

# PANAMA



## A Study of Panama

### Outline

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# PANAMA INTRODUCTION



Finding Panama on a map is easy. Just look at a map of North and South America. Look between the two continents, and you'll find a land bridge called Central America that connects them. Now find a strip of land that looks like an "S". This is Panama. Panama is the narrowest strip of land that separates the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. If you traveled by car across Panama, it would only take you about an hour to see both oceans! Panama is a country covered with rain forests and fertile plains, mountains and rivers. As it is close to the equator, its climate is hot and humid. The largest city, Panama City, is also a major banking center. Panama's exports include coffee, bananas, shrimp, and lumber. The country's exotic wildlife, lush jungles, and beautiful beaches attract many tourists from around the world.

1. Panama is located on a land bridge that connects which two continents? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Panama is the \_\_\_\_\_ that separates the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
3. True or false: Panama has extensive desert areas. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Describe the climate of Panama. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the name of Panama's largest city? \_\_\_\_\_
6. This city is also a \_\_\_\_\_
7. Name four of Panama's exports. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. List at least two reasons why tourists might like to visit Panama. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## PANAMA HISTORY

The voyages of Christopher Columbus beginning in 1492 led to the explorations of many lands. Panama was one of these discoveries. It was settled by the Spanish in 1508. Panama's place in history was secured when Vasco de Balboa, a Spanish conquistador, became the first European to travel across the Isthmus of Panama. During his travel, he was able to see both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans from one single point on a mountain peak. The Spanish soon put this narrow land to use by building a road, from Panama City on the Atlantic side to a port named Nombre de Dios ("Name of God") on the Pacific side. Treasures collected from the Incas and other cultures of Central and South America passed along this route. All of these riches, stored either in warehouses or on ships waiting to cross the ocean, proved irresistible to pirates. Buccaneers such as Francis Drake raided Nombre de Dios, and Henry Morgan sacked Panama City during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Eventually, other routes were used to transport the gold and silver of the New World, and Panama lost its important place in the Spanish Empire. In the 1800s, many Spanish colonies in the Americas claimed independence from Spain. When Panama did so in 1821, it elected to become part of the Republic of Colombia, although it struggled to become a separate nation on various occasions.

The California Gold Rush in the 1840s brought renewed prosperity to Panama. It was easier for gold prospectors on one coast in the U.S. to travel by ship to Panama, cross that country, and take another ship up to the other coast, than to go across the United States itself. A railroad across Panama was built, and it was so successful that the U.S. became interested in building a waterway across Panama for ships to cross. The United States tried to negotiate a treaty with Colombia, but was rejected. President Theodore Roosevelt, who thought a canal was a priority for his country, helped the Panamanians revolt against the Colombians, and Panama gained independence in 1903. The U.S. and Panama signed a treaty that gave the United States control over a portion of land inside Panama. After tremendous difficulty, the Panama Canal was completed in 1914. Panama benefited greatly from the building of the canal zone, since it provided jobs for the people and generated money for the country. Many Panamanians, however, felt that the United States had too much influence over their country, and they began to resent the U.S. presence in Panama.

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Panama had a rocky relationship with the U.S., as well as many problems with its own governments. Although some of its leaders were elected by the people in fair elections, others came to power through a "coup" (pronounced "koo"), or forced takeover. There were many protests against the United States over its control of the canal zone, which led to riots and even the breaking of diplomatic ties between the two countries. The United States and Panama reached an agreement in 1977, when the two nations signed a treaty that would give total control over the Panama Canal Zone to Panama in the year 2000. Another problem arose in the 1980s when General Manuel Noriega rose to power through the military. He was a corrupt leader who was involved in taking money from drug dealers. The United States, concerned for the safety of its citizens working in the Panama Canal area, sent troops to remove Manuel Noriega from power. They were successful, and a new president was put in place. Since then, Panama's government has been stable and has been able to manage the Panama Canal on its own without any problems.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PANAMA

**Answer the following questions about the history of Panama:**

1. In what year did Panama become a Spanish colony? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was Vasco de Balboa able to see from a mountaintop in Panama? \_\_\_\_\_
3. A road was built from the Atlantic coast at \_\_\_\_\_ to a port on the Pacific side named \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Name the two buccaneers who caused trouble in Panama during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Colonies in the Americas (Central and South) fought for and gained independence from what country? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was it easier for gold prospectors in the United States to do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. The success of a railroad across Panama gave the U.S. the idea of building a \_\_\_\_\_ for ships to cross Panama.
8. Which U.S. president helped the Panamanians revolt against Colombia?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What did the treaty between the U.S. and Panama give the United States?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. In what year was the Panama Canal completed? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Name two ways in which the canal benefited the country of Panama.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Some of Panama's leaders were fairly elected. How did some others come to power?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Protests against the U.S. over the Panama Canal led to riots and what else?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. A treaty signed in 1977 between the U.S. and Panama gave control of the canal to Panama in what year? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Who came to power in Panama in the 1980s? \_\_\_\_\_
16. How was this leader removed from power? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## PANAMA THE PANAMA CANAL

### *A man, a plan, a canal...Panama!*

Before the Panama Canal was built, a ship traveling from New York to San Francisco would have to go around the continent of South America, a journey of about 13,000 miles. After the canal was built, this trip was shortened by many days and thousands of miles. Voyages became safer and more profitable, but the building of the canal itself was a costly and dangerous project. Many workers died of tropical diseases, and it took eight years to complete at a cost of \$300 million.

It takes a ship about eight hours to go across the Panama Canal, covering a distance of 50 miles. Canal zone pilots come on board to guide ships through three sets of locks. A lock is a concrete chamber that can fill up with water in order to lift a vessel from a lower level to a higher one, or empty to bring a vessel down to a lower level. Every year, about 14,000 ships pass through the canal, although it has become too narrow and shallow for some. With other competitive methods of transportation now available, Panama must decide if improving the canal will be worthwhile for its future.

1. Before the canal, a ship going from New York to San Francisco would have to travel a total of how many miles? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the cost of building the Panama Canal? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long does a ship take to cross the canal? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the distance it covers? \_\_\_\_\_
5. True or false: A ship's captain guides the ship through the Panama Canal. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Describe how a lock works. \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many ships cross the Panama Canal in one year? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Other methods of transportation are competing with the Panama Canal. Name one possible method.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## PANAMA Kuna Indians

When the Spanish arrived in Panama, they either killed or enslaved the native people who lived there. One group of natives who managed to survive did so by fleeing to the remote San Blas Islands on Panama's Atlantic coast. These are the Kuna Indians, who have a strong system of self-rule. In the last century, they gained the right to govern themselves, and were granted the land they live on to serve as an autonomous (independent) region of Panama.

The Kuna live in traditional villages, using *Ulus* (a dugout canoe) for fishing and traveling to the mainland as well as between the islands. Women sew beautifully patterned and colored textiles called *molos*. They sell the *molos* to tourists to make money to buy food and other things they need. Their isolated location has allowed the Kuna to maintain their individual culture and pass down skills and beliefs from one generation to another with little interference from the outside world.

1. How did the Kuna survive the Spanish invasion of Panama? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What right did the Kuna gain during the last century? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The islands the Kuna live on became an independent, or \_\_\_\_\_, region of Panama.
4. What is an Ulu? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is a mola? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why are molos sold? \_\_\_\_\_
7. The Kuna's isolated location has allowed them to do two things. Describe them.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## PANAMA

### Endangered Species – Red-Naped Tamarin



I am a small female monkey called a Red-Naped Tamarin. My home is high up in the rain forest canopy, where I leap from tree limb to tree limb. I'm very hard to spot. Maybe you can hear me, as I will make a bird-like chirp if I see you. I am beautifully colored, with a pure white chest and a deep red-brown on my neck and upper back, and tortoise mottling down my back.

Usually I'm accompanied by both males and females with babies, and we make a group of about four to seven members. I have two babies myself, which my companions help "baby-sit" by carrying for me. The babies will be on their own in three months. We tamarins like to eat fruits and insects, but need to be on the lookout, since large snakes, jungle cats, and raptors will eat us if they can catch us. Loss of habitat is the main reason we are endangered.

1. Where does the Red-Naped Tamarin live?

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2. Describe the sound a tamarin makes.

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3. Describe the coloring of this monkey.

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4. How many members are in a troop of tamarins?

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5. True or false: A female tamarin takes care of her babies all by herself. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do tamarins like to eat?

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7. Name three predators of Red-Naped Tamarins.

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8. What is the main reason that tamarins are endangered?

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## PANAMA

### Endangered Species – Bushdog

I may belong to the dog family, but you might confuse me with a wolverine or a badger. I am a male Bushdog, and I live in forests and wet savanna areas, although we are rare throughout our range. My body is stocky and I have a broad face with small ears and a short bushy tail. I am mostly brown, becoming darker towards my tail, and I'm almost black underneath. One unique trait I possess is that my paws are webbed!

We travel in packs of up to ten individuals, and hunt together to bring down larger prey. Like wolves, only one female (called an alpha female) will bear pups. My mate has a den in a hollow tree trunk, and since she is now a mother, I and the others will bring her food. It is usually some kind of rodent, but we're not too picky; whatever I can catch will do.

1. The bushdog resembles what two animals?

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2. What is the habitat of the bushdog?

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3. True or false: Bushdogs are plentiful throughout their range. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe what the bushdog looks like.

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5. Do you think that bushdogs are good swimmers? Why or why not?

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6. Bushdogs travel in packs of up to how many individuals?

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7. What is the only female who bears pups called?

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8. What do bushdogs like to eat?

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## PANAMA

### Endangered Species – Resplendent Quetzal

I am a male Resplendent Quetzal. We are birds of legend, and our feathers adorned the headdresses of Aztec and Maya rulers. We live in the cloud forests, alone except during the breeding season. Our magnificent plumage is what we are famous for, bright iridescent green on top, with red on the breast and white underneath the wing and tail feathers. Males have crested heads and tail feathers that can reach three feet in length.

I like to eat small fruits and sometimes insects. When I want to impress a female, I fly straight up from a tall tree, circling in song, then swoop down to show off my long tail. My mate and I will carve a nest in a dead tree and share the incubation and feeding of our chicks. There is a myth that says we cannot survive in captivity. Although this is incorrect, we are rarely seen in zoos.

1. The quetzal's colorful feathers adorned the headdresses of which rulers?

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2. What habitat does the quetzal live in?

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3. Describe what a quetzal looks like.

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4. What does a quetzal eat?

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5. Describe the male quetzal's breeding behavior.

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6. True or false: Both male and female Resplendent Quetzals share in the incubation and feeding of chicks.

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7. Quetzals are rarely kept in captivity. What do many people believe because of this? because of this, many people believe that

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## PANAMA

### Endangered Species – Golden Frog



I am a female Golden Frog, and Panama’s national symbol. Hopping around in mountain rain forests and eating insects are my favorite things to do. You may find me near a cool stream and be amazed, for I am a golden yellow color, sometimes with black striping and spots, but sometimes just solid yellow.

Like most frogs, I lay eggs in the water. Tadpoles hatch, and then undergo metamorphosis (change into a different form) and become adults. We have a unique method of communication where we wave our forearms at each other in a way that’s similar to a kind of sign language. Our skin, which is poisonous, might also serve as a hearing organ since we lack ears. Just like many other frogs worldwide, we are endangered due to environmental factors, and a fungal disease that attacks our skin is killing us. People are trying to help us by capturing golden frogs in the wild and having us breed in captivity.

1. What are two things that golden frogs like to do?

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2. Describe the coloring of golden frogs.

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3. What does “metamorphosis” mean?

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4. Golden frogs communicate in which way?

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5. The skin of golden frogs is \_\_\_\_\_, and it also might serve as what?

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6. What do you think some of the environmental factors may be which endanger golden frogs?

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7. How are people trying to help these frogs?

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# PANAMA

## Answers to Questions

### Page 1

1. North America and South America
2. narrowest strip of land
3. false
4. hot and humid
5. Panama City
6. major banking center
7. coffee, bananas, shrimp and lumber
8. any two of these: exotic wildlife, lush jungles, beautiful beaches

### Page 3

1. 1508
2. both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans
3. Panama City, Nombre de Dios
4. Francis Drake and Henry Morgan
5. Spain
6. Travel by ship to Panama, cross that country, and take another ship back to the U.S.
7. waterway
8. Theodore Roosevelt
9. control over a portion of land inside Panama
10. 1914
11. it provided jobs for the people and generated money for the country
12. through a coup, or forced takeover
13. breaking of diplomatic ties between the two countries
14. 2000
15. General Manuel Noriega
16. U.S. sent in troops to remove him

### Page 4 (The quote is a palindrome)

1. 13,000 miles
2. \$ 300 million
3. about 8 hours
4. 50 miles
5. False, the canal zone pilot does
6. It fills up with water to lift a vessel from a lower level to a higher one, or empties to bring a vessel down to a lower level.
7. about 14,000
8. (not in passage, students will rely on other knowledge to answer) airplanes, trucks, etc

### Page 5

1. they fled to the San Blas Islands
2. the right to govern themselves
3. autonomous
4. a dugout canoe
5. a beautifully patterned and colored textile
6. to buy food and other things they need
7. maintain their culture and pass down skills and beliefs



## PANAMA

### Page 6

1. high up in the rainforest canopy
2. a bird-like chirp
3. It has a pure white chest and a deep red-brown on its neck and upper back, and tortoise mottling down its back.
4. Four to seven
5. False: other members help carry the babies
6. fruits and insects
7. large snakes, jungle cats and raptors
8. loss of habitat

### Page 7

1. wolverine or badger
2. forests and wet savannas
3. False
4. It is stocky, has a broad face with small ears and a short bushy tail. It is brown, becoming darker towards the tail, and is almost black underneath. Has webbed paws.
5. Yes, because it has webbed feet
6. up to 10 individuals
7. Alpha female
8. rodents, but will eat almost anything

### Page 8

1. Aztec and Maya
2. cloud forests
3. It is bright, iridescent green on top, with red on the breast and white underneath the wing and tail feathers. Males have crested heads and tail feathers that can reach 3 feet in length.
4. fruits and sometimes insects
5. It flies straight up from a tree and circles, singing, then swoops down to show off tail
6. True
7. they cannot survive in captivity

### Page 10

1. hopping around mountain rainforests and eating insects
2. golden yellow with black striping and spots, or just solid yellow
3. to change into a different form
4. wave their forearms at each other
5. poisonous, hearing organ
6. (not in passage, students will rely on other knowledge to answer) pollution, loss of habitat, etc
7. capturing them and having them breed in captivity

