

4 Corners Reading Activity- Ecuador

Create a symbol for the country based on your reading- explain why you chose this.

Using descriptive words or phrases, explain 3-4 aspects of the country's economy.

5 interesting details/new facts from the reading.

Create a bumper sticker/slogan to best describe the country.

Ecuador 101



Ecuador is a country of northwestern South America. Ecuador straddles part of the Andes Mountains and occupies part of the Amazon basin. Situated on the Equator, from which its name derives, it borders Colombia to the north, Peru to the east and the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. It includes the Pacific archipelago of the Galapagos Islands. Ecuador is one of the most environmentally diverse countries in the world, and it has contributed notably to the environmental sciences. Ecuador has a rich cultural heritage. Much of what is now Ecuador came to be included in the Inca empire, the largest political unit of pre-Columbian America. Economically, Ecuador became known for exporting Panama hats (straw hats so named because they were shipped to Panama in the mid-18th century and bought by traveling gold seekers and because they were worn by Panama Canal work crews in the early 19th century) and agricultural

products, notably cacao (the source of cocoa beans), bananas, and flowers. It is a major exporter of petroleum and an increasingly important tourist destination.

Its history has been marked by political and economic challenges, including long periods of military rule, boom-and-bust economic cycles, and inequitable distributions of wealth. Ecuador is unusual among Latin American countries in having two major centers of population and commerce, the vibrant port city of Guayaquil acting as a counterbalance to the capital, Quito, located in the Andean highlands in the north-central part of the country.

1. Where is Ecuador located in South America?
2. What "island" is considered part of Ecuador?
3. What are the two major centers of population and commerce?
4. Initially, what was Ecuador known for exporting?

Climate



Because Ecuador lies on the Equator, most of the country experiences a humid tropical climate. The Oriente experiences fairly continuous and abundant rainfall and high temperatures. The Costa generally has a wet season in the first half of the year and a relatively dry one in the second half. In some years, warm water collects off the coast, causing the weather phenomenon known as El Niño; this can result in torrential downpours that cause devastating ecological damage on the coast and occasionally even in the highlands.

Both the Costa and the Oriente are warm, with temperatures varying only slightly among the seasons; much wider differences occur between day and night. Average daytime high temperatures range from 84 to 91 °F, while

nighttime lows fall to between 68 and 75 °F. As elevation increases, temperatures drop fairly predictably at a rate of about 9 to 11 °F for every 3,300 feet. At higher elevations, frost is a possibility, especially in areas of flat relief and during the cloud-free nights of the dry seasons. Above elevations of 11,800 to 12,500 feet, agriculture becomes increasingly difficult because of the shrinking growing season and increasing frost hazard. Above 16,400 feet the peaks are snowcapped.

5. What type of climate is found in Ecuador?
6. What can cause extensive damage along the coast and in the highlands?

Languages

Spanish is Ecuador's official language of business and government. Quichua, Shuar, and other ancestral languages are spoken by the country's indigenous people. More than 10 Indian languages exist in Ecuador, and several of these will likely persist as mother tongues. Most Indian males are bilingual, and women are increasingly becoming bilingual as well. The concepts of bilingualism and bilingual or bicultural education are becoming increasingly important.

7. What is the official language of Ecuador?
8. How many Indian languages still exist?
9. Who is more bilingual- men or woman? What does this say about their society?

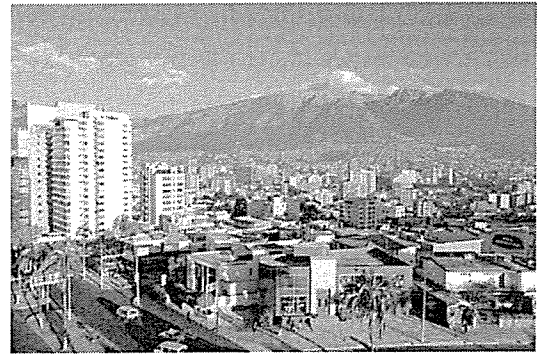
Religion

Ecuador is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. The Roman Catholic Church plays a significant role in education and social services and influences the selection of significant places for festivals and pilgrimage sites. Protestantism continues to grow rapidly, particularly among the disadvantaged; the largest groups are the non-Pentecostal Evangelicals and the Pentecostals. There is also a sizable Mormon congregation.

10. What is the major religion practiced in Ecuador?

Population

Ecuador, like other Andean countries, has experienced a population increase, the result of a decreasing death rate and a continued high birth rate. Though the birth rate has fallen since the end of the 1990s, it is still slightly higher than the world average. This growth has resulted in a relatively young population. Ecuador has also attracted immigrants from neighboring countries, mostly from Colombia and Peru, since the beginning of the 21st century. The largest group of immigrants consists of displaced Colombians, victims of escalated violence and crop-destroying sprays in their country. Thousands of Peruvians, the next largest immigrant group, arrived seeking better wages after Ecuador adopted the U.S. dollar as its national currency in 2000. A small number of Chinese and East Asians have immigrated to Ecuador as well. Significant numbers of Ecuadorans have emigrated to the United States, especially to the borough of Queens in New York City.



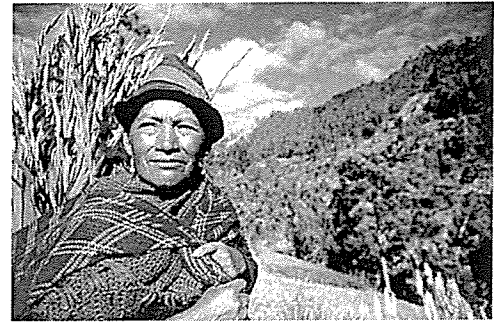
11. Compare the population of Ecuador to other LA countries in that region?
12. Immigrants have been flocking Ecuador, specifically from Colombia, why?

Economy

Ecuador is a country of enormous economic potential. Development has focused on agricultural, marine, and mineral resources, with industry playing a more limited role. The country has improved standards of living, but it is still characterized by marked inequalities of wealth and well-being.

Agriculture has traditionally employed a large proportion of the population. Many rural Ecuadorans feed their families with the produce from their own farms; production of these subsistence crops, including corn (maize), potatoes, beans, and cassava (manioc), is important but not accurately reflected in official figures. Production of tropical specialty crops such as bananas, cacao, and coffee have provided much-needed foreign exchange. The airport at Quito has supported the development of international

trade in such perishable but valuable highland products as flowers, strawberries, asparagus, and snow peas. Livestock raising is widespread. Beef cattle are bred in the lowlands and dairy cattle and sheep are bred in the highlands; chemical fertilizers have aided the development of pastures for dairy cattle.



Ecuador's major resource is its soil, which, with the country's generally adequate rainfall and diverse climates, allows a wide variety of agricultural production. The full mineral potential of Ecuador is still being discovered. There are gold deposits throughout the country and oil deposits in the northeastern Oriente, as well as natural gas.

The Andes Mountains present some possibilities for hydroelectric development. However, the construction of hydroelectric plants through the Agoyan and Paute projects has presented serious problems of siltation. Oil and gold are the country's most valuable extraction products. Exports include crude oil and derivatives, shrimp, bananas, coffee, cut flowers, cocoa, and Panama hats. Ecuador's principal export destinations are the United States, Colombia, Peru, Chile, and Italy. Imports include machines and primary industrial materials, motor vehicles, consumer goods, and food and chemical products. Imports come mainly from the United States, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, and Chile.

13. What area employs a majority of the people in Ecuador?
14. What is Ecuador's major resource?
15. Where do we find most of the hydroelectric power being developed?
16. What mineral resources are currently being investigated for "potential"?
17. What are 4 popular exports?

Education

The network of public education has been greatly expanded to promote the goal of universal literacy. Primary education is free and compulsory for six years beginning at age six. Ecuador has made progress in making education available to disadvantaged classes and ethnic groups and to women. Religious and nondenominational private schools also play a significant role. Population growth and limited funding have placed great strains on the educational system, however. Efforts are under way to adapt the curriculum to Ecuador's cultural diversity. Secondary education varies from seriously overcrowded public institutions to elite private institutions emphasizing bilingualism in English, French, or German.

18. How long are children required to attend school?
19. What 2 problems continue to effect the education system?

Sports and Entertainment

Football (soccer) is Ecuador's national sport. Amateur weekend games are played in parks, plazas, and vacant lots around the country. The national team has enjoyed success in regional competitions and in the World Cup. Other popular sports and recreational activities include basketball, volleyball, picnics in the countryside, excursions to the beach, and socializing with family and friends. Beauty contests, held frequently, are favored among all social classes in Ecuador. Pelota de mano ("handball") is usually played by men and involves hitting a small, hard ball back and forth with a bare (or rarely, gloved) fist, a widespread attraction on Sunday afternoons in Quito and San Antonio de Ibarra. National parks and nature preserves, including Sangay National Park in



the central Andes are increasingly used for picnicking, mountaineering, and fishing. Ecuador's Olympic participation began at the 1924 Summer Games in Paris. The country's first Olympic medal, gold in the 20-km walk, was won by Jefferson Perez at the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta.

20. What is the national sport of Ecuador?
21. What are some other popular pastimes?
22. Have Ecuador ever won a gold medal in the Olympics? When and for what?

Government

The beginning of the 21st century found Ecuador struggling with many of the same issues as in previous decades: political upheaval, social unrest due to dissatisfaction with indigenous rights and economic policies, and poor economic performance.



Rafael Correa served briefly as Ecuador's finance minister in 2005, and the following year he ran for president on a platform that called for constitutional reform. A skilled and charismatic political campaigner, he easily defeated Álvaro Noboa, a wealthy banana-plantation owner, in a runoff vote. After taking office in 2007, Correa increased agricultural subsidies and dramatically raised spending on social programs, most notably health care and education. His government also seized companies owned by members of a powerful family implicated in a banking scandal in the 1990s. Although his reformist agenda antagonized some business and media groups, it proved popular with many voters. In September voters approved a referendum on a new constitution that increased presidential powers over economic and monetary policy.

In February 2013 Correa demonstrated the staying power of his popularity when he was reelected president in a landslide. He captured nearly 58 percent of the popular vote, more than 30 percent more than his closest competitor in the eight-candidate field, thereby avoiding a runoff election; to do so, he needed to garner a simple majority or 40 percent of the vote plus a 10-percent margin over the runner-up. According to the new constitution, Correa would not be able to run for president again in 2017.

23. What are 4 problems Ecuador is facing in the 21st century?
24. What was Rafael Correa's platform which helped him get elected in 2007?
25. What did Correa do to help increase his popularity after taking office? (list 3)