Welcome to the exhibition *Panamanian Passages*! Let’s explore the riches of the country of Panama and learn how its diverse natural life and cultures, and its central location as a global crossroads, contribute to the world’s economy and ecology.

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**Here are some facts about Panama:**
- **Country name:** Republic of Panama
- **Panamanian flag:** The red and blue colors represent the conservative and liberal political parties that existed in 1903, and the white represents the peace between them. The stars represent strength and purity to guide Panamanians toward progress.
- **Panama’s motto:** *Pro Mundi Beneficio* (Latin); “For the Benefit of the World”
- **Capital (and largest city):** Panama City
- **Official language:** Spanish
- **Government:** Constitutional democracy
- **Total area:** 75,517 km²; 29,157 sq. miles (about the size of South Carolina)
- **Population:** 3,309,679 inhabitants (2008)

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**Do you know who designed the U.S. flag?**

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**What shapes can you find in the Panamanian flag?**
Write them in the following space:

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**What do the symbols in the U.S. flag mean?**

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*Visit the National Museum of American History website to learn all this and play games at the Star Spangled Banner virtual exhibition.*

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**Scientists at work ... what are they doing?**
Many scientists work at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. Panama is a special place to conduct research because of its rich biodiversity, as well as, for its geological and human history. Look at the photographs of the scientist at work and match the letter of the photo with the appropriate description of what they are doing.

- Excavating, looking for ancient archaeological artifacts.
- Measuring and analyzing a beehive.
- Collecting pollinators (bees, beetles, butterflies, flies, etc.).
- Feeding a bat.

Answer key: c,d,b,a

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*All images courtesy of Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute*
3 million years ago – Culmination of the emergence of the Isthmus of Panama.

1501– The first Spanish presence in Panama, with the arrival of Rodrigo de Bastidas on the Caribbean coast.

1513 – The Spaniard Vasco Núñez de Balboa crosses the isthmus and reaches the Pacific Ocean, calling it Mar del Sur—South Sea.

1855 – Opening of the transcontinental Panama Railroad.

1821 – Independence from Spain and union with Gran Colombia.

1903 – Separation from Colombia.

1914 – Inauguration of the Canal.

1999 – The Canal is transferred to Panamanian hands.

2007 – Work begins on the expansion of the canal.

In this space, draw a map of your favorite trip and write a few lines about your travel experience. How did you arrive at your destination?

Do you have an ID card?
This Panamanian proof of legal residence and ID from the late 1930s belonged to Mary Carson, who worked inside the Canal Zone, but lived in Panama. This was the identification document that allowed Panamanians who worked in the Canal Zone to travel between Panama and the U.S.-controlled Zone. What forms of identification do you have for use of the public library or at school?

Why do you think you need an ID card?

How can we get to the other side of the world?
The Spanish brought ships full of gold from Peru to Panama City. Then they took the gold across the isthmus to the Caribbean. From there, ships took the gold to Spain. Why do you think the Spanish used this route to transport the gold?

On this map draw lines that represent the two possible routes to take gold from Peru to Spain: sailing around South America or crossing through Panama. Locate Peru, Spain, and Panama on the map.

This clock counted down the time left until noon on December 31, 2009, when the Panama Canal was transferred to Panamanian control. Can you think of other countdown clocks?