

# Mexico: Physical

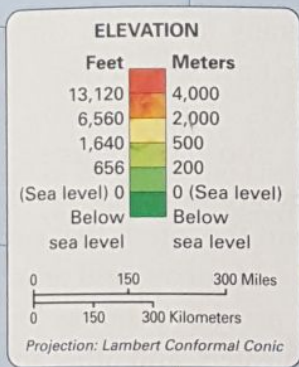


## Geography Skills

**Regions** The rugged Mexican Plateau covers much of Mexico.

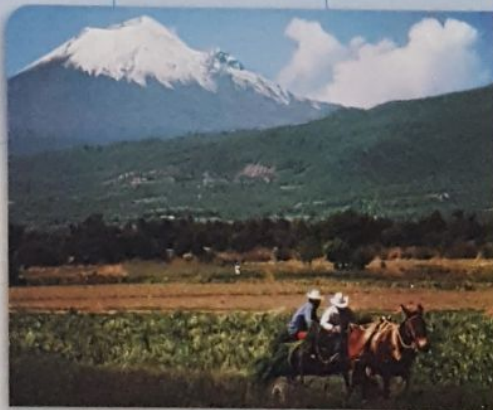
- 1. Name** What feature extends into the Gulf of Mexico?
- 2. Analyze** Where in Mexico would it be easiest to cross from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico?

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## Plateaus and Mountains

Much of the interior landscape of Mexico consists of a high, mostly rugged region called the Mexican Plateau. The plateau's lowest point is more than a half mile above sea level. Its highest point is close to two miles above sea level. The entire plateau spreads between two mountain ranges that rise still higher. One range, the Sierra Madre Oriental, lies in the east. The other, the Sierra Madre Occidental, lies in the west. Together, these two mountain ranges and another shorter one in southern Mexico make up the **Sierra Madre** (SYER-rah MAH-dray), or "mother range."



**1** Plateaus and mountains cover much of Mexico. Here, the volcano Popocatepetl rises above a mountain valley. Many people live and farm in the mountain valleys.

Between the two ranges in the south lies the Valley of Mexico. Mexico City, the country's capital, is located there. The mountains south of Mexico City include towering, snowcapped volcanoes. Volcanic eruptions, as well as earthquakes, are a threat there. The volcano Popocatepetl (poh-puh-cah-TE-pet-uhl) near Mexico City has been active as recently as 2000.

### FOCUS ON READING

What do you think the text will discuss next?