Welcome to Panama as a Crossroads, the educational suite of activities that accompanies the exhibition Panamanian Passages! We developed these educational resources and opportunities at the exhibition site for you and your students to gain a greater understanding of Panama. Panama is a passage to the world and a reservoir of biodiversity. Rich in history and culture, it has important links to the history of the United States. Explore and discover Panama and make connections to your curriculum!

Panama as a Crossroads Teacher’s Guide

Checklist to consider:
- Bring one chaperone for every ten students.
- All visitors must screen their bags at the security desk at the entrance to the building: S. Dillon Ripley Center. 1100 Jefferson Drive SW, Washington D.C. 20560.
- Please note that there are no vending facilities in this building.
- Select the subject areas in the exhibition that relate your curriculum needs.
- Have students bring a pen or pencil to the exhibition.
- The length of the educational visit is approximately 90 minutes from start to finish, and is divided into three 25–minute segments, with a 10-15 minute introduction.

What to expect during your visit:
At the start of your visit, your facilitator will introduce the exhibition, discuss the program flow and goals, and give a brief overview. Afterward, students will receive a worksheet to complete during the visit (the worksheets and all activities during the visit are bilingual; however, the teacher or leader of the group must inform the facilitator of the language preference).

The group will be divided into two smaller sessions. Group 1 will participate in the scavenger hunt for the first part of the visit, while Group 2 participates in the hands-on education station. At the end of the first session, the groups will swap stations. At the end of both sessions, the student worksheet should be completed. The final portion of the visit will be a knowledge game that will test the understanding of the exhibition using the content presented during the sessions.

Pre-visit activities:
- Have students write down five to ten things they know about Panama.
- Review the exhibition’s website with the students, to further their understanding of the exhibition.
- Make connections with exhibition themes and your curriculum.
- Review the exhibition guide, the map of Panama, and the glossary.

While in the exhibition:
- Test your knowledge by listening for the Did you know? facts during the introduction to the exhibition.
- Read the information in the exhibition guide’s overview; Explore Science and History section, Global Connections, and other sections in the guide.

After visiting the exhibition:
- Have the students visit the Smithsonian Latino Center’s website, www.latino.si.edu, and other websites in the teacher’s resources list for more information on Panama that connects to the curriculum or to the students’ interests.
- Ask students to locate the Panamanian isthmus in the world map using longitude and latitude.
- Ask students to write a list of relevant and interesting issues they learned before a school trip to the exhibition:
Visit the exhibition on your own before your planned school field trip, or visit the exhibition’s website and read the exhibition brochure to view and review themes, objects, and important connections to your curriculum: www.latino.si.edu.
Global Connections and Contemporary Issues
• Why is Panama so important to the world?
• Discuss some of the ways in which Panama connects to your daily life. (Think of foods you consume, products you purchase, and communication systems you use that are transported through Panama.)

United States–Panama Link
• What are the connections between Panama’s history and that of the United States. (Think of some of the events presented in the exhibition.)
• What had to be accomplished in order to transfer control of the Panama Canal into Panamanian hands?

Natural Sciences:
• What do you think are the most precious resources of Panama?
• What factors might affect the way people use land in Panama over the next 100 years?
• Which natural resources do you think will play a major role in shaping Panama over the next 100 years?

People and Culture:
• Find an example of an idea that was passed from one group of people to another in Panama, and how this affected the country’s future.
• People debate whether indigenous people are better caretakers of natural resources than non-indigenous people. What’s your opinion, based on what you’ve seen and heard?
• How do you think the return of the Panama Canal to Panamanian hands affected Panamanian society?

Critical thinking and discussion questions:
Explore the following questions through the exhibition’s content, themes, objects, images, natural specimens, maps, photographs, and primary sources.
If you are not able to come in person, visit the online exhibition at www.latino.si.edu.

Hands-On Activity:
Make connections among the images below and the critical-thinking topics and questions above. Which images illustrate some of the issues discussed and how? Using two squares, draw the images you would use to explain one of the contemporary issues of Panama. Then discuss with the rest of the class.

Educational activities were made possible through the generous support of the Panama Canal Authority.

Photographs: Panamanian Passages
Image courtesy of the Library of Congress
Images courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interocéánico de Panamá.
Glossary

Here are some words that you will find in the exhibition Panamanian Passages.

• **Biota:** The flora and fauna of a region.

• **Canal:** An artificial waterway constructed for shipping, for irrigation, or for recreational use. A canal may take in parts of natural rivers along its course.

• **Continental divide:** A massive area of high ground in the interior of a continent, from either side of which a continent’s river systems flow in different directions.

• **Gold rush:** A sudden wave of migration to new territory because gold has been discovered. One of the most famous gold rushes was to California in 1848.

• **Isthmus:** A narrow strip of land that joins two larger areas of land. The Panama isthmus connects North and South America.

[Source Encarta Dictionary]

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**Panamanian Passages – Teacher’s Resources List**

**Books about Panama**
- *Mola: Cuna Life Stories and Art* by Maricel E. Presilla
- *Plants and Animals in the Life of the Kuna* by Jorge Ventocilla, Heraclio Herrera, and Valero Nuñez
- *The Art of Being Kuna: Layers of Meaning Among the Kuna of Panama* by Mari Lyn Salvador
- *Panama Fever: The Epic Story of One of the Greatest Human Achievements of All Time— the Building of the Panama Canal* by Matthew Parker
- *Portrait of the Panama Canal: From Construction to the Twenty-First Century* by William Friar
- *Naturalists of the Isthmus on Panama* by Stanley Heckadon-Moreno
- *A Day on Barro Colorado Island* by Marina Wong et al.

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**History and Biodiversity of Panama:**
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute: [http://www.stri.org/](http://www.stri.org/)
- Curator’s Notes, Panamanian Passages, Aims McGuinness, Smithsonian Latino Center: [http://www.latino.si.edu](http://www.latino.si.edu)

**WEBSITES OF INTEREST**

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**Facts about Panama:**
- La Prensa: [http://www.prensa.com](http://www.prensa.com)
- Panamanian Passages – Teacher’s Resources List

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**Facts about Panama:**
- BBC on the Panama Canal Handover: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/556959.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/556959.stm)
- U.S. Department State: Background Note: Panama: [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2030.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2030.htm)