**Activity 1: Is It Trade or Colonization?**

Read “The Commodity Trade” (pp. 21–37) in Green and Branford’s Faces of Latin America.

#### Focus Questions for Reading

Use the following questions to guide your reading. While your responses to these questions won’t be graded, consider writing them in a reading journal as a way of tracking your thoughts about key concepts, synthesizing your learning experience, and helping you to formulate your ideas for the discussions, written assignments, and the final project exam.

* What are the historical roots of the “commodity trade” in Latin America? What is the link between wealth and poverty in Bolivia’s Potosí?
* What is the relationship between commodity producers and consumers in the rich countries of the world? For example, why are Canadian consumers able to buy bananas, produced far away in Latin America cheaper than apples produced locally?
* What has been the economic and social impact of sugar and gold mining in Brazil’s northeast?
* What was the economic role of Great Britain in the region after the Latin American nations gained independence from Spain and Portugal?
* When and how did the US expand its political and economic power in Latin America?
* What is the origin of the expression “Banana Republic”?
* What was the impact of oil on Venezuela’s economy from 1922 until today?
* Why has the “commodity trade” benefitted countries such as Canada, Australia, and the US so much more than the countries of Latin America?
* How does the “cocaine trade” and the insatiable demand for illegal drugs by Americans differ from the normal pattern for trade in commodities?

## Activity 2: “Promised Land”

#### Reading

Read “Promised Land: Land Ownership, Power and Conflict” (pp. 109–125) in Green and Branford’s Faces of Latin America.

#### Focus Questions for Reading

Use the following questions to guide your reading.

* What are the main forms of land ownership established during the colonial time? How do these forms compare with Canada?
* What changes occurred in the agricultural sector after World War II, and what was the role of the state in Colombia and Brazil?
* Why does Green state that agrarian reform is “one of the hottest issues in Latin American politics” (p. 120)?
* Explain the conflict between the agrarian reform plans and the modernization of agriculture. Make comparisons with developed countries such as England before the Industrial Revolution.
* Now, search TRU Library about two cases described in the reading. Find updated information on the cases you selected.

## Activity 3: “Silent Revolution”

#### Reading

Read “Silent Revolution: Market Economics” (pp. 38–63) in Green and Branford’s Faces of Latin America.

#### Focus Questions for Reading

Use the following questions to guide your reading:

* Explain how the industrialization process started in Latin America in the twentieth century. Compare with the Industrial Revolution in England.
* What were the major changes and impacts on the economy of Latin America during the period characterized by the import substitutions?
* What were the political responses to the economic difficulties in the 1970s?
* How did the volume of debt escalate during this period until the crisis of the 1980s?
* What have you learnt about taking on excessive debt both as an individual and as a country?
* What is the so-called “lost decade”? Why is it considered “lost”? How has that lost decade been more than made up for by the two decades from 1995–2015?

## Activity 4: Regional Integration (MERCOSUR, Andean Community, Central American Free Trade Agreement)

Search online for information about these three regional organizations:

* MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur)
* Andean Community (Comunidad Andina)
* Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)

Find the following information:

* Which countries are members or are associated with these regional organizations?
* When were these organizations created?

## Activity 5: Latin America and “The Americas” (NAFTA and FTAA)

Search online for information about these two agreements between the United States, Canada, and Latin American countries in which the US economy plays a leading role.

* North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): This agreement is already in place; find out when it was created and a general overview of what it covers.
* Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA): This agreement is not yet in place; it remains as an initiative. Find out when the first meeting was held and look for updated information about its status today.

## Activity 6: The Dilemma of Continental Integration

The evaluation of these regional integration programs has been controversial since their beginnings in the early 1990s. Discussions over this issue are ongoing, especially around the issue of placing developed countries and the Latin American countries under the same organization or umbrella. Let’s examine different views about NAFTA and FTAA.

#### NAFTA

###### Video and Reading

Visit the PBS website to view the video about Mexico and NAFTA (chapter 4, “Crossing Borders”).

* PBS series Commanding Heights; Episode Three: The New Rules of the Game; Chapter 4, “Crossing Borders” at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/lo/story/ch_menu_03.html>

Read the accompanying interview with former Mexican President Vicente Fox at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/shared/minitextlo/int_vicentefox.html>

* According to Fox, what are the main points in favour of NAFTA?
* Search online for “NAFTA” to read other references.

#### FTAA

###### Reading

* Search online for “FTAA” and read the first five references.

## Activity 6: “Mean Streets”

#### Reading

Read “Mean Streets: Migration and Life in the City,” (pp. 126–138) in Green and Branford’s Faces of Latin America to learn about the trend of migration to the cities and the plight of the urban poor in shantytowns and squatter settlements.

#### Focus Questions for Reading

Use the following questions to guide your reading.

* Why has migration from rural to urban centres been increasing since 1930?
* Find recent figures on the urban population in Latin American countries.
* What is the typical profile of migrants that left their agricultural way of life in search of a future in the major cities in Latin America?
* How does the migration process from Latin American countries to the US work? How does the migration process between Latin American countries work? How do the two compare?
* Who are the people in the “favelas,” “villas miseries,” and “callampas”? How do they live?
* What are the major problems people face in those marginal settlements?

## Activity 7: Gender, Work, and Politics

#### Reading

Read “Gender and Politics” (pp. 174–194) in Faces of Latin America. In this selection Green emphasizes not only issues related to women’s labour but also their participation in politics and in worker’s movements and human rights organizations.

Then, search online and/or TRU Library about the maquiladoras and their organizations in Mexico. What are the major problems they are facing today? Look for pros and cons for women working near the Mexican border.

#### Focus Questions for Reading

Use the following questions to guide your reading and research:

* What are the traditional social conditions and ways of life for women who live in rural environments?
* What is happening with middle class women with regard to education and politics?
* What is the labour situation for women in terms of informal and formal employment in Latin America?
* What are the maquiladoras? What are the main characteristics of employment in the maquiladoras?
* How have women participated in politics and in the government?

## Activity 8: “A Land in Flames”

#### Reading

Read “A Land in Flames: The Environment” (pp. 139–155) in Green and Branford’s Faces of Latin America.

#### Focus Questions for Reading

Use the following questions to guide both your reading in this activity and your online research in Activity 2.

* How did the processes of industrialization impact the environment in Latin America? Is it any different from the impact of industrialization in England or China?
* How are extractive industries, such as mining and oil, damaging the environment in Latin America? Which sub-regions are most affected? How does it compare with Canada and the US?
* What are some of the major causes and consequences of deforestation in the area? How does it compare with Canada?
* What are the consequences for the people and the land of using agricultural pesticides in rural areas?