
Cultural Concepts Taught this year so far!

Theme and Subtheme	Main Point	Details of Main Point	Country
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1-Comunidades de Escuela			
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General School info:

Mexico

Grades are 1-10 with 10 being an A, etc. Relationships with professors are more distant. Not so much your friend as an authority figure. Less choice in "electives". It is a place to study not necessarily to make friends. Universities are often free (or MUCH less expensive). Universidad Autonoma de Mexico is free. Autonomous means that it is supposedly free from political pressure. Many schools have a morning session and an afternoon session for a whole new group of students. Many teachers work double session to make a living. Teachers are not well paid. Sports do not have a place in Education. That is usually separate on a private team.

1-Geografía Humana			
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Transportation:

General Hispanic Countries

Mexico has a very low cost and developed system of Buses. (autobus). You can get from one city to a very far away city for a decent rate. This is needed b/c not as many people have their own car. (though many do). In Colombia they also have a pretty low cost airplane system. This is necessary in countries that have lots of mountains where it is hard to build lots of road infrastructure. This doesn't really fit into Human geography but it is related to geography.

El acceso a la tecnología			
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Cybercafe

General Hispanic Countries

Many cities have Cybercafes. Internet isn't as prevalent in the home though this is rising as cell phone plans are the data providers. But the traditional wifi in the home isn't as widespread. Go to the corner and pay a few pesos an hour to use internet services. Very affordable.

El entretenimiento y la diversión			
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Fanaticism-Futbol

Colombia

There is huge passion for soccer. Countries cheer on their national team with great pride. Once when I was in Colombia a defensive player tried to stop a goal and it accidentally made an "auto goal" against his team. This caused Colombia to lose to the U.S. which was a total No-no since the U.S. was not considered a "real" soccer country. When the team returned home, the player was shot, most likely by the mafia since there was huge betting on the game and he had "cost" them millions of dollars. Similar things occur in Spain where the fans from Real Madrid got into an argument with the fans from "Coruna" and someone pulled a knife and a person died. Body was thrown into the river. This happens all over. Less evidence of this in U.S. but it does still happen.

El pensamiento filosófico y la religión

Major Religion in Latin/South America is Catholicism

General Hispanic Countries

Many Catholics are that by name or tradition and not necessarily an active Faith. Celebrations like Baptisms, First Communion, etc. are big and important events. I was in Colombia once and said I was a Christian where the cab driver replied, well I am Catholic. So, the idea of Catholics and Protestants both being believers wasn't a welcome one.

Religion in Spain

Spain

Many Missionaries claim that Spain is one of the hardest places to reach, Church is not for youth. Just old people. Church buildings are very old and are beautiful cathedrals but not necessarily a demonstration of active lifestyle of faith. One exception is a group called the Opus Dei. This lay group (not part of another church) is very private, extended and very much believers. They follow Christian laws, have large families (not contraceptives) and are often wealthy.

Estructura de la familia

Padrinos/Madrinas and Compadres

General Hispanic Countries

In the past, these people were your "God parents" and those who would commit to stepping in for your parents if your parents were to pass away. These people are often very close family members or friends that play an important role in the life of the child. Nowadays, the compadre is still a close relationship and many padrinos and madrinan are "sponsors" for some event (in a financial way). Someone might be the Padrino of the cake (at a quince party).

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Unity and Structure of Family

General Hispanic Countries

Families are often very united with Grandparents living near or in the home. Retirement villages not as common. All are involved in parenting and it takes a whole village to raise up a child. Othe family members may correct your children. Grandmother the power behind the throne though ironically there is a lot of "machismo"-the idea that the man is more important.

Geografia Humana

Resources of different Countries

General Hispanic Countries

Mexico: Silver, Argentina: Oil, Costa Rica: Environment Preservation and rainforests, Dominican Republic, sugar cane,

La identidad nacional y la identidad étnica

Vos:

Argentina

Some countries have a form of conjugation that is a replacement of the Tú voice. It is called Vos and this should not be confused with "Vosotros" which is from Spain. This is mostly seen in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay and some other portions of central american countries (though not really mexico). It is a way to talk to friends of great confidence. Vos has its own conjugation and pretty much takes the place of the Tu voice. See article on website.

La salud y la medicina

Health: Remedios Caseros

General Hispanic Countries

Many Countries have made up home remedies for health. Yes there is a health system but it isn't as developed as the United States. Thus, natural remedies and supersticion find their way into the health system. Pharmacies are prevalent. Packaging is complete to go against tampering. Yerbatero's are popular (witch doctors in some places). Very superstitious in some places with people giving you the "eye" and don't take her out uncovered or else she will get super sick.

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Health: Diabetes and Weight

Mexico

Mostly seen in Hispanics in the United States. Have a higher rate of Diabetes. Maybe from Diet and lack of walking which is very typical in Mexico b/c of closeness of stores. Not spread out cities-similar to Spain as well. U.S. Has a very sedentary lifestyle in comparison. This affects health.

Las creencias personales

Supersticion:

Mexico

Many are more superstitious. When I had my daughter in Mexico, I was always told to cover my baby in case someone gave her "the eye". No one wanted an evil spirit to be able to get to her. This is also seen in health care as people make up many supposed "remedies" to all sorts of illnesses. Don't confuse this though with "holistic"/alternative medicine although they are related and similar.

Las tradiciones y los valores sociales

Day of the dead

Mexico

Important day in early november to remember your ancestors. Though it includes sugar skulls and altars, don't confuse it with halloween of scariness. It is a day to honor those who have gone before. Altars with their favorite foods are created and photos set up to honor them with the belief that they will come back and enjoy those items.

Los estilos de vida

Sedentary vs. Active Lifestyle (Sedentary means to sit)

General Hispanic Countries

There is less of a sedentary life in 3rd world countries for a variety of reasons. #1) Our nation is large (territory) and therefore we have spread out quite a bit. There is a lot of land and so our nation has had to develop interstates and great highways to connect. This allows our cities to be major hubs and grow. There are many industrialized cities. In Mexico this isn't as much the case. Mexico City, the capital is THE key city and while there are some larger cities in other places, nothing comes close to the capital. Because of this, many people live tightly together and so businesses are packed in. This allows people to walk to many places and/or take the public busses. What it doesn't foster is everybody having their own care to drive everywhere. In short, people are much more used to Walking and this helps them stay fit. This also occurs in Europe where cities are much more dense than spread out. Think of how tend to drive even if it is just a few blocks. We tend to sit more also b/c our jobs may be a bit more white collar than laboring in the fields jobs.

Los héroes y los personajes históricos

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Eva Peron

Argentina

Female President of Argentina. See online slide show! Under cultural comparisons page.

Los temas del medio ambiente

Hurricanes: Island Nations

General Hispanic Countries

Dominican Republic, Cuba, etc. suffer from being right in the path of Hurricanes. Islands need to brace for them like some states brace for tornados.

Mexico: Pollution in City

Mexico

Mexico City has 22 million people. It also has mountains surrounding the City so Smog can't really get out. It gets trapped by the mountains till it rains. People cannot drive their car one day a week to help control the pollution.

Island Nations: Garbage

General Hispanic Countries

Any nations with limited space will struggle with deciding where to put trash.

Water Availability

Mexico

Many cities don't have water on demand. In Zacatlan Mexico for example, water arrives at your house every other day for a few hours and you store it in a large water tank. The idea of limitless city water is not understood and the lack of water is well understood. Many buy water in bottles that are purified.

Los temas económicos

Spain: Lots of youth are unemployed

Spain

A few years back, Spain had an enormously high level of unemployment, especially among youth. The government had allowed lots of construction in many areas. Tons of houses were built but there weren't enough people to buy the new developments, so many lost jobs in construction. Also many youth went to college (since it is free based on grades) but upon graduating, there was too much competition for few jobs so lots were left without work. In 2015 unemployment in U.S. was 5% compared to 27% in Spain. In 2016 youth unemployment is still 45%. Side effect is many remain at home with parents which is already a trend among many hispanic nations. This is also due to many older workers coming from a communist era where job security was super strong.

Venezuela: Hurting Economy

Venezuela

Main Export: Oil. Price of oil has plummeted from \$120 a barrel to about \$50. Less purchasing power. President Hugo Chavez has also re-distributed much of the wealth from the wealthy. Grabbed businesses etc. on the promise of sharing wealth. Thus, overall poverty has gone down but no one desires to invest in Venezuela for fear of government stripping it away. Investors go elsewhere and educated people leave. Country is rich in resources but government is a mess.

Mexico: Peso Devaluation

Mexico

In the 80's Mexico's peso had to be rebranded. They went from \$1 = 4000 pesos to \$1 = 4 pesos. This has then slowly devalued and now the dollar is about 14 pesos. People don't trust the stability of the peso and thus prefer to store money in Dollars than pesos. When Trump took office there was a spike to the Peso and it was 21 pesos to the dollar b/c of the instability and insecurity of the future.

Other

Value of Animals

General Hispanic Countries

Generally Speaking Animals are not as valued as much as here in the United States. Lots of stray dogs and animals. Yes, well to do have animals, but you don't see as many Animal rights as here.

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Construccion Materiales and Colors

General Hispanic Countries

Many buildings/homes made out of enduring materials such as concrete. This withstands hurricanes and is made to last. Wood isn't as prevalent as in the U.S. Many homes/buildings can also be painted in light colors to repel heat. Water heaters are most common as black tanks on top of homes that can be heated by the sun all day. Use gravity to get pressure to showers, etc.

Quetzal: Bird and name of Currency: Money

Guatemala

Quetzal, Beautiful bird of Guatemala. On their money, bird supposedly dies in Captivity-thus it stands for liberty for the country.

Buses

Mexico

In Mexico (and other countries) the bus system is well developed. You can travel across the country for relatively little. Many don't necessarily drive their own vehicles b/c there isn't as much need for a car when your community is compacted and you can get many places by walking. Many, Many different carriers and TONS of bus routes.