## Sixth Grade Central America Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Questions</th>
<th>Enduring Understandings</th>
<th>GLCEs</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>District Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why does where you live influence how you live?</td>
<td>Political instability has been a constant in Central America’s history.</td>
<td>History H1.1.2</td>
<td>Required: Sixth Grade Central America Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do peoples preserve their traditional culture while adapting to modern life?</td>
<td>Geography, climate and natural resources affect the way people live and work.</td>
<td>W2.1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do people use and preserve natural resources?</td>
<td>Societies have evolved over time.</td>
<td>W3.1.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Central America is a geographic region made up of different countries with different forms of government.</td>
<td>W3.1.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Global views of preservation conflict with local needs for resources found in the rainforest.</td>
<td>W3.1.5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Key Terms &amp; Vocabulary</td>
<td>H1.2.1</td>
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- **History H1.1.2**
  - Compare and contrast several different calendar systems used in the past and present and their cultural significance.

- **W2.1.4**
  - Use evidence to identify defining characteristics of early civilizations and early pastoral nomads (government, language, religion, social structure, technology, and division of labor).

- **W3.1.3**
  - Describe similarities and difference among Mayan, Aztec, and Incan societies, including economy, religion, and role and class structure.

- **W3.1.4**
  - Describe the regional struggles and changes in governmental systems among the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan Empires.

- **W3.1.5**
  - Construct a timeline of main events on the origin and development of early and classic ancient civilizations of the Western Hemisphere (Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, and Incan).

- **H1.2.1**
  - Explain how historians use a variety of sources to explore the past (e.g., artifacts, primary and secondary sources including narratives, technology, historical maps, visual/mathematical quantitative data, radiocarbon dating, DNA analysis).
# Sixth Grade Central America Unit

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>H1.2.5</th>
<th>Identify the role of the individual in history and the significance of one person’s ideas.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1.4.1</td>
<td>Describe and use cultural institutions to study an era and a region (political, economic, religion/belief, science/technology, written language, education, family).</td>
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**Geography**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>G3.2.2</th>
<th>Identify ecosystems and explain why some are more attractive for humans to use than are others (e.g., mid-latitude forest in North America, high latitude of Peru, tropical forests in Honduras, fish or marine vegetation in coastal zones).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G5.1.1</td>
<td>Describe the environmental effects of human action on the atmosphere (air), biosphere (people, animals, and plants), lithosphere (soil), and hydrosphere (water) (e.g., changes in the tropical forest environments in Brazil, Peru, and Costa Rica).</td>
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<td>G5.2.1</td>
<td>Describe the effects that a change in the physical environment could have on human activities and the choices people would have to make in adjusting to the change (e.g., drought in northern Mexico, disappearance of forest vegetation in the Amazon, natural hazards and disasters from volcanic eruptions in Central America and the Caribbean and earthquakes in Mexico City and Colombia).</td>
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<tr>
<td>G2.1.1</td>
<td>Describe the landform features and the climate of the region (within the Western or Eastern Hemispheres) under study.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Civics and Government</th>
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<tr>
<td>C3.6.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Define the characteristics of a nation-state (a specific territory, clearly defined boundaries, citizens, and jurisdiction over people who reside there, laws, and government), and how Western Hemisphere nations interact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C4.3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain the geopolitical relationships between countries (e.g., petroleum and arms purchases in Venezuela and Ecuador; foreign aid for health care in Nicaragua).</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3.6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define the characteristics of a nation-state (a specific territory, clearly defined boundaries, citizens, and jurisdiction over people who reside there, laws, and government), and how Western Hemisphere nations interact.</td>
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<th>Economics</th>
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<td>E3.1.1</td>
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<td>Use charts and graphs to compare imports and exports of different countries in the Western Hemisphere and propose generalizations about patterns of economic interdependence.</td>
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### Sixth Grade Central America Unit Lessons Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>GLCEs</th>
<th>Included Resources</th>
<th>Needed Resources</th>
<th>Suggested Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>Mapping Central America</td>
<td>G3.2.1, G1.3.1, G1.2.4, G1.2.5, G1.2.3, G1.1.1, G2.1.1</td>
<td>Background information, Central America maps</td>
<td>Google Earth, Atlas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>Regions</td>
<td>G1.2.1, G4.1.1, G1.3.1, G2.1.1, G2.1.2, G2.2.1, H1.4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>United Streaming Video: Regions of the World: South and Central America, Internet, books</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>Gaining Independence</td>
<td>H1.2.4, W1.2.1</td>
<td>Timeline Template</td>
<td>Central America History Timeline: <a href="http://www.timelineindex.com">http://www.timelineindex.com</a></td>
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
Sixth Grade Central America Unit

Lesson 1

Title: Geography of Central America: Mapping Central America

Grade Level: 6

Unit of Study: Central America

GLCE:
G3.2.1 Explain how and why ecosystems differ as a consequence of differences in latitude, elevation, and human activities (e.g., South America’s location relative to the equator, effects of elevations on temperature and growing season, proximity to bodies of water and the effects on temperature and rainfall, effects of annual flooding on vegetation along river flood plains such as the Amazon).
G1.3.1 Use the fundamental themes of geography (location, place, human environment interaction, movement, region) to describe regions or places on earth.
G1.2.4 Use observations from air photos, photographs (print and CD), films (VCR and DVD) as the basis for answering geographic questions about the human and physical characteristics of places and regions.
G1.2.5 Use information from modern technology such as Geographic Positioning System (GPS), Geographic Information System (GIS), and satellite remote sensing to locate information and process maps and data to analyze spatial patterns of the Western Hemisphere to answer geographic questions.
G1.2.3 Use data to create thematic maps and graphs showing patterns of population, physical terrain, rainfall, and vegetation, analyze the patterns and then propose two generalizations about the location and density of the population.
G.1.1.1 Describe how geographers use mapping to represent places and natural and human phenomena in the world.
G2.1.1 Describe the landform features and the climate of the region (within the Western or Eastern Hemispheres) under study.

Time: 1-2 Days (flexible)

Abstract: In this lesson students will create a map of Central America.

Key Concepts: Identify the location of the countries of Central America.

Sequence of Activities:
1. Use Google Earth or examine a map of Central America and identify each region and its countries. Discuss absolute and relative location.

2. Students will create a map of Central America, including countries, major cities and landforms.

Connections: Art, Math (through use of rulers and measurement tools)

Calhoun ISD Social Studies Curriculum Design Project
Sixth Grade Central America Unit

Resources
Google Earth
World Atlas
Sixth Grade Central America Unit

Lesson 2

Title: Geography of Central America: Regions

Grade Level: 6

Unit of Study: Central America

GLCE:
G1.2.1 Locate the major landforms, rivers (Amazon, Mississippi, Missouri, Colorado), and climate regions of the Western Hemisphere.
G4.1.1 Identify and explain examples of cultural diffusion within the Americas (e.g., baseball, soccer, music, architecture, television, languages, health care, Internet, consumer brands, currency, restaurants, international migration).
G1.3.1 Use the fundamental themes of geography (location, place, human environment interaction, movement, region) to describe regions or places on earth.
G2.1.1 Describe the landform features and the climate of the region (within the Western or Eastern Hemispheres) under study.
G2.1.2 Account for topographic and human spatial patterns (where people live) associated with tectonic plates such as volcanoes, earthquakes, settlements (Ring of Fire, recent volcanic and seismic events, settlements in proximity to natural hazards in the Western Hemisphere) by using information from GIS, remote sensing, and the World Wide Web.
G2.2.1 Describe the human characteristics of the region under study (including languages, religion, economic system, governmental system, cultural traditions).
H1.4.1 Describe and use cultural institutions to study an era and a region (political, economic, religion/belief, science/technology, written language, education, family).

Abstract: In this lesson students will investigate the physical and human characteristics of Central America.

Key Concepts: Central America consists of different countries with different populations, climate, landforms, vegetation, and human characteristics.

Time: Approximately 2 days

Sequence of Activities:

1. Watch United Streaming Video: Regions of the World: South and Central America. You may need to fast forward as this covers South America as well as Central America.

2. Divide students into groups; assign each group a country located in Central America.

3. Students will use the Internet, books, or library resources to investigate their assigned Central American Country.

4. Optional: This activity may also be used as a culmination activity at the end of Lesson 6. Students will work in groups to gather information from various resources. They will then create a visual project (PowerPoint, poster, etc.) about their country as a region. Projects should include regional information such as: populations, climate, landforms, vegetation, and human characteristics.
Sixth Grade Central America Unit

Connections: Art, Technology, Math (population/climate graph if used)

Resources
United Streaming Video: Geography of Mexico and Central America,
United Streaming: Mesoamerica: A History of Central America
Google Earth
World Atlas
Encyclopedia
www.wikipedia.org
Lesson 3

Title: Geography of Central America: Human/Environment Interaction

Grade Level: 6

Unit of Study: Central America

GLCE:
G3.2.1 Explain how and why ecosystems differ as a consequence of differences in latitude, elevation, and human activities (e.g., South America’s location relative to the equator, effects of elevations on temperature and growing season, proximity to bodies of water and the effects on temperature and rainfall, effects of annual flooding on vegetation along river flood plains such as the Amazon).
G2.2.3 Analyze how culture and experience influence people’s perception of places and regions (e.g., the Caribbean Region that presently displays enduring impacts of different immigrant groups – Africans, South Asians, Europeans – and the differing contemporary points of view about the region displayed by islanders and tourists).
G3.2.2 Identify ecosystems and explain why some are more attractive for humans to use than are others (e.g., mid-latitude forest in North America, high latitude of Peru, tropical forests in Honduras, fish or marine vegetation in coastal zones).
G2.2.2 Explain that communities are affected positively or negatively by changes in technology (e.g., Canada with regard to mining, forestry, hydroelectric power generation, agriculture, snowmobiles, cell phones, air travel).
G5.1.1 Describe the environmental effects of human action on the atmosphere (air), biosphere (people, animals, and plants), lithosphere (soil), and hydrosphere (water) (e.g., changes in the tropical forest environments in Brazil, Peru, and Costa Rica).
G5.1.2 Describe how variations in technology affect human modifications of the landscape (e.g., clearing forests for agricultural land in South America, fishing in the Grand Banks of the Atlantic, expansion of cities in South America, hydroelectric developments in Canada, Brazil and Chile, and mining the Kentucky and West Virginia).
G5.1.3 Identify the ways in which human-induced changes in the physical environment in one place can cause changes in other places (e.g., cutting forests in one region may result in river basin flooding elsewhere; building a dam floods land upstream and may permit irrigation in another region).
G5.2.1 Describe the effects that a change in the physical environment could have on human activities and the choices people would have to make in adjusting to the change (e.g. drought in northern Mexico, disappearance of forest vegetation in the Amazon, natural hazards and disasters from volcanic eruptions in Central America and the Caribbean and earthquakes in Mexico City and Colombia).
W1.2.2 Describe the importance of the natural environment in the development of agricultural settlements in different locations (e.g., available water for irrigation, adequate precipitation, and suitable growing season).

Time: 1-2 days
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**Abstract:** In this lesson students will investigate the ways humans have changed and utilized the environment in Central America.

**Key Concepts:** Central America has many natural resources, including a rainforest that must be preserved. Global views of preservation conflict with local needs for resources found in the rain forest.

**Sequence of Activities:**

1. As a class, watch the United Streaming video: *Children of the Panamanian Rainforest.* Discuss the concept of the rain shadow and how this affects agriculture in Central America. Also discuss reasons for cutting down the rain forests and the benefits of preserving the Panamanian rain forest.

2. Students will take into account the benefits and harmfulness of humans utilizing the natural resources found in the rain forest, and write a persuasive paragraph, newspaper article or letter, describing and defending their choice with at least three supporting statements.

3. A specific topic could be the production of coffee in Costa Rica. Read the case study located at [http://www.american.edu/ted/coffee.htm](http://www.american.edu/ted/coffee.htm) (must be rewritten for sixth grade) and watch video on coffee production (United Streaming Video: *Guatemala’s Coffee Economy*). Have students take a side, either continuing production of coffee or limiting production due to harming the rain forest. Students may either write an essay for their position or take part in a debate.

**Connections: Language Arts**

**Resources**

United Streaming Videos: *Children of the Panamanian Rainforest* and *Guatemala’s Coffee Economy*

[http://www.american.edu/ted/coffee.htm](http://www.american.edu/ted/coffee.htm)


[http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/economics/theimportanceoftrade1.htm](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/economics/theimportanceoftrade1.htm) (info about trade)
Sixth Grade Central America Unit

Lesson 4

Title: Geography and Economics of Central America: Movement

Grade Level: 6

Unit of Study: Central America

GLCE:
G4.2.1 List and describe the advantages and disadvantages of different technologies used to move people, products, and ideas throughout the world (e.g., call centers in the Eastern Hemisphere that service the Western Hemisphere; the United States and Canada as hubs for the Internet; transport of people and perishable products; and the spread of individuals’ ideas as voice and image messages on electronic networks such as the Internet).
E3.1.2 Diagram or map the movement of a consumer product from where it is manufactured to where it is sold to demonstrate the flow of materials, labor, and capital (e.g., global supply chain for computers, athletic shoes, and clothing).

Time: 1 day, 2 if needed

Abstract: In this lesson students will trace the changing path of trade goods to and from Central America.

Key Concepts:
Geography, climate, and natural resources affect the way people live and work. Central America has a variety of natural resources that are manufactured and traded.

Sequence of Activities:
1. Show the United Streaming Video: Regions of the World, Central and South America: People and Economics Segment (6:01)
2. Review with students the natural resources that come from the Panamanian Rainforest, and other natural resources that are important in Central America.
3. Ask students to search for goods at home or in the classroom that were manufactured in Central America. As a class, trace the route these goods traveled from their place of origin to where they are now. Next, students will use a world map to trace the path of peoples and goods to and from South America. Students may use a color-coding system for clarification (Ex: red lines indicate the path of goods, green lines indicate the path of peoples).
4. Discuss the ways movement affects people both internationally and intra-nationally (migrant workers, legal and illegal immigration, etc.)

Connections: Language Arts, Math (use of ruler)

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Sixth Grade Central America Unit

Resources
United Streaming Video: Regions of the World, Central and South America: People and Economics Segment (6:01)

https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook

http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/economics/theimportanceoftrade1.htm (info about trade)
Lesson 5

Title: Central America: Gaining Independence

Grade Level: 6

Unit of Study: Central America

GLCE:
- **H1.2.4** Compare and evaluate competing historical perspectives about the past based on proof.
- **W1.2.1** Describe the transition from hunter gatherers to sedentary agriculture (domestication of plants and animals).
- **W1.2.2** Describe the importance of the natural environment in the development of agricultural settlements in different locations (e.g., available water for irrigation, adequate precipitation, and suitable growing season).
- **W2.1.1** Explain how the environment favored hunter gatherer, pastoral, and small scale agricultural ways of life in different parts of the Western Hemisphere.

Abstract: In this lesson, students will explore the history of the countries of Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Belize) and their path to independence.

Key Concepts:

Central America is made up of seven different countries that have experienced many civil wars.

Sequence of Activities:
1. Divide students into groups. Have each group use the Internet (see sites below), books and other sources to create a timeline of the history of their assigned country. Students will share their timelines with the class.

2. After sharing timelines discuss the histories and struggles for independence of each of the Central American countries. Ask students to compose an essay comparing and contrasting the struggle for independence in Costa Rica to another country. You may also give students a choice of countries compared if desired.

Connections:

English Language Arts

Resources

Central America History Timeline: [http://www.timelineindex.com/content/select/1434/45,1340,1433,1434](http://www.timelineindex.com/content/select/1434/45,1340,1433,1434)


Sixth Grade Central America Unit

Lesson 6

Title: Central America Today

Grade Level: 6

Unit of Study: Central America

GLCE:
C3.6.1 Define the characteristics of a nation-state (a specific territory, clearly defined boundaries, citizens, and jurisdiction over people who reside there, laws, and government), and how Western Hemisphere nations interact.
E3.1.1 Use charts and graphs to compare imports and exports of different countries in the Western Hemisphere and propose generalizations about patterns of economic interdependence.

Time: Approximately 2-4 days

Abstract: In this lesson students will compare and contrast the economy, environment and government of each of the Central American countries

Key Concepts: Central America is a region made up of different countries with different forms of government.

Sequence of Activities:


2. Using the CIA World Fact Book, students will collect data to fill in a grid. Possible categories: Population, Population density, government, natural resources, literacy rate, health care, life expectancy, environmental issues, natural disasters and landforms. Students could work in pairs to complete the entire graph or could be divided into groups with each group researching a particular country and reporting to the class their findings.

3. Optional: You may choose to have students create a regional poster as a culminating activity here, if you have not already done this project.

4. Students will work in groups to gather information from various resources. They will then create a visual project (power point, poster, etc.) about their country as a region. Projects should include regional information such as: populations, climate, landforms, vegetation, and human characteristics.

5. Another optional activity would be to follow the lesson plans for creating a postcard or brochure adapting ideas from the following website:
http://www.longmeadow.k12.ma.us/wms/pages1/Gelinas/tour.html
Sixth Grade Central America Unit

**Connections: Language Arts, Technology**

After collecting the information students would write a paper focusing on a country they would most like to visit based on their findings.

**Resources**
- Google Earth
- World Atlas
- Encyclopedia
- www.wikipedia.org
- United Streaming Videos: *Central America Today: Life in Central America* and *Central America Today: Geography of Central America*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population Density</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Natural Resources</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
<th>Healthcare</th>
<th>Life Expectancy</th>
<th>Environmental Issues</th>
<th>Natural Disasters</th>
<th>Landforms</th>
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