this new region.

- How did the colonies set up by the Spanish and Portuguese gain their independence?

- What languages are spoken in Latin America?

- Explain why this area is called Latin America.

Element C

Evaluate how the literacy rate affects the standard of living.

LITERACY AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN LATIN AMERICA

- A literate person is one who can read and write.
- Literacy is a major factor in whether a person is able to get a job and be successful in the workplace.
- The countries of Latin America have improved the literacy rate of their people.
- On average, 89 percent of the people in Latin America and the Caribbean are literate.
- That leaves an illiteracy rate of 11 percent.
- The standard of living (the "economic level" achieved by a person, family, or country) is often lower in countries where the illiteracy rate is high.
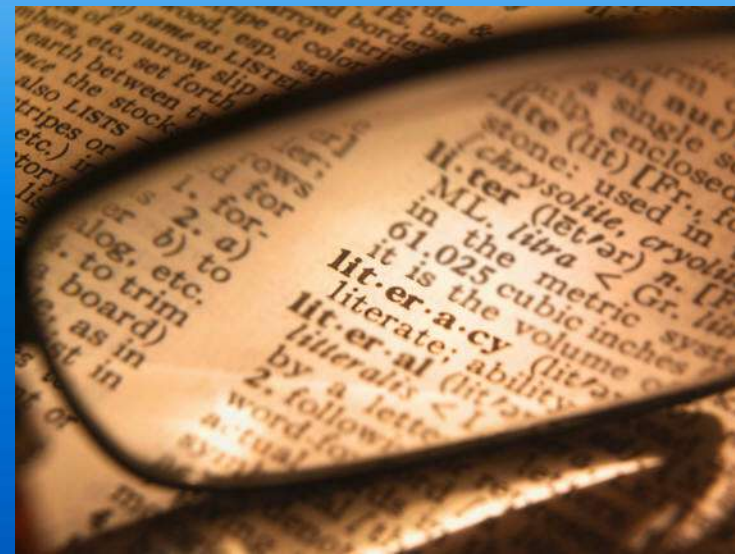
LITERACY AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN LATIN AMERICA

- One reason that many of the poor cannot learn to read and write is because their communities cannot afford to pay for teachers and schools.

- Having these basic skills, however, is important.

- Without the basic skills of reading and writing, workers are stuck in the lowest-paying jobs.

- Countries with large numbers of illiterate workers cannot build and operate modern industries.

LITERACY AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN LATIN AMERICA

- A cycle of poverty can develop in which people cannot get an education, so they can only get low-paying jobs.

- Because they can only get low-paying jobs, they cannot get enough money to pay for their children's education.

- The standard of living remains low for these families because their education level remains low.

Review Questions

- What does the term literacy mean?

- Why is literacy important?

- How does the literacy rate affect the standard of living?

- What is one reason why many people cannot read or write?

- What are the effects of not being able to read or write?

- What is the cycle of poverty?