

# Mexico Today



Learning Objective:

To know about the physical geography of Mexico

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With a partner, discuss what you have learnt about Mexico already. Use this blank map to help you point out different areas.



Now share your knowledge as a class.  
How much did you remember?



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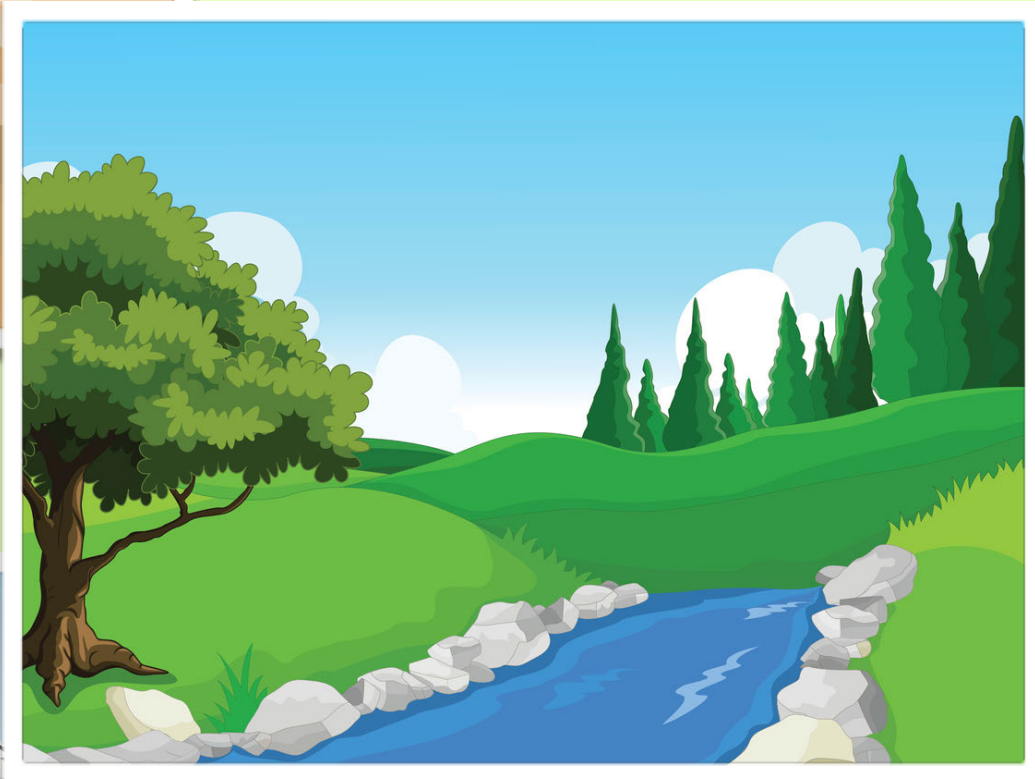
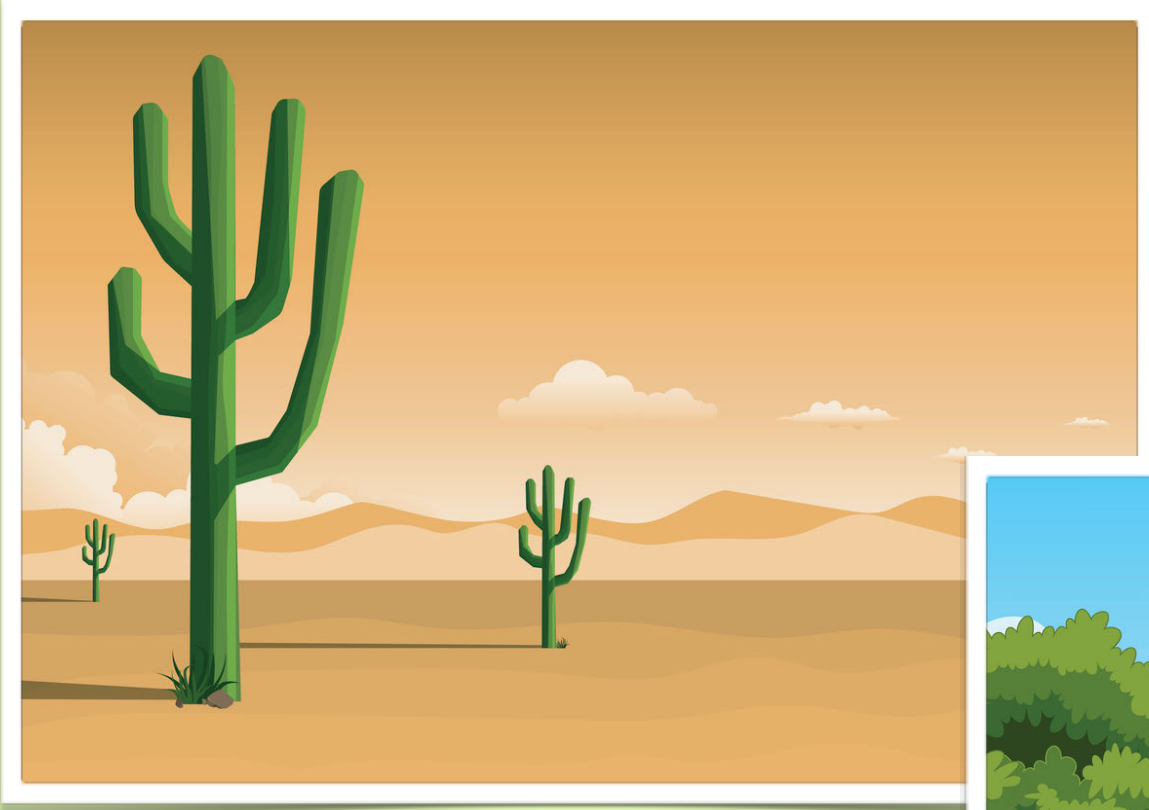
Today we are going to find out more about the physical geography of Mexico.

Do you know what this means? Think, pair, then share your ideas.

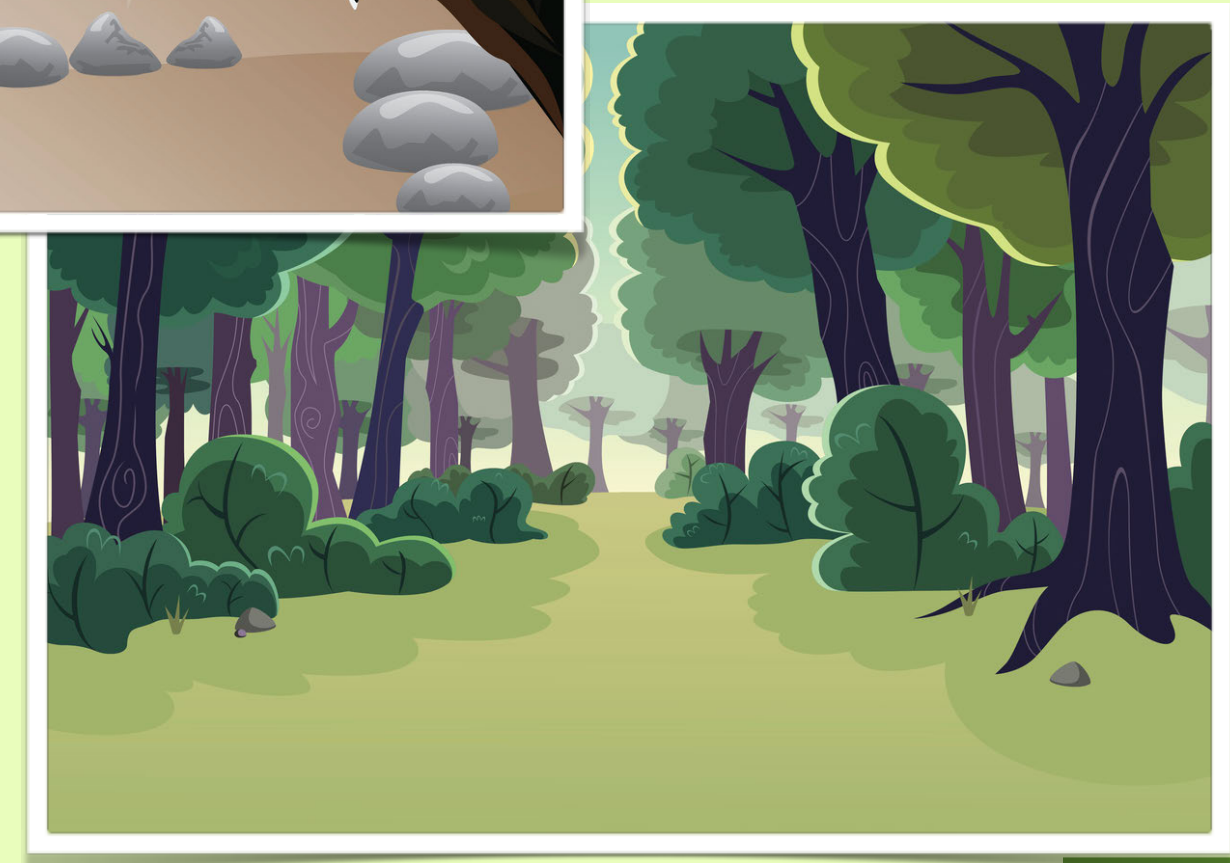
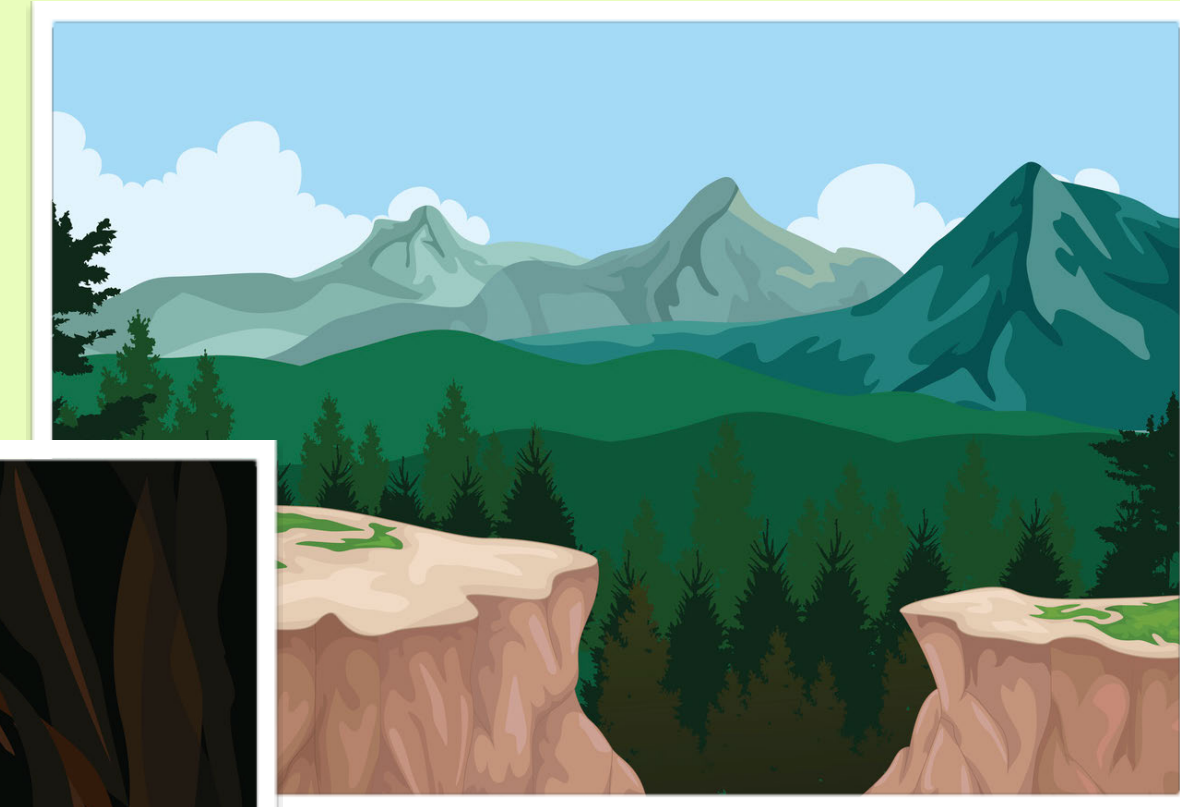
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The term physical geography is used to describe the natural features and landscape of an area or country.



What natural features do you think Mexico has?



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Mexico's physical geography is extremely varied. It includes tropical rainforests, deserts, mountains and rivers! Look at the location of these different types of landscape on the map.



Why do you think Mexico's landscape is so varied?

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This is the Rio Grande (meaning Big River). It is 3051km long, and is the longest river in Mexico. Its source (where the river begins) is Canby Mountain in the USA. It flows through three American states and four Mexican states, forming part of the border between the two countries. Its mouth (where the river joins the sea) is the Gulf of Mexico.



Can you see on the map where the Rio Grande follows part of the border between Mexico and the USA?

What words would you use to describe this landscape?

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There are two deserts that cover large parts of Mexico.

The Sonoran desert covers an area of 260,000km<sup>2</sup>, and is the hottest desert in Mexico. It covers parts of the American states of Arizona and California, and the Mexican states of Sonora, Baja California, and Baja California Sur.

The Chihuahuan desert is even bigger, covering an area of 362,000km<sup>2</sup>. It covers parts of the American states of West Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico. In Mexico, it covers most of the state of Chihuahua, as well as parts of Coahuila, Durango, Zacatecas and Nuevo León.

A wide variety of animal and plant species can be found in both of these deserts.



What words would you use to describe this landscape?



Using your knowledge of the states of Mexico, can you tell which desert is which on the map?

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The Sierra Madre (meaning Mother Mountain) is a mountain range in Mexico. The range mainly consists of the Sierra Madre Occidental to the west, the Sierra Madre Oriental to the east, and the Sierra Madre del Sur to the South.



Can you identify these three main ranges of the Sierra Madre mountains on the map?



The Copper Canyon is a long, deep, narrow valley that weaves in between the Sierra Madre Occidental. Tourists can take the Chepe train route for 405 miles to see the sights - although the journey takes 15 hours altogether!

What words would you use to describe this landscape?

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The Lacandon Jungle is a rainforest in south Mexico which covers parts of the state of Chiapas, and some of the bordering country of Guatemala. 1500 different species of tree can be found here, as well as many of Mexico's bird, animal and fish species. The jaguar, the country's national animal, lives in this habitat.

There are also lots of important historical sites within the jungle, from the Mayan civilisation who lived in this region from 1800BC to 250AD.

Do you know anything about the Mayans?



What words would you use to describe this landscape?

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Desert



Mountain



Forest



Which of these three regions of Mexico would you most like to visit and why?

Think, pair, then share your ideas.

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## Plenary:

This is a picture of Popocatepétl, an active volcano in Mexico, which sits on the borders of the two states of Puebla and Morelos, only 70km away from Mexico City. Since 1519, there have been 15 major eruptions, and frequent minor eruptions. Despite this, Mexico is still a very popular holiday destination.



An active volcano is one that has erupted in the last 10,000 years, and is likely to erupt again!

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Would you still go on holiday to Mexico? Why?