

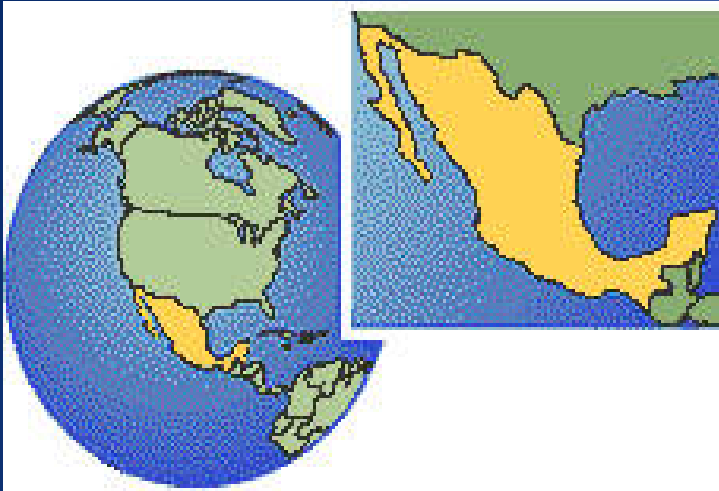
# An Introduction to Beautiful Mexico!



Created By: Erin Shepherd

*“Discovering Diverse Mexico: A Culture Box Adventure”*

# Where is Mexico?



- South of the United States
- On the continent of North America
- Central America



- There are 31 states in Mexico.
- About 114,000,00 people live in Mexico.
- Mexico City (*Ciudad de Mexico*) is the capital city of Mexico.

# Mexican Flag



- Tri-Color (green, white, red)
- Coat of Arms (symbol): Golden Eagle eating a snake perched on top of a cactus
- A symbol of Independence from Spain

# The Diverse People of Mexico

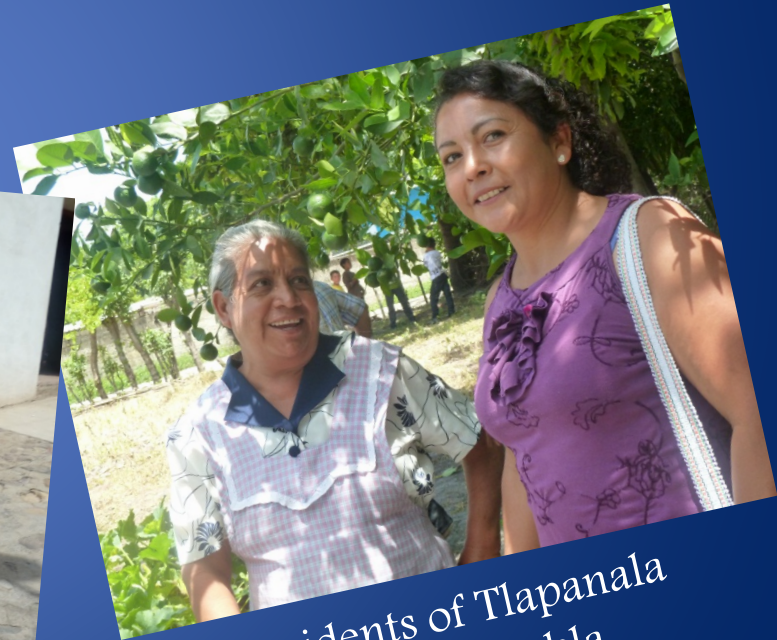
Mexico has many different groups of people! Indigenous groups, or people that are from a particular area, often have their own language and special cultural activities.



Middle school students,  
Veracruz



Resident of Teotitlán de Valle,  
Oaxaca



Residents of Tlapanala  
Village, Puebla

# Food (*comida*) of Mexico

Depending on the region you are in, you will find different types of food all over Mexico. Here are just a few delicious samples!



Tortillas are found in many dishes



*Mole negro* from Oaxaca



A snack of peanuts with lime

# Cultural Art of Mexico



Black Pottery in Teotitlán  
de Valle, Oaxaca



Zapotec rug, Teotitlán de Valle,  
Oaxaca



*Alebrije*, Tilcajete  
Village, Oaxaca

# Discussion Topics

- Explain what you are excited to learn about in this unit.
- Why is it important to learn about other cultures and countries?
- What parts of the presentation were familiar to you or brand new?



# Oaxaca, Mexico

Diverse people, diverse land



# Where is Oaxaca?

- Oaxaca is one of 31 states in Mexico.
- The capital city is Oaxaca de Juarez.



# Geography of Oaxaca

- Located in South–West Mexico
- Coastline borders the Pacific Ocean
- Southern Sierra Madre and Eastern Sierra Madre mountain ranges come together in Oaxaca
- Oaxaca has very diverse landforms and areas: mountains, beaches, caves, valleys and farmland



# People of Oaxaca



- 16 different ethnic groups and languages exist in Oaxaca, making it the most diverse state in Mexico.
- According to a 2010 census, about 3.8 million people live in the state of Oaxaca.
- There is a rich tradition of handicrafts and special cuisine created by Oaxacans.

# Interesting sights and landmarks



Monte Alban

Huatulco Beach



# Special foods of Oaxaca



Flavorful mole



Handmade tortillas,  
stuffed peppers



Chocolate

# Folk Art and Handicrafts



Zapotec Woven  
Rugs



*Alebrijes* (carved  
wooden animals)



Black Pottery

# *Alebríjes* of Oaxaca, Mexico



# The legend of *alebrijes*

There once was a man from Oaxaca who became very ill. During his illness he began to have very vivid nightmares. He dreamt of strange and wild creatures that were extremely colorful.

When he awoke, he was suddenly compelled to begin creating the creatures he saw in his dreams. He carved these creatures from wood from the copal tree and painted them in bright and detailed designs.

The people of Oaxaca loved these creatures so much! Children began using them as toys. They were called *alebrijes*. Soon, other artists in the area began making their own *alebrijes* and continue to do so today!



# How are *alebrijes* made?



The artist first carves soft wood from the copal tree into the shape he wants.



Then he carefully paints detailed designs on his *alebrije*.

# Now it's your turn!

Today, you become an *alebrije* artist! Here are the steps:

- Begin by sketching out your creature.
- Add detailed designs. You can even think of a story about your creature!
- Using modeling clay, form your creature. Let it dry completely.
- Paint your creature in bright colors. Use small dots to cover it and add details.



# Tlaplanala Village, Puebla, Mexico



# Getting to know Tlapanala...



- Tlapanala Village is a very small area of about 80 residents.
- It is located outside of the capital city, Puebla.
- Many people have migrated away from this village to the U.S.
- Special programs have been created to help people stay and be proud of their rich culture and language.

# Youth programs in the village...



- Students are taught how to raise chickens and goats.
- Their families are able to live and eat from what they produce.
- Leftover food is sold for a profit for each family.
- The kids learn responsibility and business skills as well as how to take care of animals.



# One student's daily life...



This is Diego. He bought his own chicken coops and raises them for his family.



This is Diego's family's kitchen.



This is Diego's family's orchard.

# Farming practices...



Rainwater collection tank used for watering their crops



Hot compost helps to nourish their crops



Picking fresh cilantro.

# Children's Center



The center was an old building, but grant money helped to make it into a fun place for kids!



There are many books and games for the kids to enjoy at the center.

# Tlaplanala Elementary School



After the school day,  
most students go  
and work to help  
their family.

# Discuss

- Compare and contrast your life with the life of a student living in Tlapanala.
- What do you wonder about after seeing the presentation?
- What would you want to ask a child from this village? What would you ask an adult?



# Escuela Secundaria 26, Veracruz



# Where is Veracruz?



- Veracruz is a state on the eastern edge of Mexico.
- Veracruz is also a city.
- It's climate is hot and humid.
- There are many beautiful beaches!

# Let's visit Escuela Secundaria in Veracruz!



- The school is similar to a middle school in the United States.
- Students must have very good grades and apply to go to school here.
- This is a public school.
- Students wear uniforms in Mexico at public and private schools.



- This is what a typical classroom looks like.
- The students can take band and art classes afterschool.

Science and  
engineering  
classroom.



# Discuss

- Compare and contrast your life with the life of a student from Veracruz going to this school.
- What do you wonder about after seeing the presentation?
- What would you want to ask a student from this school? What would you ask a teacher?