

SECTION
3

Reading for Understanding

▶ Key Ideas

BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

Many Caribbean nations are working together to increase trade.

NOW YOU WILL LEARN

Venezuela's economy depends heavily on petroleum, while Colombia's economy depends more on agricultural products.

▶ Vocabulary

TERMS & NAMES

federal republic form of government in which power is divided between a national government and state governments

Caracas capital city of Venezuela

joropo (huh•ROH•poh) Venezuelan national folk dance

Bogotá capital city of Colombia

Gabriel García Márquez Colombian author and Nobel Prize winner

Fernando Botero Colombian artist known for portraits of people with exaggerated forms

REVIEW

Simón Bolívar (boh•LEE•vahr) leader for independence in northern South America

dictator person with complete control over a country's government

llanos (YAH•nohs) grasslands of South America's Central Plains

BACKGROUND VOCABULARY

mosaic a picture made by placing small, colored pieces of tile or glass on a surface

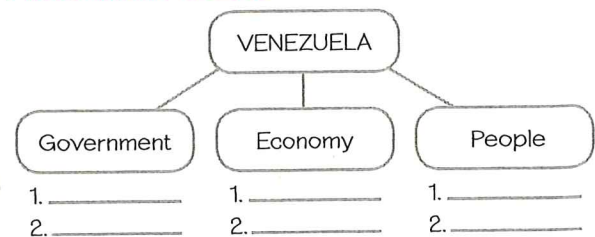
▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the cluster diagram shown at right for Venezuela and Colombia. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the diagram to record details about the two countries' government, economy, and people.



Skillbuilder Handbook, page R4

FIND MAIN IDEAS



GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Go to Interactive Review @ ClassZone.com

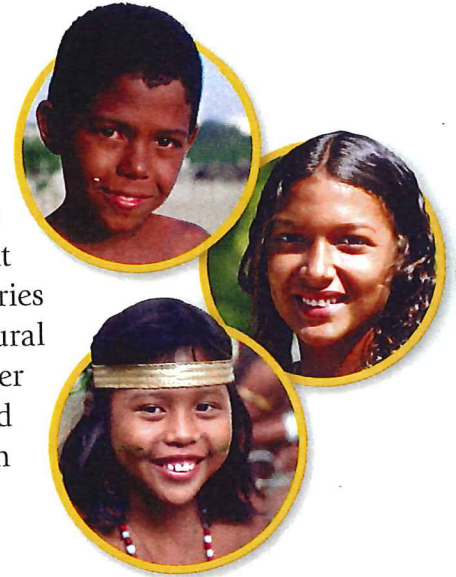
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FOCUS ON

Venezuela and Colombia

Connecting to Your World

Many civilizations have created beautiful mosaic art. A **mosaic** involves placing small, colored pieces of stone, tile, or glass next to each other on a surface to make a picture or design. The countries of South America form a kind of mosaic of their own, a cultural mosaic. People from different cultural groups live near each other but keep their own cultural identities. *Mestizos*, Indians, and people of African ancestry form part of the cultural mosaic in Venezuela and Colombia.



Venezuela

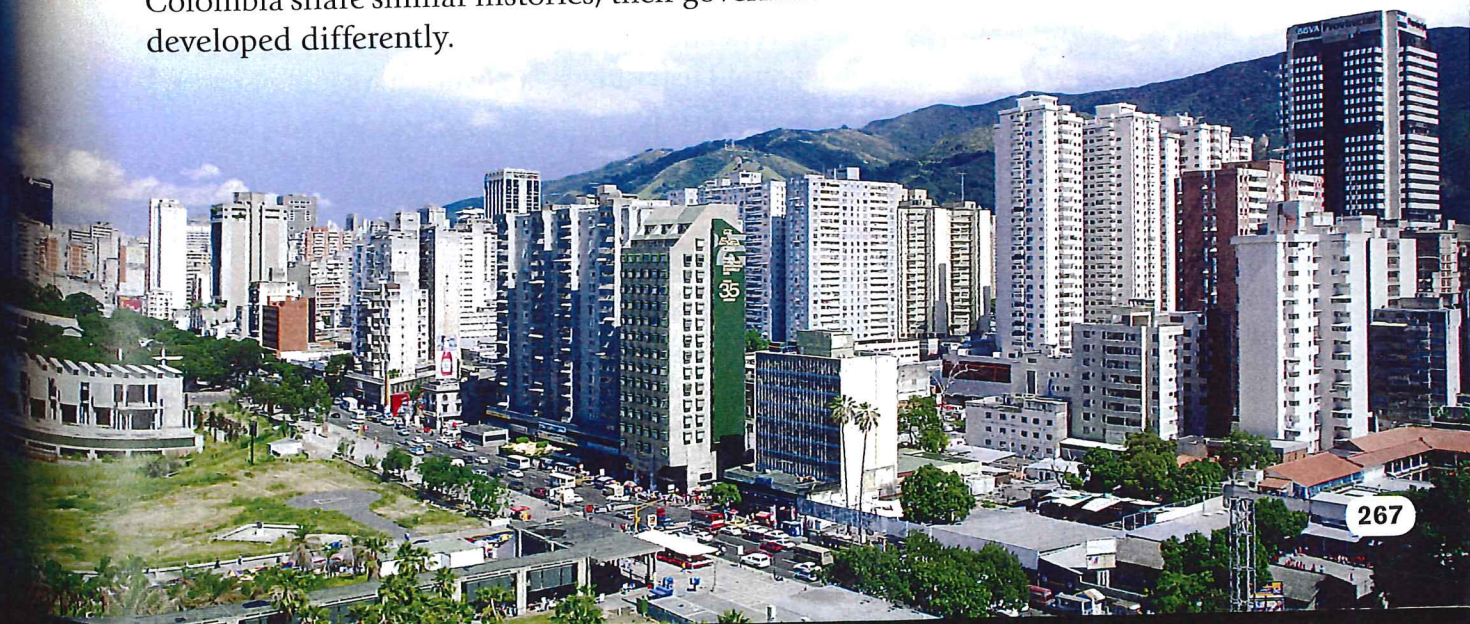
KEY QUESTION What are the main economic activities of Venezuela?

Venezuela and Colombia are located in the northern and northwestern part of South America. Both countries border the Caribbean Sea, and Colombia also borders the Pacific Ocean. In both countries, most people live in urban areas. While Venezuela and Colombia share similar histories, their governments and economies have developed differently.

Cultural Mosaic

South Americans today reflect a blend of cultures.

Caracas, Venezuela



ANALYZING Primary Sources

Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) is known as the liberator of South America. But his dream of uniting South America into one nation failed. In a letter, he explained what kind of government he thought would be best for South America.

Events . . . have proved that institutions which are wholly representative are not suited to our . . . customs, and present knowledge. . . . As long as our countrymen do not acquire the abilities and political virtues that distinguish our brothers of the north [the United States], . . . popular systems, far from working to our advantage, will, I greatly fear, bring about our downfall.

Source: Jamaican Letter



Simón Bolívar

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

What “abilities” would be needed to set up a representative system?

History and Government Venezuela became part of Spain’s empire in the early 1500s. When Spanish explorers saw Indian villages built on stilts on Lake Maracaibo, they named the area “Venezuela” after Venice, an Italian city built on water. By the 1700s, Venezuela was a colony, and most residents had little control over their lives.

Led by the Venezuelan **Simón Bolívar**, Venezuela became the first colony to declare independence from Spain in 1811 and to win it in 1821. After independence, the country went through years of civil war and **dictators**. Although establishing a democracy was not easy, Venezuela’s leaders have been democratically elected since 1958.

Today, Venezuela is a **federal republic**, a government in which power is divided between a national government and state governments. The national government consists of a president, a congress, and a supreme court. Venezuela has 22 states and a Federal District. Each state and the Federal District have a governor and a congress.

Economy Venezuela’s economy today is dependent on oil production. Its oil fields are located in the Maracaibo Basin, the location of Lake Maracaibo (South America’s largest lake), and on the eastern plains. Venezuela is one of the world’s leading oil producers. About 75 percent of the nation’s exports are oil exports, especially to the United States and Canada. But, like the Caribbean countries with one-crop economies, Venezuela’s dependence on one product sometimes results in economic instability, as oil prices rise and fall.


About ten percent of Venezuela's workers are farmers. More than half of them cultivate small farms, where they raise enough food and animals to support their families. Larger farms and ranches supply most of Venezuela's commercial products. Large farms grow bananas, coffee, corn, oranges, and rice. Large cattle ranches are an important part of the economy of Venezuela's **llanos** (YAH•nohs).

People and Culture Like the majority of Central Americans, most Venezuelans are *mestizos*. Other Venezuelans are Indians or people of European or African ancestry. Because Venezuela is a former Spanish colony, the official language is Spanish, and most Venezuelans are Roman Catholics.

Most Venezuelans live in cities, such as the capital city, **Caracas**. Many city dwellers live comfortably in houses and apartment buildings and work as professionals such as doctors, government workers, and lawyers. However, as in many parts of Latin America, the gap between the rich and the poor continues to be large. Many poor people from rural areas travel to cities in search of jobs. They live as squatters in crowded settlements outside the cities. To encourage people to stay in rural areas, Venezuela's government has paved roads, created health and education services, and provided electrical service in many rural areas.

Venezuelans enjoy sports, music, and dancing. Football (soccer) and baseball are among the most popular sports. Rodeos are popular, especially in cattle-raising regions in the llanos. The plains also inspired the **joropo** (huh•ROH•poh), Venezuela's national folk dance. While Venezuelans love to dance to Caribbean salsa, meringue, and calypso, they change each dance to make it truly Venezuelan.

Baseball Fans Venezuelans cheer on their baseball team as it plays Italy in the 2006 World Baseball Classic.

 **CATEGORIZE** Describe the economic activities of Venezuela.





Colombia

KEY QUESTION What are the characteristics of Colombia's population?

Colombia was named after Christopher Columbus. It is second in population and fourth in size among South American countries. The Andes Mountains stretch across western Colombia. Hot lowlands are located along the coasts of the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and plains are found in the eastern part of the country.

History and Government Like Venezuela, Colombia was a Spanish colony until 1819, when Simón Bolívar gained Colombia's independence. Periods of violence and civil war followed. Colombians could not agree on what kind of government to establish. Some people wanted a strong central government, and others supported strong regional governments. Political violence and civil war continue to threaten the nation today.

Today, Colombia is a republic. The national government is made up of a legislative, executive, and judicial branch. A president, elected to a four-year term, heads the executive branch. Colombia is divided into 32 departments and the district of **Bogotá**, the nation's capital. Each department has an elected legislature and governor.

CONNECT Geography & Economics

Coffee

Coffee was brought to Colombia in 1808. Colombia today is the world's second-leading coffee producer. Its land and climate are perfect for growing a certain type of coffee—Arabica. This coffee grows best in rainy regions near the equator, at elevations between 3,600 and 6,300 feet. One coffee tree produces only enough beans to make one pound of coffee a year!



Economy Unlike Venezuela, Colombia's economy relies on agricultural products. Coffee is Colombia's leading legal export. Large plantations produce bananas, corn, cotton, and sugar. Colombian ranches raise cattle for meat and for leather goods. Stopping the illegal cocaine trade has been a major economic challenge for Colombia. Over the past 30 years, Colombia has supported the cut-flower industry as an alternative to growing cocaine-producing coca plants. It has become the second-largest exporter of cut flowers in the world.

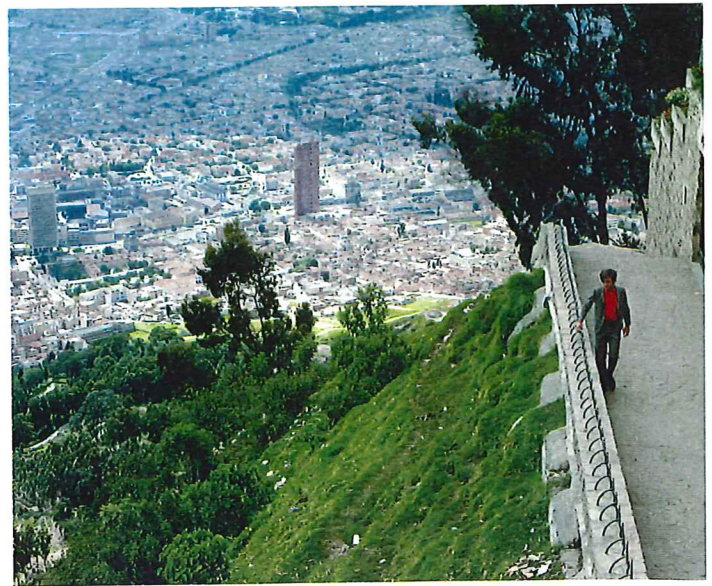
Manufacturing and service industries have become increasingly important to Colombia's economy. Manufactured goods include clothing, chemicals, and processed foods. Service industries employ about 45 percent of Colombian workers.

Colombia produces large amounts of coal and petroleum. Emeralds from Colombian mines account for more than 90 percent of the world's supply.

People and Culture Spanish is Colombia's official language, and most Colombians are Roman Catholics. Most people are *mestizos*. About 70 percent of Colombia's people live in the highland valley basins in western Colombia. Colombia's capital and largest city, Bogotá, is located in a basin in the Andes Mountains.

Most Colombians live in urban areas. People who work in the business, service, and government industries in the cities live quite comfortably. Since the mid-1900s, rural Colombians have moved to cities in search of a better life. However, their lack of education and skills make it difficult to find jobs. They sometimes end up living in poverty in squatter settlements that circle the cities.

Colombia has produced famous writers and artists. **Gabriel García Márquez**, a Nobel Prize winner, writes about Colombian life using a mixture of realism and fantasy. **Fernando Botero** is an artist known for portraits that show people in exaggerated forms.



Bogotá Colombia's capital city lies more than 8,000 feet above sea level and is home to nearly seven million people.

SUMMARIZE Describe the characteristics of Colombia's population.

Section 3 Assessment



ONLINE QUIZ
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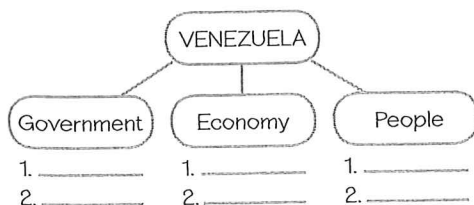
TERMS & NAMES

1. Explain the importance of

- federal republic
- Caracas
- *joropo*
- Bogotá

USE YOUR READING NOTES

- 2. Find Main Ideas** Use your completed diagram to answer the following question:
What kind of government do Venezuela and Colombia have today?



KEY IDEAS

3. What are Venezuela's main products and crops?
4. What three geographic regions are found in Colombia?
5. What industries are important to Colombia's economy?

CRITICAL THINKING

6. **Identify Problems and Solutions** How has the Venezuelan government attempted to curb the movement of people from rural to urban areas?
7. **Compare and Contrast** How are the histories of Venezuela and Colombia similar?
8. **CONNECT to Today** Much of Venezuela's income comes from oil production. How can that be both positive and negative for its economy?
9. **WRITING Write a Marketing Campaign Ad** Choose a product from Venezuela or Colombia, such as oil or cut flowers, and write an ad to convince other countries to buy this product.