

A View of Brazil: The Culture and Geography

A Lesson Plan for Grades 4–6

Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad in Brazil: Summer
2010



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Introduction and Summary

This is a curriculum unit about Brazilian culture, geography, legends, and food for educators teaching in grades 4 through 6. This lesson was designed after a Fulbright-Hays project in Brazil during the summer of 2010. The month-long seminar allowed 14 teachers from different subject areas and from all over the United States to experience first-hand Brazil's fine arts and culture. Among other aspects, we learned about Brazilian culture, history, language, music, geography, dance, food, educational system, and politics. The seminar had a long lasting positive impression on me because it allowed me to visit and experience a country I knew very little about, a country I dreamed about visiting one day in my life. As a result of this once in a lifetime opportunity to travel to Brazil, I gained a deep knowledge of Brazilian culture. As a result of that, students, teachers, principals, and community members have greatly benefited because I have been sharing with them the things that I learned while I was there.

Goals

The main goal of my unit is to introduce students in grades 4, 5, and 6 to become familiar with Brazil's geographic location, legends, music, and food in a meaningful and fun way. Although my lesson plan does not intend to make students experts in Brazil's culture, it is intended to make students aware of the importance that Brazil plays in our worldwide globalization. Brazil is not only the richest country in South America, but it is also the ninth largest economy in the world. The unit consists of three lesson plans:

- (1). Lesson 1 is the most extensive and its main goal is to help students locate states, countries, cities, and rivers through the use of maps. In addition, this lesson will help students practice their interpretation of tables using a self-elaborated table about Brazil's 26 states and their area and population.
- (2). Lesson 2's main purpose is to introduce students to a very popular Brazilian legend so students can compare it to a legend they are familiar with or a legend from their own country. Students will use their writing skills and a Venn Diagram.
- (3). Lesson 3 will introduce students to a delicious and exotic Brazilian dish called *feijoada*. In this lesson students are expected to practice their sequencing and following direction skills. Finally, students will end the unit and the last lesson with a taste of *feijoada* and the sound of the rhythm of samba.

An important aspect of my Brazil unit is that although it was designed for students in grades 4 through 6, it can easily be adapted to any other grade levels. The unit is intended to last a week, but it also depends on the amount of time teachers spend with their students and how often they see them.

Key Questions

- Why is it important to learn about Brazil's culture, geography, language, music, and food in today's economy?
- What are the main differences and similarities between Brazil and your country?
- What aspects about Brazil had the biggest impact on you and why?

Required Materials

- A notebook
- A big world map
- A map of Brazil
- A computer
- A projector
- Artifacts and posters from Brazil
- Copies of student activities (attached)
- Books about Brazil
- A CD player
- Brazilian music
- Recipe ingredients
- Fresh fruit
- Homemade *feijoada*
- Plates, cups, forks, and napkins

Standards

The lessons about Brazil's culture were designed to address the following standards in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):

113.7. Social Studies, Grade 5.

(6) Geography. The student uses geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data. The student is expected to: (A) apply geographic tools, including grid systems, legends, symbols, scales, and compass roses, to construct and interpret maps; and (B) translate geographic data into a variety of formats such as row data to graphs and maps.

(22) Culture. The student understands the relationship between the arts and the times during which they were created. The student is expected to: (B) explain how examples of art, music, and literature reflect the times during which they were created.

(25) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology. The student is expected to: (B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions; and (F) use appropriate mathematical skills to interpret social studies information such as maps and graphs.

(26) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to: (A) use social studies terminology correctly; (B) incorporate main and supporting ideas in verbal and written communication; (C) express ideas orally based on research and experiences; and (E) use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

111.17. Mathematics, Grade 5

(5.5) Patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking. The student makes generalizations based on observed patterns and relationships. In addition, the student is expected to: (A) describe the relationship between sets of data in graphic organizers such as lists, tables, charts, and diagrams.

National Geography Standards: Grades 5–8

The student knows and understands: (1) how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective; (2) how to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context; and (6) how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

National Language Arts Standards: Grade 5

Literature Standards. The student will compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text. In addition, the student is expected to demonstrate command of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing:

- Use punctuation to separate items in a series.
- Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence.

- Use a comma to set off the words yes and no, to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence, and to indicate direct address.
- Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

National Music Standards: Grades 5–8

NA. 5-8.9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture. Students describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.

Lesson 1: An Introduction to the Geography of Brazil

Goals

Students will be able find the geographic location of Brazil using a world map. In addition, students will be able to find the geographic location of Brazil’s 26 states and its federal district of Brasília.

Standards (TEKS)

Geography: 6A and 6B

Social Studies: 25B and 25F

Social Studies: 26A, 26B, 26C, and 26E

Materials

A notebook, a world map, maps of Brazil (Student Activity 1, attached), copies of Brazil’s states, capitals, area, and 2008 population and accompanying worksheet (Student Activity 2, attached), and map of South America (Student Activity 3, attached).

Procedures

1. At the beginning of the lesson ask students to write in their notebooks things they know about Brazil. After five minutes ask students to share with classmates and teacher things they wrote. The teacher will write down some students’ responses on the board.
2. Using a big world map ask students to find Brazil. Ask students to respond orally using specific details such as continent and neighboring countries. After that, the teacher will go over a few specific details and facts about Brazil. Finally, students will read Brazil Geographic Location and do Student Activities 1, 2, and 3.
3. Teacher will explain to students the importance of learning about Brazil’s geographic location, its states, and their area and population using maps and charts.

Assessment

Teacher will assess students by observations made throughout the lesson, listening to their oral responses, participation and by grading Student Activities 1, 2 and 3.

Brazil Geographic Location

Brazil lies on the continent of South America. It is comprised of 26 states and a Federal District, which has a population of 2, 557,158 people. Brazil is bordered to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, and to the north, west, and south by ten other countries. Brazil is the biggest country in South America and it is the fifth largest country in the world. In addition, it has the fifth largest population in the world with 180 million people. Most Brazilians live in large cities in the southeast part of the country. The capital of Brazil is Brasília, which is a modern new city where elected federal officials live and work. Many different people have settled in Brazil through the years. The first people to settle there were migrants from North America several thousand years ago. They are known as indigenous people or Amerindians. Brazil was conquered in the 1500s by invaders from Portugal. That is the reason why Brazil's official language is Portuguese.

Student Activity 1: States of Brazil and its Federal District

Name: _____

Date: _____



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Directions: Answer the following questions about Brazil using complete sentences.

1. How many states does Brazil have? _____

2. What is the capital of Brazil? _____

3. Which is Brazil's biggest state? _____

4. Which is Brazil's smallest state? _____

5. Name the neighboring states of Tocantins. _____

Brazil's States, Capitals, Area, and 2008 Population by State

Brazil's 26 states differ from one another in terms of area, geographic location, and population. Most Brazilians live in big cities. Brazil has 13 cities with a population of more than a million people. The three biggest cities in Brazil are São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte.

State	Capital	Area in Km. Sq.	Population
Pará	Belém	1, 247, 689, 515	7, 321, 493
Maranhão	São Luís	331, 983, 293	6, 305, 539
Piauí	Teresina	251, 529, 186	3, 119, 697
Ceará	Fortaleza	148, 825, 602	8, 450, 527
Rio Grande do Norte	Natal	52, 796, 791	3, 016, 430
Paraíba	João Pessoa	56, 439, 838	3, 742, 607
Pernambuco	Recife	98, 311, 616	8, 734, 194
Alagoas	Maceió	27, 767, 557	3, 127, 557
Sergipe	Sergipe	21, 910, 348	1, 199, 374
Amapá	Macapá	142, 814, 585	613, 164
Tocantins	Palmas	277, 620, 914	1, 280, 509
Acre	Rio Branco	152, 581, 388	680, 073
Amazonas	Manaus	1, 570, 745, 680	3, 341, 096
Rondônia	Porto Velho	237, 576, 167	1, 493, 566
Goiás	Goiânia	340, 086, 698	5, 844, 996
Rio Grande do Sul	Porto Alegre	281, 748, 538	10, 855, 214
Santa Catarina	Florianópolis	95, 346, 181	6, 052, 587
Paraná	Curitiba	199, 314, 850	10, 590, 169
São Paulo	São Paulo	248, 209, 426	41, 011, 635
Mato Grosso do Sul	Campo Grande	357, 124, 962	2, 336, 058
Mato Grosso	Cuiabá	903, 357, 908	2, 957, 732
Minas Gerais	Belo Horizonte	586, 528, 293	19, 850, 072
Rio de Janeiro	Rio de Janeiro	43, 696, 054	15, 872, 362
Espírito Santo	Victória	46, 077, 519	3, 453, 648
Bahia	Salvador	564, 692, 669	14, 502, 575
Roraima	Boa Vista	224, 298, 980	412, 783

Student Activity 2: Brazil's States, Capitals, Area, and 2008 Population

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Answer the following questions using Brazil's States, Capitals, Area, and 2008 Population chart.

1. What is the area of Amapá in square kilometers? _____

2. Which state has the greatest area in square kilometers? _____

3. Name the three states with the lowest population. _____

4. What is their combined population? _____

5. Give some of the reasons why you think those particular states have the lowest population in the country. _____

6. Name the state with the greatest population. _____

7. What is the difference in population between the state that has the greatest population and the state that has the lowest population? _____

8. Why do you think the states in the southeast have the most population? _____

Student Activity 3: Map of South America

Name: _____

Date: _____



Directions: Answer the following questions using the map of South America.

1. Name the neighboring countries of Brazil. _____

2. Which ocean is found east of Brazil? _____
3. Which ocean is found west of Brazil? _____
4. Name a major river of Brazil. _____
5. If you were given the chance to live in any country in South America, which country would you pick and why? _____

Lesson 2: Brazilian Legends

Goals

Students will learn about some traditional Brazilian folk legends. They will become very familiar with the most popular Brazilian legend, Saci-Pererê.

Standards (TEKS)

Culture: 22B

Social Studies: 25A and 25F

Social Studies: 26A, 26B, 26C, and 26E

Materials

Students will need a computer with access to Internet, books about Brazilian legends, a copy of Saci-Pererê (attached) and accompanying worksheet (Student Activity 1, attached).

Procedures

1. The teacher will give students a brief definition of what legends are and how they can tell us a great deal about a country's history, culture, and beliefs.
2. Student will read and become familiar with the most popular legend in Brazil.
3. Students will answer questions from Student Activity 1. They will practice their skills in comparing and contrasting using a Venn diagram and sequencing.

Assessment

Assessment will be conducted through observations, students' participation, and student's oral and written responses to Student Activity 1.

Brazilian Legends

Brazil, like any other country in the world, has numerous popular legends that have been passed on from generation to generation. Some of the most popular Brazilian legends include the following: Saci-Pererê, O Negrinho do Pastoreio, O Curupira, A Festa no Céu, João-de-Barro, and O Uirapuru. From all the Brazilian legends, there is one legend that is the most representative and popular in Brazilian folklore, Saci-Pererê.



Photo courtesy of A Tribuna
Saci-Pererê

Saci is a mischievous little black boy, with red eyes and only the left leg, who wears a red magical hat and is always smoking a pipe. The magical red hat enables him to disappear and reappear wherever he wishes (usually in the middle of a dust devil). He loves to play tricks and whistle through the roads during the night. He also likes to braid animals' manes while they are asleep. In addition, he loves to hide children's toys, set animals loose, tease dogs, and curse chicken eggs to prevent them from hatching. Also, when he is in the kitchen, he spills all salt, sours the milk, burns the bean stew, and drops flies in the soup. If a popcorn kernel fails to pop, it is because the Saci cursed it. In other words, anything that goes wrong inside and outside of the house may be confidently blamed on the Saci. Besides his tricks, Saci-Pererê is also known as "the great protector of the forest" because he likes to scare people who walk in the woods to destroy them or kill animals. Saci knows how to distinguish the local inhabitants from someone who is about to be attacked by snakes, spiders, and scorpions; he is always there ready to protect them. According to the legend, people can escape a pursuing Saci by crossing a water stream. He will not dare to cross because he will lose all of his power. Another way to escape is by dropping a rope full of knots because he will then be compelled to stop and undo the knots. Finally, people can also try to appease him by leaving some *cachaça* or some tobacco for his pipe.

He always announces himself with a shrilling whistle and he loves to smoke his pipe and puff the smoke on everyone that crosses his path. He never succeeds in lighting his pipe on his own, that is why he is always bothering smokers asking for a light.

Another favorite adventure of Saci is to travel inside twisters. According to the country people, Saci is responsible for causing natural destructive disasters. Every dust devil, says the legend, is caused by the spin-dance of an invisible Saci. One can capture him by throwing into the dust devil a rosary made of separately blessed prayer beads. With care, the captured Saci can be coaxed to enter a dark glass bottle. The bottle needs to be closed with a cork marked with a cross on it. Finally, depending on the treatment he gets from his master, Saci may become either a trustworthy guardian and friend or a devious and terrible enemy when he regains his freedom. Each year Brazil celebrates Saci-Pererê's National Day on October 31.

Student Activity 1: Saci-Pererê Legend

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Answer the following questions once you have finished reading Saci-Pererê.

1. Name a popular legend from your home country. _____

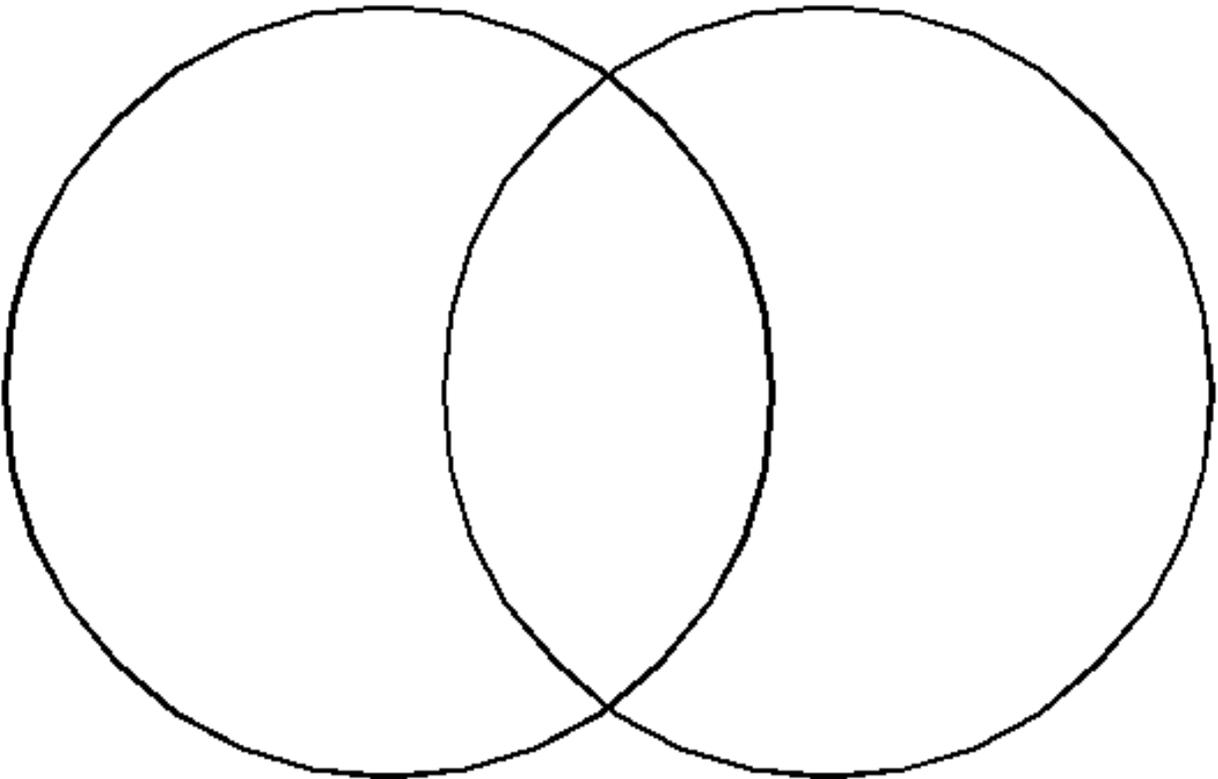
2. How did you first hear about that legend? _____

3. What is the legend about? _____

4. Using the Venn diagram below, write some differences and similarities between Saci-Pererê and your legend.

Saci-Pererê

My Legend



Lesson 3: Brazilian Cuisine

Goals

The student will learn about the main ingredients used in Brazilian cooking and about a very popular and delicious Brazilian dish. Students will watch YouTube videos about Brazilian cooking. In addition, students will learn some Portuguese words about food using technology. Students will also be able to taste *feijoada* and some tropical fruits. Finally, students will be able to listen to samba music, which is lively Brazilian ballroom music with strong African influences.

Standards (TEKS)

Culture: 22B

Social Studies: 25B

Social Studies: 26B, 26C, and 26E

National Music Standards. Grades 5–8

NA. 5-8.9

Materials

Students will need to have access to a computer, reading materials about Brazilian cuisine, individual copies of *feijoada* recipe (attached), recommended ingredients, Student Activity 1: Brazilian Cuisine (attached), Student Activity 2: Food and Portuguese Language (attached), English/Portuguese dictionary using technology, a CD player, Brazilian music CDs. Music from YouTube is strongly recommended (see references at the end of the unit). Plates, forks, spoons, cups, and napkins.

Procedures

1. The teacher will show students short video clips from YouTube about Brazilian gastronomy (see resource list). Students will discuss orally things they found appealing or interesting about Brazilian food.
2. Students will read Brazilian Cuisine and the *feijoada* recipe. After that, they will complete Student Activity 1 and Student Activity 2.
3. Teacher will get the ingredients to make *feijoada*. Students need to follow directions accordingly on how to prepare *feijoada*. The teacher will supervise students at all times for safety reasons.
4. This will be a special celebration to end the Brazil unit. Once the *feijoada* is cooked, teacher will serve students. In addition, students will bring fresh fruit to share with the class. While students eat the delicious food, they will be able to listen to some Brazilian samba.

Assessment

Assessment will be conducted by several ways such as: teacher observations, student's participation, research report, grades in Student Activities 1 and 2.

Brazilian Cuisine

The cuisine of Brazil varies greatly from region to region. Each region has its own cuisine; however, the meals are usually made up of one or more of the same basic ingredients. The basic ingredients in Brazilian cuisine are rice, beans, fish, beef, pork, coconut, and lime. People from many different countries have settled in Brazil over the years. As a result of that, Brazilian food is now a mixture of various styles of cooking. People living in Brazil include the Amerindians, Africans, Portuguese, Italians, Germans, Spanish, and Asians.



Photo courtesy of Nick Brooks.

A wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables can be found in any street market in Brazil.

Feijoada Recipe

Ingredients

1 lb. of varied pork sausages (smoked sausages are recommended)
1 lb. of pork tenderloin, cooked
Some slices of bacon
1 can of black beans (15 oz.)
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
Salt, garlic, chopped onions, and bay leaves

Directions

1. In a pan, fry cubes of pork tenderloin and slices of bacon with salt and garlic.
2. Add all the sliced sausage and stir on medium-heat until all the water is dry.
3. Add the black beans to the pan with the cooked meat.
4. Cook it for ten more minutes.
5. You can add some pepper sauce.



Photo courtesy of Do Luna Buffet

Feijoada is a very popular Brazilian dish in the southeastern region, which comprises the states of Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. The dish consists of black beans and pork stew. It is a very popular lunch on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Student Activity 1: Brazilian Cuisine

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences after you have read the Brazilian Cuisine page.

1. Name five main basic ingredients that are used in Brazilian cuisine. _____

2. Why is Brazilian cuisine so diverse? _____

3. When preparing *feijoada*, what do you have to do immediately before you are asked to cook it for ten more minutes? _____

4. Using the Internet write a report about any other typical dish from Brazil that is appealing to you. Make sure you give plenty of details about it.

Student Activity 2: Food and Portuguese Language

Directions: Using technology, match with a line the following English words with their Portuguese meaning.

English	Portuguese
Pork	comida
Chicken	obrigado/a
Fish	café de manhã
Apple	bebida
Pineapple	frango
Drink	peixe
Breakfast	jantar
Dinner	porco
Food	abacaxi
Thank you	maça

References

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<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/brazilian-cuisine.html>
- Brazilian Feijoada-Complete Step-by-Step Recipe video clip from YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGHqEmAa3qM>
- Brazil Food video clip from YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GzjKSzoGt0&feature=related>
- Brazilian Food Comidas Brasileiras video clip from YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Yz00Gwh9hw>
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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaGyFmQxUog>
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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y45jfyuXPvg>
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