

**Activity two:** En grupos de tres personas realiza un skimming del siguiente texto y en 5 minutos escribe el tema y la idea principal del texto. Favor entregarla en una hoja.

### **Palenque: An Afro-Colombian Community**

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*Four hundred years ago, escaped slaves formed Palenque. Today, the Colombian town celebrates its African roots*

*By Kenneth Fletcher*

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Centuries ago, escaped slaves built isolated forts in the jungles that surround Cartagena, once Colombia's main port for incoming slaves. Today, the Afro-Colombian inhabitants of San Basilio de Palenque, a village just over an hour from Cartagena, have preserved many of the customs of their African ancestors.

I wander around the dusty streets and of the small town on a scorching hot day, listening to residents speaking a local Creole tongue. A mixture of African languages with Spanish and Portuguese, it sounds a lot like the Bantu languages of central Africa. Although the town now has electricity and running water in most homes, locals still gather at the creek to wash clothes, chat and bathe. In the center of town there's a statue of town founder Benkos Bioho breaking out of chains. Locals say he established Palenque in 1603 with 36 other escaped slaves.

While most other strongholds for escaped slaves eventually fell, this one survived because of its isolation among the hills and swamps about 30 miles outside Cartagena. Locals claim that in 1713 the inhabitants declared it the first independent community in the Americas. Escaped slaves would head to Palenque, knowing that was their chance at freedom. But several decades ago, that same isolation led residents, called Palenqueros, to leave the village for big cities in search of work.

Today, colorfully dressed Palenquera women commute to Cartagena to sell candy and fruit on the streets, while many men work in construction and paving roads. But when Palenqueros first arrived in the cities they encountered racism and were mocked for their strange language. Out of embarrassment, many refrained from observing their traditional custom