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# Unit 9: Central America and the West Indies



## A. Central America

**Central America** is an isthmus. An isthmus is a neck of land that connects two larger landmasses. In the case of Central America, it is an isthmus that connects North and South America.

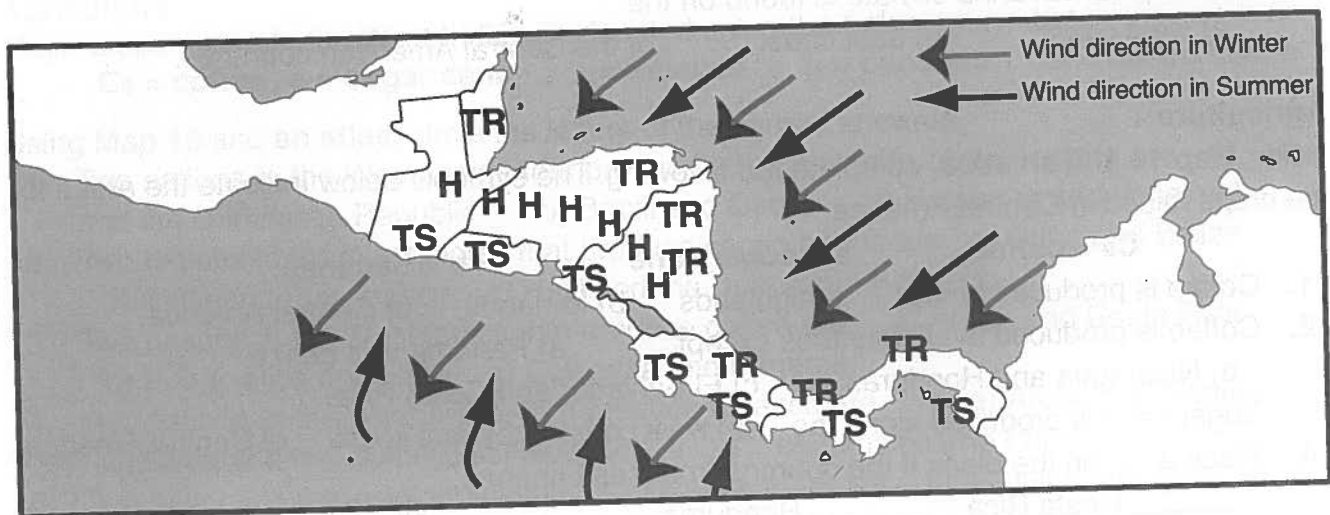
- Use an atlas and **Map 18**, which shows the Central American isthmus, for this activity. Central America includes seven countries located on the isthmus. Place a "+" on the blank if the country is a Central American country on the isthmus.

_____ Belize	_____ Canada	_____ Chile	_____ Costa Rica
_____ Cuba	_____ El Salvador	_____ Guatemala	_____ Honduras
_____ Nicaragua	_____ Panama	_____ Trinidad	

In Central America, three main climates are tropical rain forest, tropical savanna, and highland in the mountains. The tropical rain forest and tropical savanna both have year-round high temperatures and lots of rain. The tropical rain forest has rain in every month without a dry season. The vegetation consists of trees, which are home to many animal varieties. The tropical savanna has much rain in summer, but winters are dry. The vegetation is usually shrubs and tall grass. The highland climate is much cooler and milder than the very warm temperatures and rainy climate of the tropical rain forest and tropical savanna.

Central American countries are all in the tropics. Except in the mountains, the tropics are a region of year-round warm temperatures. Those regions with abundant rain year-round have winds that blow toward the shore throughout the year. The winds blow onshore and rise over the mountains, producing abundant rain. Those regions with a wet season followed by a dry season have winds blowing from over the water toward the shore in the wet season. In the dry season, the winds blow from over the land toward the water.

**MAP 18**



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### A. Central America (cont.)

Using **Map 18**, complete the following. The arrows show wind direction.

2. Along the eastern coast of Central America, the winds blow from over the water
  - a) in summer and winter
  - b) in summer and from land to water in winter.
3. Along the eastern coast of Central America, the temperatures would be warm all year and there would be
  - a) a definite wet and dry season
  - b) rainfall throughout the year.
4. Along the western coast of Central America, the winds blow from over the water
  - a) all year long
  - b) in summer and from land to water in winter.
5. Along the western coast of Central America, the temperatures would be warm all year and there would be
  - a) a definite wet and dry season
  - b) rainfall throughout the year.

Using **Map 18** and an **atlas**, complete the following. You will need red, pink, and black colored pens or pencils for this activity. The areas with the letters “TR” have a tropical rain forest climate. The areas with the letters “TS” have a tropical savanna climate. The areas with the letter “H” have a highland climate.

6. Color the tropical rain forest climate red.
7. Color the tropical savanna climate pink.
8. Color the highland climate black.
9. Place a “+” on the blank if the country has a highland climate.
 

_____ Belize	_____ Costa Rica	_____ El Salvador	_____ Guatemala
_____ Honduras	_____ Nicaragua	_____ Panama	
10. The tropical rain forest climate is found on the
  - a) west coast
  - b) east coast
 of the Central American countries.
11. Place a “+” on the blank if the country has some areas of tropical rain forest climate.
 

_____ Belize	_____ Costa Rica	_____ El Salvador	_____ Guatemala
_____ Honduras	_____ Nicaragua	_____ Panama	
12. The tropical savanna climate is found on the
  - a) west coast
  - b) east coast
 of the Central American countries.

### Agriculture

Using **Map 19** and an **atlas**, complete the following. The symbols below indicate the areas for the crops raised in Central America.

**Cs = coffee**

**s = sugar cane**

**b = bananas**

1. Coffee is produced in the
  - a) highlands
  - b) lowlands
 of Central America.
2. Coffee is produced in all countries except
  - a) Panama and Belize
  - b) Nicaragua and Honduras
  - c) El Salvador and Costa Rica.
3. Sugar cane is produced along the
  - a) west coast
  - b) east coast
 of Central America.
4. Place a “+” on the blank if the country produces bananas.
 

_____ Costa Rica	_____ Honduras	_____ Nicaragua	_____ Panama
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### B. The West Indies (Caribbean Islands)

The **West Indies** is the name given to the tropical islands in the Caribbean. There are many islands in the West Indies, and most of them are very small.

- Using **Map 19** and an **atlas**, complete the following about the West Indies. Place the letter by the country on the map to show its location.

#### West Indies (Caribbean) countries

A. Cuba    B. Jamaica    C. Haiti    D. Dominican Republic    E. Puerto Rico

- A dot on **Map 19** indicates the capital of each Caribbean island. Place the letter of the capital city next to the corresponding dot on the map.

#### Capital Cities

a. Havana    b. Kingston    c. Port-au-Prince    d. Santo Domingo    e. San Juan

### Climate

The most common climate type in the West Indies is the tropical savanna.

The climate chart below shows the average monthly temperature and rainfall typically found for locations in the West Indies. Use the chart to complete the questions that follow.

Month	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Year
Temperature (°F)	76	77	77	78	79	81	82	82	81	80	79	77	79
Rainfall (inches)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	28.5

- The yearly temperature range is    a) 3    b) 6    c) 10    d) 12    degrees.
- The rainy season extends from    a) May to August    b) May to October    c) January to May.
- True or False. It is warm throughout the year in the West Indies.
- True or False. There is a definite dry season in the West Indies.

### Agriculture

Major crops grown in the West Indies are located using the following symbols.

**Cs = coffee    s = sugar cane    t = tobacco    b = bananas    CB = cacao beans**

Using **Map 19** and an **atlas**, circle the letters of the correct answers.

- Two nations in the West Indies that produce large amounts of sugar cane are    a) Cuba and the Dominican Republic    b) Brazil and Cuba    c) Honduras and Venezuela.
- Two nations in the West Indies that produce cacao beans are    a) Cuba and Belize    b) Chile and Puerto Rico    c) Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
- Two nations in the West Indies that produce coffee are    a) Aruba and Costa Rica    b) Puerto Rico and Haiti    c) Colombia and Panama.
- Two nations in the West Indies that produce tobacco are    a) Aruba and Trinidad    b) Cuba and the Dominican Republic    c) Jamaica and Puerto Rico.
- Two nations in the West Indies that produce bananas are    a) Jamaica and Haiti    b) Panama and Trinidad    c) Puerto Rico and Peru.

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## B. The West Indies (Caribbean Islands) (cont.)

MAP 19

