**Mexico** is located south of the United States of America. The ocean to the east of Mexico is the Pacific and to the west you’ll find the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Mexico’s location is perfect for trade. The major bodies of water on the east and west coasts allow great opportunities for trading because it allows ships to send goods up and down the coasts as well as across the Pacific to Asia and east to Europe and Africa.

The northern regions of Mexico are mostly desert and the temperature is usually very hot. The coast of Mexico is full of beautiful beaches and has a tropical climate. Within the center of Mexico you’ll find the plains and more of a mild climate. The Sierra Madre Mountains divide the central Mexican plateau from the tropical coasts.

Mexico’s main natural resources include oil, silver, coffee, cotton, fruits, and vegetables. Oil is one of the top exports from Mexico. 1.7 million barrels a day are sent abroad. Money from the oil sales provides 1/3 of the Mexican government’s budget. Mexico is one of the world’s top producers of silver. Some of the most popular crops grown are corn, sugarcane, wheat, tomatoes, bananas, chili peppers, oranges, lemons, limes, and mangos. Tourism is also a major industry, especially along the tropical coasts.

Most of Mexico’s population live in central Mexico between the Sierra Madre Mountain ranges. This central region has arable farmland with enough rain to grow crops. Arable means that the land is good for farming. Many manufacturing centers are located here as well. These manufacturing factories provide the jobs to 75% of the Mexican population. 77% of the population live in urban areas; cities. This means that 23% of the population live in rural areas; outside of the cities. Mexico has a mix of new and old industries to assist their trade. They have recently expanded their railroads, airports, and electric generating plants. Mexico has seven major seaports for trade.

**Venezuela** is located in the northeast part of South America, just north of the equator. Venezuela has coasts along the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. This gives Venezuela easy access to trade with other countries. The Panama Canal is nearby and provides a shortcut to the Pacific Ocean. This shortcut allows Venezuela to trade with Asian countries easily.

Venezuela has highlands and mountains in the north and in the south, so only about 3% of the land is arable. The fact that Venezuela is located just north of the equator makes its climate hot and tropical. Within the mountains and highlands it does cool down a bit. Rain varies by region. The coasts average sixteen inches a year. The mountains and highlands average one hundred inches a year.

Venezuela is the sixth-largest oil exporter in the world. The country produces 2.8 million barrels a day. Roughly 90% of the money the government makes on exports comes from oil. Farming the land provides roughly 10% of Venezuelans jobs.

The largest city in Venezuela is the capital, Caracas. Most people live in the northern highlands along the Caribbean coast. 88% of the population live in urban areas, only 12% live in rural areas. Venezuela trades with the world through four major seaports. As mentioned before, 90% of money made on exports comes from their oil production. Tourism is also a major industry due to the countries beauty.

**Cuba** is located 90 miles south of Florida within the Caribbean Sea. Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean Sea at 700 miles long. With Cuba being an island, trade across the ocean is important not only to the economy but also its history.

Cuba’s climate is tropical but it’s moderated by trade winds coming off the Atlantic Ocean. It’s warm-to-hot all year long, but the winds provide relief from the heat. Cuba has a rainy season from May to October and a dry season from November to April. Due to its location, Cuba is a target for hurricanes. The Cuban hurricane season runs from June to November.

Cuba has only 28% arable land. The crops grown on this land are sugarcane, coffee, tobacco, and fruits. Cuba is also known for their fishing industry. The most important export is sugarcane. This crop dates all the way back to the Triangle Trade and the introduction of African slave labor in the Americas. Tourism is a fast-growing industry and has expanded with the recent end to the embargo the United States placed on Cuba in 1960. We will learn all about this embargo later this year.

Havana is the largest city in Cuba. Havana is also the capital of Cuba. Roughly 20% of Cubans live in Havana. 76% of Cubans live in urban areas. This means 24% of Cubans live in rural areas. Trade is easy for Cuba because it’s an island. They have three major seaports that export sugar, nickel, tobacco, fish, medical products, citrus fruits, and coffee. Venezuela and Cuba are trade partners. Venezuela sells oil to Cuba at a reduced price. For many years, the Communist government of the Soviet Union helped support Cuba for many years. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Cuba faced difficult times. Until recently, the trade from other countries did not bring in enough money to meet the needs of Cuba’s population. Being Communist, the government controls all businesses. Sometimes the Cuban government had to close businesses and factories to keep its populations needs met. Another method to control spending was to order blackouts. These blackouts were times when all electricity is cut off to save money.

**Brazil** is located on the eastern side of South America. The country lies alongside the Atlantic Ocean. Brazil’s massive size enables it to share a border with nearly every country in South America. The Amazon Rainforest and Amazon River stretch across Brazil. Due to its location on the equator, Brazil supports one of the world’s largest rain forests, the Amazon.

The climate is mostly hot and tropical. The further south you travel, the climate adjusts to a more temperate (mild) climate. Only 7% of the land is arable. As we have learned, Brazil cuts down parts of the Amazon to create more land for farms.

Farmers in Brazil grow 1/3rd of the world’s coffee. Brazil also leads the world in the production of oranges, papayas, sugarcane, and soybeans. The only country that exports more farm products than Brazil is the United States of America.

Brazil is the most populated country in Latin America. It’s also the largest country in the world that speaks Portuguese. Most Brazilians live along the coast. 80% of the population live within 200 miles of the Atlantic Ocean. 84% of Brazilians live in urban areas. Only 16% live in rural areas. With its massive coastline, Brazil has seven major seaports. Exports include transportation equipment, iron ore, soybeans, footwear, coffee, cars, sugar, and fruits. The Amazon Rainforest attracts many visitors as do the beaches. Brazil’s largest trading partner is the United States of America.