



Families of Panama

Teacher's Guide

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Families of Panama Script

Rural Script

It's just starting to get light outside when we get up for school at 6 AM. My name is **Raisa** and I'm 9 years old. I live here in the country outside of **Panama** City with Mom and Dad and my two brothers, **Robinson** and **Abdiel**.

I go to the **Chumecal** public school that's about a fifteen minute walk from here, and we like to get there a little early, so we have to leave the house by 7:30. Today we're having fried **maize** tortillas for breakfast.

Dad and Mom work for **Senora Jan** and **Don David** who live in this house that's just across the yard from us. Senora Jan and Don David bought this property a year ago and built the house we live in, and now they're fixing up their house.

After I finish eating I have some time to go over some information I got at school. One of the handouts is about helping the environment by not buying things we don't need, and by reducing waste and recycling, which means using things over and over instead of throwing them away.

The other brochure tells us what we can do when our friends want us to do something we know we shouldn't.

While Dad finishes washing the dishes, we feed our parakeets, which are called **pericos**. We give them cooked rice, bread or bananas and fresh water every day before we go to school. Panama has lots of wild parakeets, but we've had these since they were babies, so they're pretty tame. They're so smart that they can get the door to their cage open if we don't close it just right. It's not too hard to catch them again, though. They just hop onto the stick and we take them back to their cage.

Some of our neighbors like to hang bananas out to see who will come to eat. Birds are usually the first to find them. Then monkeys come exploring. The agoutis wait for pieces of banana to drop onto the ground. Once in a while a sloth even comes along to check things out. They move like a slow dance. They're called **oso perezoso**, which means lazy bears.

Panama has a huge variety of plants and wildlife. That's partly because we have mountains, deserts, beaches and rain forests, and also because a third of our country is protected with parks and wild life refuges. We have so many environments with different plants, birds and animals that tourists come from all over the world to see and study them.

Not far from where we live, you can take a boat trip up the **Chagres** River to visit an Embera village. The Embera people originally came from Colombia. We learned in school that Panama used to have dozens of tribes living here before the Europeans came,

and most of them were killed, either by the Spanish or by the diseases they brought with them.

Now there are 8 main tribes, and their rights to govern themselves are protected. My teacher says the Embera want to have their young people get a good education so they can help the tribe figure out how to keep their way of life and yet live in today's world. I wonder if the other tribes feel the same way.

It's time to leave for school. Mom or Dad walk with us.

They're glad that my brother and I are on the honor roll. See? The school has posted our names on the bulletin board. I want to be a lawyer, so I know I have to study hard.

Students take turns cleaning up the school area before class, and today it's my turn to help. Our mothers take turns bringing in **la crema**, or cream of wheat, that they make for students' breakfast, but they can't make it today, because the school doesn't have any water.

On Monday morning we always have a patriotic ceremony before school starts, where we sing our national anthem and school song. We have 130 students in our school and there are 36 students in my fourth grade class. Our school is for grades 1 to 8; then we have to go to Panama City for high school.

We start each day with a prayer. Then we go to computer class. Schools in Panama are free, but our uniforms each cost about \$60, which is hard for many families to pay. But we can't come to school unless we have a uniform.

After computer class we go back into our home room for Spanish, which is the official language of Panama.

We have a snack break at 10:30, and most of us buy something at the snack shop near the school. During break time some of the boys like to play football.

While I'm at school, Mom and Dad are taking care of Don David and Senora Jan's house. Mom cleans for them and another family twice a week. Sometimes their parrot, Guacamole, likes to try to fool Mom by imitating the sound of a telephone ringing. Guacamole also knows how to bark like the dogs.

Dad's main jobs are fixing things around the house and looking after the gardens and the big yard. Lately he's been planting flowers along the patio.

Carpenters are working on Senora Jan and Don David's house, and Dad cleans up after they finish each day.

When we get out of school at one o'clock Mom meets us to walk home with us.

She has lunch ready for us when we get home. Today we're having spaghetti with chicken and tomato sauce. After lunch she goes over our homework with us. We'll have rice for dinner at about five. (Read alternate)

Don David and Senora Jan's dogs, Lucy, Lulu and Midgekin like to keep us company while we watch the rain.

We have two seasons here; the rainy season is May to November, and the dry season is December to April. This is the rainy season, so it's usually pretty nice in the morning, and we get rain later in the day. Normally it just rains for an hour or so, but sometimes it lasts all afternoon.

Our teacher says rain is important here, not just to grow things, but because it takes a lot of fresh water to run the Panama Canal. You probably know that the canal lets ships take a big shortcut when they want to go between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Before the canal was built, ships had to travel all the way down to the tip of South America and then up the other side. And that took a long time.

That's why people wanted to build a canal for hundreds of years before they figured out how to do it. Panama is only about 50 miles across in this area so that's not too far, but the hard part was how to get the ships across the high ground in the center of the country.

Canal builders solved the problem with locks, which are like giant steps filled with water that lift the ships up over the hills and down again. See, this is how it works: a ship enters a lock from sea level through a watertight gate. Then the gate closes and water runs in and fills up the lock to the new level. The gate at the other end opens and the ship moves out into the water at the new level. A ship would go down by going into a lock when it was full of water. Then the water would be allowed to run out until it was the same as the sea level, and the ship could sail out the gate at the other end into the ocean.

The water to fill the locks comes from the Chagres River, which gets its water from rain. So you can see that if we don't get enough rain, the ships can't go through the canal.

That would be bad for the ships, but it would also be bad for our country. That's because ships pay our government a lot of money to go through the canal. The most a ship paid was almost a quarter of a million dollars, and the least was thirty six cents...well, that wasn't really a ship. It was a man who swam through the canal. It took him ten days to swim the 50 miles.

Good morning! It's Sunday and this is our church, where we're going to Mass. It's in the same village where we go to school.

After church we have dinner and then play some baseball. This afternoon my brother's friend stopped by. They're playing a game where they bounce a coin off the side of the house, and then see who can get their coin closest to the first coin.

Mom's ironing our shirts for school this week.

Dad's watering his squash. I guess he's pretty proud of the garden, he takes such good care of it.

When it gets dark we come inside and my brothers play with some new magnets. They're called 'singing magnets'...can you see why? You can also hide one in your hand and when you move your hand over the other magnet, like this, it moves like magic. My brothers are going to take them to school tomorrow to show their friends.

Mom says it's 8 o'clock and it's time for us to go to bed.

Good night.

Urban Script

This is Panama City. I live here with my Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa and my younger brother Francisco. It's 6 o'clock and I'm getting up to get ready for school. My name is Juan Diego and I'm 9 years old.

Grandma is already busy fixing breakfast. Today we're having scrambled eggs and ham. Grandma helps out a lot because Mom and Dad both go to work every day. Today the city will pick up the trash so Grandma puts the bag to the curb. Every morning she drives to a church service called Mass. Most people in Panama are Catholic, but they don't go to church as often as Grandma.

Mom's reminding me to bring my book bag, to behave in class and to take notes. Francisco and I both go to the same private Catholic school, which means we pay to go there. My school starts at 7:10, and Dad takes me on his way to work. Francisco's kindergarten starts later, so Mom drops him off when she leaves for work.

Kids here in Panama go to school from March to December. Our school has twenty-one hundred students in kindergarten through high school, and I'm in third grade. We're waiting for the patriotic ceremony that we have every Monday morning. All these girls need is some music to go with the game they're playing.

The head of our school talks to us, and we sing our school song and Panama's national anthem. Panama was first ruled by Spain, then we were part of Colombia, and we got our independence in 1903. Our school teaches us to be proud of Panama, to love our culture and don't forget where we came from.

Our first class is Spanish. We're supposed to come up with a sentence that the class will agree with, so I say, "We have pizza on Wednesdays". Everybody likes pizza!

Then we have swimming class. Panama is between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and we have lots of nice beaches, so we all want to learn how to swim. Panama is called a crossroads of the world because it links two continents and two oceans. After our lesson our teacher uses fresh water to hose off the chlorine that's in the pool water.

Then it's back to class for English. Kids in Panama start studying English in kindergarten. Today we're supposed to write an English sentence to go with each picture that we cut out of the handout. We're all doing the assignment our own way.

While I'm at school, Dad's at work. He's a teller for a bank in a supermarket. That means he takes deposits, where customers give the bank money to keep for them. He also cashes their paychecks, or has people fill out a request form to borrow money.

Mom's at work too. She's an industrial engineer and she works for the shipping department of an airline company. When someone wants to move things from one country to another in a hurry, they use her company. Today mom's group is going over how things are shipped. They want to find more ways to make sure that cargo gets packed and loaded so it gets where it's supposed to go on time and without any damage.

We finish school at 1:40, and Francisco and I ride home on a school bus, which takes about an hour. Grandma has dinner ready for us when we get home. She speaks English well because she worked with people from the United States when they used to run the Panama Canal. So she can help me with my English.

When Mom gets home at about 5, she helps me with some homework. Dad will get home at about 7 and he and Mom will eat dinner together.

This weekend is a busy one for us because tomorrow morning I have Scouts, and our school is having a big festival. Sunday I have two birthday parties! See you then!

It's Saturday afternoon and we're starting our Scout meeting with a prayer. Today we're playing some games. Mom likes to watch the marching band practice.

Now we're at our school festival. Each grade is acting out a human value. The kids in my class are dressed like Panama farmers. We're showing fraternity and service, which means working together and helping others without expecting something in return.

Look at all the people who've come to see their kids! I think the families are trying to see which group can show the most support.

I guess you can see why this is our school's biggest event of the year!

It's Sunday morning and we're going to church. We have lots of things to thank God for, so every week we take this time to remember to do it. Near the end, we shake hands and wish each other peace.

When we get home, Dad fires up the BBQ. He's making chicken, sausage, beef and sweet corn. He puts sauce on the meat to keep it tender and give it great flavor. When it's ready, we all have dinner.

We're having cake for dessert. I'm sure this isn't the last piece of cake I'll have today!

After dinner Mom goes over my math homework again. Division is easy for me when the number I'm dividing by goes into the bigger number an even number of times. But it's harder when there's a remainder.

Well, it's time for my friend Felipe's birthday party. It's at the mall where Dad works. All the kids at Felipe's party get passes to use for rides and games. Lots of other kids are having birthday parties here, too.

After Felipe's party, Dad and I go to the restaurant where Francisco is having his birthday party. He's 5 years old. We have twenty six cousins, and we invited all of them and their parents, plus some friends! We love playing here!

The lady that works at the restaurant teaches us some new games. Here we're trying to squeeze a balloon between us hard enough to make it pop. One thing we always do at our birthday parties is break open a piñata. It has lots of candy inside.

Time to eat! We're having chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy. There's a surprise in every kid's bag. Here's one. Once you get the wheel spinning really fast you can see colors that come out of nowhere!

It's time for Francisco's cake.

Then I help Mom hand out gifts to all the kids as a way of saying thank you for coming.

These are the birthday gifts people brought for Francisco. He'll open them at home.

It's late by the time we get home, and we're all tired out. We'll sleep well tonight!
Good night!

Glossary

agoutis: a Central and South American animal related to the guinea pig, it mostly eats fruits and vegetables

brochure: a printed material to explain materials to readers

Catholic: Christians who believe the Pope is the head of the church

chlorine: a chemical that kills germs

environment: the air, water and land and their living things in the surrounding

fraternity: sense of brotherhood

industrial engineer: a person who studies how companies can do things better

sloth: a Central and South American animal that mostly lives in trees and eats fruits and vegetables as well as insects and dead animals. They move slowly because their main food leaves provide very little energy.

Discussion and Activities After Viewing

1. Ask what things in the video indicate that the climate in Panama is subtropical.
2. Have students name or draw several fruits and vegetables commonly found in Panama that are familiar to them.
3. Discuss why Spanish is the national language of Panama. (patio, bronco, ranch, tornado)
4. Ask students to see how Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and James Carter are connected to Panama. Roosevelt encouraged Panama to secede from

Colombia and started the Panama Canal. The Canal was built and administered by the US until President Carter returned it to Panama.

5. Go online and view pictures of Panama
6. Invite someone from Panama to talk with the class about their life in Panama, play a traditional instrument, or tell a Panamanian story.
7. Ask students to draw a picture, make a list or write a paragraph on how their life and school are different and similar from those they saw in the video.
8. Ask students what direction does one go if one is travelling from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Canal . (one would travel from the northwest to the southeast)

Questions

- 1 What are Catholics?
- 2 Why is there only a rainy season and a dry season?
- 3 Did corn and peanut only grow in the Americas?
- 4 Why do kids in Panama start studying English in kindergarten?
- 5 Why is it good to have free public schools?
- 6 When did the Spanish come to Panama?
- 7 Who are the Panamanians?
- 8 Why is the Panama Canal important?

Answers to Questions

1 What are Catholics?

Roman Catholicism is one of the largest religions in the world, with over a billion members distributed all over the world. It has a large amount of literature and a large organization. Catholicism's history began when some people, initially all Jews, accepted Jesus Christ as not just a prophet, but as the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

Roman Catholicism traces its beginning to the Apostle Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Catholicism, which means *universal*, received the adjective "Roman" due to the Church's adoption of the same governing organization as that of the Roman empire. The adjective was also used because of the tradition that Peter had founded the Church in Rome and that he and Paul were buried there.

Roman Catholics are found throughout the world, with high concentrations in southern Europe, South America and the Philippines.

2 Why is there only a rainy season and a dry season in Panama?

In the tropics, which is where Panama is, the temperature is warm all year around, and there is no winter, spring or fall. The seasons are the rainy season from June through November and the dry season for the rest of the year.

3 Did corn and peanut only grow in the Americas?

The Amerindians domesticated chilies, corn, potatoes, cocoa, tomatoes, peanuts to use as food crops. The Spanish took these crops in to Europe and the rest of the Old World. Before that there were no Irish potatoes, spicy Korean kimchi, Malaysian ketchup or Dutch chocolates.

4 Why do kids in Panama start studying English in kindergarten?

Panama has had a long association with the United States principally because of the presence of the United States in the Canal Zone. Today most

Panamanians use the dollar for daily transactions. Panama and the United States have a treaty to protect American investments.

5 Why is it good to have free public schools?

A country needs people who can read and write. People need to be able to read and write in order to take advantage of all the information that has been written down.

6 When did the Spanish come to Panama?

The Spanish came to Panama in 1501.

7. What are the Panamanians?

Seventy percent of Panamanians are mestizos. Mestizos are the descendants of the Spanish men who came to Panama and Native American women. Fourteen percent are mixed Native American and African American, ten percent are white and six percent are Native American.

8 Why is the Panama Canal important?

The Panama Canal enabled ships to go from one side of the Western Hemisphere to the other without having to go around the bottom of South America. It saved a lot of time and money.

Quiz on Things We've Learned About Panama

(Circle the correct answer).

1. T F There are Native Americans in Panama.
2. T F Panama City is the capital of Panama
3. T F Panama is in South America.
4. T F Panama has many parks and wild life refuges.
5. T F The people of Panama live much as Americans do.
6. T F Many young people are learning English in Panama.
7. T F There is a big canal in Panama.
8. T F Panama borders both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans.
9. _____ is the national language of Panama.
10. Draw pictures about the different parts of Raisa and Juan Diego story. Try to include as many details as you can remember about each part.

Quiz Answers on Things We've Learned About Panama

(Circle the correct answer).

1. T There are Native Americans in Panama.
2. T Panama City is the capital of Panama
3. F Panama is in South America.
4. T Panama has many parks and wild life refuges.
5. T The people of Panama live much as Americans do.
6. T Many young people are learning English in Panama.
7. T There is a big canal in Panama.
8. T Panama borders both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans.
9. Spanish is the national language of Panama.

Introduction

Panama is famous for Canal and the panama hat though the hat was first made in Ecuador.

The Land and the Climate

Panama is bordered on the north by Costa Rica and in south by Colombia. A series of mountain ranges runs along the center of the country. Dense jungles form the border with Colombia. The climate is tropical in the lowlands plains and temperate in the highlands. A rainy season runs from April to December. It is much wetter on the Caribbean side of the country than the Pacific. The waters of the Pacific are shallow and the tidal range is up to 20 feet.

Plant and animal life

The diverse environment includes mangrove swamps, coniferous forests, deciduous forest, tropical rain forests and grasslands. This supports a dense and diverse population of flora and fauna. 40% of the country is still wooded. In some places as many as 90 different species of trees may co-exist in one acre. About 30% of the country has been set aside as wilderness preserves.

The People

There are approximately 3.3 million Panamanians. 70% Panamanians are descendants of the Spanish and the Amerindians, called mestizos. As few Spanish women came to Panama during the colonial period, most Spanish men married Amerindian women. 10 percent are mixed Amerindians and African American, 8 percent are white and 8 percent are Amerindians. There are also 130,000 Chinese, some of whose ancestor came in the nineteenth century to work on the railroads.

Cultural Life

Life in the villages revolves around the family and the church. Most people are Roman Catholics and celebrate the major passages of life in the church. The country has a 91% literacy rate.

In the cities, where more than 50% of the population lives, people have many more choices and a modern urban cosmopolitan culture exists. People love dancing and soccer is the largest participatory sport.

Daily Life

Panama's economy depends on tourism, operating the Canal, banking, agriculture, insurance, ship registry. 15% of the labor force work in agriculture.

Poverty remains high at 50% today. The economy stagnated in between 1975 and 1990. But recent moves by the country to sign a free trade agreement with the US will encourage more investment. Tourism continues to bring in foreign exchange, as Panama's impressive biodiversity makes it a growing destination for ecotourism. Problems include high youth unemployment and the negative impact of the drug trade.

History

Human artifacts dating to 2500 BCE have been found in Panama. The size of the indigenous population can only be speculated. The Spanish explorers in the early sixteenth century report many tribes that warred upon each other. Most of the original inhabitants died when exposed to the diseases brought by the Spanish.

Colonization of Panama proceeded quickly with the conquest of the Incan Empire as the isthmus provided an avenue to ship treasure from the Incan empire to Spain. With a lack of manpower, African slaves were imported. But not much of the land was arable and plantation agriculture was limited. In 1821, Costa Rica became one of several Central American provinces that declared their independence from Spain. It joined with Colombia fitfully until in 1903 encouraged and supported by the United States it separated from Colombia. Panama was dominated by a commercial elite until 1968 when military rule began.

In 1989 the US invaded Panama and overthrew the military dictator. Subsequently, the military has stayed out of politics and elections have been held regularly. In 1990, the army was abolished and replaced by a national police force. In 1999, the control of the Canal reverted to Panama.

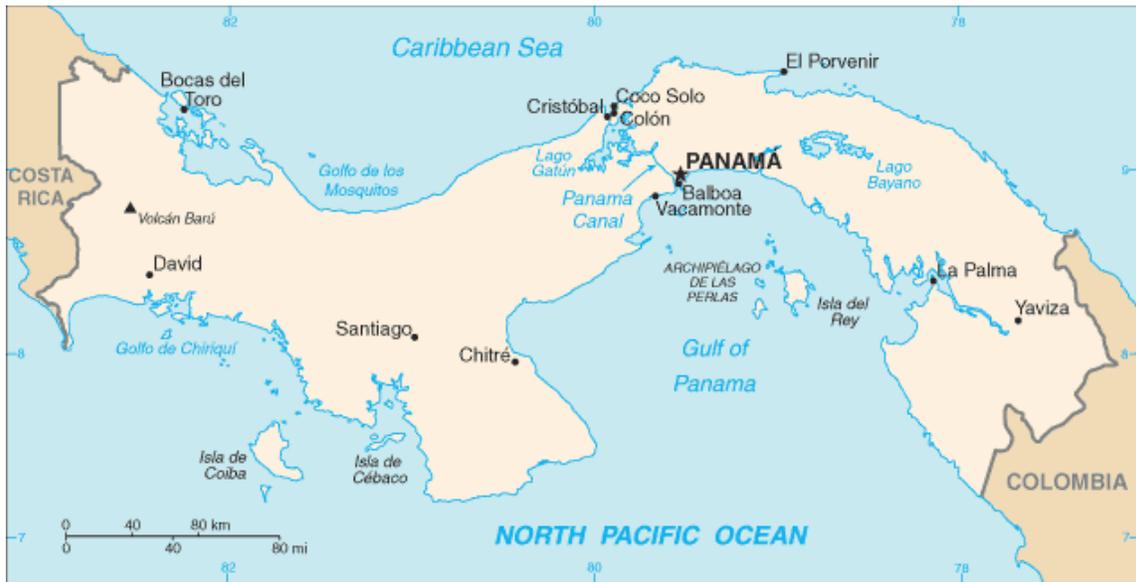
Panama



Flag of Panama

This flag was to reflect the political situation of the time. The blue was intended to represent the Conservative Party and the red to represent the Liberal Party. The white was intended to stand for peace and purity; the blue star stands for the purity and honesty of the life of the country; the red star represents the authority and law in the country; and together the stars stand for the new republic.

Map of Panama



Recipes

SEVICHE:

- 2 pounds of raw corvina (or whitefish) in filets
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 1 cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 hot chili pepper (without the seeds), chopped
- 1 tablespoon gin
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Dice the fish filets and put them in a glass or porcelain bowl. Add the rest of the ingredients, stirring well. Refrigerate for at least 24 hours before serving. Rectify the salt and serve with salted soda crackers.

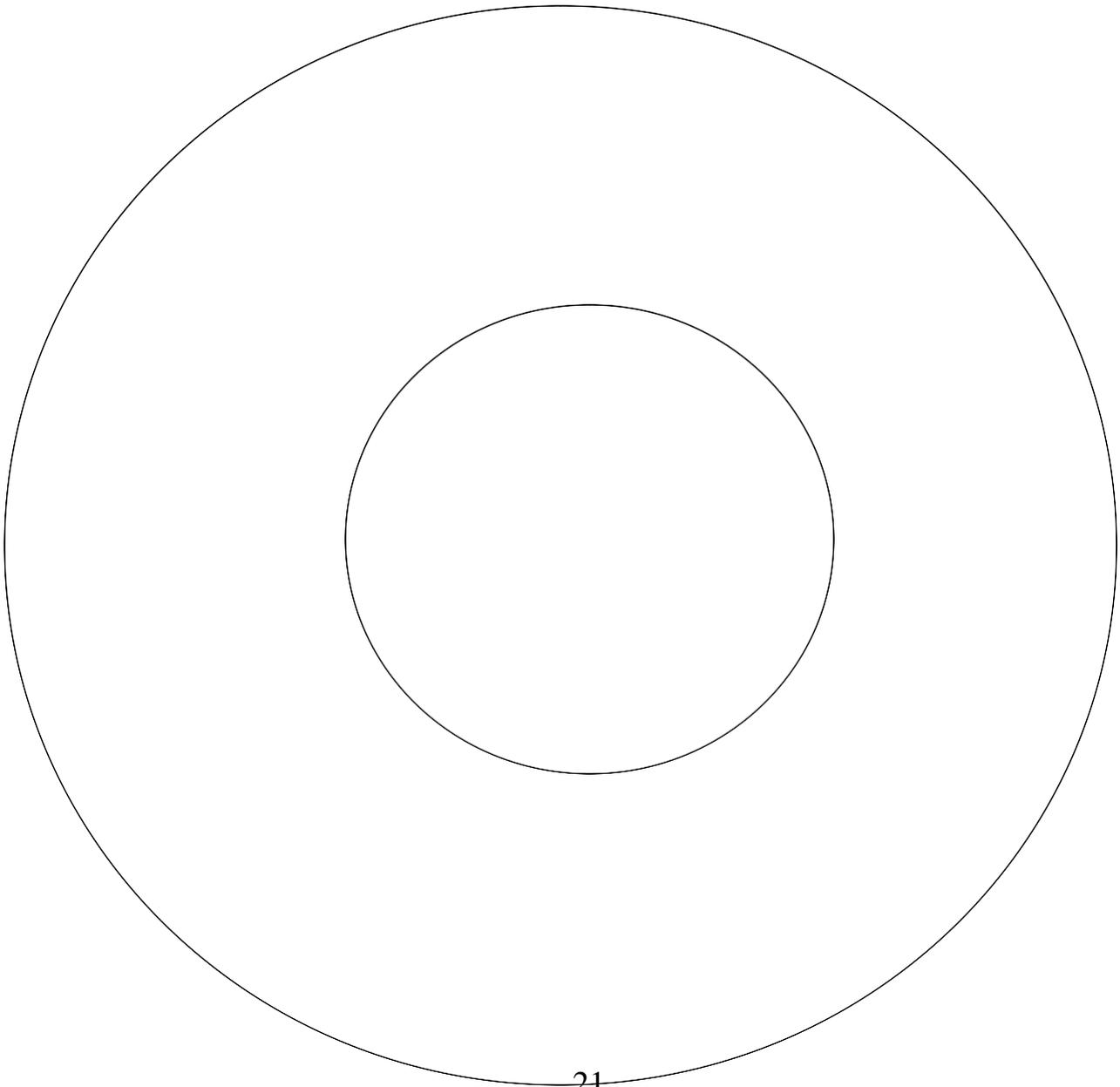


Activities – Panama Hat

Cut a wide circular disk . Cut a circle out of its center.

Cut a width of paper and roll it. Tape together

Tape or glue disk to roll. Cover top of hat with a small circular disk.



Appendix

Interesting Facts about Panama

Location: Central America, bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the North Pacific Ocean, between Costa Rica and Colombia

Geographic coordinates: 9 00 N, 80 00 W

Map references: North America

Area:

total: 78,200 sq km

land: 75,990 sq km

water: 2,210 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than South Carolina

Coastline: 2490 km

Climate: varies from tropical to desert

Terrain: interior mostly steep, rugged mountains and dissected, upland plains; coastal areas largely plains and rolling hills

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Pacific Ocean -0 m Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: Volcan Baru 3,475 m

Natural resources: hydropower

Land use:

arable land: 7.26%

permanent crops: 1.95%

other: 90.79% (2005 est.)

occasional severe storms and forest fires in the Darien area

People

Population: 3,300,766 (July 2008 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.54% (2000 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: *total population*: 76.8 years

Total fertility rate: 2.57 children born/woman (2008 est.)

Ethnic groups: mestizo (mixed Amerindian and white) 67%, Amerindian and mixed (West Indian) 13%, white 10%, Amerindian 6% Chinese 4%

Religions: nominally Roman Catholic 78.5%, Protestant 15%,

Languages: Spanish, English

Literacy: *definition*: age 15 and over can read and write *total population*: 91%

Government

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Panama

conventional short form: Panama

local long form: Republica de Panama

local short form: Panama

Government type: constitutional democracy

Capital: Panama City

Administrative divisions: 11 provinces and 1 territory

Independence: November 28, 1821, their independence from Spain (the separation from Colombia 3 November 1903)

National holiday: Independence Day, 28 November (1821)

Constitution: 5 February 1917

Legal system: based on civil law

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

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Economy

GDP - real growth rate: 11.2% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$10,700 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:

agriculture: 6.6%

industry: 16.4%

services: 77% (2006 est)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 4.2% (2007 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: agriculture 15%, industry 18%, services 67% (1997)

Unemployment rate: 6.4% urban (2007)

Poverty rate: 28.7% (2007)

Industries: construction, brewing, cement and other construction materials, sugar milling

Agriculture - bananas, rice, corn, coffee, sugarcane, vegetables; livestock; shrimp

Currency: 1 Balboa

Exchange rates: 1 Balboa = US\$1 pegged to dollar