GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How does long term conflict impact a country’s education system?
- Since Haiti is in a known hurricane zone, what could be done to help the country’s citizens move out of poverty? What would the long term impact be of building buildings that could withstand hurricanes and earthquakes?
- How would the Haitian economy grow if Wadley, and girls like her, were able to go to school, and stay? Would other nations and businesses become more willing to invest in the country if it had an educated workforce?

GENERAL INFORMATION

Capital City: Port-au-Prince  
Population of Haiti: 10.5 million (2016)  
Population of Port-au-Prince: 2.4 million  
Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 7.412 million

Haiti has been independent since 1804, when it became the second independent nation in the Western Hemisphere. While Haiti is currently one of the world’s poorest countries, it has a rich and colorful past which includes the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, buccaneers’ utilizing the small island of Tortue (Tortuga) as a base for their piracy, a slave rebellion, and a long battle with Napoleon’s French army that led to Haiti becoming the world’s first post-colonial black-led nation.

Haiti shares the tropical island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, covering 27,560 sq km of mostly rough and mountainous terrain. Lying in the middle of the hurricane belt, the country is subject to severe storms from June to October. Haiti is also subject to earthquakes and flooding.
GOVERNMENT

Haiti is currently a Republic. Political instability has dominated Haiti since the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship in 1986. In the five years that followed, the country was led by five different regimes. After a military coup d’etat ousted democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991, a UN peacekeeping came to Haiti and stayed through much of the decade. History repeated itself in the 2000s, when Aristide was re-elected and again ousted by rebellion, leading to new elections in 2006.

Haiti’s president serves as the country’s head of state and is elected by the people to serve a five-year term. The head of the government, selected by the president, is the country’s prime minister. Haiti has a National Assembly to serve as their parliament, consisting of an elected Senate that serves for six-year terms and an elected Chamber that serves for four years.

THE ECONOMY

Haiti is currently one of the poorest countries in the world, and the poorest in the Western Hemisphere. The lack of an educated workforce, exposure to frequent natural disasters, and continued political unrest have left Haiti in an economically vulnerable state. Haiti works with both the World Bank and individual countries in efforts to grow its economy. However, Haiti also lacks modern, reliable infrastructure networks for electricity, transportation, education and medical care. Currently 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and 40.6 percent (2010) is unemployed. More than two-thirds of the labor force do not have formal jobs.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in US$: 8.8 billion

Currency Exchange Rate: 1 US$ = 63.16 Haitian Gourde (2016 est.)

Imports and Exports

- Haiti imported $3.149 billion in food, manufactured goods, machinery and transportation equipment, fuels and raw materials in 2016.
- Haiti exported $933.2 million in apparel, manufactures, oil, cocoa, mangoes and coffee in 2016.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Bauxite, copper, calcium carbonate, gold, marble, hydropower

RESOURCES

- Khan Academy at www.khanacademy.org
- World Bank’s website at www.worldbank.org

All data was reported in 2015 unless otherwise noted.