Geography of Mexico

I. Introduction

A. Large mountain ranges with plateau in the middle

1. Plateau – an area of high, flat land

2. Sierra Madre Occidental & Sierra Madre Oriental are largest mountain ranges

B. Peninsula – strips of land that jut into the ocean, water on three sides

1. Baja California

2. Yucatán Peninsula

II. The Heartland Region

A. Central plateau

1. Area with most people

2. Southern part has lots of rain, rich soil, best farmland

B. Natural Hazards

1. Mexico is located at the intersection of 4 tectonic plates

2. Plates make mountains, volcanoes, and earthquakes

C. Climate Factors

1. Climate is dry and arid

2. The central plateau, though located in the tropics, is at a high elevation, therefore the climate is mild year round

3. Lots of people come here to start a new life

- Squatters

- Come illegally

- Can own land after five years, poor

III. The Coastal Regions

A. Northern Pacific Coast

1. Tijuana is one of Mexico’s fastest growing cities

2. Best farmland because of **irrigation**

**Irrigation** – artificial watering of farmland by storing and distributing water drawn from reservoirs or rivers

B. Baja California is a peninsula

1. Very hot

2. Lots of mountains

C. Southern Pacific Coast

1. Tourism because of tropical climate

- Acapulco

- Puerto Vallarta

- Mazatlán

2. Not much farmland

D. Gulf Coastal Plain

1. Lots of oil and natural gas

2. World’s major oil producing regions

E. The Yucatán Peninsula

1. Underground caverns

- Formed by limestone under the surface of the earth

2. Caverns can collapse causing sinkholes

3. Major tourist area

- Lots of people work in the service industry

4. Mérida is the largest city in the region, 500,000 people