Haiti

A country whose history is “written in blood”
Hispaniola

• Columbus arrived north coast of Haiti in 1492
• First European colonies of New World
French domination

- By 1517 the indigenous population of 250,000-500,000 had been wiped out.
- In 1600s French established themselves on western end
- Ayiti = “land of high mountains”
African slavery

• Began bringing in African slaves
• Became richest colony in New World
  – Sugar
  – Indigo
  – Coffee
• “Pearl of the Antilles”
  • Sadly, it’s now the poorest country in the western hemisphere
Slave revolt

• “Brutally efficient slave colony”
• 1804 – World’s first and only successful slave revolt
• Napoleon lost up to 50,000 troops trying to re-take Haiti
Our debt to Haiti

• Toussaint L’Overture and other Haitians fought in American Revolutionary War
• Loss of Haiti led Napoleon to be willing for the U.S. to make the “Louisiana purchase”
  – Haiti was military base
  – As much as 25% of the income of Napoleon’s government came from Haiti
Cruel leaders

• Henri Christophe and the citadel
Duvalier dictatorship

- “Papa doc”
- “Baby doc”
1986

• “Baby Doc” overthrown
  – Under the Duvaliers’ reign up to 30,000 people murdered
2010

• Devastating earthquake in which as many as 300,000 people were killed
• Aftermath: Cholera epidemic (brought in by U.N. peacekeepers from Nepal)
Language and religion

- Haitian Creole / French
- Voodoo