Key Points & Terms

Which river runs along the border?

What year was the establishment of the United States Border Patrol?
Borderlands

The areas of the southwestern U.S. and northern Mexico that are adjacent to the international boundary line are known as the “borderlands.”

This is a place where both sides meet, meld, and are transformed into a unique and distinct culture identity.

In recent years, this region has become so treacherous for migrants that human rights activists call the boundary line the “wall of death.”

Since a 2007 crackdown on drug cartels, violence has spiked in northern Mexico.

Unfortunately, the people who are dying are mostly ordinary Mexican citizens.

The human rights crisis in this region and its complex historical geography are poorly understood, especially in the United States.
Borderlands (continued)

The line that divides Mexico and the U.S. is two thousand miles long.

On the eastern end, it follows the Rio Grande River.

The western end is geometric and cuts through the Sonoran and Mojave deserts and the coastal mountain range.
Dropping off deportees

The United States has deported record numbers of immigrants in recent years, and roughly two-thirds are Mexican nationals. Some are new arrivals, but others have spent years living in the United States and are determined to sneak back in. U.S. officials often transfer them laterally along the border, far from the place they were arrested, as an additional deterrent.

Numbers indicate deportees received, January-November 2013:

Mexicali has become the border’s biggest drop-off point for deportees.

Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico’s two largest border cities, used to receive the most deportees. But their share has diminished in favor of secondary border crossings like Mexicali and Matamoros.

The greatest number of illegal crossings occur in the Arizona deserts south of Tucson. Migrants arrested here are often taken by bus to Mexicali for deportation, rather than releasing them in Nogales.

An uptick in illegal border crossings in south Texas has also led immigration officials to transfer some deportees to Mexicali by plane.
Double Life of the Borderline

Demonstrates the domination culture that has shaped the border of the United States and Mexico.

U.S.-Mexico border was shaped by imperialism rather than negotiations between countries.

- Mexico lost half of their entire territory to the U.S. and was only paid $18 million for it.
Double Life of the Borderline (continued)

This imperialist conquest is taught in both countries in different ways.
- Mexico- “U.S. Invasion” which is rightfully negative due to the contexts and results of the war
- U.S.-“Mexican-American War” or “U.S.-Mexico War” which is neutral sounding, but justified to students as the natural expansion (a.k.a Manifest Destiny)

Example: El Paso, TX, USA, and Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico were once one city but were torn apart from the war.
Double Life of the Borderline (continued)

Manifest Destiny was commonly used to justify the U.S. expansion westward.

The U.S. took this land at the end of the war with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.
  ◦ Later annexed more land with the Gadsden Treaty of 1853.

Although the borderline may appear neutral, much like the name of the “U.S. Mexico War,” this imperialism needs to be understood by Latin American geography students.
  ◦ The border is both a symbol of U.S. domination and a concrete physical location, which gives the border a “double life.”
Historical Geography of the Borderlands
Native Americans

Farming, Hunting, and Gathering.

Apache, Navajos, Zunis, Pimas
US-Mexico War

1846-1848

US gains modern day California, New Mexico, and Southern Texas

Establishes the Rio Grande as new border
Urban, Economic, and Demographic Expansion

Towns grew along the border to handle cross-border commerce and traffic. Mexican border towns began to expand tourism and entertainment. World War Two lead to economic growth along the border.
Urban, Economic, and Demographic Expansion (continued)

Mexican workers recruited to US under the Bracero Program (1942-1965).

Maquilas- Mexican assembly-plant manufacturing factories

Maquilas produced a demographic growth along the border.
The Mexican Maquiladora Program

Began after the end of “Bracero Program”

Mexican territory along the Mexico-U.S. border used to expand global factories

Encouraged urbanization and migration to northern Mexico.
The Mexican Maquiladora Program (continued)

Contrast between the old and new factory regimes
- Old factory regimes (Mexico City)
  - high wages
  - abundant well-built schools, clinics, and child care centers
  - affordable government housing
  - government worked closely with employers and workers to ensure stable and healthy neighborhoods
  - lifelong jobs
The Mexican Maquila Program

Contrast between the old and new factory regimes

- New factory regimes (dispersed cities along the Mexico-U.S. border)
  - low wages
  - few clinics, schools, and child care centers
  - poor water/sewage infrastructures
  - housing shortage
  - extended household
  - support industrial investment rather than workers and communities
  - workers lasted on average 15 to 16 month in a particular job
The Informal Economy: Drug Smuggling, People Smuggling, and More

The maquila industry has allowed for an expansion of informal activities. These activities includes drug smuggling, people smuggling, and more. The U.S.-Mexico border is a significant cross line for illegal immigrants to the U.S.

After the establishment of the U.S. Border Patrol in 1924, migrations have been closely monitored since then.

The San Diego/Tijuana border and El Paso/Juarez borders are both reinforced with triple layers of steel, high-tech sensors that can detect movement, along with military drones.

Investments in border infrastructure symbolizes how the U.S. controls and filters what may cross the border.
Informal Economy (continued)

The borderlands can be defined as an area of extreme violence.

Violence on U.S. side of the borderline is directed to migrants from Central America. These migrants encounter threats such as petty theft, rape, and deportation.

Violence on Mexico’s side contains drug trafficking into the U.S., prostitution, and lots of other informal activities.
Informal Economy (continued)

To illustrate the violence among the borderlands, in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, a group of young women are often recognized. These young women are discovered as their bodies are found mutilated, which lead to investigation, outrages, and also protests.

It is also assumed that men die in the city as well. Journalists of these stories are often killed too.

In 2010, the country tied Iraq and was second to Pakistan in number of journalists killed (Cravey 214).
Tunnel Rats

Referred to agents who go in stealthy passages that have flourished on the U.S. Mexico border over the past two decades to smuggle drugs.

They discovered an incomplete tunnel in San Diego in 2009 that is 70 feet deep, 3 feet wide, 2,700 feet long and armed with a rail system, lighting, and ventilation.

These tunnels are used for transporting drugs underground. The drugs’ bulk, and odor is difficult to conceal at borders.
Tunnel Rats (Continued)

Tunnels are usually found by informants and neighbors.

Once discovered, the U.S. fills the tunnels with concrete. On the other hand, Mexico cannot afford to fill tunnels, and they do not fill in holes from a political standpoint.

President Trump wishes to construct a great wall. He also promises to “find and dislocate tunnels and keep out criminal cartels.”
Additional Facts

Most immigrants arrive to the U.S. legally
Do pay taxes
Number of undocumented immigrants is at one of its lowest levels since early 1970s
President Trump’s vow to deport undocumented immigrants with criminal record
Key Points & Terms

Which river runs along the border?

What year was the establishment of the United States Border Patrol?
Sources


http://cdn.history.com/sites/2/2013/12/mexican-american-war-AB.jpeg


http://news.bbc.co.uk/olmedia/1845000/images/_1846367_mexico_tunnel2_inf300.gif

https://youtu.be/0wk6rswxQro