Reading a Theme Map

Latin America is diverse; its culture blends the customs of different native peoples and of the Europeans who arrived later. The languages spoken today in Latin America reflect the history of each area and the people who settled there. For example, Quechua includes a variety of dialects that date back to the Inca Empire. Today it is spoken by millions of people in several countries in the Andes Mountains. Maya dialects are spoken by millions of people in Mexico and Central America. European languages can be traced from the colonization of Latin America by Portugal, Spain, England, France, and the Netherlands.

Maps are often a valuable tool in studying history. The map below shows the languages spoken in modern Latin America. These languages are one reminder of the cultural influence of the peoples who settled each region.
INTERPRETING A MAP

Using the map on the opposite page, answer the following questions.

1. In what part of Latin America is Quechua, the language of the Inca Empire, spoken?

2. In what parts of modern Latin American are the dialects of the Maya Empire spoken?

3. Which European language is the most widespread in Latin America? Explain why this might be so.

4. Name three parts of Latin America where Spanish is spoken.

5. Name three European languages, besides Spanish, that are spoken in parts of Latin America today.

6. What language is spoken only on an island in the Caribbean Sea and nowhere else in Latin America?

7. Using this map and a political map of Latin America, name the country in which Portuguese is the main language. Why do you think Portuguese is the main language there?