

Mexico National Day (September 16, 2026)

TEACHING GUIDE

What? Mexico is celebrating its national holiday, marking the day the country decided to stop being a Spanish colony. 🎉

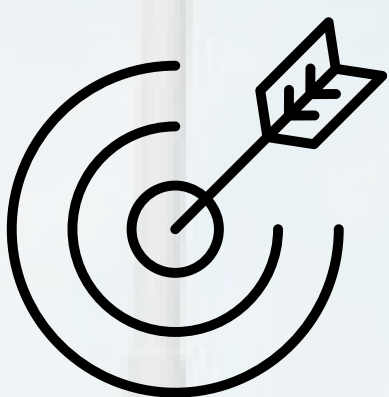
Who? The priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who issued the call to revolt, and all the Mexicans celebrating their country today.

Where? In Mexico, a large North American country south of the United States—and especially in the main square of Mexico City, the capital.

When? It all began on September 16, 1810, and every year the celebration kicks off on the evening of September 15 with the famous cry "¡Viva México!"

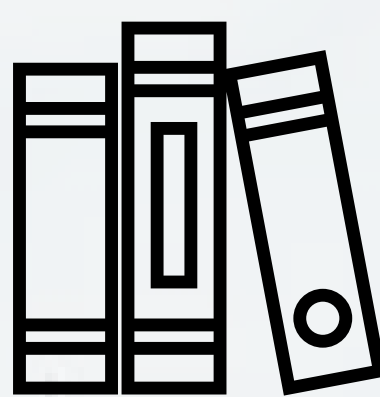
Why is it important? Because Mexico is a major North American country, and it's great to learn about it!

🎯 **For this activity, your goal is to learn a little more about Mexico.** 🌱



OBJECTIVES

- Locate Mexico on a world map and identify the surrounding countries
- Identify the oceans and the gulf bordering Mexican territory
- Discover the *Tren Maya*, a train that circles the entire Yucatán Peninsula
- Calculate distances and travel time using a data table
- Decode words using a symbol key



SUBJECTS

- **Social Studies / Geography**
 - Continents, countries, and borders
 - World oceans and seas
 - Capitals and major cities
- **Mathematics**
 - Addition and subtraction of large numbers
 - Division and duration calculations
 - Converting hours to minutes
- **English**
 - Reading instructions and data
 - Written expression (short and extended responses)
- **History / Culture**
 - Ancient civilizations of the Americas
 - National holidays and symbols



COMPETENCIES

- Research and interpret information
- Use a digital mapping tool
- Read and interpret a data table
- Perform calculations (addition, subtraction, division)
- Decode a system of symbols
- Produce a structured response



DURATION

- Approximately 45 minutes



GETTING STARTED

- Ask students to name the North American countries they know.
- Ask them what they know about Mexico—what spontaneously comes to mind.
- Write their answers on the board without correcting them; these will serve as a point of comparison later.
- Ask them if they know what a national holiday is and when their own country's national holiday takes place.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS****TEACHING GUIDE**

STEP 1 — Explore Mexico! Location of Mexico on Google Earth and identification of the surrounding geographical features. Answers to five short questions.

Q1 — The United States.

Q2 — Guatemala. (Mexico also shares its southern border with Belize, which is much smaller.)

Q3 — The Pacific Ocean.

Q4 — The Gulf of Mexico.

Q5 — Guadalajara.

STEP 2 — Aboard the Tren Maya. Reading of an infographic showing the route and distances of the seven Tren Maya sections. Distance and duration calculations, followed by an open-ended question.

Q6 — The longest section is Chetumal → Escárcega (287 km); the shortest is Cancún → Tulum (110 km).

Q7 — $228 + 235 + 172 + 257 = 892$ km

Q8 — $287 - 110 = 177$ km

Q9 — $892 \div 160 = 5.575$ hours, or approximately 5 hours 35 minutes.

Q10 — Variable answer. E.g., the train stops at several stations, it does not always travel at its maximum speed, and it must slow down on curves and when approaching towns.

STEP 3 — A Civilization to Discover. Decoding of three symbol panels using a key inspired by Mayan glyphs.

Q11 — PYRAMID. The Maya built stepped pyramids at the heart of their cities, such as El Castillo at Chichén Itzá; these served as temples, not as tombs like those in Egypt.

Q12 — CALENDAR. The Maya used several calendars simultaneously, including a 365-day calendar that tracked the solar year with remarkable precision for the time.

Q13 — GLYPH. Glyphs are the characters of the Mayan writing system—the most complete in the ancient Americas—where each sign represents a whole word or a syllable, never just a single letter.

**WRAPPING UP**

- Conduct a group review of what the students have learned.
- Revisit the list written on the board at the start of the activity and compare it with what they know now.
- Discuss what surprised them the most (the 1,543 km length of the Tren Maya, the fact that the Maya people still exist, the idea that a people could write without an alphabet).

**FURTHER EXPLORATION**

 Belinda Briggs. *Mexico: Travel for Kids*. Dinobibi Publishing

