

SECTION  
2

# Reading for Understanding

## ▶ Key Ideas

### BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

Mayan and Spanish influences are seen today in Central American cultures.

### NOW YOU WILL LEARN

The influences of various European countries and Africa are reflected in the Caribbean island cultures.

## ▶ Vocabulary

### TERMS & NAMES

**Taino** Indian group in the Caribbean islands

**dependency** a place governed by a country that it is not officially a part of

**one-crop economy** an economy that depends on a single crop for income

**tourism** industry that provides services for travelers

**Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)** a trade organization of several Caribbean nations

**commonwealth** a self-governing political unit that is associated with another country

### REVIEW

**Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)** trade agreement to promote trade between the United States and countries of Central America

**dictator** person with complete control over a country's government

**communism** a type of government in which the Communist Party holds all political power and controls the economy

## ▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the chart shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the chart to summarize what you have learned about the economies, governments, and cultures of the Caribbean islands.



See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R5

### SUMMARIZE

ECONOMY	GOVERNMENT	CULTURE
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.



**GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS**

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SECTION  
2

FOCUS ON

# The Caribbean

## Connecting to Your World

What images come to mind when you hear the words Caribbean islands? Many people think of beautiful sandy beaches and clear blue water. Thousands of people from all over the world travel to the Caribbean islands each year to enjoy the warm climate and outdoor activities. But the Caribbean islands are home for many thousands more. These people are shaping the economy and culture of the islands today.

## History and Economy

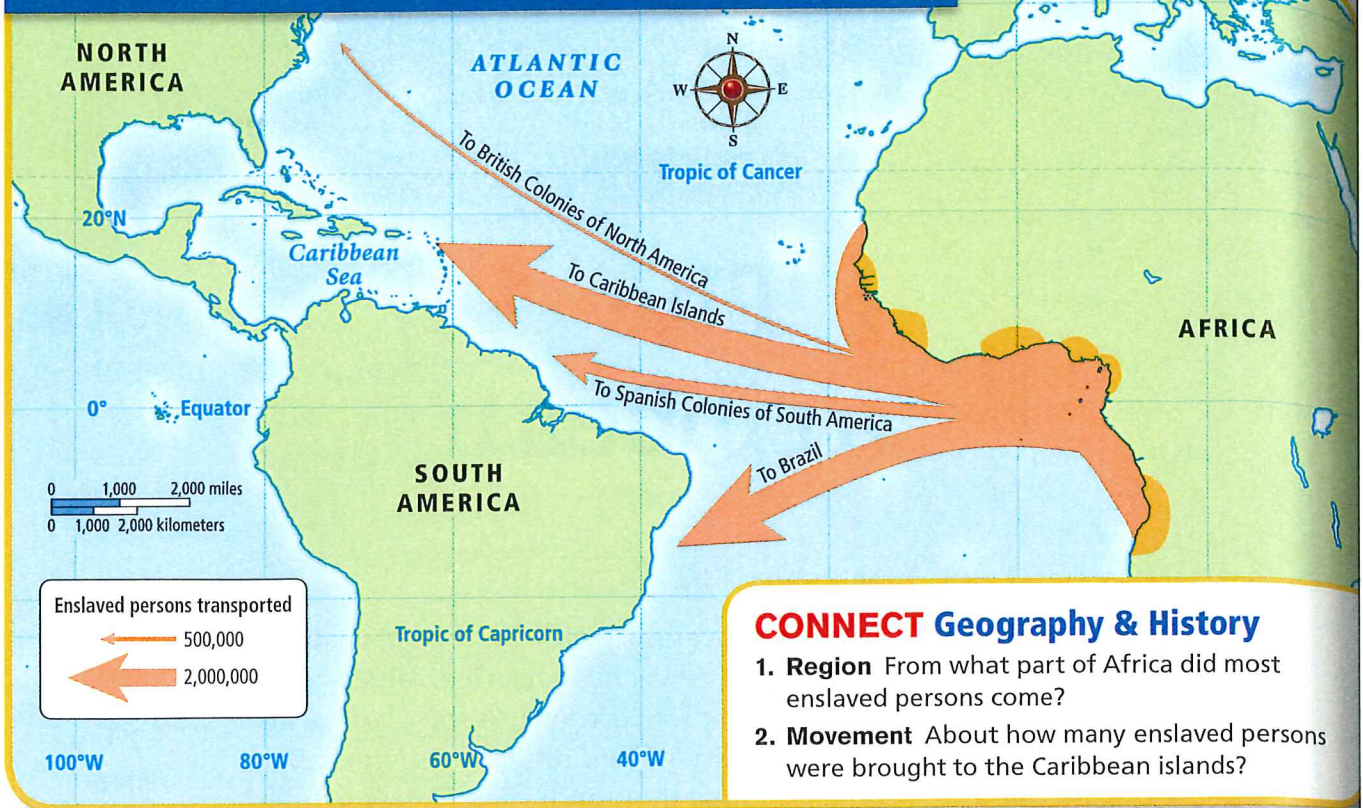
▼ **KEY QUESTION** How have Caribbean nations worked to develop their economies?

Although Spain ruled most of Central America, several other European nations claimed and settled the Caribbean islands. In addition, Africans were brought to the islands as enslaved persons. The influences of all these people contributed to the diverse cultures in the Caribbean islands today.

Beach in Varadero, Cuba



## Slave Trade from West Africa to Caribbean Islands



**From Colonization to Independence** After Columbus arrived in the Caribbean islands in 1492, the Spanish settled some of the islands and set up sugar cane plantations. They used the native **Taino** people as forced labor. By the 19th century, the French, British, and Dutch also claimed islands to profit from the sugar trade.

After nearly all the Taino people died due to disease and cruel treatment, Europeans looked to enslaved Africans to replace the Taino. Forty percent of all enslaved persons brought to the Americas were brought to the Caribbean islands.

In 1804, Haiti was the first island to achieve independence. The independence movement there started as a slave revolt against the French, who forced Africans to work on the sugar plantations. In 1898, Cuba gained independence from Spain, while Puerto Rico became a dependency of the United States. A **dependency** is a place governed by or closely connected with a country that it is not officially part of. Today, only a few islands are still under the direction of European nations or the United States.

**Economic Activities** During colonial times, the Caribbean islands focused mainly on developing the sugar cane industry. Sugar was so profitable that European plantation owners raised few other crops. A country that depends on a single crop for most of its income has a **one-crop economy**. This kind of economy can be unstable. If a crop fails or prices for the crop are low, the entire economy suffers.

In the late 1800s, the sugar industry in the Caribbean islands was in trouble. Places in other parts of the world that raised sugar cane charged lower prices for their sugar. As a result, the sugar trade in the Caribbean islands declined.

The Caribbean nations found they had to diversify their economies. They began to raise other crops, such as bananas, pineapples, and citrus fruits. They also developed industries such as fishing, mining, and chemical plants. **Tourism**, which provides services for travelers, has become a very important industry. Residents of the islands are able to find jobs in the hotels, restaurants, and resorts on the islands. They also work as guides on sailing trips, snorkeling, and other activities for tourists.

Several Caribbean nations today are members of the **Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)**, a trade organization similar to NAFTA and **CAFTA**. The purpose of the organization is to coordinate economic and trade relations among the member nations.

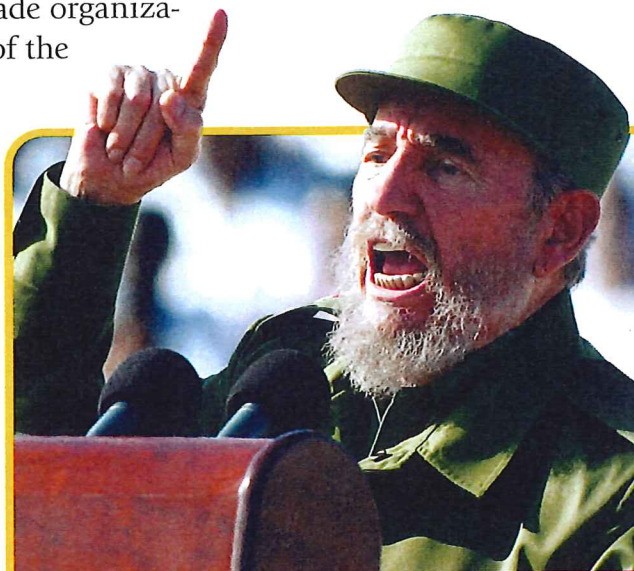
**DRAW CONCLUSIONS** Explain what Caribbean nations have done to develop their economies.

## Two Different Governments

**KEY QUESTION** How are the Puerto Rican and Cuban governments different?

Most Caribbean nations have at some time been under the rule of **dictators**. Today, most nations have democratically elected governments. Two islands, however, Cuba and Puerto Rico, have developed two distinctly different forms of government.

**Cuba** Spain controlled Cuba until the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War in 1898. The United States military occupied the island until Cuba became an independent country in 1902. However, U.S. influence continued until 1959, when rebel forces led by Fidel Castro overthrew an unpopular dictator. By 1961, Castro had established communism in Cuba, with close ties to the Soviet Union. **Communism** is a type of government in which the Communist Party holds all political power and controls the economy. Castro's government



## HISTORY MAKERS

### Fidel Castro born 1926

Castro was the son of a wealthy farmer. As a boy, he worked in his father's sugar cane fields. He attended private schools and received a law degree from the University of Havana in 1950. There he also developed an interest in politics. As a lawyer, Castro worked on behalf of poor people. In 1953, he unsuccessfully tried to overthrow Cuba's dictator, Batista. After succeeding in 1959, Castro himself has ruled as a dictator for more than 40 years.



#### ONLINE BIOGRAPHY

For more on the life of Fidel Castro, go to the Research & Writing Center @ [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com)

## COMPARING

## Puerto Rican and Cuban Governments



**PUERTO RICO**



**CUBA**

<b>Political Status</b>	U.S. commonwealth	Independent country
<b>Type of Government</b>	Democracy	Communist state
<b>Head of Government</b>	Governor	President
<b>Voting Age</b>	18	16
<b>Number of Political Parties</b>	2	1
<b>Political Divisions</b>	Divided into 78 municipalities	Divided into 14 provinces
<b>Relationship to U.S.</b>	Non-voting commissioner in the U.S. House of Representatives	None

### CRITICAL THINKING

**Evaluate** How does a two-party system help make a government more democratic?

improved health care and education for the Cuban people. However, Castro has ruled Cuba as a dictator and has denied Cubans many rights and freedoms.

**Puerto Rico** Like Cuba, Puerto Rico was a Spanish colony until 1898, when it became a U.S. territory. Puerto Rico, however, was never independent. In 1952, Puerto Rican voters approved a constitution that made Puerto Rico a commonwealth of the United States. As a **commonwealth**, Puerto Rico is self-governing but is still a part of the United States. Although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, they cannot vote for the U.S. president.

**COMPARE AND CONTRAST** Describe the similarities and differences between the governments of Cuba and Puerto Rico.

## People and Culture

**KEY QUESTION** Why has African culture been a major influence on Caribbean life?

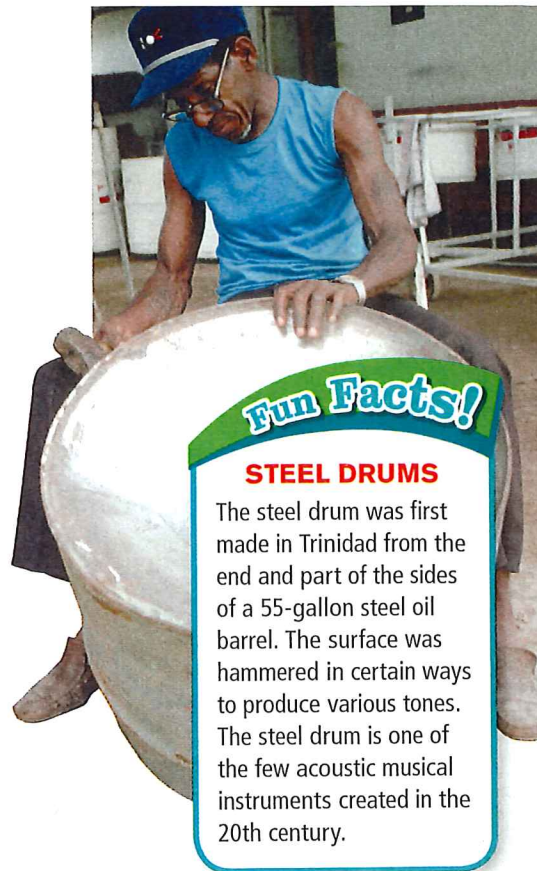
The cultures of the Caribbean islands reflect Indian, African, and European influences. Because the region was the center of the slave trade, African influences have left a mark on many aspects of

Caribbean life. People in the islands speak a variety of languages. Spanish is the official language in Cuba, French in Haiti, and English in Jamaica.

Music in the Caribbean also reflects a blend of cultures. Calypso music began in Trinidad. It combines styles from Africa, Spain, and the Caribbean. Steel drums and guitars accompany calypso songs. Reggae developed in Jamaica in the 1960s. It blends African music, Caribbean music, and U.S. music to make its own unique style. Caribbean music includes many guitar-like instruments that have been created in the region, such as the Puerto Rican *cuatro* and the Cuban *tres*.

Most people in the Caribbean live in urban areas, where they hope to find jobs in the tourist industry. People celebrate festivals, such as Carnival. Artisans create folk art, such as oil drum art and papier-mâché sculptures. Popular sports are football, known as soccer in the United States, and baseball.

**EVALUATE** Explain why African culture has been a major influence on life in the Caribbean.



### Fun Facts!

#### STEEL DRUMS

The steel drum was first made in Trinidad from the end and part of the sides of a 55-gallon steel oil barrel. The surface was hammered in certain ways to produce various tones. The steel drum is one of the few acoustic musical instruments created in the 20th century.

## Section 2 Assessment



#### ONLINE QUIZ

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### TERMS & NAMES

#### 1. Explain the importance of

- Taino
- dependency
- tourism
- commonwealth

### USE YOUR READING NOTES

#### 2. Summarize

 Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

Why did the Caribbean islands diversify their economies?

ECONOMY	GOVERNMENT	CULTURE
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

### KEY IDEAS

3. What was the main economic activity in the Caribbean islands during colonial times?
4. How did Fidel Castro come to power in Cuba?
5. Why do people in the Caribbean Islands speak a variety of languages?

### CRITICAL THINKING

6. **Compare and Contrast** How is Cuba's government different from the U.S. government?
7. **Draw Conclusions** Why do most people in the Caribbean islands live in urban areas?
8. **CONNECT to Today** In recent years Puerto Ricans have debated the issue of becoming a state of the United States. Why might people support or oppose Puerto Rican statehood?
9. **WRITING** **Write a Country Profile** Choose one Caribbean island and prepare a country profile for its Web site. Include its location, the kind of government and economy it has, and tourist attractions.