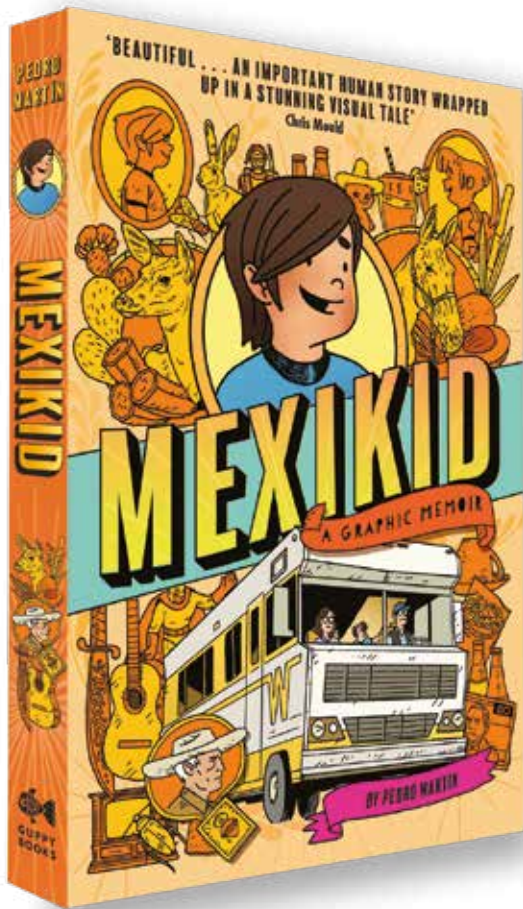


Mexikid: A Graphic Memoir by Pedro Martín

Educational Resource Pack:
Geography / Design and Technology

EXPLORING MEXICO



About the book:

A poignant, hilarious, and unforgettable graphic memoir about a Mexican-American boy's family and their adventure-filled road trip to bring their abuelito back from Mexico to live with them.

Pedro Martín has grown up hearing stories about his abuelito—his legendary crime-fighting grandfather who was once a part of the Mexican Revolution. But that doesn't mean Pedro is excited at the news that abuelito is coming to live with their family.

After all, Pedro has eight very noisy brothers and sisters and the house is crowded enough! Still, Pedro piles into the Winnebago with his family for a road trip to Mexico to bring abuelito home, and what follows is the trip of a lifetime, one filled with laughs and heartache. Along the way, Pedro finally connects with his abuelito and learns what it means to grow up and find his grito.

About the creator:

PEDRO MARTÍN is a former Hallmark artist and the creator of Asteroid Andy. He chronicles his life growing up Mexican American online in a comic series and in his debut graphic memoir, both called Mexikid.



'STUNNING...THE GRAPHIC NOVEL WAS INVENTED FOR IMPORTANT HUMAN STORIES LIKE THIS'



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3x Geography lesson plans and activity sheets.

- Exploring Mexico - Activity 1: Mapping Mexico
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4x Design and Technology information/ activity sheets

- Piñatas information
- Make a piñata
- Design and make a piñata
- Make chilaquiles

Additional ideas and activities

National Curriculum objectives



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EXPLORING MEXICO

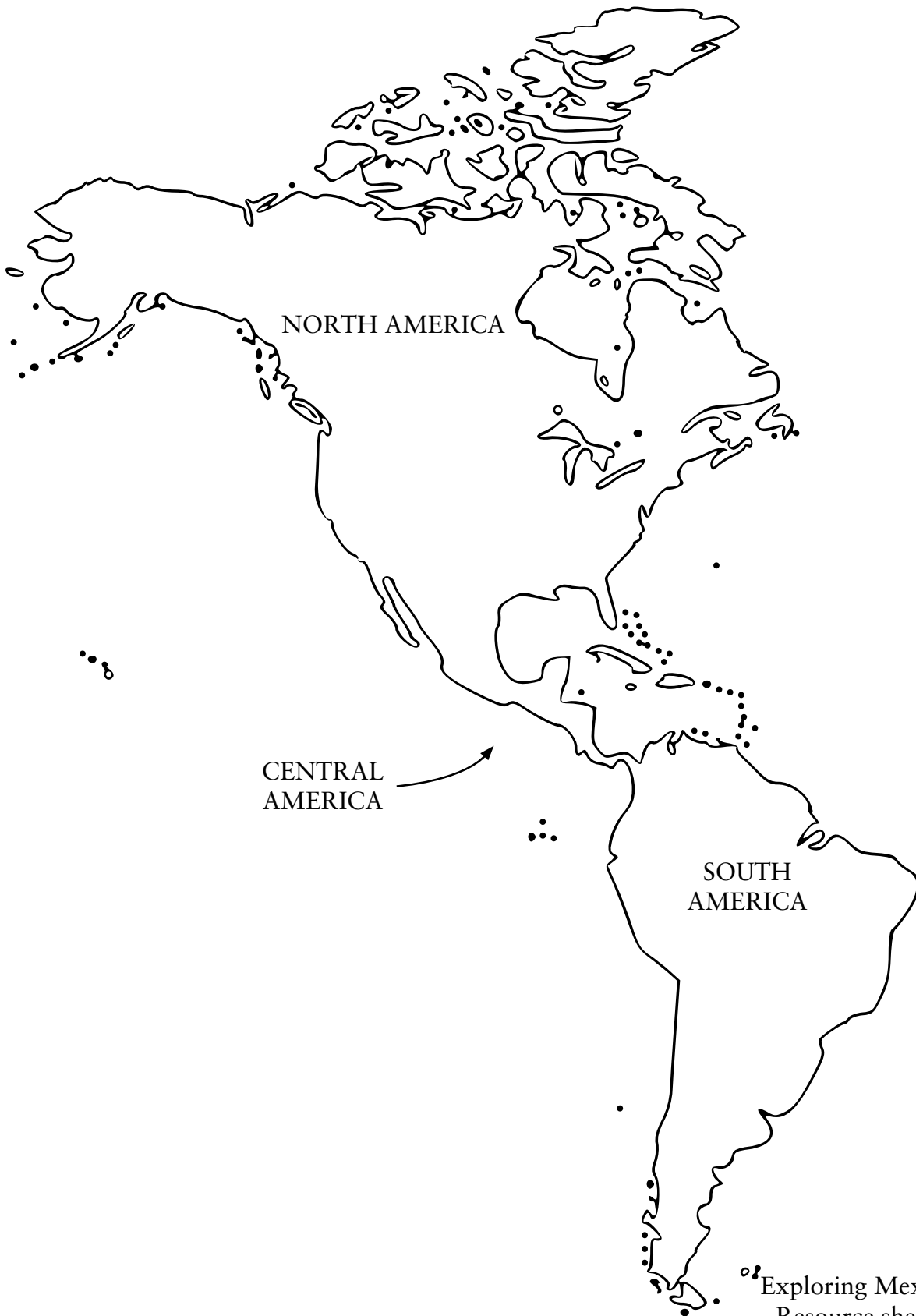
ACTIVITY 1: MAPPING MEXICO

- Provide each student with a **map of North and South America (resource sheet 1)** Ask them to point to where they think Mexico is. Also ask them to point to where they think the USA is.
- Then show them the correctly coloured and labelled version of the map (**resource sheet 2**) Point out that both countries are in the continent of North America. Mexico is in the southernmost region of North America and it borders an area known as Central America. To the south of Central America lies the continent of South America. Ask children to colour in Mexico and the USA in two different colours on their own maps.
- Using atlases students should then locate Mexico on political and physical maps. Discuss Mexico’s proximity to the equator and what children know or can predict about the climate and landscape of Mexico.
- Distribute copies of **Map of Mexico and Southern California (resource sheet 3)**. The capital of Mexico (Mexico City) has been marked with a star. Challenge students to find Mexico City on the map.
- Tell students that Pedro began his road trip in the family’s home town of Watsonville, on the southwest coast of California in the USA. Ask children to locate Watsonville on the map.
- Explain that the family travelled south via Los Angeles to Mexico. Ask students to locate Los Angeles and the Mexican border on the map.
- The family’s first stop in Mexico was Tijuana, then they travelled through the mountainous region called Plan de Barrancas. They journeyed south for hundreds of miles to Pedro’s parent’s hometown, Pegueros (near Tepatitlán). Ask students to locate these places and plot the route that the Winnebago took by drawing a dotted line. Write the names of the locations on a large white board to help students.
- For the return journey, Pedro’s family drove their motorhome onto a ferry and they sailed across the Sea of Cortez to Cabo San Lucas, the southernmost point of Baja California. They then drove up through the centre of Baja California, crossing through dusty desert lands before reaching the border to the USA.
- Finally, they stopped in LA again before taking the same route back to Watsonville. Ask students to plot the return journey on their maps.
- Provide each student with a blank map of Mexico and Southern California (**resource sheet 4**). They should add to the map by marking on the places Pedro mentions in his graphic memoir and drawing the route of the road trip They could then add pictures to show some of the things Pedro saw along the way. (For example, they could draw a cactus to indicate the desert road in Baja California; a mountain to indicate the mountainous regions and an ice cream or action figure toy to represent the Mercado in Tijuana.)

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MAP OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

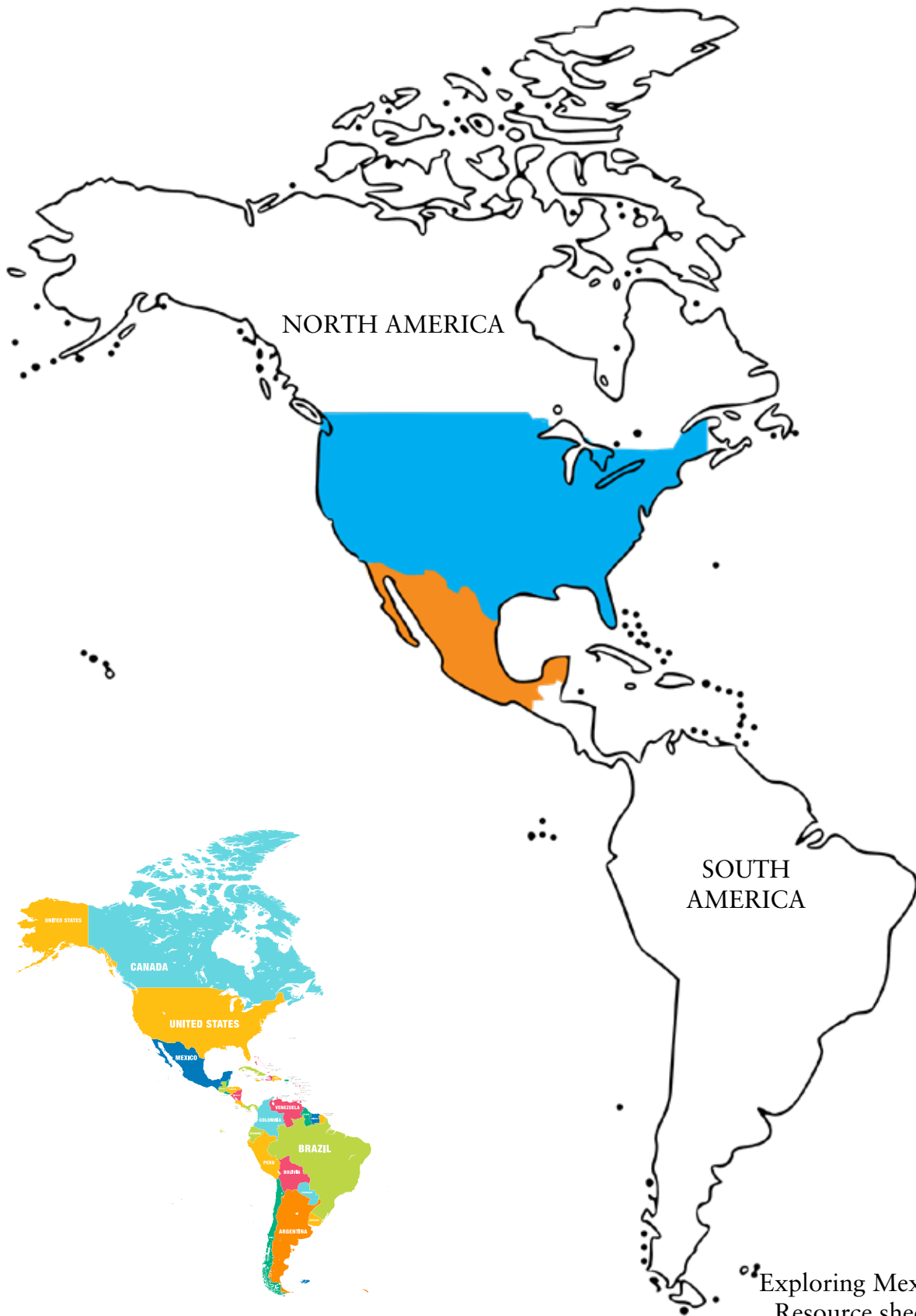


Exploring Mexico -
Resource sheet 1

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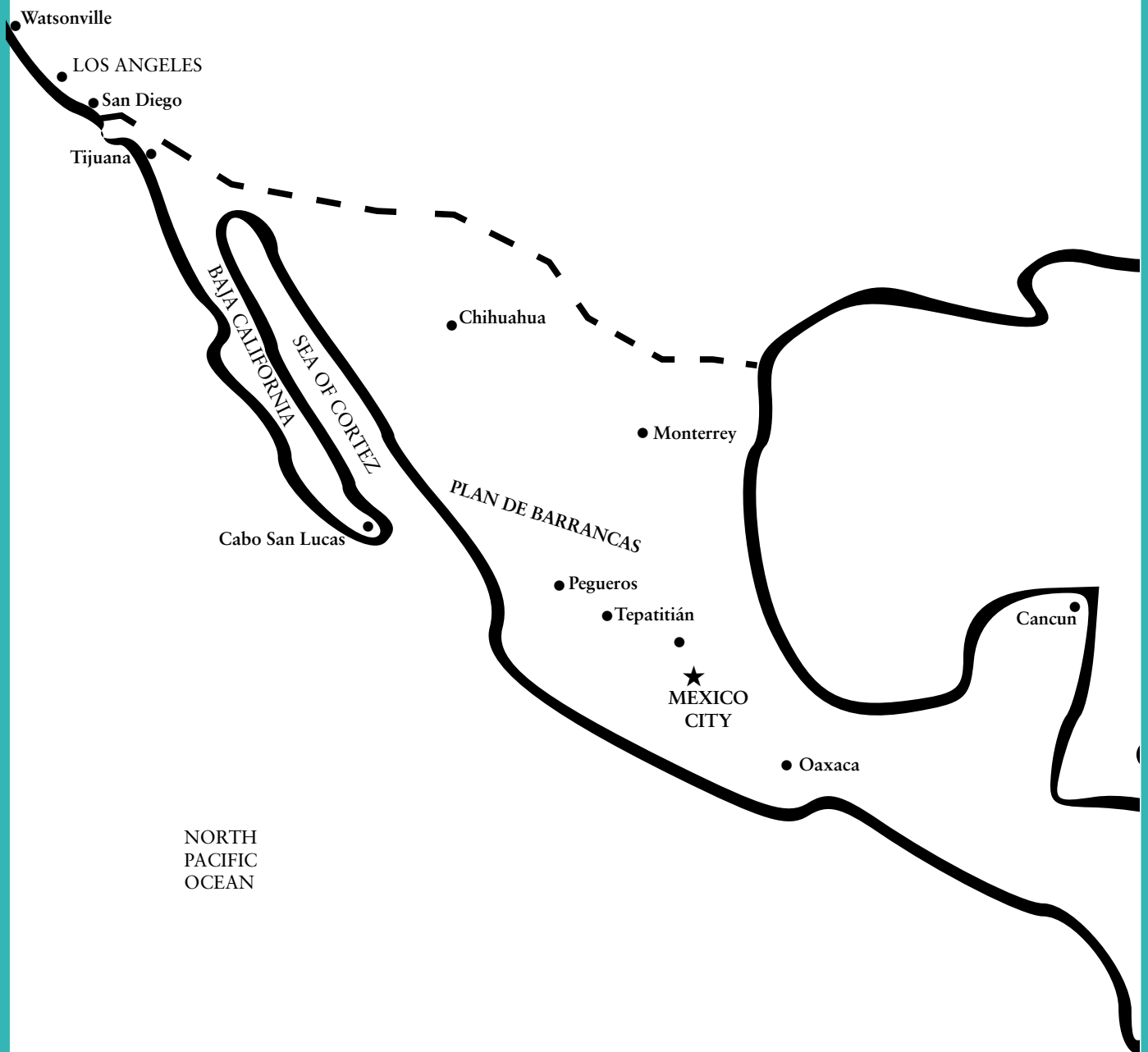
MAP OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA



Exploring Mexico -
Resource sheet 2

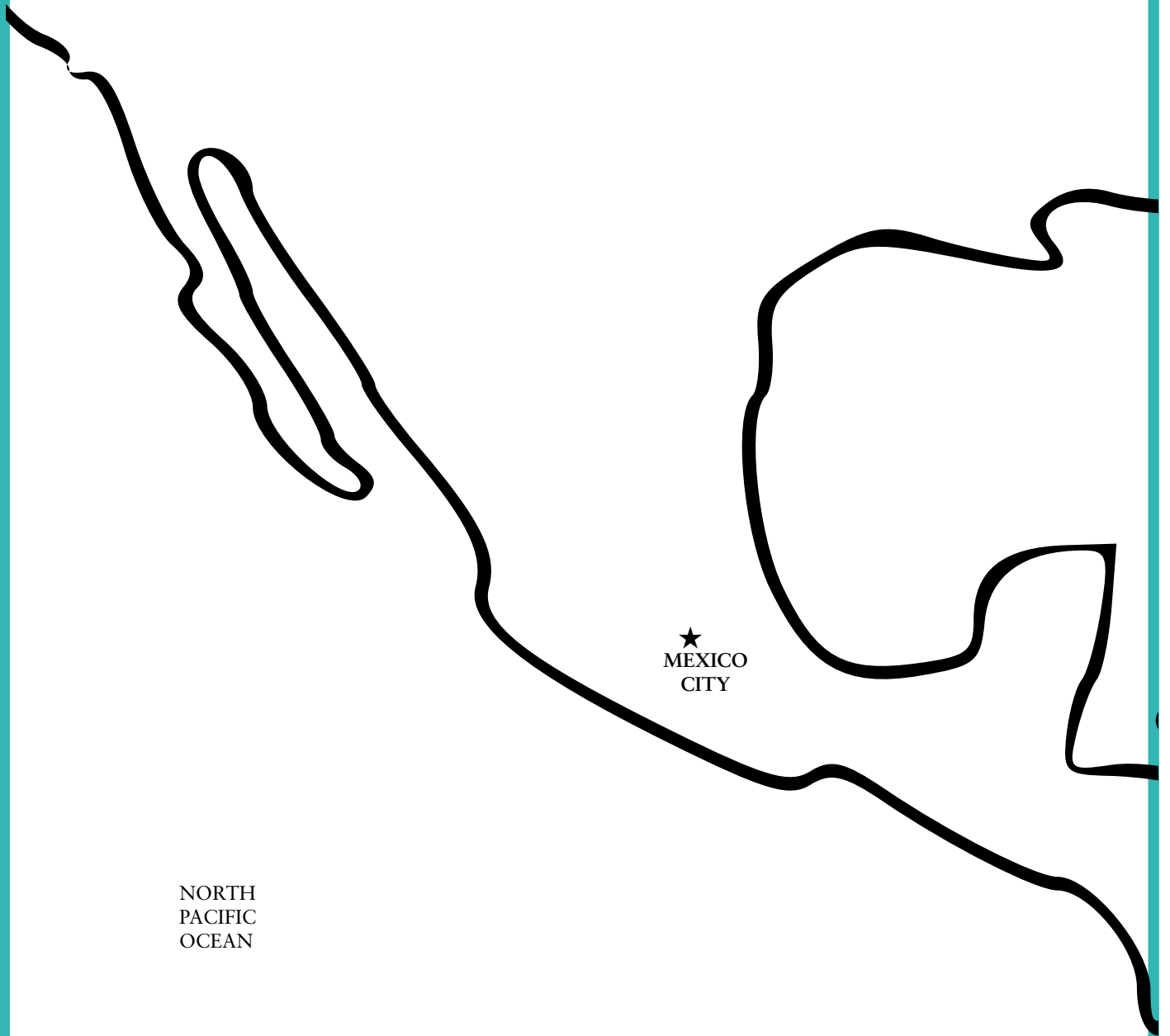
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MAP OF MEXICO AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



NORTH
PACIFIC
OCEAN

MAP OF MEXICO AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



NORTH
PACIFIC
OCEAN

★
MEXICO
CITY

‘STUNNING...THE GRAPHIC NOVEL WAS INVENTED FOR IMPORTANT HUMAN STORIES LIKE THIS’

EXPLORING MEXICO

ACTIVITY 2: MEXICO RESEARCH

- Students will need access to the internet or a range of non-fiction books in order to carry out some independent research about Mexico.
- If using the internet, remind students of e-safety rules and discuss useful key words that they could enter into a search engine. (E.g., Mexico information, Mexico facts for children, Mexico fact file.)
- Encourage students to cross check their research by using at least two different websites to verify the information they find.
- Talk through the headings on **Resource sheet 5 - Mexico research**. Ensure students understand the terms population, area, currency, religion and landmark.
- The most famous landmark in Mexico is probably Chichen Itza in the Yucatán Peninsula, near Cancun. It is one of the New Seven Wonders of the World and it is the remains of an ancient Mayan city. You may wish to encourage students to find out about Chichen Itza, especially if you are studying the Mayans in history.
- Discuss the different aspects of Mexican culture and environment that students may like to research. There are several suggestions on the worksheet: food, festivals, art, wildlife and famous people. Pick one thing and model taking brief notes on the topic.
- Allow plenty of time for students to carry out their research. The box on the worksheet will only be large enough for brief notes but students could use their workbooks to make further notes. They could then produce a presentation about the topic they have researched.



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ACTIVITY 2: MEXICO RESEARCH

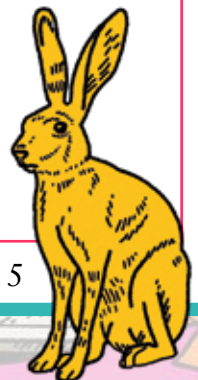
Use the internet, an atlas or an information box to find out about Mexico.

CAPITAL CITY:	
POPULATION:	
AREA:	
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:	
CURRENCY:	
MAIN RELIGION:	

Draw and colour the flag of Mexico:

Draw and label a famous landmark:

Research an aspect of Mexican culture or environment. Choose from food, festivals, art, wildlife and famous people and make notes in the box below.



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EXPLORING MEXICO

ACTIVITY 3: THE COLOURS OF MEXICO

- Ask students what comes to mind when they picture Mexico. Make a list of their ideas on a white board.
- Tell students that Mexico is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world. Ask students what they think this means and what they think the landscape in Mexico is like. Explain that we use the term physical geography when referring to the Earth's natural features, such as landscape, flora and fauna.
- Next, ask students what they think the word culture means. (The ideas, customs and social behaviour of a group of people.) Culture is an aspect of human geography. Briefly discuss how Mexican culture is extremely rich, vibrant and diverse.
- Provide students with **Images of Mexico (resource sheet 6 and 7)**. (You may wish to enlarge these sheets to A3.) Ask them to cut out the images and sort them into two groups. Group one should contain images showing aspects of physical geography and group two should contain images showing aspects of human geography.
- Once they have completed this task discuss how they have sorted the images. Point out that Mexico's topography is extremely varied – including mountainous regions, deserts, tropical rainforests, deep canyons and cenotes. Few countries on earth support as many plants and animals as Mexico does.
- Then explain that customs and traditions in Mexico vary from region to region. The culture has been influenced by the ancient Maya and Aztec civilizations and by European colonialism. Many people in Mexico are mestizos (they have both Native American and European, mainly Spanish, ancestors). Discuss how festivals and fiestas are very important in Mexico, with The Day of the Dead being a particularly well known and popular holiday.
- Explain that Mexico is often described as a colourful country. Discuss the different ways that a country can be colourful. There are many natural colours in the landscape, flora and fauna. But the human geography is also very colourful as shown in the architecture, food, art and textiles. The term colourful can also be used to indicate diversity in culture.
- Ask students to work in small groups or in pairs to create a collage to illustrate The Colours of Mexico. Provide them with lots of colourful magazines, posters and scrap paper. They should discuss a design idea before they start and sketch it out on a large sheet of paper. Encourage them to be as imaginative as possible and to try to reflect aspects of both human and physical geography.



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EXPLORING MEXICO

ACTIVITY 3: THE COLOURS OF MEXICO

- ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

- Share with students one of Pedro Martín's comic stories, De Colores, from his website: <https://www.mexikid.com/#/de-colores/>.



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ACTIVITY 3: THE COLOURS OF MEXICO



Exploring Mexico - Resource sheet 6

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ACTIVITY 3: THE COLOURS OF MEXICO



Exploring Mexico - Resource sheet 7

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PIÑATAS

A popular element of Mexican culture is the piñata. A piñata is a decorated container filled with sweets or treats that is suspended from a height. When the piñata is hit the treats will fall out.

Piñatas are often used at parties and celebrations in Mexico. Only when the piñata has been destroyed can the celebrations begin.

At Christmas time in Mexico piñatas are often filled with candy and fruit. Traditional fiesta piñatas were often shaped like a star, representing the star of Bethlehem, or a donkey (a burro piñata), representing the mule that Mary rode in the Christian Christmas story.

Nowadays piñatas come in all shapes and sizes. They will often be models of popular cartoon or celebrity figures.



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MAKE A PIÑATA

You will need:
cardboard box (any size)
sticky tape
wrapping paper
colourful paper (tissue paper is ideal)
wrapped treats



1 Make two small holes in the box directly opposite each other and thread some strong string through the holes. Tie it securely in a loop. You will use the string to hang the box from a height.

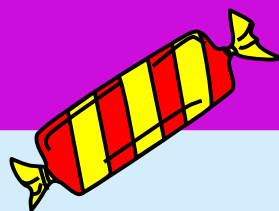
2 Ensure that all the sides of your box are taped/attached securely to each other but leave the top of the box open.

3 Fill the box with your individually wrapped treats.

4 Seal the top of the box with tape.

5 Cover the box with wrapping paper.

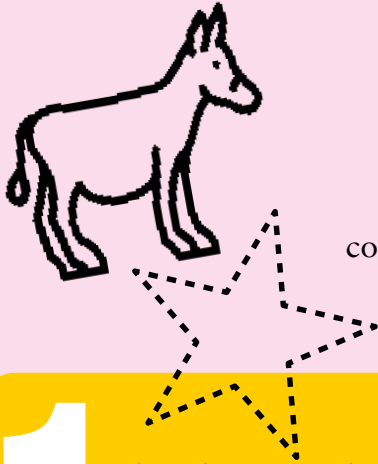
6 Decorate your box with tissue paper. You could also attach additional pieces of cardboard to turn your piñata into an animal or figure of your choice.



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DESIGN AND MAKE A PIÑATA



You will need:
cardboard
sticky tape
wrapping paper
sketching paper and pencil
colourful paper (tissue paper is ideal)
wrapped treats
string



1

Sketch some ideas for a piñata (a star, a donkey, an ice cream etc).

2

When you have decided on your design draw it on a piece of cardboard and cut it out. Then use the first design as a template. Draw around the shape so that you have two identical shapes. Cut out the second shape.

3

Create sides for your piñata so that you can join your two shapes together and create a container. You will need to measure the sides carefully and join them securely with sticky tape. Leave an opening

4

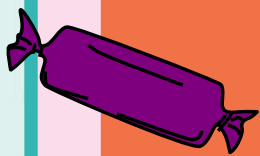
Make two small holes in the piñata and thread some strong string through the holes. Tie it securely in a loop. You will use the string to hang the box from a height.

5

Fill the piñata with treats or sweets and then seal the opening.

6

Now you can wrap and decorate your piñata.



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'STUNNING...THE GRAPHIC NOVEL WAS INVENTED FOR IMPORTANT HUMAN STORIES LIKE THIS'

MAKE CHILAQUILES

Make a famous and tasty Mexican breakfast!



There's no one right method to make chilaquiles. The only essential ingredient is **tortilla chips** (preferably a little stale). You can mix them with other leftover ingredients. This is a suggested recipe that you can adapt.

You will need:

- a large bag of tortilla chips •
- an avocado • two eggs • a tin of cooked black beans (frijoles) •
- an onion • salsa • grated hard cheese (queso)

How to make salsa:

Chop up six large, ripe tomatoes; half an onion; a clove of garlic; a handful of coriander leaves and a green chilli. Mix them all together in a bowl. (For a smoother salsa use a food processor to combine the ingredients.) Squeeze the juice from half a lime on top.

1 Heat a big splash of oil in a large pan.

Add some tortilla chips and fry until they are golden brown.

2 Carefully remove the tortilla chips from the pan and place them on some absorbent paper to soak up any liquid.

3 Add your salsa to the same pan and heat gently. Then add the tortilla chips and coat them with the salsa.

4 Mix in the black beans and season with salt and pepper. Leave to simmer.

5 In a separate pan, fry two eggs.

6 Peel and remove the stone of your avocado and then carefully slice it.

7 Chop up your onion into even slices.

8 Remove the large pan from the heat and place the eggs, avocado and onion slices on top of the tortilla chip mixture.

9 Finally grate some hard cheese on top of the dish.

10 Serve and enjoy!

SAFETY FIRST!

Adult supervision required. Be extremely careful when frying ingredients and using chopping knives.



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‘STUNNING...THE GRAPHIC NOVEL WAS INVENTED FOR IMPORTANT HUMAN STORIES LIKE THIS’

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS

- Invite students to make a list of all the different references to 1970s pop culture in Mexikid. They should include TV shows, films, music, toys etc. Discuss the things that children had heard of before reading the graphic novel and the things that they have never heard of before. Consider why some cultural phenomena have endured over the last few decades (Star Wars, comic book action figures etc).

In small groups students could create two posters - one illustrating 1970s pop culture (in the USA) and one illustrating modern day pop culture.

- Ask students to find out more about the Mexican Revolution. They could carry out some independent research and then present their findings.

Provide them with the following questions to help guide their research: What were the main causes of the revolution? How long did the revolution last? How did the revolution change Mexican society? How did the USA get involved in the revolution? (KS3)

- Look closely at the diagram of the Winnebago on pages 38 and 39. Ask students to imagine that they are going on a long family road trip. Challenge them to draw and label a diagram of the motorhome they would like to travel in.

- Discuss the meaning of the word *memoir* and any other memoirs that students have read. What are some of the common features of a memoir? How does a memoir differ from a biography? Whose memoir would you like to read? Do you think the graphic novel format works well for a memoir?

- Ask students to find some Spanish words and phrases in Mexikid. They could then create mini dictionaries in which they explain the meaning of Spanish words such as abuelito (grandfather), padrinos (godparents), queso (cheese), hola (hello), primos (cousins), gracias (thank you), rápido (fast), besos (kisses) and chato (boring).



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'STUNNING...THE GRAPHIC NOVEL WAS INVENTED FOR IMPORTANT HUMAN STORIES LIKE THIS'

NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

Geography - KS2

Location knowledge

- Locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on Europe and **North and South America**, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries and major cities.

Place knowledge

- Understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom, a region in a European country and a region within **North or South America**.

Design and Technology - KS2

Design

- Use research and develop design criteria to inform the design of innovative, functional, appealing products that are fit for purpose, aimed at particular groups or individuals.
- Generate, develop, model and communicate their ideas through discussion and annotated sketches.

Make

- Select from and use a range of materials and components according to their functional properties and aesthetic qualities.

Evaluate

- Evaluate their ideas and products against their own design criteria and consider the views of others to improve their work.

Cooking and nutrition

- Prepare and cook a variety of predominantly savoury dishes using a range of cooking techniques.
- Know where and how a variety of ingredients are grown.

(KS3)

- Become competent in a range of cooking techniques.

Art and Design - KS2

- Improve their mastery of art and design techniques with a range of materials.

(KS3)

- Use a range of techniques to record their observations as a basis for exploring their ideas.

History - KS2

- Pupils should be taught about a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history – one study chosen from: early Islamic civilization, including a study of Baghdad c. AD 900; **Mayan civilization** c. AD 900; Benin (West Africa) c. AD 900-1300.

