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UNIT NARRATIVE

In this unit, students will explore the diverse physical and cultural landscapes of **Latin America**, a region shaped by Indigenous civilizations, European colonization, and modern global challenges. Through the lens of **geography, culture, history, and economics**, students will deepen their understanding of how human and environmental factors interact to shape societies. They will also analyze how **the legacy of colonialism** continues to affect modern-day Latin American nations socially, economically, and politically.

Students will engage with a variety of sources—maps, images, data, texts, and case studies—to build content knowledge and develop academic skills such as **critical thinking, analysis, collaboration, and communication**. The unit culminates with a **collaborative poster project**, in which students research a current environmental issue in Latin America and present possible solutions.

Students will engage with materials from the National Geographic World Geography & Cultures textbook; *Unit 2: North America*, *Unit 3: Central America & the Caribbean*, and *Unit 4: South America*. Additional lessons can be found within the online platform to supplement instruction as well.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Below are the standards taught and assessed in this unit.

Process Standards (Social Studies Skills and Processes)	
<p>6.19 Social Studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including technology.</p> <p>6.21 Social Studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.</p>	
Tools to Know	
<p>6.19(A)* differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as oral, print, and visual material and artifacts to acquire information about various world cultures</p> <p>6.19(C)* organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps</p> <p>6.19(D)* identify different points of view about an issue or current topic</p> <p>6.19(F) evaluate a variety of historical and contemporary sources for validity, credibility, bias, and accuracy</p> <p>6.21(A)* use social studies terminology correctly</p> <p>6.21(F) apply foundational language skills to engage in civil discourse about social studies topics, including those with multiple perspectives</p> <p>6.22(A) describe governmental and democratic processes such as voting, due process, and caucuses using simulations and models</p>	
Latin America	Connected Knowledge and Skills 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.9, 6.10, 6.13, 6.16
<p>6.15 Culture. The student understands relationships that exist among world cultures.</p>	
Readiness Standards	Supporting Standards
<p>6.1(A)* trace characteristics of various contemporary societies in regions that resulted from historical events or factors such as colonization, immigration, and trade</p> <p>6.2(B) evaluate the social, political, economic, and cultural contributions of individuals and groups from various societies, past and present</p> <p>6.3(A)* identify and explain the geographic factors responsible for patterns of population in places and regions</p> <p>6.3(B)* explain ways in which human migration influences the character of places and regions</p> <p>6.3(C) identify and locate major physical and human geographic features such as landforms, water bodies, and urban centers of various places and regions</p> <p>6.3(D)* identify the location of major world countries for each of the world regions</p> <p>6.5(C)* identify and analyze ways people have modified the physical environment such as mining, irrigation, and transportation infrastructure</p> <p>6.6(C)* explain the impact of the distribution of resources on international trade and economic interdependence among and within societies</p> <p>6.9(A) describe and compare examples of limited and unlimited governments such as constitutional (limited) and totalitarian (unlimited)</p> <p>6.10(A) identify and give examples of governments with rule by one, few, or many</p> <p>6.13(A)* identify and describe common traits that define cultures and culture regions</p> <p>6.15(A)* identify and describe means of cultural diffusion such as trade, travel, and war</p> <p>6.15(D)* identify the impact of cultural diffusion on individuals and world societies</p>	<p>6.2(A) identify and describe the historical influence of individuals or groups on various contemporary societies</p> <p>6.6(A) describe ways in which the factors of production (natural resources, labor, capital, and entrepreneurs) influence the economies of various contemporary societies</p> <p>6.6(B) identify problems that may arise when one or more of the factors of production is in relatively short supply</p> <p>6.7(B)* compare and contrast free enterprise, socialist, and communist economies in various contemporary societies, including the benefits of the U.S. free enterprise system</p> <p>6.9(B) identify reasons for limiting the power of government</p> <p>6.13(C)* analyze the experiences and contributions of diverse groups to multicultural societies</p> <p>6.15(B)* identify and describe factors that influence cultural change such as improvements in communication, transportation, and economic development</p> <p>6.16(A) explain the relationships that exist between societies and their architecture, art, music, and literature</p> <p>6.16(B) describe ways in which contemporary issues influence creative expressions</p>

UNDERSTANDINGS AND QUESTIONS

Important big ideas and processes for the unit.

Key Understandings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography influences where and how people live. • Colonization has long-lasting impacts on language, religion, economics, and social systems. • Cultural diffusion and syncretism have shaped modern Latin American identities. • Human-environment interaction involves both benefits and consequences. • Modern issues in Latin America are often rooted in historical events, especially colonization.

Key Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has Latin America’s geography influenced its cultures, economies, and population patterns? • In what ways has colonialism impacted the development of Latin American societies? • How do modern issues in Latin America connect to past events? • How do people in Latin America adapt to and modify their environment?

Instructional Themes	Performance Tasks & Assessments	Support for Diverse Learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical & Human Geography: Explore terrain, climate, and natural resources across Latin America. • Colonization & Indigenous Civilizations: Analyze Spanish and Portuguese colonization and its effects on Indigenous societies. • Cultural Blending & Identity: Examine syncretism in language, religion, food, and traditions. • Human-Environment Interaction: Study deforestation, eco-tourism, and urbanization. • Contemporary Challenges: Connect poverty, environmental issues, and cultural resilience to colonial legacies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative Checks: Do Now’s, exit tickets, vocabulary checks, mapping activities, and graphic organizers. • Summative Project: Collaborative Poster (environmental issue + historical connection). • Reflection Paragraph: Students explain how modern issues connect to Latin America’s colonial past. • Optional Extension: Students analyze how colonial legacies still influence inequality today. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence stems and vocabulary scaffolds for EB students. • Use of visuals, maps, and charts to support comprehension. • Scaffolded reading, writing, and structured group roles during projects. • Flexible options for final product (visual, written, oral), allowing creative expression and differentiation.

