

### Follow-up Activities

- Each of the seven countries of Central America has an interesting and unique history. In groups, have your students research each of the countries and compile their information into book form. Add the books to your classroom library.
- The Petén Rainforest in Costa Rica is a center of ecotourism. Have your students explore this vast area and find information on the animals and plants that make the Petén their home. Have them create travel posters to encourage someone to make the trip to tour a rainforest.
- Use an atlas and rulers to create a math lesson for your students. Ask your students to calculate the distance from the capital city of any one of the seven Central American countries to their home towns. Explain how the map scale can be used to find the number of miles between two locations. Extend this math lesson by asking students to calculate how long the trip would take if you were driving an average of 60 miles an hour.
- The Panama Canal remains one of the greatest engineering accomplishments of all time. Have your students explore how the canal locks work to allow ships to cross from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Have your students construct a model of a canal lock.
- Make a Central American flag display in your classroom. Have your students find, draw and label the flag of each of the seven countries of Central America. Display the flags around your classroom.
- Corn and rice appear often in Central American cooking. Have your students find Central American recipes that feature corn, corn meal or rice as a main ingredient. Try making some of the recipes with your class. Have your students write a letter to the school cafeteria asking them to prepare one of the recipes and place it on the lunch menu. Create a display in the school cafeteria showing all the recipes you found and include pictures if you can.
- Coffee is an important crop in many Central American countries. Have your students research how coffee is grown, harvested and prepared for market. Share the unique flavor of coffee with your students by serving coffee ice cream to your class. (With this and all food activities, don't forget to check with the school nurse before bringing any food products into the classroom.)
- Following the directions given in the program, have your students make a yarn weaving. You will need to provide your students with these supplies: poster board or cardboard, scissors, and yarn in many colors.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bh.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bh.html)  
This web site is the on-line version of the World Fact Book compiled by the Central Intelligence Agency. Select from the alphabetical countries list and link to a map, the flag, and easy-to-read and -understand facts and figures on that country.
- [www.coffeeresearch.org/tour1.htm](http://www.coffeeresearch.org/tour1.htm)  
Take your students on a tour of the history and production of coffee at this web site.
- [www.campsilos.org/mod3/index.shtml](http://www.campsilos.org/mod3/index.shtml)  
Everything you and your students ever wanted to know about corn can be found at this web site.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Alphin, Elaine Marie. *A Bear for Miguel*. HarperTrophy, New York, NY; 1996.
- Castaneda, Omar. *Abuela's Weave*. Lee & Low Books, New York, NY; 1993.
- Collard, Sneed. *The Forest in the Clouds*. Charlesbridge, Watertown, NY; 2000.
- Deady, Kathleen W. *El Salvador*. Bridgestone Books, Mankato, MN; 2002.
- Landau, Elaine. *Canals*. Children's Press, New York, NY; 2001.

#### TEACHER'S GUIDE

Mark Singer, M.S.

Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

#### TITLES IN THIS SERIES

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- JAPANESE-AMERICAN HERITAGE
- JEWISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE
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Executive Producer: Andrew Schlessinger

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## Central American Heritage

Grades K-4

The United States has always been a country of immigrants, rich with the customs and traditions of the many countries they represent. *American Cultures for Children* introduces students to the heritage of some of the immigrant groups that make up this diverse land. Through songs, play food, holidays and history, students are provided with an understanding of and appreciation for the cultural differences they see every day in their classrooms and neighborhoods. Everyone has at least one culture to celebrate, and this series gives children a chance to explore their heritage and share it with others.



## Program Summary

*Central American Heritage* introduces students to some of the customs and traditions of people from the seven countries of Central America who now make their home in the United States. Students learn the location, geography and climate of Central America, and explore the Petén rainforest. The historical and social events that motivated many Central Americans to immigrate to the United States are presented. Students learn to count to ten and say a few words in Spanish. In a field trip, students visit a Guatemalan shop, a Salvadoran food market, and a restaurant that features Central American cuisine. The Mayan folktale, “The Chirimia,” is retold, and the folksong, “El Torito Pinto,” is sung. In an arts & crafts segment, students are given a lesson in weaving.

### Countries of Central America

Belize  
Costa Rica  
El Salvador  
Guatemala  
Honduras  
Nicaragua  
Panama

## Vocabulary

**plantain** — The large greenish fruit from a type of banana plant which is often fried and made into chips.

**volcano** — A vent in the earth’s crust from which melted or hot rock and steam come out.

**rainforest** — A tropical woodland with a high annual rainfall and very tall trees.

**Maya** — Native peoples of the Yucatan and neighboring areas in Central America.

**coffee bean** — A seed of the coffee tree. Coffee beans are ground and brewed with water to make the drink called coffee.

**weaving** — The interconnection of threads going lengthwise and crosswise to form a fabric.

**immigrant** — A person who makes a new home in a country other than his or her own.

**refugee** — A person who moves from his or her home looking for a safer place to live.

**tortilla** — A round and flat bread usually made from corn or wheat flour that resembles a very thin pancake.

**huuipil** — A Guatemalan blouse.

**tropical** — Having to do with the tropics, the area of the earth  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  north to  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  south of the equator. The climate is hot and often wet. Most of Central America has a tropical climate.

**fútbol** — The Spanish word for soccer. Fútbol is a popular game played in Central America.

**chirimia** — A wooden flute-like instrument first played by the Native Americans of Central America.

**sloth** — A slow-moving mammal found in the tropical forests of Central and South America. They are related to armadillos, live in trees and feed on leaves, shoots and fruits.

**Panama Canal** — The man-made waterway linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

**dynamite** — A blasting explosive that is made chiefly of nitroglycerin.

### Words in Spanish

Hola = Hello  
Adiós = Good-bye  
amigo = friend (m)  
amiga = friend (f)  
Gracias = Thank you

### Numbers in Spanish

One = Uno  
Two = Dos  
Three = Tres  
Four = Cuatro  
Five = Cinco  
Six = Seis  
Seven = Siete  
Eight = Ocho  
Nine = Nueve  
Ten = Diez

## Focus Questions

1. What are three countries in Central America?
2. What is the name of the largest city in Central America?
3. The Panama Canal connects which two oceans?
4. What is the name of the rainforest in Central America?
5. What is the name of the Native American group that first settled in Central America?
6. What language is spoken in six of the seven Central American countries?
7. What language is spoken in Belize?
8. What is the name of a major crop grown in Central America?
9. How do you say “Thank you” in Spanish?
10. What is an immigrant?
11. What is a refugee?
12. Fútbol is the Spanish name for what sport?

## Follow-up Discussion

- Many people from Central America have come to the United States because of war in their home countries, looking for a safer place for themselves and their families. These people settled in, found jobs, went to school and made a new life. Ask each of your students to pretend that he or she is one of these refugees. Tell them they have been in the United States for five years, and now the troubles in their home countries are over and it is safe to return. Would they stay in the United States or return to their home countries? What things would they consider in making their decisions? Can they think of any problems they might face if they went back to their home countries?
- Many animals make their home in the rainforests of Central America. The people of Central America need more room for homes and farms, and some people want to cut down the trees and plants in the rainforest to make room for them. What may happen to the animals of the rainforest if the trees and plants are cut away? What could be done to help the animals of the rainforest? Can you think of any ways to keep the rainforests as they are and still make way for more farms and homes?
- Think about the foods featured in the video presentation. How many of these foods have you eaten? Can you think of any other foods that you eat which may have come from Central America? Ask your students to think about their own heritage. Are there foods that they eat which are part of their heritage? Have these foods become part of “American” eating?

(Continued)