

# Brazilian Public Schools

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## Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- compare and contrast lives of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Brazil and the United States.
  - compare and contrast educational systems in Brazil and the United States.
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## Materials

- Student Handout: **Nas Escolas**
  - Student Handout: **A Brazilian Excerpt**
  - Student Handout: **A U.S. Excerpt**
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## Activities

1. Divide the class into workgroups.
    - a. Ask students to describe what they would imagine life would be like in a public school in Brazil. What would they expect to see? What would the students be like?
    - b. Distribute a copy of the student handout entitled **Nas Escolas** to each workgroup. (If available, you may wish to use the PowerPoint version of the handouts which can be downloaded from the project website.) Direct students to examine each of the images carefully.
    - c. When each group has had an opportunity to examine the images, hold up each of the six images in turn and ask the class:
      - What do you find familiar in this image that would be similar to what you have experienced in school?
      - What appears to be different and unique?Place student responses on the chalkboard.
    - d. After all of the photos have been examined, explain that the images represent various types of schools: public schools, an experimental public school similar to a private school, and schools run by non-governmental organizations that are trying to provide education to children who for various reasons cannot attend public schools.
    - e. Direct students to re-examine the photos. Can they tell which schools are which? How? (Images 1 and 4 are from two different NGOs; image 3 is of an experimental school in Pernambuco, and images 2, 5, and 6 are from various public schools.)
    - f. What does the existence of various types of schools suggest about the state of education in Brazil?
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2. Distribute the student handout entitled **An American Student**.
    - a. Direct students to read through the handout and to assess whether Dillyn's life is similar to or distinctly from theirs. In what ways is it similar or different?
    - b. Would you describe Dillyn's life as typical of an American teenager? Why or why not?
  3. Distribute the student handout entitled **A Brazilian Student**.
    - a. Direct students to read through the handout and to assess whether Ana's life is similar to or distinctly from theirs. In what ways is it similar or different?
    - b. Ask students to discuss whether they would be comfortable in Ana's environment. What appear to be determining factors that make her life different from the average American teenager's?
  4. Explain to the class that, like in the United States, there is no federal system of education in Brazil. Responsibility for primary education is shared by the individual states and local governments (*municípios*).
    - a. Explain that, in general, primary education ranges from three to five years, depending on the local system and the amount of funding available.
    - b. Write the terms *ginásio* and *colégio* on the chalkboard.
    - c. Explain that the *ginásio* is roughly like our fifth through ninth grades, and the *colégio* is comparable to high school.
    - d. Write the number 33 on the chalkboard, and ask students what they think it might mean regarding Brazilian education.
    - e. When they have given their answers, explain that the dropout rate in Brazil is very high; only 33 out of every 100 students who enter grade one make it to grade six. Why do they think this is? (Poor children have to work and cannot go to school because they have to support their families.)
    - f. How does this dropout rate explain both the rise of NGOs and the appearance of adult learners in Ana's classes?
  5. Concluding Activity

Ask students to write a letter to an imaginary student in Brazil. In the letter, direct them to describe their own lives in the United States and to develop a set of questions they would ask the Brazilian student about life in his/her school.
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