Copyright and Permissions

The Choices Program curriculum units and the contents of the electronic versions are copyrighted—1989-present. These copyright protections extend to all the various elements of Choices units, including titles, lesson plans, background readings, and the construction and language of the “options” or “futures” that are central to each unit. If you would like to use material from a Choices unit, in whole or in part, in your own work, please contact us at choices@brown.edu for permission. We are usually happy to extend permission for most non-commercial educational purposes with appropriate credit given. Your purchase of a Choices unit includes permission to make copies of the student text and appropriate student handouts from the Teacher’s Resource Book for use in your own classroom. This permission does not extend to copies made for resale.

NOTE: This document is NOT intended for multi-teacher use. Duplication of this document for the purpose of resale or other distribution is prohibited. Publishing, posting or providing access to this file on an intranet or other networked or web based computer system is prohibited.

Please contact us at choices@brown.edu if you are looking for an E-Text that is appropriate for distribution on a secure intranet site. Our E-Text format allows you to post individual readings, study guides, and handouts for students to complete and submit back electronically.

The Choices Program is committed to providing rigorous and scholarly educational materials to teachers and classrooms. We thank you for your support.
From the Choices Program
www.choices.edu
Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads

THE CHOICES PROGRAM
Explore the Past... Shape the Future
History and Current Issues for the Classroom

WATSON INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
BROWN UNIVERSITY WWW.CHOICES.EDU
Acknowledgments

Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads was developed by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program with the assistance of the research staff of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, scholars at Brown University, and several other experts in the field. We wish to thank the following researchers for their invaluable input to this or previous editions:

Elizabeth Bakewell
Research Associate in Latin American Studies
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

Thomas Bierstecker
Henry R. Luce Professor of Transnational Organizations
Department of Political Science, Brown University

Katrina Burgess
Adjunct Assistant Professor (Research)
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

Vikram Chand
Former Visiting Scholar in International Relations (Research)
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

Cindy Collins
Former Research Assistant
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

R. Douglas Cope
Associate Professor of History
Brown University

Ellen Messer
Visiting Associate Professor
Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University

Julio Ortega
Professor of Hispanic Studies
Brown University

Kenneth Shadlen
Lecturer in Development Studies
Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics

Thomas Skidmore
Professor of History Emeritus
Brown University

Gustavo Vega
Associate Professor, Centro de Estudios Internacionales
El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico City

Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads is part of a continuing series on international public policy issues. New units are published each academic year and all units are updated regularly.

Visit us on the World Wide Web — www.choices.edu
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Mexico’s Transformation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part I: Mexico’s Beginnings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Mexican Societies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spanish Conquest</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Mexico</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican Independence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II: The Consolidation of a Nation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress, Reform, and Order</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mexican Revolution</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-making Mexico</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Boom and Bust</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part III: Mexico Today</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in the 1980s and 1990s</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges Today</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futures in Brief</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future 1: Justice for the People</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future 2: Restore Order and Stability</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future 3: Embrace the Future</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Documents</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Resources</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Choices for the 21st Century Education Program is a program of the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. Choices was established to help citizens think constructively about foreign policy issues, to improve participatory citizenship skills, and to encourage public judgement on policy issues.

The Watson Institute for International Studies was established at Brown University in 1986 to serve as a forum for students, faculty, visiting scholars, and policy practitioners who are committed to analyzing contemporary global problems and developing initiatives to address them.

**Introduction: Mexico’s Transformation**

On December 1, 2000, Mexico took a dramatic step toward a new era. On that day, Mexico inaugurated a new president and completed its first transfer of presidential power to an opposition party since the 1920s. For many Mexicans, the end of the seventy-one-year dominance of the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI) signalled an important political transformation for Mexico.

Political reform has not changed Mexico’s economic course. As the country focuses on entering the global marketplace, inequality continues to pull Mexican society apart. Mexican business executives jet from continent to continent, while poor people in the cities are caught in a widening web of crime and drug trafficking. At the same time, much of Mexico’s rural indigenous population lacks basic services such as running water, sanitation, and access to primary education.

Many Mexicans made their frustrations clear in the country’s 2006 presidential election. Felipe Calderón, a conservative candidate, won the election by 233,831 votes (out of the 41.5 million cast) over Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a champion of the poor. The election exposed the deep divisions in Mexican society. The majority of Obrador’s supporters were from the poor and working classes while Calderón was primarily supported by the middle class and those who thought that Mexico’s top concern should be economic and political stability. Many of Obrador’s supporters believed the election had been fraudulent and called for a recount of the votes. They organized a six-week long demonstration in Mexico City in which protesters erected tents to block traffic on the city’s major streets. In the end, Mexico’s courts allowed only a partial recount and granted Calderón the victory. Although the protests have ended, many Mexicans continue to be angry and distrustful of the government.

"We are fed up with being robbed, fed up with fraud. We are ready for it to come to blows. If that is what they want, that’s what they will get. They want a revolution, then they’ll have a revolution."

—An Obrador supporter

In this reading, you will be asked to step into the shoes of Mexicans and consider Mexico’s future. The readings trace the history of Mexico, from its pre-colonial past to its most recent political and economic changes. You will be asked to consider the same questions that the people of Mexico are now debating: What principles should guide the development of Mexico’s economy? How should Mexico define its relationship with the rest of the world? How should Mexicans address their country’s inequality and poverty?
Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads

Part I: Mexico’s Beginnings

In the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Mexico City, a plaque in front of a sixteenth-century church contains the following inscription: “On August 12, 1521, heroically defended by Cuauhtemoc [emperor of the Aztecs], Tlatelolco fell into the hands of Hernán Cortés. It was neither a triumph nor a defeat: it was the painful birth of the mestizo nation that is Mexico today.”

The inscription reflects the mixed feelings that Mexicans have toward their country’s origins. Mexicans today have a great deal of pride in their indigenous past. The achievements of the region’s early civilizations hold a prominent place in Mexican history and culture. Many Mexicans remember the resistance of the Aztecs during the Spanish conquest as the heroic defense of a sophisticated society against savage Spanish conquistadors (“conquerors”). At the same time, Mexicans cannot deny their Spanish heritage and the influence of nearly three hundred years of Spanish colonialism. Most Mexicans are mestizo, a mix of indigenous and European ancestry.

Tensions between indigenous and Spanish, conquered and conqueror, continue to exist today. The descendents of Spanish conquistadors continue to control much of Mexico’s land and wealth. At the opposite extreme, millions in rural indigenous communities are among the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere. For members of Mexico’s mestizo majority, the divisions are more complex.

For those who want to understand Mexico today, understanding early Mexican history is crucial. As you read, try to note the connections between past and present.
country of Guatemala. The Mayas built huge stone pyramids, palaces, and temples. They also developed a complicated calendar system, possibly to help them determine optimal times to plant or harvest their crops. Their society was hierarchical, with the nobility ruling over commoners and slaves. In order to expand their territory, the Mayas conquered neighboring kingdoms. The Mayas forced the conquered kingdoms to pay a regular tax but otherwise left them to govern themselves. In the following centuries, the center of Maya civilization extended north to the Yucatán Peninsula. Maya people still live in Mexico today.

The rise of the Mayas occurred alongside the development of the city of Teotihuacán in the Valley of Mexico (the location of Mexico City). Historians are not sure of the exact origin of the people who built this city, although they often refer to them as Teotihuacanos. The construction of Teotihuacán was carefully planned, with wide thoroughfares connected in a grid pattern. The architecture and art of the people of Teotihuacán show that religion was very important to them. In the heart of the city was a ceremonial center of approximately two square miles which held numerous stone...
Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads

pyramids and temples. The city’s Pyramid of the Sun is the third largest pyramid in the world. (The largest pyramid ever constructed is also located in central Mexico.) Teotihuacán was a shrine to pilgrims from throughout the region. Teotihuacán was also a trading hub, with a network reaching to parts of northern Mexico and as far south as present-day Guatemala. At its height, the city was home to as many as two hundred thousand people.

**How was the Aztec Empire established?**

In the seventh century, Teotihuacán and other central Mexican societies diminished, possibly because of food shortages. The region was also invaded by warrior tribes from the north. The Toltecs and later the Aztecs eventually restored the Valley of Mexico as a center of power by the middle of the fourteenth century. The city of Tenochtitlan, which the Aztecs built on an island in Lake Texcoco, came to rival the earlier wealth and glory of Teotihuacán. The Aztecs based much of their society on the ideas and practices of other groups in the area. The nobility ruled Aztec society and the Aztecs forced city-states they had conquered to pay their emperor, similar to the practice of the Maya Empire before them. The Aztecs also required these city-states to provide young men and women for labor and for human sacrifice. Human sacrifice had been practiced in the region as early as the second century, mainly for religious purposes. The Aztecs expanded upon this practice, sacrificing thousands of people each year, as much for political control and intimidation as for honor of the gods.

Tenochtitlan was a huge metropolis, with a complex political, military, and religious bureaucracy including tax collectors, courts of justice, and a mail service. Local and regional markets attracted thousands from the surrounding area to buy goods. The Aztecs were renowned for their fine art and massive stone statues, and the city housed a royal library filled with books documenting Aztec culture and society. By the time the Spanish arrived in the early sixteenth century, the Aztec Empire stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, reached as far south as present-day El Salvador, and contained seven to fifteen million people.

**The Spanish Conquest**

Starting with Columbus in the fifteenth century, the Spanish monarchy commissioned explorers to discover a faster trade route to Asia. What these conquistadors found instead was a vast continent, previously unknown to Europe, and inhabited by thousands of different indigenous groups and cultures. In
the 1490s, the Spanish set up a small colony called Santo Domingo in the Caribbean islands and enslaved the indigenous population to work on farms and in gold mines. Santo Domingo not only provided Spain with resources and wealth, but also was a convenient location for further exploration of the region.

A labor shortage caused the Spanish to explore the Mexican coast. Most of the Caribbean’s indigenous population had died from European diseases. Diego Velázquez de Cuellos, Governor of Santo Domingo, sent the first Spanish expedition to Mexico in 1517 to find more slaves. Landing along the Yucatán coastline, the Spanish glimpsed sophisticated cities and civilizations before being fiercely driven away by the Mayas. The commander of the second trip, which sailed from Cuba in 1518, travelled further up the coastline. This was the first time the Aztecs had direct contact with the Spanish. When the Aztec emperor Moctezuma heard about the Spanish, he and his advisors decided to wait and see what the Spanish would do before taking any action.

What happened in the fight for Tenochtitlan?

The Spanish and their allies entered the city of Tenochtitlan for the first time in November 1519. The Spanish were awestruck by Tenochtitlan’s size and grandeur. The city was larger than any the Spanish had seen, not only in the region, but in much of Europe as well.

“...when we saw so many cities and villages built in the water and other great towns on dry land and that straight and level Causeway going towards Mexico, we were amazed.... And some of our soldiers even asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream.”

—Bernal Díaz del Castillo, one of Cortés’ soldiers

Moctezuma, still unsure of Spanish intentions, welcomed Cortés and his men into the city. Tenochtitlan was an island city, connected to the mainland by three removable bridges. Cortés, fearing a possible trap, captured Moctezuma. For the next eight months, the Spanish directed Moctezuma’s rule and demanded large gifts of Aztec gold. Historians are not sure why Moctezuma allowed this to happen, but some believe he may have been worried about losing support if he admitted he had made a mistake in allowing the Spanish to enter the city.

Spanish rule in Tenochtitlan abruptly ended in 1520 after the Spanish brutally massacred between eight and ten thousand Aztec nobles during a religious festival. The Aztec populace rose up in anger, and the Spanish,
suffering many casualties, were forced to flee the city.

“Oh! What a fight and what a fierce battle it was that took place; it was a memorable thing to see us all streaming with blood and covered with wounds and others slain.”

—Bernal Díaz, one of Cortés’ soldiers, remembering the Spanish retreat from Tenochtitlan

This was a major Aztec victory and significantly undermined support for the Spanish among other indigenous city-states. The Spanish spent the next year reforming alliances with these groups, planning to surround Tenochtitlan and squeeze it from the outside. At the same time, the death of Moctezuma, who was killed most likely by the Spanish during the uprising, left a power vacuum within the city and the cohesion of the Empire continued to unravel. Also during this period, a smallpox outbreak killed nearly forty percent of the indigenous population in less than a year.

The Spanish and their allies (more than two hundred indigenous warriors for each Spanish fighter) returned to Tenochtitlan in 1521. They blocked the city’s three bridges and used ships to try to cut the city’s supply of food and water. A massive battle for Tenochtitlan lasted three months. The Aztecs were militarily superior and had huge numbers of troops. The Spanish would have been brutally defeated had it not been for their indigenous allies who gave supplies and tens of thousands of warriors to fight the Aztecs. The blockade of supplies and troop reinforcements eventually wore down Aztec resistance, and in August 1521, Tenochtitlan fell to the Spanish and their allies.

Colonial Mexico

After the fall of Tenochtitlan, the remainder of the Aztec Empire quickly collapsed. The Spanish destroyed the city and built Mexico City upon its ruins. Fueled mainly by desires for riches and further exploration, the Spanish extended their rule throughout the region. Although Spain established its colony, New Spain, in 1535, frontier wars and indigenous resistance slowed Spanish expansion throughout the colonial period. Nevertheless, by the 1670s, New Spain was the richest and most populous Spanish colony. Of all of Spain’s colonies, including much of North America, South America, and the Caribbean, Mexico was the jewel in the Spanish crown.

How was Mexican society changed by colonization?

A new society was created from the mix of diverse cultures in colonial Mexico. European customs blended with indigenous practices and the traditions of enslaved Africans who were brought to Mexico from Spanish colonies in the Caribbean. This created new musi-
cal styles, dances, and cultural and religious practices. People’s daily lives also changed. For instance, many indigenous people who lost their land moved to the city and adapted Spanish customs. Similarly, large landowners, isolated in rural areas, often adapted some indigenous practices. Intermarriages and unions between men and women of different backgrounds created new racial categories. Collectively called mestizos, these groups quickly outnumbered the white population.

The population also changed in other, more tragic ways. A series of plagues throughout the sixteenth century decimated the indigenous population. Numbering more than twelve million at the end of the fifteenth century, the indigenous population was less than one million by 1620.

Social and economic opportunities in New Spain were based on one’s race and background. For example, although whites held a higher status than any other group, whites born in Spain, called peninsulares, generally had more opportunities than criollos, the whites born in the colony. Indigenous people and freed Africans, on the other hand, had very few opportunities for social or economic advancement. Slaves, of course, had no opportunities.

How did the Spanish treat indigenous groups?
The Spanish considered indigenous peoples legal minors and wards of the crown and Catholic church. Spanish authorities declared slavery of indigenous peoples illegal in 1542. Still, the colonial government often forced indigenous communities to pay a regular tribute, usually of money and labor.

At the same time, the colonial government protected certain indigenous rights. Most significantly, the government preserved indigenous land ownership rights. Many times groups were forced off traditional lands, but this law allowed them to claim new lands on which to settle. Although the law was passed mainly to ensure that indigenous communities could afford to pay tribute, it allowed many communities to remain economically self-sufficient.

Spanish authority was strongest in the cities, mainly located in central and southern Mexico. In the rural areas, particularly to the north, indigenous groups remained more independent. Revolts in the north were successful in either slowing Spanish expansion or stopping it altogether for much of the colonial period. The discovery of gold and silver mines, however, led to more permanent Spanish settlements in the north.

What was the economy of New Spain based upon?
According to the Spanish crown, New Spain existed only for the economic benefit of Spain. The economy of New Spain was based on trade with Spain, exporting raw materials and importing European manufactured goods. With few navigable rivers, transportation in New Spain was expensive and slow. This meant that only the most profitable goods, such as gold, silver, and cacao, were exported. The colonial government discouraged other economic development in New Spain in order to protect producers in Spain.

Indigenous workers and African slaves provided the majority of labor in New Spain. The Spanish used these workers to excavate silver from mines in the north. Landowners also put them to work on their haciendas, large tracts of land given to wealthy Spaniards by the Spanish crown. Early transportation in the colony was provided by indigenous porters who would physically carry goods and people to points of destination across the country. The forced labor of indigenous workers also built most of New Spain’s cities and towns. The stone for many of the colony’s finest churches and palaces came from indigenous temples and pyramids.

What was the role of the Catholic church in New Spain?
The Catholic church was the most influential institution in colonial Mexico. To a large extent, many Spanish explorers justified their
conquests by claiming they were spreading Christianity. The aim of conversion was to totally replace traditional religious practices with Catholicism. In practice, although indigenous communities were often receptive to this new religion, Christianity was rarely accepted completely. Many indigenous groups combined religious practices, adopting parts of Catholicism into their traditional religions.

“They give worship to Christ and they serve their gods, they revere the Lord and they do not revere Him...they venerate Him, in short, only with the appearance of Christianity.”
—José de Acosta, Spanish missionary, 1588

Although frustrating to Spanish missionaries, this blending of new and old helped preserve elements of indigenous cultures long after the colonial period ended. Today, almost ninety percent of Mexicans identify themselves as Catholic. At the same time, many Mexicans still practice indigenous customs. For example, traditional healers, using indigenous medicines and religious practices, still provide services in many communities.

The Catholic church was also important in the social and economic life of New Spain. The church provided the only education in the colony, which was primarily geared towards white males. In the absence of banks, the church became a major lending institution for the wealthy in New Spain. Furthermore, thanks to large gifts of money from elite families, the church owned large portions of rural and urban land throughout the colony.

Mexican Independence

During the colonial period, most of New Spain’s population, indigenous and European alike, sincerely accepted the rule of the Spanish monarch over the colony. Many had never even considered gaining independence from Spain.

How did events in Europe affect colonial desires for independence?

At the start of the nineteenth century, events in Spain changed the thinking of many criollo elite. In 1808 France’s Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Spain and put Spain’s King Ferdinand VII in jail. The Spanish convened their national assembly, which had not operated for many years, to rule in the king’s absence. The assembly drafted a new constitution that called for popular voting rights and a representative government, and it demanded increased revenue from the colonists in New Spain.

The criollo elite in New Spain, loyal to King Ferdinand, were fearful of a liberal constitution that would threaten their traditional privileges. They also felt squeezed financially by the economic demands of the new Spanish government. Resentment of the government in Spain was added to long existing criollo resentment of peninsulares. Although the peninsular population in New Spain was quite small, competition between criollos and peninsulares for status and position was fierce. Talk of Mexican independence began in earnest among the criollo elite a few years after King Ferdinand was imprisoned.
How was the majority of New Spain’s population involved in the independence movement?

Many in the mestizo and indigenous populations were frustrated with their limited opportunities and increasing poverty. At the same time, many were loyal to the Spanish monarch. They generally directed their frustration towards the local government in New Spain. However, some criollos believed that the masses could be organized to fight against the authority of peninsulares and the authority of the Spanish government in the colony.

Miguel Hidalgo, a criollo parish priest, organized his largely mestizo and indigenous congregation in the first armed uprising against Spanish rule. On September 16, 1810, the date now celebrated as Mexico’s Independence Day, he called on his congregation to regain their land and freedom from the Spanish. He spoke particularly about the land that had been stolen from indigenous communities by the peninsulares, an issue that was of central importance to most indigenous people. (In fact, most indigenous land had been confiscated by criollo landowners.)

Hidalgo organized an army of twenty thousand, mostly farmers armed with machetes and shovels, and led them to a nearby mining town to attack peninsulares. Hidalgo had little control over his followers, and the army went on a rampage, killing hundreds. Ironically, both peninsulares and criollos were targeted, as the poor rural masses found both groups equally arrogant. Lacking organization, the army dispersed after a few months and Hidalgo was executed by the colonial authorities.

Many criollos became frightened at the peasant discontent that had been uncovered and lost their enthusiasm for independence. Fighting continued, as small, independent guerrilla movements of indigenous and mestizo communities, protesting their oppression, spread across the country. José María Morelos, a mestizo parish priest who had been one of Hidalgo’s officers, continued the rebellion south of Mexico City. He organized an army, mostly of mestizo and indigenous peasants, which won control of much of southern Mexico. In 1813, he convened a popular assembly that declared Mexico’s independence from Spain. Before their new government could take effect, the colonial authorities crushed the movement and executed Moreles.

How did Mexico gain independence from Spain?

In 1814, Spanish guerrillas forced the French out of Spain and King Ferdinand returned to his throne. The elite of New Spain expected gratitude for their loyalty, but Ferdinand, fearful of losing control of the colony, sent troops to Mexico to reassert Spanish rule. Then, in 1820, a rebellion in Spain forced the King to accept the liberal constitution the Spanish assembly had drafted in his absence. Many Mexican conservatives feared that the reforms threatened to overturn the old social order. Criollos and peninsulares joined together and developed an independence plan to preserve their privileges. The Plan de Iguala called for an independent Mexico ruled by a monarch, equality between peninsulares and criollos, and Roman Catholicism as the official religion. In 1821, after limited fighting between Mexican and Spanish forces, Spain officially recognized Mexican independence.

In the end, conservative Mexico had won independence from a much more liberal Spain.

What happened in Mexico after independence?

Instability and hardship were characteristic features of newly independent Mexico. Disease had killed as many as 600,000 people during the insurgency. Mining, agriculture, and industry had all suffered. Many wealthy peninsulares and colonial administrators left the country after independence, taking their money and skills with them. The silver mines were flooded and machinery had been ruined. U.S. and European merchants took over most of Mexico’s trade and therefore collected most of the profits. The country lacked infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and ports, and the new government did not have the money to build more. Unable to collect taxes due to their...
Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads

weak control of the country, Mexico’s leaders resorted to borrowing from foreign countries and soon amassed a huge foreign debt.

Mexico’s leaders struggled to maintain control after independence. For the first fifty years of independence, most Mexican leaders were in power for less than a year. According to the constitution passed in 1824, the Mexican Congress, with two representatives from each state, would elect the president. In practice, most leaders came to power through military coups. Antonio López de Santa Anna, the most powerful political figure of the era, was in power eleven times over the period. The government was dominated by elites, most of them wealthy landowners with their own private armies.

For the most part, elite struggles for power had little effect on the lives of the majority of Mexico’s people. Most peasants continued to work for wealthy landowners or on communal land in indigenous communities. The Mexican public had little contact with the ruling elite. Some indigenous communities did rebel against the new government. The Caste War of the Yucatán was a Maya rebellion lasting from 1847 to 1854. During this rebellion, the Mayas in the Yucatán peninsula temporarily separated from the rest of Mexico. Although eventually defeated, this rebellion underscored the weakness of the central government during the period.

What happened in Texas?

Mexico paid a high price for its instability in the northern territories as well. The weak central government could not control Mexico’s frontier, the land which today comprises the U.S. states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. The region was sparsely settled and Mexico’s leaders, hoping to populate the area and protect it from hostile indigenous groups, encouraged the immigration of U.S. citizens. As settlers streamed into Texas, they increasingly clashed with Mexican authorities over land rights, slavery, and tax issues.

In 1836, Texan settlers declared independence from Mexico. Santa Anna personally led a six-thousand-man army into Texas to defend the territory, but after a few short battles, he was defeated. Nevertheless, Mexico refused to recognize Texan independence. The United States government did recognize an independent Texas, however, and in 1845, the region was annexed into the United States. Hungry for more land, the United States put pressure on the Mexican government to agree to a larger boundary for Texas and to the sale of California and New Mexico. When the Mexican government refused, the United States declared war.
What were results of the war between Mexico and the United States?

The North American Invasion (known in the United States as the Mexican-American War) exposed Mexico’s shortcomings. The country lacked a strong central army, so much of the fighting was done by hurriedly raised, poorly equipped troops whose commanding generals pursued individual strategies instead of following a unified plan. Although outnumbered in most battles, U.S. troops dominated the fight, pushing Mexican armies back on every front. In a little more than a year, U.S. forces took over Mexico City.

Initially, most Mexicans provided little support for the war, believing Mexico would have an easy victory over U.S. troops. The successful invasion inspired Mexican patriotism, and many Mexicans became openly hostile towards the United States. They vowed that U.S. troops would not be victorious. The Mexican criollo elite, however, fearful of further instability, surrendered to the United States and in 1848 the government signed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. In exchange for $15 million, Mexico surrendered half its territory to the United States.
The war between Mexico and the United States was a serious wake-up call for Mexico’s political leaders. The U.S. desire for expansion was a grave threat to Mexican territory and the stability of Mexican independence. The war had exposed the fragility of the nation. Mexican leaders realized that if they did not quickly establish control and stability in the country, they risked losing it altogether.

Progress, Reform, and Order

Defeat at the hands of the United States in 1848 led many in the Mexican elite to question their country’s cultural foundations. They blamed traditional social structures, including the Catholic church and the military, for Mexico’s loss. The urban middle class emerged as a powerful political force, advocating complete reform of Mexico’s political, economic, and social institutions. These reformers, known as liberals, advocated principles of individual responsibility and private property, and they believed European and U.S. ideas of progress could serve as a model for Mexico’s reform.

What was “La Reforma”?

The liberals led a revolt against Santa Anna, who was again in power, and took over the government in 1855. Implementing their program of reform, “La Reforma,” the liberals immediately began to dismantle traditional structures of religious and military privilege. At the time the liberals came to power, the Catholic church owned much of Mexico’s best farmland, as well as many urban properties, and Mexicans were required by law to pay a percentage of their income to the church. Legislation passed during La Reforma forced the church to sell all property that did not have religious buildings, established a clear separation of church and state, and restricted the authority of military and church courts. In 1857, middle class professionals drafted a new constitution which protected basic human rights and freedoms and established a democratic, representative government.

Opposition to the liberals and the new legislation was great, particularly among conservative members of the church and the military. Many indigenous communities were also opposed to the liberals’ method of reform. Most rural communities were structured around the church and did not welcome the liberals’ changes. Furthermore, the same law which forced the church to sell its extra properties also forced indigenous communities to sell their ejidos, traditional communal lands. Policy makers intended to transform indigenous people into independent small farmers. Instead, the law forced most of Mexico’s six million indigenous people off their lands, which were then bought up by large landowners and speculators.

How did conservatives try to regain control of Mexico?

Conservative elites were afraid that these reforms would strip them of their economic and social privileges. In 1858, they forced the liberals out of Mexico City and took over the government. The liberals fled to the port city of Veracruz where they formed a government in exile. This government was led by Benito Juárez, a highly educated lawyer who, despite his indigenous roots, firmly believed in European ideals of progress and reform. The two governments battled for control of the country. This civil war lasted for three years, with a great deal of violence and destruction on both sides. In 1861, liberal forces were victorious. They retook Mexico City and reformed their government, with Juárez as president.

The cost of the war bankrupted Mexico’s economy. Juárez was forced to suspend Mexico’s repayment of foreign loans. In January 1862, British, French, and Spanish troops occupied Veracruz to make sure that Mexico would repay the money as soon as possible.

The French also had a hidden agenda. Mexican conservatives, desperate to return to power, had negotiated with France’s emperor to create a new Mexican monarchy. The
French agreed and invaded Mexico in 1862, installing a European emperor to rule the country. But the French had overestimated the conservatives’ popular support; Most Mexicans did not accept the new monarch and the liberals led resistance to the new government across the country. They were seen as the defenders of Mexican nationalism and popular support for Juárez and the liberals intensified.

In 1865, the United States ended its own civil war and began to support the liberals with arms, ammunition, and volunteer soldiers. The French withdrew in 1866, and in 1867, liberal forces defeated the monarchy and executed the emperor. The conservatives were discredited and Juárez was elected president amid great public support.

**How did Juárez reform the Mexican economy?**

During Juárez’s presidency, Mexico’s economy and government were more stable than they had been at any point since independence. Juárez implemented a new economic plan based on foreign trade. Most Mexican exports were raw materials, like agricultural goods and minerals, that were needed in the booming industries of the United States and Great Britain. To make transportation of goods to and from port cities easier, Mexico needed better infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and railroads. In order to do this, the government needed money. The government encouraged foreign investors to come to Mexico to lend their capital and expertise. Juárez also focused his reforms on education, limiting the role of the church and creating many new, state-run schools.

**What was the Porfiriato?**

Mexico’s government remained stable after Juárez’s sudden death in 1872 and a new president, Sebastián Lerdo, was democratically elected to replace him. But in 1876, Porfirio Díaz seized control of the government, claiming that Lerdo had violated the constitution by running for a second term. Ironically, Díaz would rule the country for the next thirty-five years almost uninterrupted, violating the very principle he claimed to be protecting.

Díaz continued many of Juárez’s reforms, building thousands of miles of railroad, and modernizing roads, bridges, and ports. He focused on maintaining stability to attract more foreign investors and to improve Mexico’s international image. Massive amounts of foreign capital were invested in the country. The money was used to develop industries such as steel and textiles and to modernize the country’s agricultural and mining sectors with new technology. The economy grew dramatically, and foreign trade increased from about 50 million pesos in 1876 to more than 480 million pesos in 1910.

Díaz’s rule in Mexico, known as the Porfiriato,
Sugarcane farmers in the late 19th century. During the Porfiriato, millions of farmers lost their land and were forced to work on large haciendas.

was structured on his belief that stability and economic growth would only be achieved through order and progress. Díaz controlled Mexico through “pan, o palo,” bread or the stick. This phrase meant that those who supported Díaz were rewarded (the bread) and those who opposed were punished (the stick). For example, as the economy grew, Díaz expanded the police force, and created a large government bureaucracy. He used the police to repress opposition movements brutally, particularly those led by peasants and indigenous groups. He appeased his political opponents with positions in the bureaucracy. Díaz also changed the constitution in order to legitimize his lengthy rule.

**What were the consequences of Díaz’s reforms?**

The Porfiriato created massive inequality in Mexican society. Economic growth benefited the rich at the expense of the poor. In the countryside, Díaz continued to encourage the concentration of landholding. Land speculators and wealthy businessmen bought huge tracts of land, oftentimes forcing peasants off their lands. During the Porfiriato, indigenous communal landholdings shrunk from twenty-five percent to only two percent of Mexico’s land. At the same time, most land was incorporated into huge haciendas owned by foreigners and a handful of Mexico’s richest families.

Approximately ninety percent of the rural population lost its land during Díaz’s rule. Many were forced to work on the large haciendas for low wages, often borrowing money in order to survive. Most farms grew crops that were profitable to export, so much less land was devoted to growing food. This raised the price of basic food items, hurting the poor. Additionally, these large farms required less labor, putting many peasants out of work. Some moved to the cities to find jobs in the factories and often worked very long hours for little pay.

Most of the peasants’ employers were foreigners. By 1900, close to ninety percent of Mexican industry, and more than a quarter of Mexico’s land, was owned by foreigners, primarily U.S. investors. As the economy began to slow at the turn of the century, many middle class Mexicans became concerned with the country’s dependence on foreign money. They grew increasingly frustrated at the privileges given to foreign investors and began to protest the level of foreign involvement in Mexico’s economy. Poor workers were equally unhappy, as the government often used the national military to repress strikes of Mexican workers to the benefit of foreign owners. Rural and urban workers alike began to organize in regional and national workers’ associations. By the early 1900s, Díaz was, to many, the symbol of everything that was wrong with the country. Many believed that conditions would improve only if he was forced out of office.

**What did various opposition groups wish to accomplish?**

Although many were unhappy with the
Porfiriato, opposition groups had different ideas about what would improve the situation. Many among the middle class believed that political reform was all that was needed for things in Mexico to get better. They were content with the status quo and thought that a democratically elected president would resolve any discontent.

“Gentlemen, you do not want bread, you want only freedom because freedom will enable you to win your bread.”

—Francisco Madero at a worker’s rally, 1910

Other rebel groups, mostly made up of peasants and workers, were much more radical. Their demands ranged from land reform to worker’s rights to reforms in education. For them, political change was only a starting point. They were fighting for land and liberty.

United only in their dislike of Díaz, the different opposition factions formed a weak alliance to force Díaz out of power. A coalition of opposition forces led by Francisco Madero entered Mexico City in 1911 and forced Díaz into exile.

The Mexican Revolution

The end of the Porfiriato was the first step in a violent revolution that lasted for nearly a decade. There were great divisions among the opposition groups, and the Revolution meant very different things to different people. Groups had diverse and specific demands which made unification among them nearly impossible. Violent rebellions broke out across the country. A number of different leaders came to power, often by force and often either by killing the previous leaders or forcing them into exile. These leaders struggled to remain in power as the violence of the civil war continued unabated.

Who was Emiliano Zapata?

Emiliano Zapata is perhaps the most well known figure of the Mexican Revolution and, today, a national hero to many Mexicans. Originally from Morelos, a region in southern Mexico, Zapata was one of many local rebel leaders. For a time, Zapata had worked as a skilled horse trainer on a large hacienda, but he had left his job when he realized that the horses lived better than most of the farm workers. He returned to Morelos and organized an army to fight for land reform and the return of lands that had been forcibly taken from peasants.

The Zapatistas, as Zapata’s army was known, not only fought opposing rebel groups but also local landowners. Shortly after Díaz was forced out of power, Zapata and his army seized a number of large haciendas in southern Mexico and divided them up between local peasant farmers. Wide support for Zapata’s land reform demands made his movement popular with many peasants across the country.
What other rebel groups were fighting?

By 1914, there were three main revolutionary groups involved in the struggle. Zapata and his army controlled much of southern Mexico, pressing for extensive land reform. In the north, Francisco “Pancho” Villa led an army of cowboys, miners, railroad workers, and farmers. Villa, a former bandit, was very popular in the region for his lawless attitude. His army, known as the Villistas, fought for the rights of rural peasants and urban workers. The group organized a cavalry to fight opponents, took over haciendas and distributed the land to peasants, and, to finance their operations, robbed trains and printed paper money. The Villistas controlled northern Mexico for much of the Revolution.

The third group was the Constitutionalists. This force, led by Venustiano Carranza, primarily consisted of middle class citizens who wished to reinstate the democratic principles of the 1857 Constitution. The United States provided the Constitutionalists with arms and military support, although the group openly denounced U.S. involvement in Mexico’s civil war.

Thanks in part to U.S. support, the Constitutionalists took control of the presidency in 1914. Two months later, Carranza organized a meeting of delegates from the different rebel factions in order to discuss their various demands and bring some order to the country. Delegates arrived with weapons, exceedingly distrustful of each other. The Zapatista and Villista delegates joined together against the Constitutionalists and many believed that the two sides could not be reconciled.

“Those are men who have always slept on soft pillows. How could they ever be friends of the people, who have spent their whole lives in nothing but suffering?”

—Pancho Villa, referring to the Constitutionalists

Fighting increased after the convention. Zapata and Villa unified their armies to force
the Constitutionalists out of Mexico City. The troops occupied the city for only a few weeks before the Zapata-Villa coalition collapsed. Zapata’s peasant forces—mostly indigenous men clad in heavy white cloth and huge sombreros—were bewildered by the big city and retreated into the southern mountains. The Constitutionalists took advantage of the division to launch a major attack on the Villistas. This attack severely weakened Villa’s army and forced the Villistas back into northern Mexico.

What was significant about the Constitution of 1917?

By 1916 Carranza and the Constitutionalists controlled most of central and southern Mexico. In September of that year, Carranza organized a convention of Constitutionalist delegates to draft a new constitution. The document they created fulfilled the demands of many of the revolutionary factions, protecting both the political and social goals of the Revolution.

The Constitution of 1917 established an active central government committed to promoting the well-being of Mexican citizens. This reversed previous ideas that the government should have a limited role in the lives of ordinary people. The constitution’s authors—mostly teachers, lawyers, bureaucrats, engineers, and other members of the middle class—were determined to wrest power away from large landowners, foreign businessmen, and the church. The constitution protected the rights of workers to form unions and strike, with the government acting as mediator between owners and laborers. Article 27 of the constitution instated land reforms, granting rural communities the right to claim land.

“This Nation shall at all times have the right to impose on private property such limitation as the public interest may demand...to ensure a more equitable distribution of public wealth. Necessary measures shall be taken to divide up large landed estates; to develop small landed holdings....”

—Article 27, Mexican Constitution

This provision also gave the Mexican government, rather than foreign governments and investors, control of Mexico’s mineral and petroleum resources, as well as its frontiers and borders. Among other things, the constitution formally separated the powers of the church from the state and granted every citizen the right to education. Although some principles have not yet been achieved, the constitution of 1917 is the same one Mexico uses today.

Why did fighting continue after 1917?

Most Mexicans supported the constitution. Still, those who felt that the constitution was too progressive or not progressive enough continued fighting. Others became frustrated with Carranza for failing to implement the constitution’s reforms fast enough. Urban workers organized strikes, and support for Zapata grew once again as he criticized the government for not implementing land reform. Carranza’s popularity declined even more when, in 1919, he organized the murder of Zapata. Many viewed Zapata as a martyr and Carranza as a traitor to the ideals of the revolution.

In 1920, Alvaro Obregón, the general of the Constitutionalist army, withdrew his support of Carranza. Promising land reform, he joined with the Zapatistas to force Carranza out of power. Amid a great deal of popular support, Obregón was elected president. Obregón was powerful and capable of imposing order. Over the next four years, Obregón put down several rebellions and built a new consensus among the leading forces of the Revolution.

Re-making Mexico

The Revolution took a heavy toll on Mexico. Between 1.5 and 2 million Mexicans died during the war, mainly from disease and famine. Much of Mexico’s infrastructure had been damaged in the fighting and the economy needed serious attention. Mexico needed to be rebuilt, but more than this, leaders after the Revolution faced the daunting task of imple-
menting the reforms of the new constitution. For many Mexicans, the true Revolution was not the battles and fighting but the revolutionary social and economic changes promised by the constitution of 1917. The reforms of this post-Revolution period would completely change Mexican society.

How did the political environment change after the Revolution?

The two major political figures of this era were Plutarco Elías Calles and Lázaro Cardenas. Calles was president from 1924 to 1928 but exercised a great deal of control over the Mexican presidency until 1935. Calles created the National Revolutionary Party (PRN) in 1929 to bring stability and control to Mexican politics. The PRN was a political party that united the hundreds of political movements that had arisen during the revolution. The PRN made itself the symbol of Mexico’s revolutionary reforms, using slogans and images from the Revolution to earn the public’s support. All major organizations and influential figures affiliated themselves with it. Under Calles, most party members were government officials. Cardenas, president from 1934 to 1940, opened party membership up to workers, unions, and peasants. By 1940, the party had expanded to control nearly all potential opposition. Most people trusted in the party to protect the rights that had been won in the Revolution and they would automatically vote for whatever presidential candidate had been chosen by the party leadership. The PRN, later renamed the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI), effectively controlled Mexican politics and the presidency for the remainder of the twentieth century.

How did the Revolution change Mexican society?

The Mexican Revolution created a strong sense of nationalism and national identity for most Mexicans. Many viewed the Revolution not only as the driving force for economic and political changes, but also as a cultural revolution. The goal of this cultural revolution was to “Mexicanize” the population so that Mexican people would respect and have pride in uniquely Mexican ways and traditions, rather than always seeking to copy the West.

Education was the primary source of this cultural change. The government built thousands of new schools, particularly in remote rural regions. These schools opened their doors to rich and poor alike, girls as well as boys. Schools not only taught reading and writing, but also patriotism, citizenship, reverence of the agrarian lifestyle, and the dignity of work. In this way, government leaders began
to blend diverse groups and regions into a unified, national culture.

“To integrate Mexico through the rural school—that is, to teach the people of the mountains and of the faraway valleys, the millions of people that are Mexicans but are not yet Mexican, to teach them the love of Mexico and the meaning of Mexico.”
—Assistant Minister of Public Education, 1926

How did the government restructure the economy?

The government was more cautious reforming the economy than it had been instituting cultural changes. Although foreign involvement in Mexico had inspired much of the early fighting of the Revolution, little changed in the 1920s. Foreign investment in Mexico continued to grow and Mexican economy became even more dependent on trade with the United States. This was a dangerous position for the Mexican economy, as became clear during the worldwide depression in the 1930s. Foreign demand for Mexican goods and oil plummeted, hurting nearly every sector of the Mexican economy.

Like many other Latin American governments at the time, the Mexican government initiated a new plan for economic growth called Import Substitution Industrialization or ISI. Under ISI, Mexico developed its domestic industry. New factories were created to manufacture goods that Mexico had typically imported before. These factories also used many of the agricultural goods and raw materials the country had previously exported. The government passed laws to set prices and taxes that would protect these new industries in their infancy. For many Mexicans, domestic industrialization was a source of pride and many believed Mexico was finally controlling its own national destiny.

Economic changes during Cardenas’ presidency inspired further nationalist feelings. The constitution had given the government the right to nationalize, or take control of, foreign-owned mining and petroleum industries. In practice, little had been done to challenge foreign ownership. In the 1920s, Mexico was the third largest oil producer in the world but foreign companies dominated the industry. In 1938, workers organized a number of strikes against British and U.S. oil companies. When these companies refused to increase worker compensation, Cárdenas seized the property and nationalized the industry, bringing it under state control. This move was wildly popular among the Mexican populace and even the church. Many Mexican citizens viewed the nationalizations as a declaration of Mexico’s economic independence and voluntarily contributed money to help pay compensation to foreign owners.

What was Cárdenas’ land reform program?

Cárdenas’ land reform program also earned him a great deal of popular support. In the 1920s, land reform had proceeded slowly. Government leaders had seen land reform as an issue of increasing the productivity and modernization of agriculture. They were reluctant to redistribute lands to peasants because they were afraid that breaking up the large haciendas would lead to food shortages. Under
Cárdenas, however, land reform became an issue of justice. Many large farms were broken up and approximately fifty million acres of land was given to peasants, mostly to create new communal ejidos.

“A new Mexico is being built and the redistribution of land is the foundation.... We are laying it with bleeding hands and in great stress, but we are laying it, and digging it so deep into the hearts of the nation that this work of the revolution will endure forever.”

—Ramón P. de Negri, secretary of agriculture, 1924

Redistribution of land created violent struggles between landowners and agrarian activists. Nevertheless, during his term, Cárdenas oversaw the redistribution of nearly twelve percent of Mexico’s land. Although many peasants remained landless, Cárdenas’ land redistribution program ended more than four hundred years of concentrated landholding.

Economic Boom and Bust

Cárdenas believed that he was creating a foundation for continuing economic and social reform. However, when Cárdenas left office in 1940, many of his programs ended. Land reform in particular was largely abandoned. Subsequent leaders focused instead on industrialization and economic growth.

How did the Second World War affect Mexico?

World War II initiated a long stretch of economic growth in Mexico. The United States and its allies needed food and raw materials, so demand for Mexico’s exports boomed. At the same time, the war effort in many countries limited their industrial production and Mexico imported far less from abroad. Mexico’s domestic industries, producing many of the country’s former imports, flourished under the ISI strategy. These industries became more developed and better able to compete in international markets. The government continued to protect them by raising taxes on imported goods, making the domestic ones cheaper for people to buy.

Economic growth continued after the war, as Mexico joined in a worldwide economic expansion. The government focused its economic strategy on stability and growth, and supported the growth of private businesses and large-scale farmers. From 1940 to 1980, Mexico’s economy grew at an average annual rate of over six percent (by comparison, since 2001, the Mexican economy has grown at an average rate of two to four percent per year). The Mexican government continued to borrow internationally, and spent money creating roads, dams, and irrigation projects. Foreign investment, mostly from the United States, poured into the country, encouraged by Mexico’s stability.

This economic boom matched major changes in Mexican society. From 1940 to 1980, Mexico’s population grew from twenty to seventy million people. Urbanization transformed Mexico’s rural society and by 1980, more than twice as many people lived in cities than in rural areas. Over this period, Mexico City became one of the largest cities in the world.

Why do many view this period as the end of Mexico’s revolutionary reform?

Economic and social changes after World War II created a great deal of inequality in Mexican society. Economic growth did not translate into a higher standard of living for most of Mexico’s population. The government limited its funding of ejidos and many peasants again lost their land. Many left the countryside for the prosperity they believed they would find in the cities. But cities did not have enough jobs and many people remained unemployed. Urban growth strained city services such as housing, water, electricity, and sanitation. Those who did have jobs often earned low wages and the government became increasingly repressive of unions and strikes.
As much of the population grew poorer, many believed that the government had betrayed the revolution’s social reforms. After Cárdenas, the government largely abandoned the reforms of the Revolution. The middle class, beneficiaries of economic growth, grew larger and wealthier and became more conservative. Most wanted to preserve what they had rather than change the system to benefit the poor. The middle class was a powerful force in the PRI, which still retained control of the government. During this period, the Mexican government increasingly repressed peasant and worker discontent and jailed anyone engaged in activities considered threatening to society.

For most of the 1940s and 1950s, the middle class accepted this repression because the economy was strong. In the 1960s, however, the economy slowed as foreign demand for agricultural goods declined. Urban middle class dissatisfaction grew as the cities were strained by even more peasant migration. Many believed that government officials were corrupt, getting richer as most of the population grew poorer. Middle class students and professionals, as well as the poor, began to protest the government more frequently. The government responded with increased repression, as demonstrated in the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968 (see box on page 22). At the same time, decline in the agricultural sector forced the government to import even more foodstuffs to feed its growing population. To afford this, the government once again turned to foreign borrowing.

How did the economy change in the 1970s?

In the 1970s, Mexico’s economic strains began to show themselves more clearly. Foreign demand for Mexico’s exports decreased and the government owed a huge foreign debt. In an attempt to reverse this trend, the government tried to limit its foreign imports. Then, in the late 1970s, Mexico’s fortune changed. Mexicans discovered new reserves of oil and gas and by 1981, Mexico was the fourth largest producer of oil in the world. At the same time, international oil prices skyrocketed and the country was suddenly flush with cash. The government began spending on social projects, increasing public employment, and creating social welfare programs. This economic boom boosted the public’s confidence and renewed support for the PRI.

“For the first time in our history...
we were being courted by the most important people in the world. We thought we were rich. We had oil.”
—Jesus Silva Herzog, minister of finance 1982-1988
The Tlatelolco Massacre

The PRI’s repression of opponents broke into the open most dramatically in 1968, when Mexico was preparing to become the first developing country to host the Olympics. In July, a few months before the summer games were scheduled to began, the riot police brutally repressed a student fight, mistaken as a protest. Government violence and the jailing of many student leaders sparked major protests, not only of students but of middle class and poor workers across the city. The government, afraid of the effect of these protests on its international image, arrested hundreds and led raids against supposed dissidents.

“We have caused Mexico to appear in the eyes of the world as a country in which the most reprehensible events may take place; for the unfair and almost forgotten image of the Mexican as a violent, irascible gunman to be revived...”

—President Díaz Ordaz, State of the Union Address, September 1968

By October, only a few thousand continued to protest. They organized a demonstration in a plaza in the city district of Tlatelolco on October 2. Many spectators, including children, joined the rally, listening to the impassioned speeches of protesters. After a few hours, the army and police arrived and surrounded the plaza. Although the government denied the reports of observers, many reported that state forces opened fire on the crowd and killed as many as four hundred people, arresting two thousand more.

Although the Olympic Games proceeded conflict-free, the Mexican people were shocked at the government’s violence. The massacre significantly weakened support for the PRI, beginning a decades-long process that would eventually challenge PRI control of the government. The protests also illuminated the growing discontent in Mexico’s cities.

But Mexico’s economic troubles were far from over. Mexico’s agricultural sector was still unable to feed the population, and the government continued to import large quantities of food. The government also paid for subsidies, money that was paid to producers to keep food and fuel cheaper for Mexican consumers. Although the government earned huge amounts of money from the oil and gas industries, it was forced to borrow even more money to finance all of its expenses. From 1976 to 1982, Mexico’s foreign debt nearly tripled and Mexico became one of the most heavily indebted countries in the developing world.

The government assumed it would be able to pay back these loans as oil prices continued to rise. But in 1982, oil prices decreased sharply and the Mexican economy, losing its main source of revenue, crashed. At the same time, due to a worldwide economic recession, international demand for Mexican exports declined. Foreign banks could no longer afford to lend money to the Mexican government. In a matter of months, the Mexican government found itself facing bankruptcy. Many of Mexico’s leaders believed that only drastic economic change would save Mexico from this crisis.
Part III: Mexico Today

When the economy crashed in 1982, the Mexican government faced serious financial problems. The country had a foreign debt of $80 billion, and its primary sources of revenue—oil, mineral, and agricultural exports—were being sold on the international market at drastically reduced prices. The government had no money and was not only unable to pay off its debt, but also could not continue many of its social welfare programs. Unemployment skyrocketed and those fortunate enough to keep their jobs faced dramatically lowered wages.

Changes in the 1980s and 1990s

The problems which arose from this economic crisis caused Mexico’s leaders to reassess their economic policies. Since the 1920s, the government had been actively involved in Mexico’s economy. After 1982, many believed that less government involvement, coupled with greater participation in international markets, was necessary to improve Mexico’s economy.

How was the international community involved in Mexico’s economic changes?

To begin Mexico’s economic recovery, the government needed to negotiate with foreign banks, mostly from the United States, about how Mexico would repay its international debt. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lead the negotiations. Established at the end of World War II, the IMF is an international organization created to help provide global economic stability.

The IMF gave the Mexican government a loan to help pay back foreign banks in exchange for the government’s acceptance of an economic reform program. Many of Mexico’s leaders believed that the reforms were the medicine that Mexico’s economy desperately needed and they pursued the program with enthusiasm. In keeping with IMF requirements, the government cut its spending on social projects, kept wages low, promoted exports, and discouraged imports. Although some suffered under these policies, the program improved the economy by limiting spending while increasing revenue. By the late 1980s the economic crisis had eased.

Mexico’s leaders continued to transform the economy even after it improved. Carlos Salinas, elected president in 1988, instituted an economic program that he believed would increase Mexico’s foreign trade. This type of policy is known as “free trade” because it lowers barriers, such as taxes and government protections, so that foreign trade becomes cheaper. From 1985 to 1992, the average tax on imported consumer goods fell from 60 percent to less than 20 percent. At the same time, Salinas sold off many prominent state-owned firms, including the country’s telephone company, airlines, and a large steel mill. The number of companies under government control dropped from 1,555 in 1982 to 217 in 1992, shrinking the government’s role in the economy.

What events in the 1980s undermined support for the PRI?

The economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s critically weakened support for Mexico’s ruling political party, the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI). By limiting the role of government in the economy, the PRI created a government that had less influence in people’s daily lives. Cuts in government spending limited the PRI’s ability to carry out popular social programs. At the same time, the privatization of Mexican industry meant that there were far fewer jobs to award to political supporters.

In addition to its unpopular economic reforms, the PRI made a number of political missteps in the 1980s that caused it to lose significant public support. In 1985, a major earthquake struck Mexico City, killing more than 20,000 people and leaving another 200,000 homeless. Rather than follow the army’s standard emergency relief plan, the
government relied on local workers to help victims. Initially refusing international assistance, the government provided almost no aid to most of Mexico City’s population. When the army was finally deployed, it was sent to protect Mexico City’s factories from looting rather than to rescue civilians.

In the absence of government relief, Mexico City’s people joined together to help themselves. Many began to question the legitimacy of a government that did not take care of its people. Hundreds of grassroots and community organizations began to form in opposition to the PRI.

Pressure for democracy began to boil over the top of the Mexican political system by the late 1980s. The Alliance for Change, later renamed the National Action Party (PAN), the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), and other opposition parties became more active. In 1988, the presidential election was the closest race in Mexican history up to that point. When the PRI’s Salinas was declared the winner, many believed that the PRI had rigged the election, purposely miscounting votes. Taking to the streets, Mexicans protested the results, criticizing the PRI for stealing the election. Although Salinas took over the presidency with the support of PAN, opposition to the PRI continued to grow.

How did NAFTA change Mexico’s economy?

The government continued to reform the economy throughout the 1990s, despite diminishing popular support. Under President Salinas, the government negotiated with the

---

Super Barrio Saves the Day

Many popular heros also emerged in the aftermath of Mexico City’s 1985 earthquake. Superheros from the United States had long been popular in Mexico. When the government failed to provide relief for Mexico City’s victims, a number of individuals decided to create real-life superheros to provide assistance and encouragement to the people. Rejecting U.S. characters such as Batman or Superman, these masked crusaders imitated popular Mexican comic book heros, such as Super Barrio (a barrio is a city neighborhood). Dressed in tights and masks, Super Barrio and his fellow superheros went throughout the city, handing out supplies to earthquake victims. These local heros became symbols of hope and of opposition to the inadequacies of the government. Super Barrio later became a symbol of the Assembly of Barrios, a community group formed after the earthquake, and now represents the struggles of the urban poor. In later years, other activist superheros emerged, including Super Eco, a champion of environmental issues, and El Chupacabras Crusader, who fights for Mexicans suffering from debt, wearing a fanged mask and business suit.
United States and Canada to increase trade on the continent. Years of talks among the three countries eventually produced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which took effect in 1994. NAFTA was created to lower barriers to trade among North American countries. In Mexico, this means that Mexican exports are now cheaper for U.S. and Canadian consumers, and at the same time, imports from the United States and Canada are cheaper for Mexican consumers. When NAFTA was implemented, over two-thirds of Mexico’s exports were permitted to enter the United States and Canada tax-free, and by 2009 all import taxes are scheduled to be lifted. Today, NAFTA is the largest trading partnership in the world, totalling close to $1 trillion in trade per year.

NAFTA made Mexico a hot spot for investors. From 1990 to 1993, Mexico attracted more foreign investment ($53 billion) than any other developing country. Because Mexico could trade more cheaply with the United States, many international manufacturers moved their plants to Mexico. At the same time, many U.S. businesses opened factories in Mexico because they could pay Mexican workers lower wages. Mexico’s exports boomed, thanks largely to the growth in manufacturing. The U.S. company General Motors is now Mexico’s largest private employer.

The Mexican government believed that increasing exports to the North American market would create millions of new jobs in Mexico’s factories and farms. It believed that the breakdown in trade barriers would spur modernization and innovation throughout the economy. But most of Mexico’s manufacturing growth has taken place in the two thousand assembly plants, or maquiladoras, in northern Mexico. These maquiladoras, many owned by prominent European and Japanese companies, assemble electronic goods, automobiles, and other items for shipment across the U.S. border. Most of the products used by the plants are imported and thus the factories contribute little to other Mexican industries. At the same time, the workers in these plants make, on average, about six to eight dollars a day. (The average wage for manufacturing workers in the United States is more than seventeen dollars per hour.)

How did these economic changes affect Mexico’s population?

The free market reforms that began in the 1980s plugged Mexico into the global economy and enriched a small elite, but they did not benefit most people. Under President Salinas, the number of billionaires in Mexico rose from two to twenty-four. At the same time, the standard of living for many among
the middle class and poor did not improve.

The economic situation grew even more dire in 1994, when the economy collapsed again. In a matter of months, the economic progress that average Mexicans had achieved since the 1982 crash had been wiped out. Over one million workers lost their jobs. Those remaining in the workforce suffered wage cuts of at least one-third. At the same time, social programs for the poor were reduced again in order to limit government spending.

How did the public support for the PRI erode in the 1990s?

Inequality and worsening poverty increased public frustration with the PRI. After the country’s economic crisis in the 1990s, for example, the Mexican government became the butt of jokes and political cartoons. Protesters chanted, “First world. Ha, ha, ha” to mock earlier hopes that Mexico would soon be ranked among wealthier nations.

Throughout the 1990s, the PRI slowly began to lose its control over the government. In 1989, a PAN candidate became the first member of an opposition party to become governor of one of Mexico’s thirty-one states. By 1996, PAN mayors governed five of Mexico’s seven largest cities. In national elections, voter turnout reached record levels, rising from 50 percent in 1988 to 77.7 percent in 1994. In 1997, for the first time in the party’s history, the PRI lost control of the lower house of the Congress. Opposition parties became increasingly popular as Mexicans made it clear that they would no longer stand for election fraud and an unrepresentative government.

How did the Zapatista army respond to the economic problems?

Frustration with the government began to boil over in the southern state of Chiapas in 1994. Local peasants, calling themselves Zapatistas after the army that Emiliano Zapata led during the Mexican Revolution, organized a guerrilla army to fight on behalf of the region’s indigenous people. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) declared war on the government and led a rebellion against both local and national government beginning on January 1, 1994.

“We are the product of 500 years of struggle.... But today we say enough!”
—From the “Declaration of War” of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation

The Zapatistas were fighting not only for land reform and greater independence for indigenous communities, but also for economic justice and the end of the PRI’s hold on political power. The EZLN rebellion was specifically planned to coincide with the day that NAFTA would take effect. The Zapatistas believed that NAFTA was yet another example of a government reform that would make the lives of the rich easier while the poor continued to suffer.
During the rebellion, EZLN soldiers, wearing black ski masks or red bandanas across their faces, took government officials hostage, blew up telephone and electrical towers, and set off car bombs in Mexico City. The government brutally suppressed the rebellion, and the Zapatistas and the government quickly negotiated a cease-fire. But within a year, the peace talks had failed. The conflict continued, pitting village against village, often spilling over into bloodshed. Throughout the 1990s, hundreds of EZLN supporters, government supporters, and local villagers in Chiapas died in the violence.

The rebellion in Chiapas was connected to greater instability within Mexico during the 1990s. In addition to the economic upheaval caused by the passage of NAFTA, in 1994, Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI’s presidential candidate, was assassinated while campaigning for the election. Colosio had given numerous speeches about the need for political reform and many Mexicans believed that the government had been involved in his murder. In public opinion polls that year, nearly 70 percent of urban residents believed that Mexico’s political situation was a critical problem.

**Challenges Today**

By international standards, Mexico is not a poor country. The United Nations ranked Mexico 52nd among 177 countries in terms of development in 2007. At the same time, Mexico’s population of 110 million people is pressing the limits of the country’s resources. The fanfare surrounding NAFTA and increased foreign investment has raised expectations for a better life but has failed to deliver substantial results. As the protests after the 2006 elections demonstrated, much of Mexican society is no longer willing to wait for the brighter future that has been promised since the 1980s.

**Why was the presidential election of 2000 so important?**

After 71 years of PRI political control, in the 2000 election, a PAN-party candidate, Vicente Fox, won the Mexican presidency. When Fox was elected, many believed the country would see great political and economic reform, including poverty relief and the end of government corruption. Fox promised to create one million new jobs per year and to negotiate with U.S. President George W. Bush to legalize the ten million undocumented Mexican workers in the United States. Many of Fox’s promises were not realized. For most Mexicans, little changed under Fox’s presidency. He continued the free-market reforms of his predecessors, which did little to decrease inequality and poverty.

**How has NAFTA affected Mexico’s people?**

NAFTA has further widened the gap between the haves and have-nots in Mexico. Mexico’s most efficient industries are among the success stories boasted by NAFTA. High-tech steel plants and glass manufacturers in Monterrey, for example, have substantially increased their exports to the United States. Since 1995, Mexico has recorded healthy trade surpluses with the United States. Buoyed by these successes, the Mexican government has negotiated additional free trade agreements with the European Union and other Latin American countries.

At the same time, most Mexicans are inclined to blame NAFTA and free trade for the thousands of jobs lost in struggling factories producing toys, candy, textiles, and other consumer goods. Competition from U.S. corn imports, for instance, is hindering local corn production, bankrupting scores of Mexican farmers. Many workers in Mexico’s foreign factories also do not earn enough to get by. In 2004, a U.S. research center found that a maquiladora worker in Tijuana, one of Mexico’s

---

**Mexico at a Glance**

Area: 761,606 square miles
Arable land: 13%
Population: 110 million
Life expectancy: 73 male, 79 female
Per capita GDP: $12,500
Internet Users: 22 million

Source: The CIA World Factbook.
northern cities, would have to work for five to six hours in order to afford one gallon of milk. Mexico’s maquiladoras have also made the country more dependent on U.S. buyers. When Americans limited their spending during an economic recession in 2001, the maquiladoras fired as many as 400,000 workers.

Many economists question if Mexico’s economic reforms were too rushed. Many Mexican businesses struggle to compete with the United States, the world’s strongest economy.

“It’s as if I climbed in the ring with Mike Tyson for fifteen rounds. The impact [of NAFTA] has been brutal.”
—Javier Higuera, unemployed accountant

The Mexican government is afraid that increased unemployment from NAFTA will push even more Mexicans to migrate to the United States. In 2002, Mexican leaders tried to renegotiate the terms of NAFTA with the U.S. government in order to protect Mexican small farmers. The U.S. government refused, suggesting instead that it might increase the amount of temporary work visas to the United States available to Mexican farm workers.

The effect of NAFTA on Mexico’s self-image has also been jarring. American-style department stores and fast-food chains have begun to appear in many of northern Mexico’s cities and in Mexico City itself. Parts of Mexico are now indistinguishable from the United States, with strip malls of stores like Staples, McDonald’s, and Starbucks.

How has Mexico’s relationship with the United States changed?

In the decades after the Mexican Revolution, Mexico’s leaders sought to assert their country’s independence by keeping the United States at arm’s length. In the United Nations, Mexico routinely opposed U.S. interests. Mexico was also one of the few countries in the Western Hemisphere to reject cooperation with the U.S. military. The Mexican armed forces long identified the United States as Mexico’s most likely enemy. Until 1996, Mexico refused to extradite Mexican citizens wanted for crimes in the United States.

Mexico’s economic reforms and NAFTA have been accompanied by a shift in Mexican policy toward the United States. Since the mid-1990s, the Mexican government has been much more willing to cooperate with the U.S. government.

From the Mexican perspective, Mexican-U.S. relations have never been an equal contest. The United States has long held enormous economic leverage over Mexico. U.S. economic output is about ten times greater than that of Mexico. The United States accounts for about two-thirds of Mexico’s imports and exports, while Mexico is involved in only one-tenth of total U.S. trade.

There is also a huge imbalance in terms of attention. Mexicans have long been absorbed
by their country’s relationship with the United States. The territorial losses of the North American Invasion (Mexican-American War) are still a common point of reference in Mexican politics. In contrast, U.S. citizens have rarely looked south. Only in recent years, with the discovery of new oil deposits, the rising tide of illegal immigration and drug trafficking, and the passage of NAFTA, has Mexico come into sharper focus for the United States.

“So far from God. So close to the United States.”
—Mexican expression

How does the issue of undocumented immigration affect relations with the United States?

The issue of undocumented Mexican immigration to the United States has been especially sensitive. Mexican leaders are under pressure to defend the rights of their citizens in the United States. At the same time, they face demands from Washington to control the flow of illegal immigrants across the border. Mexican officials have recently suggested that the United States issue work permits to protect Mexican laborers from abuse. Meanwhile, they have allowed the United States to airlift Mexican illegal immigrants deep into Mexico, rather than simply dropping them across the border.

At the beginning of his term, President Fox proposed reintroducing programs to allow Mexican laborers to enter the United States and return to Mexico after a six-month period. U.S. President Bush was willing to reevaluate the questions surrounding the U.S.-Mexican border, but the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 put the subject on hold for years.

In 2006, the issue of Mexican immigration again came to the forefront. For most of the year, the U.S. Senate debated an immigration bill supported by President Bush that would tighten border security, address the issue of undocumented Mexicans living in the United States, and create programs for future Mexican migration. In the end, the U.S. Congress limited the bill to border security. Signed by President Bush in October 2006, the bill calls for the construction of a fence to stretch for seven hundred of the approximately two thousand miles of the U.S.-Mexico border in order to prevent illegal border crossings.

How have drugs and crime affected Mexican society?

Another point of contention between Mexico and the United States is the issue of drug trafficking. Since the late 1980s, drug trafficking in Mexico has become a major industry. Mexican drug bosses
now work closely with their counterparts in Colombia to smuggle cocaine into the United States. Many have set up their own distribution networks in the U.S. market.

U.S. sources contend that approximately sixty-five percent of the cocaine reaching the United States comes through Mexico. Although the cocaine is produced in Columbia, it is often smuggled across the southern U.S. border by Mexican drug traffickers. In addition, Mexican drug traffickers supply most of the heroin consumed in the western states of the United States and have expanded their trade in marijuana and synthetic drugs, such as methamphetamines.

The Mexican government has warned that the drug trade poses a threat to Mexico’s security and stability. Drug profits have allowed major traffickers to buy off police, military, and local political officials. Many Mexicans believe that drug money has penetrated the top ranks of the government.

Drugs have also caused an increase in violent crime. Often linked to the explosive growth of Mexico’s cities and the tensions brought on by economic change, crime has long been a problem. In recent years, highly organized crime linked to the buying, selling, and trafficking of drugs has been on the rise. Drug gangs have been involved in countless kidnappings and murders, usually of other gang members or of law enforcement officials. In 2007, drug-related violence killed more than 2,500 people. President Calderón has led an aggressive campaign against drugs and crime since his election in 2006. In a move that has earned him increasing public support, the president has sent thousands of soldiers and federal police officers to fight the drug gangs in numerous cities.

Despite the increase in violence, popular culture has, to some extent, idealized the lives and struggles of drug traffickers. A popular type of Mexican music, known as narcocorridos, treats drug dealers as popular heroes.

“I don’t belong to anyone. I administer my business. My clients are in my pocket, everything is going fabulously. The little Colombian rock [cocaine] is making me famous.”
—Los Tucanes de Tijuana, “The Little Colombian Rock”

Why do the questions of land reform and the indigenous communities persist?

While the problem of drug trafficking dates back a few decades, the challenges of land reform and the fate of indigenous communities are as old as Mexico itself.

Roughly one-quarter of the country’s people still live in the countryside, often in suffocating poverty. Land reforms after the Revolution were not sufficient to bring prosperity to many regions. Nearly half of all rural households are considered poor, including a quarter of rural households classified as extremely poor. Many do not have access to basic services such as clean water and electric-
ity. Although the literacy rate is improving, in 2004 nearly 20 percent of the rural population aged fifteen and above was illiterate.

Mexico’s rural areas differ by region. In the north and west, commercial farms grow crops such as cotton, oranges, strawberries, melons, and tomatoes for export. These farms have incorporated new technologies and farming practices and have been relatively successful in the international market. In the south and central regions, small farms and ejidos tend to produce basic crops such as beans and corn. Poverty is widespread, pushing many to migrate for jobs in the cities and in the maquiladoras near the U.S. border. Much of the land here is used for subsistence, which means that farmers and their families consume virtually all of the harvest they produce. At the same time, the Mexican government must import corn to feed its cities.

Land reform issues are closely connected to the struggles of the country’s indigenous people. Mexico has one of the largest indigenous populations in all of Latin America and the Caribbean, with indigenous people comprising nearly 10 percent of the national population. Since the Revolution, government policy has focused on strengthening indigenous communities through bilingual education and the preservation of local traditions. Nevertheless, indigenous communities are disproportionately poorer than the rest of Mexico’s population and are largely concentrated in the rural areas. Many indigenous groups have long been working to recover the lands that they lost over the past five centuries due to the Spanish conquest as well as more recent government policies.

“For us, the land does not have a price, because the lives of our grandparents and our parents are within it. Many gave their lives to obtain it. They fought with the owners, with the army, and even with the campesinos [farmers] who were against being free. We do not want to be... employees. We want to continue to be free, although poor.”
—Amadeo González Ruiz, farmer in La Concordia

How has the Zapatista rebellion spread?
The Zapatista army continues to be an important symbol for many communities in Mexico. After the first EZLN rebellion in Chiapas in 1994, guerrilla violence spread to other poor states in southern Mexico. Other social movements have joined the Zapatistas in furthering the land reform aims of indigenous communities. The Zapatistas themselves have expanded since the 1990s, coordinating with activists across the country and across the world via the internet. The Zapatistas have pledged their support to all Mexicans who are poor and exploited, and they have also joined international organizations in a worldwide movement against free trade.

When President Fox was elected in 2000, he quickly reopened negotiations with the EZLN. Although many Zapatista demands have not been met, much of the violence has ended. In 2001, the organization stated that it would begin to participate in the country’s political process. In the six months leading up to the 2006 election, the EZLN organized a movement called The Other Campaign to oppose Mexico’s mainstream political parties. The organization toured the country to raise popular support for more comprehensive political, social, and economic changes.

The Zapatistas have also backed other, independent movements in other parts of the country. For example, in mid-2006, a teacher protest in Oaxaca was repressed by thousands of state police officers, sparking a wider movement calling for the resignation of the state governor, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. The teachers’ union was joined by 350 other social organizations in Oaxaca, including unions and indigenous groups, and the region plunged into civil rebellion. The protesters had the support of the EZLN as well as presidential candidate Andrés Obrador. Violence spread as far as Mexico City. Protesters took control of parts of Oaxaca City, and violence between protesters and police escalated throughout Oc-
Like the Mexican people themselves, you will have an opportunity in the coming days to consider a range of alternatives for Mexico’s future. The three viewpoints, or Futures, that you will explore are written from a Mexican perspective. Each is based on a distinct set of values and beliefs about the appropriate economic system, political structure, and social priorities for Mexico. You should think of the Futures as a tool designed to help you better understand the contrasting political philosophies from which the Mexican people may choose.

Eventually, you will be asked to create a Future that reflects your own beliefs and opinions about where Mexico should be heading. You may borrow heavily from one Future, combine ideas from several Futures, or take a new approach altogether.

Mexico’s political and economic transformation continues. Yet the numerous economic and political crises of the last decade have led many Mexicans to question what kind of future they want for their country. As Mexicans look ahead, many also look back to their history. Although Mexicans draw different lessons from their country’s past, history shapes how Mexicans see themselves and the world.

The early indigenous civilizations, the arrival of the Spanish and independence, as well as Mexico’s long relationship with the United States all contribute to Mexican’s sense of what their country is and what it should be.
**Futures in Brief**

**Future 1: Justice for the People**

The will of the Mexican people is being denied in the name of international capitalism and free markets. NAFTA has opened our country to a new form of exploitation by the United States. Mexico has been shoved, weak and defenseless, into the global marketplace. The results have been devastating. Mexico must heed the cry for justice from its people. We must rekindle the promise of the Mexican Revolution for those who have known only poverty and oppression. Fairness and equality must serve as the foundation for a new society. The enormous imbalance between rich and poor must be corrected. With commitment and struggle, all Mexicans can at last have an opportunity to share in the wealth of our country.

**Future 2: Restore Order and Stability**

After decades of steady advancement, our country’s era of stability and development has been sidetracked. In its place, we have crime, corruption, and disorder. The politicians responsible for the mess call our present turmoil the price of progress. In reality, Mexico is sliding backward. We are drifting toward a repetition of the violence and destruction of the Revolution. Mexico must take strong measures to restore order and turn back the forces of disintegration. The unrestrained capitalism of the United States cannot be transplanted to Mexican soil. Nor can our carefully crafted political system be overturned in the span of a few years. Rather, we must follow a course that fits Mexico. Let us join together in restoring the system that has served our country well.

**Future 3: Embrace the Future**

At long last, Mexico is in a position to realize its potential. Our country stands ready to make the leap from poverty to prosperity, from the rule of force to the rule of law. Since the early 1980s, Mexico has undergone a painful yet necessary transformation. We have prodded Mexico to the doorstep of the democratic, free-market world. Mexico must not retreat from our country’s march of progress. We should step up our efforts to guide our country into the twenty-first century. Through renewed emphasis on improving the efficiency of the Mexican economy, we can expand exports and generate millions of new jobs. At the same time, economic reforms go hand-in-hand with the transformation of our political system. We have come much too far to turn back now.
Future 1: Justice for the People

Mexican history is scarred by betrayal and injustice. The blood of Emiliano Zapata and Miguel Hidalgo bear witness to the triumph of the powerful over the powerless. The same is happening today. The will of the Mexican people is being denied in the name of international capitalism and free markets. NAFTA has opened our country to a new form of exploitation by the United States. Mexico has been shoved, weak and defenseless, into the global marketplace. The results have been devastating. The vast majority of Mexicans have seen their living standards drop since the early 1980s. Millions of peasants have been pushed off the land. Unemployment has reduced a generation of workers to desperate poverty. Meanwhile, a handful of rich families has snatched up still more of our country’s wealth.

Mexico must heed the cry for justice from its people. We must rekindle the promise of the Mexican Revolution for those who have known only poverty and oppression. Fairness and equality must serve as the foundation for a new society. We should begin the process of building a new Mexico by re-examining our roots as a people. The great civilizations that flourished in our country before the conquest by the Spanish deserve renewed attention as we look toward the future. The land and the people who farm it must be protected and nurtured. Government investment and land reform should concentrate on revitalizing our ejido communities and ensuring that Mexico can feed itself. In the broader economic sphere, Mexico must pursue a policy of economic development that places the needs of our people first. Our country’s workers must be shielded from the twists and turns of international financial markets. The enormous imbalance between rich and poor must be corrected. Finally, our country’s political system must be reformed to give a voice to the voiceless. True democracy must bring power to the people. With commitment and struggle, all Mexicans can at last have an opportunity to share in the wealth of our country.

What policies should we pursue?

• Mexico should undertake a program of economic development. The state should take a leading role in managing the economy and promoting higher living standards. The minimum wage should be raised, the wealthy should be forced to pay their fair share of taxes, and government projects should be launched to hire the unemployed.

• Mexico should join with other developing nations to form a united front in trade negotiations with the developed world. Trade and investment policy should be designed to protect Mexican industry and safeguard our natural resources from foreign exploitation.

• Mexico should join with labor unions and environmental groups in the United States and Canada to press for the renegotiation of NAFTA. A revised agreement should center on protecting workers’ rights, the environment, and farming communities.

• Mexico should ensure that all of its citizens enjoy full democratic rights. The advantages of the PRI should be eliminated to create a level playing field for all political parties.

• Mexico should direct new resources toward strengthening ejidos and increasing food production for the Mexican market. Land taken unfairly from peasants should be returned.

• Mexico should nurture the language and culture of Indian communities.

• Mexico should place special emphasis on the development of the poor, especially women, through education, training, and self-help programs.
Future 1 is based on the following beliefs

- The state needs to play a central role in Mexico’s economic development in order to put the country’s resources to work for the common good and to reduce poverty.
- Mexico’s problems, both today and in the past, are due mainly to the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a tiny, undemocratic elite.

Arguments for

1. Developing a program of careful economic planning will focus the country’s economic resources on improving the lives of the Mexican people.
2. Clearing away the obstacles to full democracy will give all Mexicans, including the poor, an interest in maintaining a stable, democratic political system.
3. Investing in the advancement of peasant communities and other disadvantaged groups will finally allow the poorest among us to participate fully in the development of Mexican society.

Arguments against

1. Reversing years of free-market reform will leave Mexico isolated from the mainstream of the global economy and destroy the confidence of investors, both at home and abroad, in the Mexican economy.
2. Picking a fight with the United States will spark a trade war with our largest trading partner and close off markets to Mexico’s export industries.
3. Re-establishing state control over the economy will undermine the modernization of Mexican industry, paving the way for the return of inefficiency, corruption, and backwardness.
4. Raising the political expectations of Mexico’s poor will lead to greater pressure for reckless change and will ultimately sharpen tensions within Mexican society.

The international system, led by the United States, is based on the exploitation of Mexico and other developing nations.
Future 2: Restore Order and Stability

Mexico is a country in crisis. After decades of steady advancement, our country’s era of stability and development has been sidetracked. In its place, we have crime, corruption, and disorder. Mexican society is unraveling, and the chaos threatens to swallow up our entire country. The politicians responsible for the mess call our present turmoil the price of progress. In reality, Mexico is sliding backward. We are drifting toward a repetition of the violence and destruction of the Revolution. The 1994 financial crisis, soaring crime rates, and the guerrilla movements in Chiapas, Guerrero, and Oaxaca should serve as a warning. Mexico is on the wrong path. We have to return to the policies that laid the foundation for four decades of stability and development.

Mexico must take strong measures to restore order and turn back the forces of disintegration. The reckless experiments that have been imposed on our country must come to a halt. Mexico is unique. The unrestrained capitalism of the United States cannot be transplanted to Mexican soil. Nor can our carefully crafted political system be overturned in the span of a few years. Rather, we must follow a course that fits Mexico. We must recognize that our society cannot withstand the pressures of rapid change. The modernization of Mexico’s economy is important, but the country must not be left at the mercy of North American investors and the global marketplace. Millions of Mexican workers cannot be thrown into the streets in the name of free trade. Giving Mexicans a political voice is a worthy goal, but it must be done within the realm of normal political processes. Above all, we as Mexicans should take pride in the society that we have built since the revolution. Let us not turn our backs on Mexico’s accomplishments. Instead, let us join together in restoring the system that has served our country well.

What policies should we pursue?

• Mexico should re-establish state ownership over key industries, such as energy, communications, and transportation. The government should work as a partner with leading private companies to ensure their stability and success.

• Mexico should protect important industries from unfair foreign competition. Foreign investment should be sought to advance the modernization of manufacturing and agriculture.

• Mexico should insist that NAFTA be renegotiated to protect vulnerable sectors of the Mexican economy.

• Mexico should take strong measures to reverse the spiral of political violence and unrest. The role of the government in promoting the unity and stability of Mexican society should be strengthened.

• Mexico should crack down against drug traffickers and concentrate on lowering the crime rate.

• Mexico should invest in strengthening important public institutions, such as schools, the university system, and ejidos.

• Mexico should promote a cooperative partnership between labor and industry.
Future 2 is based on the following beliefs

- With its history of violence and division, Mexico needs a strong central government to maintain stability and prevent chaos.
- The economic and political system of the United States is not suitable for Mexico.

**Arguments for**

1. Restoring the authority of the central government will strengthen the state’s ability to combat the rise of crime and drug trafficking.
2. Rebuilding the legitimacy of the PRI will help promote a spirit of compromise among Mexico’s competing interests and heal the divisions within our society.
3. Sheltering the Mexican economy from the full force of foreign competition will allow local companies to take root and grow.

**Arguments against**

1. Retreating from Mexico’s commitment to free trade and free markets will lead foreign investors to withdraw their money from our country and trigger an economic collapse.
2. Blocking the road to democratic reform will force groups opposed to the government to turn to violence to make themselves heard.
3. Strengthening the power of the central government will only deepen the corruption and mismanagement that has crippled Mexican society.
4. Raising trade barriers to protect the Mexican economy will spark our NAFTA partners to retaliate and close the North American market to Mexican exports.
Future 3: Embrace the Future

At long last, Mexico is in a position to realize its potential. Our country stands ready to make the leap from poverty to prosperity, from the rule of force to the rule of law. Since the early 1980s, Mexico has undergone a painful yet necessary transformation. We have torn down the barriers that have stifled innovation in our economy. We have exposed Mexican industries to the invigorating winds of competition. A spotlight has been turned on the corruption and abuse within our political system. In short, we have prodded Mexico to the doorstep of the democratic, free-market world. Now we are ready to move forward.

Mexico must not retreat from our country’s march of progress. The latest crisis must not be allowed to derail our program of reform. On the contrary, we should step up our efforts to guide our country into the twenty-first century. Through renewed emphasis on improving the efficiency of the Mexican economy, we can expand exports and generate millions of new jobs. Through a strong commitment to free-market principles, we can attract new foreign investment and continue the modernization of Mexican industry. Let us not lose sight of the opportunities before us. NAFTA has linked our country to the richest market in the world. Trade barriers no longer separate Mexican factories and farms from the more than 300 million prosperous consumers to our north. At the same time, economic reforms go hand-in-hand with the transformation of our political system. Mexico must continue on the path toward democracy. If we are eventually to take our place among the world’s developed nations, we have to live by internationally accepted standards of law and human rights. We have come much too far to turn back now.

What policies should we pursue?

- Mexico should move forward with the process of free-market economic reform. Special privileges and outdated regulations should be eliminated to spur competition. State-run companies, including the oil industry, should be sold to private investors.
- Mexico should lower trade barriers and reform its legal system to promote the growth of export industries and encourage foreign investment.
- Mexico should strive to establish a stable political system based on the rule of law. Democratic reforms should be gradually introduced to guarantee fair, multi-party elections.
- Mexico should strongly support the full implementation of NAFTA without delay.
- Mexico should enforce strict limits on campaign spending to draw a clear line between political parties and the government.
- Mexico should ensure that farmers are able to buy and sell land, improve efficiency, and find a market for their crops.
- Mexico should hold down government spending by rooting out waste and corruption in existing programs.
Future 3 is based on the following beliefs

- The only path to economic development is through the acceptance of the free-market economic system and participation in the global marketplace.
- Thanks to rising levels of education, technological development, and political maturity, Mexico is ready to build a society based on the rule of law and fair, multi-party elections.
- Mexico’s long-term interests lie in linking our country with the United States and the other nations of the developed world.

Arguments for

1. Accepting the economic principles and legal standards of the developed world will help Mexico to attract foreign investment.
2. Establishing a society based on the rule of law will strengthen the confidence of Mexicans in their own economy and encourage them to invest their savings here at home.
3. Linking Mexico’s future to the United States and other developed countries will give Mexico a greater voice in the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and other important international organizations.

Arguments against

1. Continuing the rapid pace of economic change will widen the income gap within Mexico, deepen poverty, and fuel the crime and disorder that threaten to destroy our society.
2. Tying Mexico’s trade and finances to the United States will make our country more vulnerable than ever to pressure from Washington.
3. Opening Mexico up to unrestrained foreign investment will allow outsiders to snatch up our country’s most prized industries, such as oil and transportation.
4. Rushing toward democracy will deepen our country’s divisions and eventually pit one group against another in violent conflict.
Supplementary Documents

Reply of the Lords and Holy Men of Tenochtitlan to the first Franciscan evangelizers in central Mexico, 1524

The following account was written by or for Bernardino de Sahagún, a Spanish missionary. It was written in 1564, forty years after the meetings it discusses took place. Sahagún wanted to record and understand the views of Aztecs so as to be more successful at converting them to Christianity. The account reads like a single speech or letter, but in fact the ideas were originally expressed over several meetings between Aztec and Spanish leaders in Mexico.

Our lords, leading personages of much esteem, you are very welcome to our lands and towns. We ourselves, being inferior and base, are unworthy of looking upon the faces of such valiant personages. God, Our Lord, has brought you to rule us. We do not know where you come from or where our lords and gods dwell because you have come by sea, through the clouds and mist, a route we have never known. God sends you among us as His own eyes, ears, and mouth. He who is invisible and spiritual becomes visible in you. And we hear His words with our own ears through you, His representatives. We have heard the words that you have brought us of the One who gives us life and being. And we have heard with admiration the words of the Lord of the World which he has sent here for love of us, and also you have brought us the book of celestial and divine words.

You have told us that we do not know the One who gives us life and being, who is Lord of the heavens and of the earth. You also say that those we worship are not gods. This way of speaking is entirely new to us, and very scandalous. We are frightened by this way of speaking because our forebears who engendered and governed us never said anything like this. On the contrary, they left us this our custom of worshipping our gods, in which they believed and which they worshipped all the time that they lived here on earth. They taught us how to honor them. And they taught us all the ceremonies and sacrifices that we make. They told us that through them [our gods] we live and are, and that we were beholden to them, to be theirs and to serve our countless centuries before the sun began to shine and before there was daytime. They said that these gods that we worship give us everything we need for our physical existence: maize, beans, chia seeds, etc. We appeal to them for the rain to make the things of the earth grow.

These our gods are the source of great riches and delights, all of which belong to them. They live in very delightful places where there are always flowers, vegetation, and great freshness, a place unknown to mere mortals, called Tlalocan, where there is never hunger, poverty, or illness. It is they who bestow honors, property, titles, and kingdoms, gold and silver, precious feathers, and gemstones.

There has never been a time remembered when they were not worshipped, honored, and esteemed. Perhaps it is a century or two since this began; it is a time beyond counting....

It would be a fickle, foolish thing for us to destroy the most ancient laws and customs left by the first inhabitants of this land...for the worship, faith and service of the above-mentioned [gods], in which we were born and raised. And we are accustomed to them and we have them impressed on our hearts.

Oh, our lords and leaders you should take great care not to do anything to stir up or incite your vassals to some evil deed. How you could leave the poor elderly among us bereft of that in which they have been raised throughout their lives? Watch out that we do not incur the wrath of our gods. Watch out that the common people do not rise up against us if we were to tell them that the gods they have always understood to be sure are not gods at all.
Caught Between Two Worlds:  Mexico at the Crossroads

It is best, our lords, to act on this matter very slowly, with great deliberation. We are not satisfied or convinced by what you have told us, nor do we understand or give credit to what has been said of our gods. It gives us anguish, lords and fathers, to speak this way. Here present are the lords charged with governing the kingdom and republics of this world. All of us together feel that it is enough to have lost, enough that the power and royal jurisdiction have been taken from us. As for our gods, we will die before giving up serving and worshipping them. This is our determination; do what you will. This will serve in rely and contradiction to what you have said. We have no more to say, lords.

Testimonies from Tlatelolco, 1968

The following excerpts are from eyewitness accounts of students who were at Tlatelolco Plaza during the massacre on October 2, 1968.

“We knew that the police got gangs of roughnecks and bullies to commit outrages against the people, pretending they were members of the Movement and shouting ‘Hurray for students!’ In Coyoacán, a notorious gang of good-for-nothings, ‘Los Conchos,’ burned buses and manhandled the passengers and drivers. They wrecked stores and molested people on the streets, supposedly in the name of the Movement, but they hardly fooled anybody…. Why? Because that wasn’t the first time the police had resorted to such tactics, and people realized what they were up to. What’s more, even people who thought it was students who were responsible for such outrages regarded these incidents as more or less justifiable excesses: the vile language and the intrigues against the University in the Chamber of Deputies were bound at that point to be met with a certain amount of violence on the part of the students. In general, however, people could easily tell the difference between acts by more or less rebellious students and the outright provocations and the attempts to blacken the Movement’s name plotted by the police.” (Gilberto Guevara Niebla)

“We’ve already seen kids ten, eleven, twelve years old who know very well what fighting for the people’s freedom means. I remember very well, for instance, the Carlos Marx mini-brigade at the National School of Economics, consisting of one young girl and four teen-age girl students from the College of Madrid, all of them incredible kids: exuberant, brave, determined—some of the finest kids in their school.

“I think the Movement made such a deep impression on young kids that if there’s any hope at all for this country’s future, it’s because there is such an immense number of young people here in Mexico. The possibilities of a real revolution lie with the kids of various ages who stood on the sidewalks watching the demonstrations, seeing their older brothers and sisters march by, holding their parents’ hands at Movement meetings, those who have heard stories of the days of terror, or somehow felt them in their very bones. The government of this country ought to be very wary of kids who were ten or twelve or fifteen in 1968. However much they’re brainwashed, however they’re drugged, deep down they’ll remember for the rest of their lives the clubbings and the murders their older brothers and sisters were the victims of…. Despite the government’s every effort to make them forget, they will remember that as kids they witnessed the ignominy of clubbings, tear-gas grenades, and bullets. (Eduardo Valle Espinoza)

“Upstairs there on the speakers’ stand, the confusion soon became utter desperation. It was all quite clear then: this was a sneak attack on us. The Olimpia Battalion had their firearms trained on us. And they had begun firing at will at the crowd fleeing in panic down below. The sound of rifle and machine-gun fire, and the screams from the crowd and those of us there on the speakers’ stand, were really deafening.

“‘Get upstairs! Run for it!’ some of us shouted as we looked around for some way to get off that big wide balcony on the fourth floor of the Chihuahua building from which the speakers had been addressing the crowd.
“Eventually some of us found an apartment where we could take shelter for the time being. Others who weren’t as lucky were already lying dead or wounded from the deadly hail of bullets, or were about to be.

“The Army troops were shooting in all directions. It was impossible even to show our heads in that apartment. The bullets were flying about everywhere, imbedding themselves in the walls after having shattered the windowpanes and torn big holes in the curtains. Bits of plaster and other objects were raining down on our heads all over the place.

“That was where the agents arrested me: there in that apartment on the sixth floor of the Chihuahua building.” (Pablo Gómez, economics student)

Testimonies from the Mexico City Earthquake, 1985

The following excerpts are from newspaper accounts and interviews with earthquake survivors, rescue workers, and journalists after the Mexico City earthquake on September 19, 1985.

“I invite all who suffer as I do at this moment to point to responsible parties and accuse them. We won’t let things rest. Let people use the proper tribunals to denounce the fact that international aid never reached the hands of the victims, that the supplies were sold in the provinces and the Federal District; that the army, far from helping us, stole people’s belongs...

“Let the people...speak up. And let them not be content with just making accusations, but go on to create an organization with staying power because Mexico’s social problem goes way beyond the earthquake.

“For the victims, for those of us who lost everything, a way of being able to live with ourselves is to participate is this change and not to allow business as usual. Let no one live in a house that can crumble....

“My family was not killed by the earthquake; what killed them was the fraud and corruption fostered by the government of Mexico....

“We’re no longer the same.” (Judith Garcia de Vega to Elena Poniatowska)

“Raúl Trejo wrote, “The tragedy moves us all, in some way equalizing us, it evens us out.” Right now, I am not so sure. Oh, my Mexico, my wounded Mexico, my Mexico that contents itself with so little! Is it possible that we can still believe in the efficacy of government when, at the crucial moment, it was the people who did everything? Even yesterday, the people in the street appeared grateful because the Route 100 bus was free, pay phones were free, even when they had to break the hydrants open in the street because the water trucks hadn’t arrived. People ask for little and are satisfied with exceedingly little. The populace, these days, takes care of itself.

“In any case, those on the bottom are accustomed to the fact that nobody even throws them a line. The absolute uselessness of government is nothing new to them. They are so different from the apparatus of power, such helpless onlookers at government decisions, so elbowed to the side that one would think they do not speak the same language. What’s going on outside has nothing to do with what’s going on underneath this monumental umbrella of stone, nothing. The language of power is simply “other.” For all the talk about “the people,” they have never been granted anything but the role of extras; leaders have always been there to obstruct, to paralyze, to block the way....” (Elena Poniatowska)

“In many ways, the government is designed to control, to maintain institutions, to keep the status quo and exercise power. After September 19, it became evident that the government had been left behind; thirty-nine hours went by before the President addressed the nation.... In a nutshell, the government failed.

“First the government tried to minimize the disaster. It ordered the population, ‘Stay home,’ when it should have made an appeal
to all professionals: engineers, physicians, architects, miners, nurses, contractors, operators of cranes and bulldozers. Second, it rejected international aid, going so far as returning airplanes with cargo that later were made to come back. Yes, yes, we need the stuff, after all. Third, it launched the self-deception of ‘normality.’ We had to go back to normality at any cost. We were living through the greatest catastrophe of our history and they kept saying, ‘Mexico is standing up; we are all standing; the country is still standing.’ When we had not gotten our people out from under the twisted concrete, we were ‘standing’ and on our way to normality.

“It was the people—beyond all acronyms, political parties, government ministries, social classes—the guys and gals, the compadres, who organized themselves in the districts of the city. This is the way we got the rescue brigades and the shelters. Many hours went by before the government arrived to take the reins....

“I was astonished that there never was a call by the School of Medicine to its graduates, who could have been distributed among the emergency zones in an orderly way. What was done, was done voluntarily.

“'No to normality. We refuse to go back to normality.' Gustavo Esteva.” (Elena Poni-atowska)

“We entered the building looking for survivors. But in fifteen minutes the machines were on again. But in fifteen minutes the machines went on again. Once again, I went out, explaining to him that we needed silence so we could hear the voices of survivors. He stopped the vehicles in a very bad mood, and we spent forty minutes of intense search in the three floors until we were persuaded that no life existed in there. The only thing to be done was to recover the bodies. We left a brigade in charge of that effort and departed wondering how many of the thirty-six people who were trapped could have been saved if someone had been there in the first three days after the earthquake....

“The hope that kept us all going was the possibility of finding a person still breathing. That hope was stronger than fatigue, hunger, sweat, or dust.” (Unknown rescue worker)

“At the Red Cross they gave us T-shirts that read ‘Rescue Worker’ and ‘Paramedic,’ so on Friday, September 20, we were traveling on Cuauhtémoc Avenue, near the Ministry of Commerce, says Luis Bosoms, a twenty-two-year-old student from Anáhuac University, when the earth suddenly started quaking again; people stood in the middle of the street, others knelt down, others wailed loudly, and still others cried quietly....

“We had to stop the car because the ground underneath cracked open about twenty inches. Some buildings that had been damaged previously, but were still standing, crashed down all the way. There was no electricity. The air smelled of natural gas. You could hear explosions. If you looked up, you could see fires here and there on the horizon. I tried to life a woman from the ground, but she was stiff, praying aloud, ‘Christ the King, the bleeding Christ, pray for us. Christ the King....

“In the building across the street from us, some people were calling from the fifth floor. In spite of the smell of gas they had candles in their hands. The building they were in was still rocking. The neighbors saw us with Red Cross badges and came to beg us to go up and get them down. They said that the grandmother had a broken hip and couldn’t make her way down...as if we were Superman. And that’s what you want to be, mighty.

“Anyhow, we went to the building half dead of fright, we went up to where they were, put the old lady in a chair, and lowered her slowly, slowly, hoping there would be no more quakes and the building wouldn’t give way. When people trust you like that, it makes you feel like an idiot. Because they put a badge on you, you are supposed to know what to do and what’s going to happen. The feeling of impotence is awful when that kind of natural catastrophe strikes....
“On Sunday the 22nd, they sent us to the store to get cloth and string to make surgical masks—I believe about 50,000 pesos were coming out of the cash register every five minutes. They gave us 30,000 pesos. Between the university and the store we collected 40,000 more. We told the store clerk that we wanted 70,000 pesos worth of cloth, not thinking about taxes and all that.

“It was a grocery store. I asked the manager to let me use the microphone and in five minutes I got 70,000 pesos more. One señora alone asked me, ‘How much do you need?’ and took out 30,000 pesos from her wallet. Even the maids would give us 200-peso donations…. In the afternoon we went to the bakery of Barrilaco to buy bread for sandwiches for the rescue workers. The man in charge asked me what I wanted so much bread for. For the Red Cross, I said. So sure enough, he told me to take all the bread he had, for nothing. I filled up the VW.

“The Camino Real Hotel sent food to the Red Cross. It was kind of surrealistic, to see trays of hors d’oeuvres delivered by uniformed waiters.

“People would come in to donate blood, to sweep the floor, to unload pots of food, whatever. It’s awesome, let me tell you! After an experience like that, you realize that you are not alone on an island, and that you better make yourself useful where you are.” (interview reported by Marisol Martín del Campo)

EZLN’s Declaration of War
“Today we say ‘enough is enough!’
(Ya Basta!)”
First Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle, 1993

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO:
MEXICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us. We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don’t care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children.

But today, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. The dispossessed, we are millions and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a 70 year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors that represent the most conservative and sell-out groups. They are the same ones that opposed Hidalgo and Morelos, the same ones that betrayed Vicente Guerrero, the same ones that sold half our country to the foreign invader, the same ones that imported a European prince to rule our country, the same ones that formed the “scientific” Porfirio dictatorship, the same ones that opposed the Petroleum Expropriation, the same ones that massacred the railroad workers in 1958 and the students in 1968, the same ones the today take everything from us, absolutely everything.

To prevent the continuation of the above and as our last hope, after having tried to utilize all legal means based on our Constitution, we go to our Constitution, to apply Article 39 which says:

“National Sovereignty essentially and originally resides in the people. All political power emanates from the people and its purpose is to help the people. The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify their form of government.”

Therefore, according to our constitution, we declare the following to the Mexican federal army, the pillar of the Mexican dicta-
mentorship that we suffer from, monopolized by a one-party system and led by Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the maximum and illegitimate federal executive that today holds power.

According to this Declaration of War, we ask that other powers of the nation advocate to restore the legitimacy and the stability of the nation by overthrowing the dictator.

We also ask that international organizations and the International Red Cross watch over and regulate our battles, so that our efforts are carried out while still protecting our civilian population. We declare now and always that we are subject to the Geneva Accord, forming the EZLN as our fighting arm of our liberation struggle. We have the Mexican people on our side, we have the beloved tricolored flag highly respected by our insurgent fighters. We use black and red in our uniform as our symbol of our working people on strike. Our flag carries the following letters, “EZLN,” Zapatista National Liberation Army, and we always carry our flag into combat.

Beforehand, we refuse any effort to disgrace our just cause by accusing us of being drug traffickers, drug guerrillas, thieves, or other names that might be used by our enemies. Our struggle follows the constitution which is held high by its call for justice and equality.

Therefore, according to this declaration of war, we give our military forces, the EZLN, the following orders:

**First:** Advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican federal army, protecting in our advance the civilian population and permitting the people in the liberated area the right to freely and democratically elect their own administrative authorities.

**Second:** Respect the lives of our prisoners and turn over all wounded to the International Red Cross.

**Third:** Initiate summary judgments against all soldiers of the Mexican federal army and the political police that have received training or have been paid by foreigners, accused of being traitors to our country, and against all those that have repressed and treated badly the civil population and robbed or stolen from or attempted crimes against the good of the people.

**Fourth:** Form new troops with all those Mexicans that show their interest in joining our struggle, including those that, being enemy soldiers, turn themselves in without having fought against us, and promise to take orders from the General Command of the Zapatista National Liberation Army.

**Fifth:** We ask for the unconditional surrender of the enemy’s headquarters before we begin any combat to avoid any loss of lives.

**Sixth:** Suspend the robbery of our natural resources in the areas controlled by the EZLN.

To the People of Mexico: We, the men and women, full and free, are conscious that the war that we have declared is our last resort, but also a just one. The dictators are applying an undeclared genocidal war against our people for many years. Therefore we ask for your participation, your decision to support this plan that struggles for work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace. We declare that we will not stop fighting until the basic demands of our people have been met by forming a government of our country that is free and democratic.

JOIN THE INSURGENT FORCES OF THE ZAPATISTA NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY.
Supplementary Resources

Books


World Wide Web
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/north_america/mexico_election06/index.html>
The PBS Newshour’s coverage of Mexico’s 2006 elections, including links to articles and a political timeline from 1911 to 2006.

<www.enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx>
Official site of the Zapatista army. The website has great photos. The text of the site is in Spanish.

<http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico.html>
This site provides translations of major EZLN letters, declarations, speeches, and interviews, as well as a detailed overview of the Zapatistas and a chronology of events in Chiapas.

<http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Regional/NAFTA/Section_Index.html>
U.S. Trade Representative’s site on NAFTA includes press releases, fact sheets, reports, and recent news on NAFTA.

<http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/>
Mexico’s official presidential webpage. Most of this site is in Spanish, although some can be translated to English.
Our world is constantly changing.
So CHOICES continually reviews and updates our classroom units to keep pace with the changes in our world; and as new challenges and questions arise, we’re developing new units to address them.
And while history may never change, our knowledge and understanding of it are constantly changing. So even our units addressing “moments” in history undergo a continual process of revision and reinterpretation.
If you’ve been using the same CHOICES units for two or more years, now is the time to visit our website - learn whether your units have been updated and see what new units have been added to our catalog.

CHOICES currently has units addressing the following:

- U.S. Role in a Changing World
- Immigration
- Terrorism
- Genocide
- Foreign Aid
- Trade
- Environment
- Cuba
- Nuclear Weapons
- UN Reform
- Middle East
- Iraq
- Russia
- South Africa
- India & Pakistan
- Brazil
- Iran
- Mexico
- Colonialism in Africa
- Weimar Germany
- China
- U.S. Constitutional Convention
- New England Slavery
- War of 1812
- Spanish American War
- League of Nations
- FDR and Isolationism
- Hiroshima
- Origins of the Cold War
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Vietnam War

And watch for new units coming soon:

- Westward Expansion
- Human Rights

**THE CHOICES PROGRAM**

*Explore the Past... Shape the Future*

*History and Current Issues for the Classroom*

Teacher sets (consisting of a student text and a teacher resource book) are available for $20 each. Permission is granted to duplicate and distribute the student text and handouts for classroom use with appropriate credit given. Duplicates may not be resold. Classroom sets (15 or more student texts) may be ordered at $9.75 per copy. A teacher resource book is included free with each classroom set. Orders should be addressed to:

Choices Education Program
Watson Institute for International Studies
Box 1948, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912

Please visit our website at <www.choices.edu>.
Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads

Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads involves students in Mexico’s wrenching economic, political, and cultural transformation. The unit probes Mexico’s complex identity—from a Mexican perspective—to bring students face-to-face with the difficult policy choices confronting the people of Mexico today.

Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads is part of a continuing series on current and historical international issues published by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program at Brown University. Choices materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.
Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads
Acknowledgments

Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads was developed by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program with the assistance of the research staff of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, scholars at Brown University, and several other experts in the field. We wish to thank the following researchers for their invaluable input to this or previous editions:

Elizabeth Bakewell
Research Associate in Latin American Studies
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

Thomas Bierstecker
Henry R. Luce Professor of Transnational Organizations
Department of Political Science, Brown University

Katrina Burgess
Adjunct Assistant Professor (Research)
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

Vikram Chand
Former Visiting Scholar in International Relations (Research)
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

Cindy Collins
Former Research Assistant
Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University

R. Douglas Cope
Associate Professor of History
Brown University

Ellen Messer
Visiting Associate Professor
Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University

Julio Ortego
Professor of Hispanic Studies
Brown University

Kenneth Shadlen
Lecturer in Development Studies
Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics

Thomas Skidmore
Professor of History Emeritus
Brown University

Gustavo Vega
Associate Professor, Centro de Estudios Internacionales
El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico City

Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads is part of a continuing series on international public policy issues. New units are published each academic year and all units are updated regularly.

Visit us on the World Wide Web—www.choices.edu
Contents

The Choices Approach to Current Issues ii

Note To Teachers 1

Integrating This Unit into Your Curriculum 2

Day One: The Aztec-Spanish Encounter 3

Day One Alternative: Political Geography of North America 11

Day Two: Digging Deeper into Mexican History 16

Day Three: Role-Playing the Three Futures: Organization and Preparation 23

Optional Lesson: Expressing Political Views through Art 33

Day Four: Role-Playing the Three Futures: Debate and Discussion 40

Day Five: Charting Mexico’s Future 42

Day Five Alternative: Assessing Political Values 47

Key Terms 53

Issues Toolbox 54

Making Choices Work in Your Classroom 55

Assessment Guide for Oral Presentations 57

Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan 58
The Choices Approach to Current Issues

Choices curricula are designed to make complex international issues understandable and meaningful for students. Using a student-centered approach, Choices units develop critical thinking and an understanding of the significance of history in our lives today—essential ingredients of responsible citizenship.

Teachers say the collaboration and interaction in Choices units are highly motivating for students. Studies consistently demonstrate that students of all abilities learn best when they are actively engaged with the material. Cooperative learning invites students to take pride in their own contributions and in the group product, enhancing students’ confidence as learners. Research demonstrates that students using the Choices approach learn the factual information presented as well as or better than those using a lecture-discussion format. Choices units offer students with diverse abilities and learning styles the opportunity to contribute, collaborate, and achieve.

Choices units on current issues include student readings, a framework of policy options, suggested lesson plans, and resources for structuring cooperative learning, role plays, and simulations. Students are challenged to:

• recognize relationships between history and current issues
• analyze and evaluate multiple perspectives on an issue
• understand the internal logic of a viewpoint
• identify and weigh the conflicting values represented by different points of view
• engage in informed discussion
• develop and articulate original viewpoints on an issue
• communicate in written and oral presentations
• collaborate with peers

Choices curricula offer teachers a flexible resource for covering course material while actively engaging students and developing skills in critical thinking, deliberative discourse, persuasive writing, and informed civic participation. The instructional activities that are central to Choices units can be valuable components in any teacher’s repertoire of effective teaching strategies.

The Organization of a Choices Unit

Introducing the Background: Each Choices curriculum resource provides historical background and student-centered lesson plans that explore critical issues. This historical foundation prepares students to analyze a range of perspectives and then to deliberate about possible approaches to contentious policy issues.

Exploring Policy Alternatives: Each Choices unit has a framework of three or four divergent policy options that challenges students to consider multiple perspectives. Students understand and analyze the options through a role play and the dialogue that follows.

• Role Play: The setting of the role play varies, and may be a Congressional hearing, a meeting of the National Security Council, or an election campaign forum. In groups, students explore their assigned options and plan short presentations. Each group, in turn, is challenged with questions from classmates.

• Deliberation: After the options have been presented and students clearly understand the differences among them, students enter into deliberative dialogue in which they analyze together the merits and trade-offs of the alternatives presented; explore shared concerns as well as conflicting values, interests, and priorities; and begin to articulate their own views.

For further information see <www.choices.edu/deliberation>.

Exercising Citizenship: Armed with fresh insights from the role play and the deliberation, students articulate original, coherent policy options that reflect their own values and goals. Students’ views can be expressed in letters to Congress or the White House, editorials for the school or community newspaper, persuasive speeches, or visual presentations.
Note To Teachers

Mexico has undergone a dramatic transformation in the last twenty years. The end of one-party rule and an effort to embrace globalization have led to profound changes in Mexican society.

Mexico’s historical experience and unique cultural heritage continue to shape and inform Mexican society. Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads seeks to bring Mexico’s evolving national identity and history into sharper focus for high school students. Students are asked to see the world through Mexican eyes and to contemplate current Mexican choices in the areas of economic development, political reform, and foreign relations.

At the core of the unit are three distinct directions, or Futures, for Mexico in the coming years. Each Future is grounded in a clearly defined philosophy about Mexico’s place in the world and offers broad guidelines on fundamental Mexican public policy issues. By exploring a spectrum of alternatives, students gain a deeper understanding of the values and assumptions competing for the allegiance of the Mexican people.

The reading prepares students to assess Mexico’s policy choices. Parts I and II trace the conflict and drama of Mexican history from the pre-colonial period to the early 1980s. Part III explores the most pressing public policy challenges facing Mexico today.

Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan: The Teacher Resource Book accompanying Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads contains a day-by-day lesson plan and student activities. The unit opens with a primary source analysis of Spanish-Aztec encounter. Teachers can also choose to examine the changing political geography of Mexico. Day Two examines the controversy revolving around the revision of elementary school history textbooks in Mexico. An optional lesson centers on Mexico’s rich tradition of mural painting to introduce students to the concerns of individual Mexicans. The third and fourth days of the lesson plan involve students in a simulation in which they act as advocates for the three Futures or take on the role of Mexican voters. On the fifth day, students apply their own policy recommendations for Mexico to pressing economic issues. There is an alternative lesson for the fifth day that assesses the revolutionary rhetoric of the Zapatistas. You may also find the “Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan” useful.

- Alternative Study Guides: Each section of reading has two distinct study guides. The standard study guide helps students harvest information in the reading before tackling analysis and synthesis within classroom activities. The advanced study guide requires the student to tackle analysis and synthesis prior to class activities.

- Vocabulary and Concepts: The reading in Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads addresses complex and challenging subjects. To help your students get the most out of the text, you may want to review with them “Key Terms” found in the Teacher Resource Book (TRB) on page TRB-53 before they begin their assignment. An “Issues Toolbox” is also included on page TRB-54. This provides additional information on key concepts of particular importance to understanding the reading.

- Primary Source Documents: Materials are located on pages 40-45 of the student text which can be used to supplement readings or lessons.

- Additional Online Resources: Further resources and links are available at <http://www.choices.edu/mexicomaterials>.

The lesson plan offered for Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads is a guide. Many teachers choose to devote additional time to certain activities. We hope that these suggestions help you in tailoring the unit to fit the needs of your classroom.
Integrating This Unit into Your Curriculum

Units produced by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program are designed to be integrated into a variety of social studies courses. Below are a few ideas about where Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads might fit into your curriculum.

**World History:** Mexico offers a unique lens from which to study Latin America. Its rich pre-colonial past, mestizo heritage, and long border with the United States have created a history distinct from many other nations in the region. At the same time, Mexico’s size and economic development have thrust the country into a leadership position not only in Latin America, but for much of the developing world. From the Chiapas rebellion to free trade policies, Mexico’s agenda is crowded with issues that are vital to developing countries. Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads offers a springboard for a broader study of the challenges facing the majority of the world’s people in the twenty-first century.

**Economics:** Mexico ranks alongside countries like Brazil, South Africa, and India as a powerhouse economy of the developing world. At the same time, it provides an important case study of the effects of a rapid transition from protectionism to free trade in an industrializing nation. In the past two decades, Mexico has rushed into the global marketplace at a gallop. Mexico’s government officials dismantled their country’s old economic system with a speed that left international business leaders and economists spinning. But the societal upheaval and dislocation associated with these changes has been profound. The opening of Mexico’s economy has recast the rules for Mexican business leaders, while the poor and working classes face new levels of insecurity and poverty. As the forces of free trade take Mexico’s economy in new directions, much of the world is drawing lessons from the Mexican experience.

**Government:** Few political parties in the world have held onto power as long as the PRI. For decades, the PRI’s ability to co-opt opponents and build consensus made the party a model of authoritarian stability. In 2000, the PRI lost its control over the government. Yet Mexico’s democracy is on shaky ground. Mistrust of the government and allegations of fraud are still widespread, and many continue to protest government policies and practices. The populace is sharply divided about the direction of Mexico’s future. At the same time, corruption, drug trafficking, and social unrest threaten Mexico’s political stability. How Mexico’s political system evolves holds great import for the development of democracy within countries undergoing political transformation.
The Aztec-Spanish Encounter

Objectives:

Students will: Read and analyze primary source accounts of the encounter between the Spanish and Aztecs.

Determine what makes a source reliable or biased.

Consider how different points of view contribute to historical understanding.

Required Reading:

Before beginning the lesson, students should have read Part I of the student text (pages 1-11) and completed “Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 4-5) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part I” (TRB-6).

Handouts:

“The Spanish in Tenochtitlan: Three Perspectives” (TRB 7-10)

In the Classroom:

1. Understanding Reliability—How can students determine if a source is reliable? Remind students that multiple accounts of the same event can help historians to sort out what is fact and what is opinion. Understanding the motives of the writer, as well as the context in which the source was written, can help to determine reliability and accuracy. A further conversation could address the concept of reliability in secondary as well as primary sources.

2. Understanding Viewpoint and Bias—Even if a source is accurate, it might still have a bias. In the large group setting, review with students the concept of bias. Nearly every primary source will reflect bias in some way. Ask students to consider how different people in sixteenth century Mexico might have interpreted events differently. How might a Spanish soldier’s viewpoint differ from an Aztec peasant’s? Can a biased source be useful for an historian? Discuss how students might recognize bias in a source: language use, or selective use of facts, for instance.

3. Groupwork—Divide students into groups of three or four. Distribute “The Spanish in Tenochtitlan: Three Perspectives” to each group and ask groups to answer the questions once they have finished reading the three selections.

4. Debriefing—Return to the large group setting and ask students to comment on the reliability of the sources. Look in particular at question 6. How do students imagine historians might use these sources?

Extra Challenge:

Ask students to write a paragraph in which they describe the events from the three selections, incorporating them as an historian might into a single secondary source or a high school textbook.

Homework:

Students should read Part II of the student text (pages 12-22) and complete “Study Guide–Part II” (TRB 17-18) or “Advanced Study Guide–Part II” (TRB-19).

Note:

Several resources exist for teachers wishing to learn more about teaching with primary sources. Here are two websites:


The National Archives <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/>
Study Guide—Part I

1. How did the presidential election of 2000 signify an important change for Mexico?

2. What does the term *mestizo* mean? Why is it important to understanding Mexican culture?

3. Four early Mexican societies are covered in Part I. Identify the highlights of these societies in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Why did the Spanish first visit Mexico?

5. List two ways that Spanish colonization changed Mexico.
   a. 
   b. 

6. Define the following terms:
   a. Peninsulares
   b. Criollos

7. Why did the colonial government discourage economic development in New Spain?

8. List three ways the Catholic Church influenced life in New Spain.
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

9. Who was Miguel Hidalgo? What did he do?

10. What were the results of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo?
Advanced Study Guide—Part I

1. What are the main sources of tension in Mexico today?

2. Why were the Spanish under Cortés able to challenge the rule of the Aztec Empire?

3. Explain the role and status of mestizos, criollos, and peninsulares.

4. How did Spanish economic policies affect the development of New Spain? Why is this important?

5. What contributed to the drive for independence from Spain?
The Spanish in Tenochtitlan: Three Perspectives

Introduction: Historians use a variety of primary sources to understand the past. Although the Aztecs had a written language and a library of books about Aztec history and culture when the Spanish arrived in Mexico, most of these books were destroyed in the Spanish conquest. Thus, historians have had to rely mainly on Spanish accounts and the memoirs of participants written years after New Spain was established. The following selections are from three of the most important primary sources that historians have used to piece together what happened when the Spanish arrived in central Mexico. All three excerpts describe the same event—the Spaniards’ acquisition of gold while in Tenochtitlan. Like their spellings of Moctezuma’s name, which in these selections is spelled Montezuma, Moteucçoma, and Muteczuma respectively, the three authors have different interpretations of this event. After you read the three accounts, answer the questions that follow.

Source A

Excerpt from the memoirs of Bernal Díaz, one of Cortés’ soldiers in the conquest of Mexico. He wrote his memoirs over the last thirty years of his life, from about 1555-1584, decades after the Spanish defeated the Aztecs in Tenochtitlan.

…within twenty days all the chieftains whom Montezuma had sent to collect the tribute of gold, came back again. And as they arrived Montezuma sent to summon Cortés and our captains and certain soldiers whom he knew, who belonged to his guard, and said these formal words, or others of like meaning:—

“I wish you to know…that I am indebted to your great King, and I bear him good will both for being such a great Prince and for having sent to such distant lands to make inquiries about me; and the thought that most impresses me is that he must be the one who is to rule over us, as our ancestors have told us, and as even our gods have given us to understand in the answers we have received from them. Take this gold which has been collected:… That which I have ready for the emperor is the whole of the Treasure which I have received from my father….”

When Cortés and all of us heard this we stood amazed at the great goodness and liberality of the Great Montezuma, and with much reverence we all doffed our helmets, and returned him our thanks, and with words of the greatest affection, Cortés promised him that we would write to His Majesty of the magnificence and liberality of this gift of gold which he gave us in his own royal name. After some more polite conversation Montezuma at once sent his Mayordomos to hand over all the treasure and gold and wealth that was in that plastered chamber, and in looking it over and taking off all the embroidery with which it was set, we were occupied for three days, and to assist us in undoing it and taking it to pieces, there came Montezuma’s goldsmiths from the town named Azcapotzalco, and I say that there was so much, that after it was taken to pieces there were three heaps of gold, and they weighted more than six hundred thousand pesos, as I shall tell further on, without the silver and many other rich things… We began to melt it down in the with the help of the Indian goldsmiths, and they made broad bars of it, each bar measuring three fingers of the hand across:...

Some of our soldiers had their hands so full, that many ingots of gold, marked and unmarked (with the royal stamp), and jewels of a great diversity of patterns were openly in circulation. Heavy gaming was always going on with some playing cards…. So this was the condition we were in, but let us stop talking of the gold and of the bad way it was divided, and worse way in which it was spent.

As Cortés heard that many of the soldiers were discontented over their share of the gold and the way the heaps had been robbed (to put aside extra gold for Cortés), he determined to make a speech to them all with honeyed words, and he said that all he owned was for us, and he ...(wanted)... only the
share that came to him as Captain General, and that if any one had need of anything he would give it to him, and that the gold we had collected was but a breath of air, that we should observe what great cities there were there and rich mines, and that we should be lords of them all and very prosperous and rich, and he used other arguments very well expressed which he knew well how to employ….


**Source B**

*Excerpt from Book Twelve of the Florentine Codex by Bernardino de Sahagún, a Spanish missionary. Because many original Aztec books were destroyed, some Spaniards created handwritten books, known as codices, such as this to record indigenous life prior to and during the Spanish conquest. It was originally written in Nahuatl, a widely spoken indigenous language, and the narrative was created by blending the stories of various indigenous people, mostly Aztec noblemen, who were interviewed by Sahagún and his students.*

...And when [the Spaniards] were well settled, right away they interrogated Moteucçoma about all the stored treasure of the altepetl1, the devices and shields. They greatly prodded him, they eagerly sought gold as a thing of esteem. And then Moteucçoma went along leading the Spaniards. They gathered around him, bunched around him; he went in their midst, leading the way. They went along, taking hold of him, grasping him. And when they reached the storehouse, the place called Teocalco, then all the [shining things] were brought out: the quetzal-feather head fan, the devices, the shields, the golden disks, the necklaces of the devils, the golden nose crescents, the golden leg bands, the golden arm bands, the golden sheets for the forehead.

Thereupon the gold on the shields and on all the devices was taken off. And when all the gold had been detached, right away they set on fire, set fire to, ignited all the different precious things; they all burned. And the Spaniards made the gold into bricks. And they took as much of the green-stone as pleased them; as to the rest of the green-stone, the Tlaxcalans2 just snatched it up. And [the Spaniards] went everywhere, scratching about in the hiding places, storehouses, places of storage all around. They took everything they saw that pleased them.

Eighteenth chapter, where it is said how the Spaniards went into Moteucçoma’s personal home and what happened there.

Thereupon they went to the place where Moteucçoma stored his own things, where all his special property was kept, called Totocalco. It seemed that they <all bunched together>, were struck [with hope], patted one another on the back of the neck, their hearts brightening. And when they got there and went into the storage place, they seemed to disperse in all directions, quickly going in everywhere, as though covetous and greedy. Thereupon [Moteucçoma’s] own personal property was brought out, belonging to him alone, his own portion, all precious things…. They took all of it; they appropriated it, assigned and apportioned it to themselves....

And when the collection of all the gold was completed, thereupon Marina summoned to her, had summoned, all the noblemen. She stood on a flat roof, on a roof parapet, and said, “Mexica3, come here, for the Spaniards are suffering greatly. Bring food, fresh water, and all that is needed, for they are suffering travail, are tired, fatigued, weary, and exhausted. Why is you do not want to come? It is a sign that you are angry.”

But the Mexica no longer at all dared to go there. They were greatly afraid; they were limp with

---

1 altepetl = a city or town
2 Tlaxcalans = indigenous group allied with the Spanish
3 Mexica = another name for the Aztec people
fear; they were taken aback. Fear greatly prevailed; it spread about. No one dared come out. It was as though a wild beast were loose, as though it were the deep of the night. Yet there was not for that reason halt or hesitation in delivering everything [the Spaniards] needed, but they delivered it fearfully, they went in fear, they ran in fear as they went to deliver it. And when they had spilled it on the ground, everyone came running back in a flash, panting and trembling.

Lockhard, James (editor and translator), *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

**Source C**

_Excerpt from one of many letters that Cortés wrote to the King of Spain during the conquest. It was written and sent in 1520._

...When I discovered that Muteczuma was fully devoted to the service of your Highness, I requested him that, in order to enable me to render a complete account to your Majesty of the productions of the country, he would point out to me the mines from which gold was obtained; to which he consented with the greatest readiness, saying that it would give him pleasure to do so.

...I one day spoke to Muteczuma and said that your Highness needed gold for certain works that he had ordered to be completed, and I wished him to send some of his people, and I would send some of mine, to the lands and abodes of those lords who had submitted themselves on that occasion, to ask them to supply your Majesty with some part of what they possessed; since besides the necessity your Majesty had for the gold, it would serve as a beginning of their fealty[^4^], and your Highness would form a better opinion of their disposition to render him service by such a demonstration; and I also requested that he himself would give me what gold he had, as well as other things, in order that I might transmit them to your Majesty. He immediately requested that I would designate the Spaniards whom I wished to send on this business, and he distributed them two by two, and five by five, among many provinces and cities, the names of which I do not recollect,...and with them he sent some of his own people, and directed them to go to the governors of provinces and cities, and say that I commanded each one of them to give a certain proportion of gold, which he prescribed. Accordingly all those caciques[^5^] to whom he sent contributed freely what he demanded of them, as well jewels as plates and leaves of gold and silver, and whatever else they possessed; and melting down all that admitted it, we found that the fifth part belonging to your Majesty amounted to 32,400 pesos of gold and upwards, without reckoning the jewels of gold and silver, the feather-work, and precious stones, together with many other valuable articles that I set apart for your sacred Majesty, worth more than 100,000 ducats. These besides their monied value, were of so costly and curious workmanship, that considering their novelty and wonderful beauty, no price could be set on them; nor is it probable that any one of all the princes of the world to whose knowledge they might come, could produce any articles of equal splendor. It may seem to your Majesty like a fabulous story, but it is true, that all the natural objects, both on sea and land, of which Muteczuma has any knowledge, are imitated in gold and silver, as well as in precious stones and feathers, in such perfection that they appear almost the same. He gave me numerous specimens of many of these for your Highness,...and many other articles, so numerous and ingenious, that I am unable to describe them to your Majesty.


[^4^]: fealty = loyalty to the King Spain
[^5^]: caciques = political leaders
The Spanish in Tenochtitlan: Three Perspectives

1. Who is the author of the selection?
   Source A: Source C:
   Source B:

2. What events are described in the selection?
   Source A: Source C:
   Source B:

3. For what audience was the selection written? Why do you think each author wrote his document?
   Source A: Source C:
   Source B:

4. What similarities and differences are there among the three sources?

5. Can you determine whether the sources are accurate? Why or why not?

6. What type of information in each of these sources would be useful to an historian?
   Source A: Source C:
   Source B:
Political Geography of North America

Objectives:

Students will: Practice general map reading skills.

Identify the major geographical landmarks of colonial and post-colonial Mexico and the United States on a map.

Understand how the political geography of North America has changed since the colonial period.

Connect geography and historical events.

Required Reading:

Before beginning the lesson, students should have read the Introduction and Part I of the student text (pages 1-11) and completed “Study Guide—Part I” (TRB 4-5) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part I” (TRB-6).

Note:

This simple exercise is designed to acquaint students with the basic political geography covered in the reading.

Colored pencils might be helpful for each group as students fill in their maps. Have students read all the directions carefully before beginning the exercise.

Teachers may want students to refer to their maps as they continue reading. Some students may find it helpful to record the date of significant events on the map where they took place.

Handouts:

“North America in 1713” and “North America in 1832” (TRB 12-13)

“Political Geography of North America” (TRB-14)

“A Powerpoint presentation of these maps is available for download at <www.choices.edu/mexicomaterials>.

In the Classroom:

1. Overview—Ask students to note the different dates on the maps in the handouts. Ask students to provide significant events or people from the reading in the years before and after 1713 and 1832 and list those on the board.

2. Forming Small Groups—Divide the class into groups of three or four. Distribute the maps to each group. Each group should complete the questions and instructions.

3. Sharing Conclusions—After about fifteen minutes, call on students to share their findings. Ask students to make connections to Part I of the reading when they can. How did Mexico’s borders affect its history? How did Mexico’s size affect efforts to govern Mexico?

Ask students to consider their answers to question 5. Using the internet or other resources, ask students if they can find evidence of the influence of Spanish or Mexican culture that dates from the 1830s or earlier in these states.

Homework:

Students should read Part II of the reading in the student text (pages 12-22) and complete “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 17-18) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-19).
North America in 1713

Map by Alexander Sayer Gard-Murray.
Political Geography of North America

Instructions: Follow the directions below and fill in the map “North America Today.” Use the maps “North America 1713” and “North America 1832” and any other resources you may have available in your classroom. You may want to use the internet, maps on the wall, or other textbooks. You may want to use different colored pencils.

1. Draw a line that marks the border of Mexico today.

2. List below the countries that border Mexico today.

3. What are the major bodies of water that border Mexico?

4. Draw a line on the map marking the 1832 border of Mexico.

5. List the contemporary U.S. states that fall inside the 1832 border.

6. Draw a line on the map that marks the borders of the Viceroyalty of New Spain in 1713.

7. List the countries that today occupy territory held by the Viceroyalty of New Spain in 1713.

8. Spain, France, Mexico, and indigenous peoples once held significant portions of what is now the United States. Are there any indications on the map “North America Today” that this was the case? Explain.
Digging Deeper into Mexican History

Objectives:

Students will: Compare the historical interpretations of two Mexican history textbooks.

Analyze the significance of history for Mexicans of different eras.

Compare textbook controversies in Mexico and the United States.

Required Reading:

Before beginning the lesson, students should have read the Part II of the reading in the student text (pages 12-22) and completed “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 17-18) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-19).

Handouts:

“The Struggle for Mexico’s Past” (TRB 20-21)

In the Classroom:

1. Understanding the Mexican World-view—Explain that Mexicans have traditionally viewed their history as an ongoing drama pitting heroes against villains. Who are the most prominent heroes and villains according to this mind-set? How does the Mexican attitude toward history compare to the U.S. perspective?

2. Comparing Historical Interpretations—Distribute “The Struggle for Mexico’s Past.” Review the background to the textbook controversy, calling on students to assess the role of Porfirio Díaz in Mexican history. Divide students into groups and instruct students to read the excerpts and to develop answers to the discussion questions.

3. Rethinking the Past—Call on students to apply the contrasting perspectives of the two excerpts to other crucial junctures in Mexican history. Instruct them to review Parts I and II of the reading to flesh out their responses. For example, how would the old and new textbooks differ in interpreting the Spanish conquest? The independence struggle? The presidency of Benito Juárez? The Mexican Revolution?

Note:

The Mexican government ultimately backed away from issuing the textbooks written in 1992. Instead, Zedillo invited scholars from throughout Mexico to submit a new round of revisions for the 1993-94 school year. Winning entries were selected by an independent panel of judges. Nonetheless, the controversy was not resolved. Zedillo blocked the publication of several textbooks the panel had chosen, insisting that substantial revisions were required. In the case of the 1992 draft of the fifth-grade social sciences textbook, the furor that had arisen from the treatment of the 1968 student massacre and the 1988 elections was avoided altogether by concluding the history in 1964. Mexican education officials maintained that their country needed more time to digest the events of the past three decades.

Homework:

Students should read Part III in the student text (pages 23-32) and complete “Study Guide—Part III” (TRB 24-25) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part III” (TRB-26).
Study Guide—Part II

1. List three reforms the liberals of “La Reforma” passed.
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

2. Why were both rural communities and elites opposed to “La Reforma”?
   rural communities: 
   elites: 

3. Why did Benito Juárez encourage foreign investment? 

4. Díaz’s rule in Mexico, known as the ________________________, was structured on his belief that 
   ______________________ and ______________________ would only be achieved 
   through ______________________. 

5. Describe the changes to landholding that happened under the Porfiriato.

6. What was the main issue each of these revolutionary groups fought for?
   Zapata: 
   Pancho Villa: 
   The Constitutionalists:
7. What was the main difference between the 1917 constitution and previous ones?

8. Why was it difficult to implement the reforms of the Revolution?

9. How did the government attempt to unify the people after the Revolution?

10. How did the economic changes from Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) help Mexico?

11. From 1940 to 1980, Mexico’s __________________ grew at an average rate of over __________ percent. Mexico’s __________________ also grew from twenty to ______________ million people during that same time.

12. How did the decline in the economy in the 1960s affect the Mexican middle class?

13. How did the crash in oil prices and worldwide depression in 1982 affect the Mexican economy?
Advanced Study Guide—Part II

1. How did Mexico’s leaders attempt to establish control and stability in their country following the war between Mexico and the United States?

2. Describe the effects of the Porfiriato on Mexico’s economy. How were different classes affected differently?

3. Explain the differences among the three main rebel groups of the Revolution.

4. Why was the PRN, later the PRI, able to stay in power for much of the twentieth century?

5. In your view, was the Mexican Revolution successful? Why or why not?

6. The reading suggests that economic change often caused political change and vice-versa in Mexico. How were average Mexicans involved in these shifts?
As you learned in Part II of the reading, Mexicans take their history seriously. That attitude was clearly illustrated in 1992-93, when a national controversy erupted over the revision of Mexico’s elementary school history textbooks.

Unlike in the United States, the Mexican government issues a standard set of textbooks for the country’s students. Before the latest round of revisions, Mexican elementary school students were using social studies textbooks that were written in the early 1970s under the administration of President Luis Echeverria.

In the 1980s, then Minister of Education Ernesto Zedillo pledged to modernize Mexico’s educational system. Zedillo felt that the old textbooks reflected a viewpoint that ran counter to the economic reforms that had begun in 1982. He hired some of Mexico’s leading historians to revise the textbooks, encouraging them to place new emphasis on historical periods that previously had been overlooked.

Zedillo’s team of historians devoted greater attention to Mexico’s colonial era and the rule of Porfirio Díaz. The revised text tackled the 1968 massacre of student demonstrators for the first time, but did not mention that the government had ordered troops to attack the demonstrators. The revised text also praised the economic reforms instituted by President Carlos Salinas, who took office in 1988. The new textbook passed over the fraud that took place in the presidential election that brought Salinas to power.

The revisions set off a firestorm of protest in Mexico. Critics charged that the Salinas government was trying to shape history to fit its own agenda. They argued that the revised textbooks were an attempt to water down the spirit of the Mexican Revolution. In response, Zedillo asserted that the revised textbooks presented a more balanced picture of key historical figures, rather than casting them only as heroes or villains.

The most heated controversy revolved around the treatment of Porfirio Díaz. The following two passages from the sixth-grade social sciences textbook highlight the most important revisions. Read each one carefully and answer the related questions. Finally, answer “Questions for Consideration” on TRB-22.
Excerpt #1–1970s textbook

In 1877, Porfirio Díaz occupied the presidency for the first time and proposed to pacify and modernize the nation; to achieve that, he repressed all popular demonstrations against him and jailed his political enemies, thus establishing the so-called “Porfiriana peace” or “peace of the sepulcher*” and converting his government into a dictatorship.

As for the economy, Díaz gave concessions to foreigners—principally English and North Americans—so they would invest capital in our country. As a result, the most important branches of the national economy were in the hands of foreigners, at a cost to the majority of Mexicans who were displaced from management positions and could only work as employees or peons.

Díaz governed for more than 30 years. In this period…the dominant class was made up of large landowners…industrialists, bankers, and businessmen, while the majority of the population were peasants without land and workers who lived in deplorable conditions.

* sepulcher = a tomb or burial vault

1. What would be the characteristics of a “peace of the sepulcher?”

2. Overall, does this textbook paint a positive or negative picture of Díaz’s rule?

Excerpt #2–Revised 1992 textbook (chapter summaries)

The long government of Porfirio Díaz achieved pacification of the country through alliances with different groups and interests. Good administration achieved economic recuperation and attracted foreign investment that sparked economic development. Negotiation of the foreign debt allowed the government to nurture the economy and normalize relations with creditor nations. Culture flourished, and there were good historians, painters, and poets.

The railroads were one of the principal means of economic development during the Porfiriato. The railroad made contact between previously isolated regions, allowed the circulation of men and merchandise, diminished the costs of transportation, and promoted the export of Mexican products.

The long government of Porfirio Díaz created a climate of peace and promoted the economic development of the country. This government diminished individual liberties, concentrated power in a few hands, and halted the development of democracy.

1. What are the characteristics of a “climate of peace” according to this textbook?

2. Overall, does this textbook paint a positive or negative picture of Díaz’s rule?
Questions for Consideration
1. Fill in the chart below, indicating how each textbook explained Porfirio Díaz’s rule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive Results of Porfiriato</th>
<th>Negative Results of Porfiriato</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excerpt 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excerpt 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Why would different governments want to portray historical events in different ways?

3. If there were a single textbook for all the schools in the United States, do you think its development would cause controversy? What parts of U.S. history would be controversial? What parts would not be?
Role-Playing the Three Futures: Organization and Preparation

Objectives:

Students will: Analyze the issues that frame the debate on the direction of Mexico’s reform.

Identify the core values of the Futures.

Integrate the arguments and beliefs of the Futures and the background reading into a persuasive, coherent presentation.

Weigh the ramifications of the Futures from a Mexican perspective.

Work cooperatively within groups to organize effective presentations.

Required Reading:

Students should have read Part III of the background reading in the student text (pages 23-32) and completed “Study Guide—Part III” (TRB 24-25) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part III” (TRB-26).

Handouts:

“Presenting Your Future” (TRB-27) for the Future groups

“Expressing Key Values” (TRB-28) for the Future groups

“Speaking for the Mexican Electorate” (TRB-29) for the Mexican Voters

“Mexican Perspectives” (TRB-30-32) for the Mexican Voters

In the Classroom:

1. Planning for Group Work—In order to save time in the classroom, form student groups before beginning Day Three. During the class period of Day Three, students will be preparing for the Day Four simulation. Remind them to incorporate the reading into the development of their presentations and questions.

2a. Future Groups—Form three groups of four students. Assign a Future to each group. Distribute “Presenting Your Future” and “Expressing Key Values” to the three Future groups. Inform students that each Future group will be called on in Day Four to present the case for its assigned Future to a group of Mexican voters. Explain that Future groups should follow the instructions in “Presenting Your Future.” Note that the Future groups should begin by assigning each member a role.

2b. Mexican Voters—Distribute “Speaking for the Mexican Electorate” and “Mexican Perspectives” to the remaining students and assign each student a role. While the options groups are preparing their presentations, these students should develop clarifying questions for Day Four. Remind these students that they are expected to turn in their questions at the end of the simulation.

Extra Challenge:

Ask the Future groups to design campaign posters illustrating the best case for their Futures. Mexican citizens may be asked to design a political cartoon expressing their concerns.

Homework:

Students should complete preparations for the simulation.
Study Guide—Part III

1. List three consequences of the 1982 crash of the Mexican economy.
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

2. What is the purpose of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)?

3. List three things that undermined the strength of the PRI.
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

4. a. What does NAFTA stand for?
   b. What was the original goal of NAFTA?
5. List two positive effects of NAFTA for Mexico.
   a. 
   b. 

6. List two negative effects of NAFTA for Mexico.
   a. 
   b. 

7. How does the issue of undocumented immigration affect U.S.-Mexican relations?

8. Why are issues of land reform and poverty important in Mexico today? Explain your answer.
Advanced Study Guide—Part III

1. How did Mexico’s economic reforms weaken the power of the PRI?

2. Why do many Mexicans believe that NAFTA has hurt their country’s economy? What types of businesses have benefited from NAFTA?

3. How has Mexico’s relationship with the United States changed in recent years?

4. How does drug trafficking threaten Mexico’s political stability?

5. What problems persist in Mexico’s rural areas? How have Mexico’s economic reforms affected different groups in the countryside?

6. Many Mexicans believe that their country is on the road to full democracy. Others predict increasing instability. What is your assessment of Mexico’s political future?
Presenting Your Future

Preparing Your Presentation

Your Assignment: Your group is scheduled to appear before a gathering of Mexican voters. Your assignment is to persuade the voters that your Future should serve as Mexico’s guiding philosophy in the coming years. You will be judged on how well you present your Future.

Organizing Your Group: Each member of your group will take a specific role. Below is a brief explanation of the responsibilities for each role. Before preparing your sections of the presentation, work together to address the questions on the “Expressing Key Values” sheet.

1. Group Director: Your job is to organize your group’s three- to five-minute presentation. In organizing your presentation, you will receive help from the other members of your group. Read your option and review the reading to build a strong case for your option. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet will help you and your group to organize your thoughts. Keep in mind that, although you are expected to take the lead in organizing your group, your group will be expected to make the presentation together.

2. Economic Adviser: Your job is to explain why your Future is justified from an economic standpoint. You should draw on the lessons of Mexico’s economic transformation since the early 1980s to support your position. Read your Future, paying close attention to the references to Mexico’s economic policy, and then review the sections of the reading that deal with your area of expertise. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

3. Political Adviser: Your job is to explain why your Future is justified from a political standpoint. You should draw on your understanding of Mexico’s current challenges to support your position. Read your Future, paying close attention to the references to Mexico’s political system, and then review the sections of the reading that deal with your area of expertise. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

4. Historian: Your job is to explain why your Future is justified from an historical standpoint. You should draw on lessons from Mexico’s history to support your position. Read your Future, paying close attention to references to Mexico’s past, and then review the sections of the reading that deal with your area of expertise. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

Making Your Case

After your preparations are complete, your group will deliver a three-to-five minute presentation to the gathering of Mexican voters. The “Expressing Key Values” worksheet and other notes may be used, but you should speak clearly and convincingly. During the presentation, you should try to identify the weak points of the other Futures. After all of the groups have presented their Futures, the voters will ask you questions. Any member of your group may respond during the question-and-answer period.
Expressing Key Values

The notion of values lies at the core of this unit. Each of the three Futures in this unit revolves around a distinct set of values. The opening two paragraphs of your Future are devoted to making a convincing case for the values that are represented. The term “values,” however, is not easy to define. Most often, we think of values in connection with our personal lives. Our attitudes toward our families, friends, and communities are a reflection of our personal values.

Values play a critical role in political decisions as well. Some values fit together well. Others are in conflict. Nations and their citizens are constantly being forced to choose among competing values in their ongoing debates about public policy.

In today’s time of rapid change, the people of Mexico face similar challenges. Mexicans share many of the same values as others around the world. Mexicans also hold other fundamental values, such as concern for historical traditions and promotion of economic equality. Your job is to identify and explain the most important values of your Future. These values should be clearly expressed by every member of your group. This worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

1. Summarize your Future.

2. What are the two most important values underlying your Future?
   a. 
   b. 

3. According to the values of your Future, what should be the main goals for Mexico’s economic development?

4. Why should the values of your Future be the guiding force for setting Mexico’s course?
Speaking for the Mexican Electorate

Your Role
Speaking for your assigned voter, you will take part in a forum for Mexican legislative candidates. You will listen to the presentations of three distinct political philosophies, or Futures, for Mexico in the coming years. At the conclusion of the forum, you are expected to evaluate each of the Futures and decide which group presented their option most persuasively. Your teacher will give you an evaluation form to help you do this.

Your Assignment
While the four option groups are organizing their presentations, each of you should prepare two questions regarding each of the Futures. The questions should reflect the values, concerns, and interests of your assigned character. Your teacher will collect these questions at the end of Day Four.

Your questions should be challenging and critical. For example, a good question for Future 1 from Martín Ergas would be:

**How will Mexican producers access profitable international markets if we do not make trade agreements with richer nations?**

On Day Four, the three Future groups will present their positions. After their presentations are completed, your teacher will call on you and the other voters to ask questions. The “Evaluation Form” you will receive is designed for you to record your impressions of the options. After this activity is concluded, you and your classmates may be called upon to explain your positions on Mexico’s course for the future.
**Martín Ergas**—You are a thirty-seven-year-old owner of a large-scale farming operation in Colima in western Mexico. Your farm supplies international food processing companies in the region with a variety of vegetables. In addition, you export herbs and specialty crops directly to Europe and the United States. Most recently, you have expanded your operations to produce chemical fertilizers and to assemble agricultural machinery from imported European parts. You are a strong supporter for reform of Mexico’s land ownership laws and believe that private ownership will allow people to be economically self-sufficient. You are optimistic about the future, but you worry that Mexico’s democracy is still weak and could be threatened by the legacies of corruption and fraud in political parties.

**Jesús González**—You are an eighteen-year-old high school student living in Uruapan, about two hundred miles west of Mexico City. Your family used to live in a shantytown that had no running water and only two communal pit latrines for a population of three hundred people to share. When you were six years old, your father became involved in a local drug gang and began smuggling drugs from the south up to Mexico’s U.S. border. With the money he made, your family was able to move to a larger house in a suburb of Uruapan, and you and your older brother were sent to better schools in town. You are graduating high school next year and you are concerned about the future. You’d like to go to college, but you are worried that, even with a college education, you will not be able to find a job. Your older brother believes that there are no opportunities for Mexican youth, and three years ago, he dropped out of high school to join your father. You are worried about your family’s safety in the face of so much drug-related violence and you are concerned that, upon graduation, your best option will be to join them in trafficking drugs.

**Beatriz Pérez**—You are a fifty-year-old woman living in the city of Merida on the Yucatán peninsula. You and your husband used to own a plot of land and grow corn for the market in Merida, but the increase of cheap agricultural imports from the United States has forced you to sell your land and move to the city. Your eldest daughter moved to the United States with her husband five years ago and now lives there as an illegal immigrant, cleaning people’s homes in Los Angeles. She sends you money every month, which allows you, your husband, and your two youngest children to live better than most of the other families in your community. You depend on the money she sends, but at the same time, you fear for her safety and worry that she might be deported. You also wish that she could live closer to home and are sad that you have only ever seen pictures of her three-year-old son—your first grandchild—who was born in the United States.

**Roberto Ortega**—You are a sixty-seven-year-old farmer in Guanajuato in central Mexico. You and your wife farm eight irrigated acres of fertile land on an *ejido*. For most of your life, you grew only corn and beans, the traditional crops of the region. You also depended on a local middleman to loan you money and sell your crops in the city. In the mid-1980s, however, you began to grow high-risk cash crops. With financial help from your children, you planted marigolds for a foreign producer of chicken feed. When international food processing companies opened plants in Guanajuato in the early 1990s, you and your wife began to grow cauliflower, broccoli, and cucumbers. The companies provide you with fertilizers, insecticides, and high-yield seedlings on credit. This has allowed you to eke out an existence and you are grateful for your success. You wonder why most of your neighbors have not taken advantage of new opportunities over the last twenty years.
Raphael Pacheco—You are a thirty-five-year-old shop owner in Mexico City. Your small grocery store sells mainly corn, beans, vegetables, and tortillas. Since NAFTA, your costs have decreased dramatically, and you now buy almost all of your goods from U.S. producers. While this has brought you greater profits and allowed you and your family to move to a nicer apartment, you are concerned that more and more unemployed Mexican farmers are moving to Mexico City, where there are not enough jobs. You worry that these migrants will turn to drugs and crime, making the city even more dangerous for your family to live in. You proudly voted for Vicente Fox in the 2000 election, but you are scared that the election protests in 2006 threatened the stability of Mexico’s fledging democracy.

Miguel Gonzalez—You are a forty-one-year-old street vendor in Mexico City. You used to work in a plastics factory but you didn’t earn enough money to support your family so you quit your job and went into business for yourself. You now sell electronic goods in a street market and, because you work on one of the most popular thoroughfares in town, you earn four to five times the amount you used to make at the factory. Selling on the streets is not very safe, and to protect yourself from thieves and the police, who wish to rid the city of its “unsightly” elements, you pay a local political strongman to protect you. Recently, however, you were robbed at gunpoint on your way home from work, and your wife wants you to change jobs. Returning to factory work is no longer an option because so many factories have closed since the mid-1990s that there aren’t any jobs to be had. Even if you could find a job, you worry that both you and your wife would have to work long hours each day to be able to afford food, now that the government’s subsidies have ended and food prices have risen so drastically. You are happy about your country’s political reforms but you are frustrated that these changes have not created more opportunities for you and your family.

Carolina Fernandez—You are a thirty-seven-year-old homemaker living on the outskirts of Mexico City. Your husband has a high-paying position with a foreign bank in the city, and your two children attend a private school. Although you have a college degree, you don’t work and instead spend your days caring for your children, going to the fitness club, and shopping in town. Crime has always been a problem in Mexico City, and sometimes you feel like a target when you are walking in the streets. After being mugged last month, you are trying to be more careful. You spend more of your time at home, watching soap operas on satellite TV and overseeing the maid who comes daily to cook and clean. When you do go out, you avoid driving past certain neighborhoods that you believe are more dangerous. You are confident that your children will have a bright future, particularly with your husband’s foreign connections, but sometimes you worry that crime and social unrest will threaten Mexico’s international image.

Gabrielle Sandoval—You are a twenty-seven-year-old maquiladora worker near the Texan border. You moved to the area six years ago and have worked in a variety of factories, doing everything from stitching pants to soldering circuit boards. Layoffs, chemical fumes, and exhausting working conditions have driven you from job to job every few months. You and your boyfriend live in a shack in a community near a number of maquiladoras, and you can see the factory smokestacks billowing pollution into the air. Sometimes you look over the border into Texas and are frustrated that you have so few opportunities to get ahead in life. Recently, you joined a friend who was going to a meeting of factory workers, and at the meeting you learned about the foreign companies that own the maquiladoras and how they are polluting your community. You want to join these workers but your boyfriend warns you that you will lose your job if you join a workers’ union.
Josefina Cruz—You are a thirty-six-old woman living in an industrialized section of Mexico City. To support your twelve year-old daughter and your mother, you work six days a week as a maid on the other side of town. To get to work, you travel up to two hours by bus, subway, and mini-bus to reach the affluent neighborhoods where your clients live. For twelve hours of cleaning and cooking, you earn about four times the minimum wage. Despite your daily struggle, you are proud of your accomplishments. When your family arrived in Mexico City from Puebla in the 1950s, you lived in a house made from cardboard and tin cans. Now you are hopeful that your daughter will someday be able to attend university. You hope that the government will make good on its promises to create more jobs so that she will be able to get a well-paying job and live a more comfortable life.

Katia Espinoza—You are a forty-two-year-old woman living in Chiapas in the south of Mexico. For as long as you can remember, your family has been struggling to hold onto its land. You and your daughter grow crops of corn and beans and struggle to sell the goods in a nearby town. Cheap imports have made it nearly impossible to compete, and many of your neighbors have been forced to sell their lands. Most of them, not wanting to leave the community, have taken jobs working on the new cotton plantation that was created from the consolidation of their lands. You worry for your daughter and sense her growing frustration at the futility of your struggle. She has begun talking more and more about the Zapatista army and you recently accompanied her to a meeting of the EZLN to see what they had to say. Although you are worried for her safety, especially when government forces come to raid nearby villages, sometimes you truly believe that Mexico has forgotten its indigenous people.

Bernardo Martínez—You are forty-seven years old and the owner of an electronics factory in Monterrey in northern Mexico. Your father was a wealthy industrialist and when you were growing up, he would often bring you to his factory to teach you the trade. After working for several companies when you finished college, you went into business for yourself, manufacturing specialized electronic equipment such as high-performance microphones and amplifiers. When President Salinas lowered Mexico’s trade barriers in the mid-1980s, your firm was well-positioned to adjust to the global marketplace. You had already formed a partnership with a Japanese company in the field and by the late 1980s, you were importing parts from Japan for your line of products, rather than producing everything yourself. Your costs went down and the quality of your equipment increased, but you were forced to fire more than half of your workforce. While you were not happy to do this, you believe that recent trade agreements with Latin American countries and the European Union will create even more jobs for your former workers to choose from.

Elva Allende—You are a twenty-year-old maquiladora worker in Tijuana, near the U.S. border. You work in a factory that assembles sneakers and believe that you are lucky to have this job, especially because many of your closest friends in the factory have been laid-off in the last few years. At the same time, you can’t help feeling like you’ll never get ahead, as you work long hours each day just to afford your groceries and rent, and the little extra money you save you send to your family in Oaxaca. One of your friends from work recently quit her job and now washes dishes in a restaurant in San Diego, earning more than five times as much money per hour as you do. You wonder if you should consider working in the United States for a few years to make some extra money. At the same time, you are nervous that the recent increase in drug-related violence and social unrest will influence U.S. policy makers to pass laws restricting Mexican immigration.
Expressing Political Views through Art

Objectives:

Students will: Analyze the relationship between art and politics in twentieth century Mexico.

- Explore the styles and techniques of Mexico’s leading muralists.
- Express the political views of individual Mexicans through art.

Required Reading:

Students should have read Part III of the student text (pages 23-32) and completed “Study Guide—Part III” (TRB 24-25) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part III” (TRB-26).

Handouts:

- “Politics and the Paintbrush in Modern Mexico” (TRB 34-39)
- “Mexican Perspectives” (TRB 30-32)

In the Classroom:

1. Art and Politics—Divide the class into groups of three or four. Distribute “Politics and the Paintbrush in Modern Mexico” to each group. Explain that Mexico’s mural tradition gained international attention in the 1920s and 1930s. Have the students read the handout and answer the questions for each painting.

2. Defining Roles—Emphasize that the connection between politics and art remains strong in present-day Mexico. Opponents of the government are more likely than ever to express their criticism through elaborate banners and sidewalk drawings in the central plazas of Mexico’s large cities. Distribute “Mexican Perspectives” to each group. The handout presents profiles of twelve Mexicans coping with their country’s recent changes. Assign a profile to each group or allow groups to choose their own profile. Explain that the groups are expected to make a sketch of a small-scale mural that conveys the hopes and concerns of the individual they have been assigned.

3. Spurring Creativity—Encourage students to take another look at the artwork in “Politics and the Paintbrush in Modern Mexico” to develop ideas for their murals. Urge them to discuss the profiles they have been assigned before they begin drawing. What events have shaped the attitudes of the profiled Mexicans toward their country? What would they wish to say through their murals to passers-by about Mexico today? Call on students to offer suggestions on how to express abstract concepts visually. For example, what symbols or styles could they use to illustrate hope for the future or anger at the government?
Politics and the Paintbrush in Modern Mexico

Introduction: Art and politics have been closely connected in Mexico, especially since the Mexican Revolution. The struggle and ideals of the Revolution gave rise to a generation of muralists who sought to tell the story of Mexico through their paintbrushes. Foremost among them were José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. Their work was designed to speak to ordinary Mexicans, many of whom could not read. The artists employed a style of large-scale murals that emphasized bold, vibrant colors, and heroic themes. Their murals dramatized the turning points of Mexican history, particularly the revolutionary period. Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros shared a strong commitment to justice and equality for Mexico’s poor. Mexican governments after the Revolution promoted the muralist movement as a unifying force. The walls of many of Mexico’s most important public buildings served as giant canvases for the muralists.

More recently, muralist Rufino Tamayo painted in a different style from Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros. His work tended to be physically smaller and less political. Finally, Javier de la Garza and other contemporary artists are more likely to turn their talents against the government than toward glorifying the Revolution. The massacre of student demonstrators in Mexico City in 1968, for example, sparked an artistic outcry against the government. More recently, artists have focused on corruption, the Chiapas rebellion, and economic troubles. Many have contributed to the international “pop art” trend, adapting the styles of comic books, advertising, and other forms of popular culture to their own work.

Instructions: The following pages feature examples from the work of Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, Tamayo, and Garza. With your group, review the paintings and answer the questions below for each painting.

Questions:
1. Describe the people and/or images in this painting.

2. What kind of mood does this painting project?

3. Can you make any connections between this painting and the history of Mexico which you have read?
José Clemente Orozco  
(1883-1949)  

At the early stage of his career, Orozco used his artistic talent to illustrate the poverty of Mexico City and support the Mexican Revolution. Public criticism forced Orozco to leave Mexico from 1917 to 1920. When he returned, the new government of President Alvaro Obregón was eager to sponsor his work. By the mid-1920s, Orozco had developed a highly political style. Criticism, however, again forced him abroad. From 1927 to 1934, he pursued his career in the United States and won international recognition. Orozco returned to Mexico as a national hero. For the last fifteen years of his life, he was given free rein to explore a variety of themes. Many of Orozco’s later murals reflect his fascination with Mexico’s indigenous past. This painting, called *American Civilization—Hispanic America* (1932) represents one half of Orozco’s view of society in North and South America. Its companion mural is called *American Civilization—Anglo America*. Emiliano Zapata stands at the center of this painting.
Diego Rivera (1886-1957)

Rivera began developing his artistic talent during fourteen years of study and work in Spain and France. Rivera’s painting came to be dominated by powerful, stark forms. After returning to Mexico in 1921, Rivera was commissioned to paint large murals at several prominent public buildings in the capital. He created elaborate scenes with simple, flattened figures. Rivera’s murals relied on precise outlines and strong colors to convey the artist’s message. This painting, Death of a Capitalist (1928) is one of a series of murals that focus on the theme of revolutionary justice.
David Alfaro Siqueiros
(1896-1974)

Siqueiros was consumed by politics from his youth. In 1913, he interrupted his artistic education to join the army of Venustiano Carranza during the Mexican Revolution. After studying in Europe, Siqueiros returned to Mexico in 1922. For the next five decades, he was both an active member of the Communist Party and one of Mexico’s most productive muralists. His designs stressed movement and vigor, often with a narrow range of colors. Siqueiros commonly used a paint gun to speed up his work. This painting, *The Revolutionaries*, is one of several huge panels that tell the story of Mexico’s revolutionary struggle.
Rufino Tamayo  
(1899-1991)

After beginning a traditional artistic education in Mexico City, Rufino Tamayo, a Zapotec Indian, turned toward the study of indigenous art. At the same time, he rejected the huge proportions and blunt political messages of Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros. Tamayo worked primarily on small canvases. His themes were Mexican, although his style was closer to the Cubist and Surrealist painting of Europe. By the 1950s, Tamayo had earned international praise and was commissioned to design murals in Mexico, the United States, and France. He and his work have been especially influential among recent generations of Mexican artists. This painting, *El Grito*, is of Miguel Hidalgo’s rallying cry (“el grito”) during the Mexican struggle for independence from Spain.
Javier de la Garza

(1954-)

Javier de la Garza considers himself self-taught, though he did attend art school briefly in the 1970s. He lived in Paris from 1981-86, and his work has been shown in Mexico, the United States, and elsewhere. His work, which has followed the Pop art style, often deals with historical themes and Mexican national identity. This painting, called Structures, uses striking imagery to consider authoritarian rule.
Role-Playing the Three Futures: Debate and Discussion

Objectives:

Students will: Articulate the leading values influencing Mexico’s future.

Explore, debate, and evaluate multiple perspectives on Mexico’s future.

Sharpen rhetorical skills through debate and discussion.

Cooperate with classmates in staging a persuasive presentation.

Handouts:

“Evaluation Form” for Mexican Voters (TRB-41)

In the Classroom:

1. Setting the Stage—Organize the room so that the three Future groups face a row of desks reserved for the voters. Distribute “Evaluation Form” to the voters. The worksheet should be completed as homework.

2. Managing the Simulation—Explain that the simulation will begin with three- to five-minute presentations by each of the Future groups. Encourage the group members to speak clearly and convincingly.

3. Guiding Discussion—Following the presentations, invite Mexican voters to ask clarifying questions. Make sure that each voter has an opportunity to ask at least one question.

The questions should be evenly distributed among all three Future groups. If time permits, encourage members of the Future groups to challenge the positions of other groups. During the questioning, allow any Future group member to respond. (As an alternative approach, permit questions after each Future is presented.)

Homework:

Students should read each of the three Futures in the student text (pages 34-39), then moving beyond these Futures they should fill out “Focusing Your Thoughts” (TRB-43) and complete “Mexico’s Future” (TRB-44).

Note:

The consideration of alternative views is not finished when the Futures role play is over. The Futures presented are framed in stark terms in order to clarify differences. After the role play, students should articulate their own views on the issue and create their own Future for Mexico. These views will be more sophisticated and nuanced if students have had an opportunity to challenge one another to think more critically about the merits and trade-offs of alternative views. See Guidelines for Deliberation <www.choices.edu/deliberation> for suggestions on deliberation.
Evaluation Form

Instructions: Answer the questions below following the simulation.

1. According to each Future, what should Mexico do?
   
   Future 1:

   Future 2:

   Future 3:

2. According to each Future, what are the most important concerns in Mexico?
   
   Future 1:

   Future 2:

   Future 3:

3. Which of the three Futures would your assigned voter support most strongly? Explain your reasoning.
Charting Mexico’s Future

**Objectives:**

**Students will:** Articulate a coherent political program for Mexico based on personally held values and historical understanding.

Compare and contrast values and assumptions with classmates.

Offer reasoned arguments to support policy recommendations.

Apply individual views to current issues in Mexico.

**Required Reading:**

Students should have read each of the three Futures (pages 34-39), filled out “Focusing Your Thoughts,” (TRB-43) and completed “Mexico’s Future” (TRB-44).

**Handouts:**

“Tortilla Politics in Free-Market Mexico” (TRB 45-46)

**In the Classroom:**

1. **Analyzing Beliefs**—Call on students who represented Mexican voters to share their evaluations of the Future groups. Which arguments were most convincing? Which beliefs were most appealing? Review the beliefs in “Focusing Your Thoughts,” noting the relationship between beliefs and Futures.

2. **Drawing Connections**—If your students designed murals, call on students to draw connections between the murals and the three Futures. Invite students to share their own Futures. Which values are featured most prominently? Which problems receive the most attention?

3. **Tortilla Policy**—Distribute “Tortilla Politics in Free-Market Mexico.” Review the handout with the class, emphasizing the significance of tortillas in Mexico’s national identity. Call on students to answer the discussion questions. They should focus in particular on how the shift in tortilla policy parallels Mexico’s larger economic reform program. Why did Zedillo believe that an end to price controls was needed to revitalize Mexico’s tortilla industry? How has NAFTA increased pressure on the Mexican government to eliminate subsidies and price controls? Encourage students to evaluate the pros and cons of Zedillo’s tortilla policy.

4. **Applying Student Futures**—Invite students to offer their own recommendations for Mexico’s tortilla policy based on their individual Futures. How would they protect Mexico’s poor from rising tortilla prices? How would they address the concerns of small tortilla makers facing rising costs? What position would they take toward U.S. corporations that are eager to sell low-cost, packaged tortillas in the Mexican market? Urge students to extend their debate beyond tortilla policy. What are the implications of student recommendations for other issues facing Mexico? What other policy measures would students suggest to solve Mexico’s problems? Finally, call on students to step back from their Futures to reflect on their understanding of Mexico. How did the unit affect their attitudes toward Mexico?
Focusing Your Thoughts

Instructions
You have had an opportunity to consider three Futures for Mexico. Now it is your turn to look at each of the Futures from your own perspective. Try each one on for size. Think about how the Futures address your concerns and hopes. You will find that each has its own risks and trade-offs, advantages and disadvantages. After you complete this worksheet, you will be asked to develop your own Future for Mexico.

Ranking the Futures
Which of the Futures do you prefer? Rank the Futures, with “1” being the best Future for Mexico to follow.

___ Future 1: Justice for the People
___ Future 2: Restore Order and Stability
___ Future 3: Embrace the Future

Beliefs
Considering the statements below will help you complete the worksheet “Mexico’s Future.” Rate each of the statements according to your personal beliefs:

1 = Strongly Support  2 = Support  3 = Oppose  4 = Strongly Oppose  5 = Undecided

___ To move forward, Mexico must first overcome its history of injustice and exploitation.
___ Mexico has an opportunity to eventually join the ranks of richer nations if the country holds steady to the course of reform.
___ Closing the gap between the rich and the poor in Mexico is more important than achieving high rates of economic growth.
___ Rapid change threatens to plunge Mexico into chaos and violence.
___ Linking Mexico closely to the United States is the surest route to prosperity for the Mexican people.
___ Democracy is a worthy goal only to the extent that it puts power in the hands of the common people.
___ The United States seeks only to take advantage of Mexico’s weaknesses.
___ The free-market economic system and democracy are the only realistic options available to poor countries seeking to advance.
___ A strong, central government is Mexico’s best bet for promoting stability and prosperity.

Creating Your Own Future
Your next assignment is to create a Future that reflects your own beliefs and opinions. You may borrow heavily from one Future, or you may combine ideas from two or three Futures. Or you may take a new approach altogether. You should strive to craft a Future that is logical and persuasive. Be careful of contradictions. For example, you should not propose raising trade barriers to protect Mexican industries if you believe that NAFTA is crucial to Mexico’s development.
Mexico’s Future

Instructions: In this exercise, you will offer your own recommendations for Mexico. Imagine that you are drafting a campaign speech for a candidate in Mexico’s presidential elections. Your responses to “Focusing Your Thoughts” should help you identify the values of your Future.

1. What should be the main principles guiding Mexico’s economic development?

2. What should be the main principles underlying Mexico’s political system?

3. How will Mexico change over the next ten years if your Future is adopted?

4. What are the two strongest arguments supporting your Future?
   a. 
   b. 

5. What are the two strongest arguments opposing your Future?
   a. 
   b.
Every day throughout Mexico, millions of people stop at their neighborhood *tortillerias* (tortilla bakeries) to buy a few pounds of the fresh corn pancakes that are the foundation of Mexican cuisine. There, stacks of tortillas are typically piled high on the counter, while in the background dough-pressing machines and rotating grills replenish the supply.

**Mexico’s Staple**

Made from corn flour, lard, and water, tortillas date back to the Aztecs. Until the second half of the twentieth century, most Mexican women prepared tortillas at home, often with corn grown on a family plot. As Mexicans moved from the countryside to the city, most consumers came to rely on local *tortillerias*. Today, the average Mexican consumes nearly three hundred pounds of tortillas a year. Tortillas provide half of the daily calories of the more than fifty million Mexicans who live on $4 per day or less.

Tortillas have long occupied a special place in Mexico’s political arena. In the early 1970s, President Luis Echeverría took measures to ensure that tortillas were within reach for the poor. His administration imposed price controls that limited the amount that producers could charge, but also offered subsidies to producers to support the tortilla industry. Echeverría’s tortilla policy boosted the government’s popularity, especially among the poor.

**Free-Market Forces**

Since Mexico embarked on free-market reforms in the 1980s, the government’s role in the economy has steadily shrunk. After President Ernesto Zedillo came to office in 1994, the government slashed subsidies of rice, beans, and fuel. Eventually, Mexico’s tortilla policy came up for review as well.

Zedillo believed that government price controls and subsidies were holding back the tortilla industry. He believed that allowing free-market forces to determine prices would give Mexico’s fifty-thousand tortilla makers the capital to expand and modernize. According to Zedillo, the new policy would enable smaller producers to fend off growing competition from large corporations, some of which are based in the United States. He also predicted that his measures would result in a tastier, more nutritious product, because producers would be forced to respond to consumer desires for better tortillas. In 1998, Zedillo’s administration began chipping away at the price controls and subsidies that had kept tortilla prices low. On January 1, 1999, the last restraints were eliminated.

**Consumer Backlash**

As tortilla prices began to rise, consumers complained loudly to shop owners and journalists. Politicians of every political stripe voiced their concerns about the situation. At the same time, the government vowed to put in place a targeted program to provide low-cost or free tortillas to Mexico’s neediest citizens. Nonetheless, the Mexican public remained angry and suspicious.

Tortillas played a role in the 2006 elections. Presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador noted that many tortillas were now yellow, which indicated that the corn had been grown in the United States. (Most Mexican corn is white.) With NAFTA ending Mexican tariffs on U.S. corn and beans, Mexican farms have been hard-pressed to compete for the increased supply.
Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads

TRB

Day Five

Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads

with cheaper U.S. corn. Obrador promised to renegotiate NAFTA if elected, but he lost the election to a strong supporter of NAFTA, Felipe Calderón.

In early 2007, soaring corn prices led to a public outcry. The sharp rise in prices hurt many small tortillerias because people could no longer afford to buy as many tortillas.

Mexico’s very poor, many of whom pay up to one quarter of their daily wages on tortillas, were especially hard hit. Public anger forced President Calderón to retreat from the policy of allowing the market to set the price of tortillas. Calderón reached an agreement with major businesses to limit the price of tortillas to about 35 cents a pound.

Questions for Consideration

1. Why were price controls on tortillas and corn subsidies viewed as an important government program for the poor?

2. Why did President Ernesto Zedillo believe that Mexico’s tortilla policy needed to be changed?

3. What does the controversy over tortilla policy say about the divisions within Mexican society?
Assessing Political Values

Objectives:

Students will: Analyze primary source material from the Zapatista Army.
Identify the values reflected in primary source material.
Compare the values of the Zapatista Army with those of other Mexicans.
Assess the factors that have contributed to the competing values in contemporary Mexico.

Required Reading:

Students should have read each of the three Futures (pages 34-39), filled out “Focusing Your Thoughts” (TRB-43) completed “Mexico’s Future” (TRB-44).

Handouts:

“The Values of the Zapatista Army” (TRB-48) for each of the six small groups
“Selections from the Speeches and Writings of the Zapatista Army” (TRB 49-52) for the appropriate small groups.
“Mexican Perspectives” (TRB 30-32)

In the Classroom:

1. Focus Question: Write the question “What makes certain political ideas revolutionary?” on the board or overhead.

2. Forming Small Groups—Divide the class into six groups and distribute “The Values of the Zapatista Army” to each group. Review the instructions with the class.

Remind students that the Zapatistas are advocates for revolutionary change in Mexico. Assign each group one of the six selections from the Zapatista writings. Distribute the appropriate section of “Selections from the Writings of the Zapatista Army” and “Mexican Perspectives” to each group.

3. Sharing Conclusions—After the groups have studied their selections, call on the groups to present the values they identified. Given what students know about Mexico, do the Zapatistas’ views represent the values of contemporary Mexico? Ask students why they think the Zapatistas have adopted these values and political beliefs. What groups of people might share these values? What groups might not?

Are there examples from Mexican history of groups or people who shared the values of the Zapatistas?

4. Making Connections—Ask students to identify current figures who challenge the core values of their own society. The figures could be political, religious, artistic, or even fictional characters from a movie or novel. Make a list of these figures on the board. Do the figures identified by students share a common set of values?

What happens when not all members of a society hold the same values?

Note:

This lesson requires analysis of text that is complex and symbolic. Some students may find it challenging.

The Zapatista Army maintains a website (in Spanish) that students may find interesting. <http://www.enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/>

Translations of letters, declarations, speeches, and interviews, as well as a detailed overview of the Zapatistas and a chronology of events in Chiapas can be found in English at <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico.html>. 
The Values of the Zapatista Army

Introduction: Values are beliefs and principles that form the basis of our identity and guide our action. Some values, such as bravery, honesty, and responsibility, describe personal characteristics. Others, such as freedom, equality, and democracy, reflect abstract ideals. Values like patriotism, loyalty to family, and compassion shape our relationships with the rest of the world. Another set of values, which includes power, justice, truth, recognition, and wealth, may serve as goals and priorities.

While values vary from person to person, societies generally have shared values that are typically transmitted through their schools, media, and political leaders. At times, values can be questioned by members of society who challenge the social order and/or political system.

Your assignment: In this activity, you will explore the values of the revolutionary Zapatista army and compare them with the values of other Mexicans. Your group has been assigned a selection from the Zapatista’s writings. First, read the selection carefully and underline the two or three most important sentences. In the margin, write down two of the values expressed in these sentences.

Then, express these values in your own language below. For example, consider beginning your sentences with “The Zapatistas believe a person should...” or “The Zapatistas think it is important to...”

Finally, choose two of the Mexicans from “Mexican Perspectives” and indicate how, in your group’s opinion, each would respond to the values you have identified. Be prepared to share your conclusions with the class.

Values Identified

1. Values identified:

2. Characters from “Mexican Perspectives”

   Character Name: Would this character share the values identified? Explain.

   Character Name: Would this character share the values identified? Explain.
Selection 1

The history of the measure of memory

The oldest of our old tell, that the first gods, those who created the world, shared out memory among the men and women who walked in the world.

“Memory is good,” the greatest gods said and told, “because it is the mirror which helps to understand the present and promises the future.”

The first gods measured out memory with a cup in order to share it out and all the men and women came by to receive their measure of memory. But some of the men and women were larger than the others and then the measure of memory was not seen equally in all. It shone clearly in the smallest and in the largest it was made opaque. Because of that they say memory is greatest and strongest in the smallest and it is harder to find in the powerful. That is why they also say that men and women become smaller and smaller when they grow old. They say it is so memory will shine more brightly. They say that it is the work of the oldest of the old: to make memory great.

And they also say that dignity is no more than memory which lives. They say.

(“The History of the Measure of Memory,” Subcommandante Marcos, August 1998)

Selection 2

The world is not square, or so we learn at school, but on the brink of the third millennium it is not round either. I do not know which geometrical figure best represents the world in its present state but, in an era of digital communication, we could see it as a gigantic screen—one of those screens you can program to display several pictures at the same time, one inside the other. In our global world the pictures come from all over the planet—but some are missing. Not because there is not enough room on the screen but because someone up there selected these pictures rather than others....

(“Why Do We All Agree the Global Market is Inevitable?” Subcommandante Marcos, August 2000)

Thousands of indigenous people armed with truth and fire, with shame and dignity, shook the country awake from its sweet dream of modernity. “That is enough!” their voices scream, enough of dreams, enough of nightmares...

The indigenous Zapatistas paid for their sins with their blood. What sins? The sin of not being satisfied with handouts, the sin of insisting on their demands for democracy, liberty and justice for all Mexico, the sin of their ‘everything for everyone, nothing for us’...


Selection 3

We, the first inhabitants of these lands, the indigenous, we were left forgotten in a corner, and the rest began to grow and become stronger. We only had our history with which to defend ourselves, and we seized it in order not to die. Later even this part of the history became practically a joke because a single country, the country of money, put itself in the middle of all of the flags. And they said “Globalization” and then we knew that this was how this absurd order was called, an order in which money is the only country which is served and the borders are erased, not out of brotherhood, but because of the impoverishment which fattens the powerful without nationality. The lie became the universal coin, and in our country, a dream, based on the nightmare of the majority, of wealth and
prosperity was knitted for the few....

We became even more forgotten, and now our history wasn’t enough to keep us from dying just like that, forgotten and humiliated. Because death does not hurt, what hurts is to be forgotten. We discovered then that we did not exist any more, that those who govern had forgotten about us in their euphoria of statistics and rates of growth.

A country that forgets itself is a sad country, a country that forgets its past can not have a future. And so we took up arms and we went into the cities where we were considered animals. We went and we told the powerful, “We are Here!” and to all of the country we shouted, “We are Here!” and to all of the world we yelled, “We are Here!” And they saw how things were because, in order for them to see us, we covered our faces; so that they would call us by name, we gave up our names; we bet the present to have a future; and to live...we died. And then the planes came and the bombs and the bullets and the death and we went back to our mountains and even to there death pursued us, and many people from many parts said, “Talk,” and the powerful said “Let’s talk,” and we said, “Okay, let’s talk,” and we talked and we told them what we wanted and they did not understand very well, and we repeated that we wanted democracy, liberty and justice, and they made a face like they didn’t understand, and they reviewed their macroeconomic plans and all their neo-liberal points, and they could not find these words anywhere, and “we don’t understand” they said to us, and they offered us a prettier corner in the history museum, and death with an extended timeline, and a chain of gold in order to tie up our dignity....


Selection 4

A certain dose of tenderness is necessary in order to walk when there is so much against you, in order to awaken when you’re so exhausted. A certain dose of tenderness is necessary in order to see, in this darkness, a small ray of light, in order to make order from shame and obligations. A certain dose of tenderness is necessary in order to get rid of all of the sons of bitches that exist. But sometimes a certain dose of tenderness is not enough and it’s necessary to add...a certain dose of bullets.

(“There Will Be a Storm,” Subcommandante Marcos, October 1994)

The rebel is, if you will permit the image, a human being beating himself against the walls of the labyrinth of history. And, so that there is no misinterpretation, it is not that he is pummeling himself in order to look for the path which will lead him to the way out.

No, the rebel beats at the walls because he knows that the labyrinth is a trap, because he knows that there is no way out other than by breaking down the walls.

If the rebel uses his head as a club, it is not because it is a hard head (which it is, have no doubt), but because breaking down the traps of history, along with their myths, is a job that is done with the head, that is, it is an intellectual work....

(“We are in Silence—and the Silence is Not Being Broken,” Subcommandante Marcos, September 2002)

Selection 5

...There once was a little mouse who was very hungry and wanted to eat a little cheese that was in the tiny kitchen of the small house. And then the little mouse went very decidedly to the tiny kitchen to grab the little cheese, but it happens that a little cat came across the path and the little mouse became very frightened and ran away and was not able to get the little cheese from the tiny kitchen. Then the little mouse was thinking of what to do to get the little cheese from the tiny kitchen.
and he thought and he said:

I know, I am going to put a small plate with a little milk and the little cat is going to start drinking the milk because little cats like very much the little milk. And then, when the little cat is drinking the milk and is not noticing, I am going to the tiny kitchen to grab the little cheese and I am going to eat it. Veery good idea—said the little mouse to himself. And then he went to look for the milk but it turns out that the milk was in the tiny kitchen and when the little mouse wanted to go to the kitchen the little cat came across his way and the little mouse was very frightened and ran and could not get the milk. Then the little mouse was thinking of what to do to get the milk in the tiny kitchen and he thought and he said:

I know, I am going to throw a little fish very far away and then the little cat is going to run to go eat the little fish because little cats like very much the little fish. And then, when the little cat is eating the little fish and is not paying attention, I am going to go to the tiny kitchen to grab the little cheese and I am going to eat it. Veery good idea—said the little mouse.

Then, he went to look for the little fish but it happened that the little fish was in the tiny kitchen and when the little mouse wanted to go to the tiny kitchen, the little cat came across his way and the little mouse became very frightened, and ran away and could not go to get the little fish.

And then the little mouse saw that the little cheese, the milk, and the little fish, everything that he wanted were in the tiny kitchen and he could not get there because the little cat would not allow it. And then the little mouse said “Enough!” and he grabbed a machine gun and shot the little cat and he went to the tiny kitchen and he saw that the little fish, the milk, and the little cheese were already rotten and could not be eaten. And then he returned where the little cat was and cut it in pieces and then he made a great roast and then invited all his friends and they made a party and ate the roasted little cat and they sang and danced and lived very happily. And history started...

It is not necessary to conquer the world, it is sufficient to make it anew...

(“The History of the Little Mouse and the Cat,” Don Durito, August 1995)

Selection 6
To Penthouse Mexico...

One arrives by plane. An airport in Mexico City, Monterrey, Guadalajara or Acapulco, is the entrance to an elevator which neither rises nor falls, but rides horizontally across the country of the 24 richest men in the country, the scenes of Mexico of modern times: the government offices where neoliberalism is administered, the business clubs where the national flag becomes more diffused every day, the vacation resorts whose true vocation is to be a mirror of a social class that does not want to see what is below their feet: a long stairway, spiral and labyrinthed, which leads all the way down to the Lower Mexico, Mexico on foot, mud Mexico....

To get to Middle Mexico...

One goes by car. It is urban and its image is a carbon copy, which repeats itself in various parts of the country, of Mexico City. An image of concrete which can not deny the contradiction of the co-existence among the extremely rich and the extremely poor...

Middle Mexico survives in the worst possible way: thinking that it is alive. It has all of the disadvantages of Penthouse Mexico: historical ignorance, cynicism, opportunism and an emptiness that import products can only fill partially or not at all. It has all the disadvantages of Lower Mexico: economic instability, insecurity, bewilderment, sudden loss of hope and, furthermore, misery knocking, on every corner, upon the window of the automobile. Sooner or later, Middle Mexico must get out of the car and get into, if he still has enough left, a taxi, a collective taxi, a subway, a bus terminal, and start the journey down, all the way to—
Lower Mexico...

Where one may arrive almost immediately....

Lower Mexico has a fighter’s vocation, it is brave, it is solidary, it is a clan, it is the “hood,” it is the gang, the race, the friend, it is the strike, the march and the meeting, it is taking back one’s land, it is blocking highways, it is the “I don’t believe you!” it is “I won’t take it anymore!” it is “No more!”...

Lower Mexico has absolutely nothing... but it has not yet realized it....

Basement Mexico...

One arrives on foot, either barefoot, or with rubber soled huaraches*. To arrive one must descend through history and ascend through the indexes of marginalization.

Basement Mexico was first. When Mexico was not yet Mexico, when it was all just beginning, the now Basement Mexico existed, it lived. Basement Mexico is “Indigenous” because Columbus thought, 502 years ago, that the land where he had arrived was India. “Indians” is what the natives of these lands have been called from that time on....

Basement Mexico is indigenous... however, for the rest of the country it does not count, produce, sell or buy, that is, it does not exist...

Between mud and blood one lives and dies in Basement Mexico. Hidden but in its foundation, the contempt that Mexico has for this will permit it to organize itself and shake up the entire system. Its charge will be the possibility of freeing itself from it. The line of democracy, liberty and justice for these Mexicans, will be organized and it will explode and shine on....”

(“The Long Journey From Hope to Despair,” Subcommandante Marcos, September, 1994)

* huaraches = sandals
# Key Terms

## Introduction and Part I
- political reform
- economic course
- global marketplace
- economic and political stability
- pre-colonial
- *mestizo*
- indigenous
- pictographs
- cultivation
- irrigation
- hierarchical
- metropolis
- bureaucracy
- monarchy
- balance of power
- coercion
- alliance
- blockade
- racial categories
- social and economic opportunities
- tribute
- self-sufficient
- raw materials
- manufactured goods
- navigable rivers
- conversion
- elite
- representative government
- revenue
- liberal
- conservative
- patriotism

## Part II
- political, economic, and social institutions
- foreign loans
- nationalism
- foreign trade
- foreign investors
- capital
- land speculators
- workers’ associations
- coalition
- land reform
- union
- cultural revolution
- Import Substitution Industrialization
- nationalize
- worker compensation
- economic expansion
- corrupt
- dissident
- foreign debt

## Part III
- international markets
- barriers to trade
- international manufacturers
- global economy
- opposition party
- economic justice
- undocumented workers
- trade surplus
- free trade agreement
- economic leverage
- economic output
- drug trafficking
- commercial farms
Globalization:

The term globalization is used to describe today’s changing international economic environment. The end of the Cold War and the rapid growth of new technologies in computing, communication, and transportation have created the conditions for a highly dynamic and more open world economy. With these technological advances, the cost of doing business around the world has dropped significantly. At the same time, the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1993 encouraged increased trade between nations. NAFTA, enacted in 1994, increased trade among Mexico, Canada, and the United States. These conditions and trade agreements combine to create not only economic opportunity but also economic, cultural, and social dislocation.

Trade Barriers and Protectionism:

Over the years, barriers to trade have been put up to protect particular domestic industries and workers. This is often referred to as protectionism. These barriers are often in the form of tariffs (a tax placed on imports). Other forms of protection are known as non-tariff barriers (NTBs). Some examples of NTBs are quotas, content requirements, licensing fees, and standards related to product quality and safety.

Free Trade:

Advocates of free trade believe that all barriers to trade between nations should be at the lowest possible levels. In the early 1800s, the English economist David Ricardo outlined the benefits of trade between nations. His argument states that each and every nation has a comparative advantage in producing a certain good and stands to benefit by trading that good. Advocates still cite Ricardo and argue that free trade will help the poorest countries enter the developed world. Critics warn of a “race to the bottom,” where the lowest wages, environmental standards, etc., will prevail in the marketplace.

Maquiladora:

Maquiladoras are factories that take advantage of lower labor costs in Mexico. They use imported component materials to assemble goods for export. Sixty percent of Mexican maquiladoras are based along Mexico’s border with the United States. Since NAFTA, maquiladoras have created the vast majority of new jobs in the north of Mexico, where take-home wages for an unskilled worker are about five dollars per day. Wages on the northern border area are about 60 percent higher than in the south—reinforcing a geographical and economic divide between northern and southern Mexico. Concern is also high about the increased pressures on the environment that additional workers bring to the region as well as the industrial waste produced by the factories.
Making Choices Work in Your Classroom

This section of the Teacher Resource Book offers suggestions for teachers as they adapt Choices curricula on current issues to their classrooms. They are drawn from the experiences of teachers who have used Choices curricula successfully in their classrooms and from educational research on student-centered instruction.

Managing the Choices Simulation

A central activity of every Choices unit is the role play simulation in which students advocate different options and question each other. Just as thoughtful preparation is necessary to set the stage for cooperative group learning, careful planning for the presentations can increase the effectiveness of the simulation. Time is the essential ingredient to keep in mind. A minimum of 45 to 50 minutes is necessary for the presentations. Teachers who have been able to schedule a double period or extend the length of class to one hour report that the extra time is beneficial. When necessary, the role play simulation can be run over two days, but this disrupts momentum. The best strategy for managing the role play is to establish and enforce strict time limits, such as five minutes for each option presentation, ten minutes for questions and challenges, and the final five minutes of class for wrapping up. It is crucial to make students aware of strict time limits as they prepare their presentations.

Fostering Group Deliberation

The consideration of alternative views is not finished when the options role play is over. The options presented are framed in stark terms in order to clarify differences. In the end, students should be expected to articulate their own views on the issue. These views will be more sophisticated and nuanced if students have had an opportunity to challenge one another to think more critically about the merits and trade-offs of alternative views. See Guidelines for Deliberation <www.choices.edu/deliberation> for suggestions on deliberation.

Adjusting for Students of Differing Abilities

Teachers of students at all levels—from middle school to AP—have used Choices materials successfully. Many teachers make adjustments to the materials for their students. Here are some suggestions:

- Go over vocabulary and concepts with visual tools such as concept maps and word pictures.
- Require students to answer guiding questions in text as checks for understanding.
- Shorten reading assignments; cut and paste sections.
- Combine reading with political cartoon analysis, map analysis, or movie-watching.
- Read some sections of the readings out loud.
- Ask students to create graphic organizers for sections of the reading, or fill in ones you have partially completed.
- Supplement with different types of readings, such as from literature or text books.
- Ask student groups to create a bumper sticker, PowerPoint presentation, or collage representing their option.
- Do only some activities and readings from the unit rather than all of them.

Adjusting for Large and Small Classes

Choices units are designed for an average class of twenty-five students. In larger classes, additional roles, such as those of newspaper reporter or member of a special interest group, can be assigned to increase student participation in the simulation. With larger option groups, additional tasks might be to create a poster, political cartoon, or public service announcement that represents the viewpoint of an option. In smaller classes, the teacher can serve as the moderator of the debate, and administrators, parents, or faculty can be invited to play the roles of the voters. Another option is to combine two small classes.
Assessing Student Achievement

Grading Group Assignments: Students and teachers both know that group grades can be motivating for students, while at the same time they can create controversy. Telling students in advance that the group will receive one grade often motivates group members to hold each other accountable. This can foster group cohesion and lead to better group results. It is also important to give individual grades for groupwork assignments in order to recognize an individual’s contribution to the group. The “Assessment Guide for Oral Presentations” on the following page is designed to help teachers evaluate group presentations.

Requiring Self-Evaluation: Having students complete self-evaluations is an effective way to encourage them to think about their own learning. Self-evaluations can take many forms and are useful in a variety of circumstances. They are particularly helpful in getting students to think constructively about group collaboration. In developing a self-evaluation tool for students, teachers need to pose clear and direct questions to students. Two key benefits of student self-evaluation are that it involves students in the assessment process, and that it provides teachers with valuable insights into the contributions of individual students and the dynamics of different groups. These insights can help teachers to organize groups for future cooperative assignments.

Evaluating Students’ Original Options: One important outcome of a Choices current issues unit are the original options developed and articulated by each student after the role play. These will differ significantly from one another, as students identify different values and priorities that shape their viewpoints.

The students’ options should be evaluated on clarity of expression, logic, and thoroughness. Did the student provide reasons for his/her viewpoint along with supporting evidence? Were the values clear and consistent throughout the option? Did the student identify the risks involved? Did the student present his/her option in a convincing manner?

Testing: Research shows that students using the Choices approach learn the factual information presented as well as or better than from lecture-discussion format. Students using Choices curricula demonstrate a greater ability to think critically, analyze multiple perspectives, and articulate original viewpoints. Teachers should hold students accountable for learning historical information, concepts, and current events presented in Choices units. A variety of types of testing questions and assessment devices can require students to demonstrate critical thinking and historical understanding.

For Further Reading

## Assessment Guide for Oral Presentations

### Group assignment:

### Group members:

### Group Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The group made good use of its preparation time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The presentation reflected analysis of the issues under consideration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The presentation was coherent and persuasive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The group incorporated relevant sections of the background reading into its presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The group’s presenters spoke clearly, maintained eye contact, and made an effort to hold the attention of their audience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The presentation incorporated contributions from all the members of the group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Individual Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The student cooperated with other group members</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The student was well-prepared to meet his or her responsibilities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The student made a significant contribution to the group’s presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan

Day 1:
See Day One Alternative of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan. (Although this is a lesson for Day One, students should have read Part II of the reading and completed “Study Guide—Part II” before beginning the unit.)

**Homework:** Students should read Part III of the background reading and complete “Study Guide—Part III” as homework.

Day 2:
Assign each student one of the three Futures, and allow a few minutes for students to familiarize themselves with the mindsets of the Futures. Call on students to evaluate the benefits and trade-offs of their assigned Futures. How do the Futures differ in their overall philosophies? Ask students to respond to a current issue, such as social unrest, the Zapatista army, or Mexico’s international trade agreements. Moving beyond the Futures, ask students to imagine they are Mexican voters. Which values should guide Mexico’s economic development and political direction? Which issues should be at the top of Mexico’s public policy agenda?

**Homework:** Students should complete “Focusing Your Thoughts” and “Mexico’s Future.”

Day 3:
See Day Five of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan.
Our units are always up to date. Are yours?

Our world is constantly changing. So CHOICES continually reviews and updates our classroom units to keep pace with the changes in our world; and as new challenges and questions arise, we’re developing new units to address them.

And while history may never change, our knowledge and understanding of it are constantly changing. So even our units addressing “moments” in history undergo a continual process of revision and reinterpretation.

If you’ve been using the same CHOICES units for two or more years, now is the time to visit our website - learn whether your units have been updated and see what new units have been added to our catalog.

CHOICES currently has units addressing the following:

- U.S. Role in a Changing World
- Immigration
- Terrorism
- Genocide
- Foreign Aid
- Trade
- Environment
- Cuba
- Nuclear Weapons
- UN Reform
- Middle East
- Iraq
- Russia
- South Africa
- India & Pakistan
- Brazil
- Iran
- Mexico
- Colonialism in Africa
- Weimar Germany
- China
- U.S. Constitutional Convention
- New England Slavery
- War of 1812
- Spanish American War
- League of Nations
- FDR and Isolationism
- Hiroshima
- Origins of the Cold War
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Vietnam War

And watch for new units coming soon:

- Westward Expansion
- Human Rights

THE CHOICES PROGRAM

Explore the Past... Shape the Future

History and Current Issues for the Classroom

Teacher sets (consisting of a student text and a teacher resource book) are available for $20 each. Permission is granted to duplicate and distribute the student text and handouts for classroom use with appropriate credit given. Duplicates may not be resold. Classroom sets (15 or more student texts) may be ordered at $9.75 per copy. A teacher resource book is included free with each classroom set. Orders should be addressed to:

Choices Education Program
Watson Institute for International Studies
Box 1948, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912

Please visit our website at <www.choices.edu>.
Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads

Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads involves students in Mexico’s wrenching economic, political, and cultural transformation. The unit probes Mexico’s complex identity—from a Mexican perspective—to bring students face-to-face with the difficult policy choices confronting the people of Mexico today.

Caught Between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads is part of a continuing series on current and historical international issues published by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program at Brown University. Choices materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.