

**Society**

## Introduction

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Brazil is truly a multi-ethnic state of great diversity. In its early history, the society developed into an intriguing mixture of Portuguese, Africans, and indigenous peoples (mostly Tupi and Guarani). The great Brazilian writer and professor Gilberto Freyre argued in his classic work *Casa-Grande & Senzala* that it was this mixture of the races enriched Brazilian culture and led to what he termed Brazil's "racial democracy."

Over the centuries, immigration has changed the ethnic landscape of Brazil as Italians, Germans, Poles Ukrainians, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Lebanese, Syrians, and others sought new opportunities in Brazil.

Yet, the *Nordeste* still reflects the earlier history of Brazil with its rich Afro-Brazilian culture. Although Brazil has the largest Japanese population outside of Japan, and it also has more people of African origin than any nation except Nigeria.



The lessons in this section of the *Resource Guide* are structured to provide students with a glimpse into the rich complexity of Brazilian life, language, and educational opportunities.

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# Brazil and the U.S.: A Comparison

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## Objectives

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

- Compare and contrast data regarding Brazil and the United States.
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## Materials

- Library materials and/or Internet access
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## Activities

1. Put up chart paper on the board or a wall and have it serve as the first column for Knowledge (K) which represents what the students already know about Brazil.
    - a. Explain to the students that they may put their hands up to volunteer any information that the students may know about Brazil.
    - b. Give hints about what the students may know if they are at a loss for ideas (size, language, status, climate, etc.). **Some examples:**
      - The U.S. is big. Brazil is big.
      - People in the U.S. speak English. People in Brazil speak Portuguese.
      - There are beaches in Brazil. There are beaches in the U.S.
      - Brazil has a tropical climate. The climate in the U.S. varies is generally temperate.
      - The U.S. is a major world power. Brazil is considered to be a developing nation.
      - The major sport in the U.S. is football. The major sport in Brazil is soccer.
    - c. Write the students' thoughts on the chart paper.
    - d. Provide guidance to the students as a whole group during their input.
  2. Hang more chart paper on the wall in order to record what the students would like to know (W column).
    - a. Explain to students that their requests on what they would like to know about the U.S.A. will be recorded on one paper and what they would like to know about Brazil on another. The wants for one country should be the same as the other because the students are to contrast/compare.
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**Activities  
(continued)**

- b. Explain to the students that time will be taken to discuss their thoughts to make sure that all are clear on what the students want to know.
  3. Divide students into research teams or pairs.
    - a. Explain that the students are to use available library and/or Internet sources to find the answers to their requests to what they would like to know.
    - b. Explain that students are to record their answers on the chart paper under the L column representing what they learned.
    - c. Have the groups of students come back together as a whole class to report/read and discuss what they have learned.
    - d. Direct each groups to report on their discoveries.
  4. Culminating Activity
    - a. Direct students to write a brief essay (approximately ten sentences) describing what they learned about the similarities and/or differences between Brazil and the United States.
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# Portuguese and Spanish: A Comparison

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## Objectives

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

- Identify 6 common pattern changes between Spanish and Portuguese.
  - Convert words between Spanish and Portuguese using the 6 common pattern changes.
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## Teacher Note

This lesson presupposes that students already possess a working knowledge of the Spanish language.

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## Materials

- Student Handout: **Spanish vs. Portuguese**
  - Student Handout: **Now Its Your Turn!**
  - Student Handout: **Memory Matching Game**
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## Activities

1. As an anticipatory set, ask students the following questions:
    - a. Where is Spanish commonly spoken? (List student responses on the board. If global maps are available, direct students to locate these nations on a map.)
    - b. Where is Portuguese commonly spoken? (List student responses on the board. If global maps are available, direct students to locate these nations on a map. Emphasize that Portuguese is the primary language of Brazil.)
    - c. What do Spanish and Portuguese have in common? (Emphasize that they are both Romance languages and have many similarities.)
  2. Distribute the student worksheet entitled **Spanish vs. Portuguese**.
    - a. Explain to the students that there are several common pattern changes between Spanish and Portuguese as reflected in this handout.
    - b. Review with the class the pattern changes in the handout, encouraging students to pronounce the words in both Spanish and Portuguese.
  3. Following the review, distribute the student handout entitled **Now Its Your Turn!**
    - a. Divide students into pairs, and direct students to work with their partner to apply the common patterns and convert the Spanish terms to Portuguese.
    - b. Circulate among the working pairs and provide assistance as needed.
    - c. When students have finished, review the conversions with the class as a whole.
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4. Keeping the students in pairs, pass out sets of **The Memory Game** cards. (**Note:** The teacher will need to photocopy and cut-out sufficient sets of Memory Game cards.)
    - a. Explain that the objective of the game is to match as many Spanish words to Portuguese words as possible.
    - b. Direct students to lay out their Memory Cards face down.
    - c. Students need to take turns choosing two cards. When the students find a match, they are to keep the cards.
    - d. The student with the most pairs at the end of the game wins
  5. Concluding activity.
    - a. Review the common patterns between Spanish and Portuguese by reviewing the matches from the Memory game.
    - b. Ask students come to the board and to illustrate one of the common patterns between Spanish and Portuguese using the words discussed in this lesson.
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# Spanish vs. Portuguese

Nombre/Nome: \_\_\_\_\_

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**The Spanish "ue" becomes Portuguese "o":**

nuevo - novo

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**The Spanish "ie" becomes Portuguese "e":**

fiesta - festa

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**Very often, words starting with "h" in Spanish, start with "f" in Portuguese.  
But there are many exceptions!**

horno - forno

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**Spanish endings "ión", "on", and "an" become Portuguese "ão":**

televisión - televisão

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**Spanish plural endings "ones" and "anes" become Portuguese "ões" and "ães":**

televisiones - televisões

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**Spanish ending "able" becomes Portuguese "ável":**

rentable - rentável

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**Spanish ending "dad" becomes Portuguese "dade":**

igualdad - igualdade

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**Spanish words starting with "ll" very often convert to "ch" in Portuguese:**

llamar - chamar

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## Now Its Your Turn!

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Try to switch these words from Spanish to Portuguese.

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puerta

miedo

hormiga

hierro

razón

capitán

razones

capitanes

considerable

nacionalidad

llave

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**LLAMAR**

**CHAMAR**

**IGUALIDAD**

**CHAVE**

**RENTABLE**

**IGUALDADE**

**TELEVISIONES**

**NACIONALIDADE**

**TELEVISIÓN**

**RENTÁVEL**

**HORNO**

**CONSIDERÁVEL**

**FIESTA**

**TELEVISÕES**

**NUEVO**

**RAZÕES**

**LLAVE**

**CAPITÃES**

**MIEDO**

**TELEVISÃO**

**HIERRO**

**RAZÃO**

**PUERTA**

**CAPITÃO**

**HORMIGA**

**FORNO**

**CAPITÁN**

**FORMIGA**

**RAZÓN**

**FERRO**

**CAPITANES**

**FESTA**

**RAZONES**

**MEDO**

**CONSIDERABLE**

**NOVO**

<b>NACIONALIDAD</b>	<b>PORTA</b>
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## Off to Market

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### Objectives

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

- Compare and contrast the retail market of the United States to the open market of Brazil.
  - Analyze the process of bargaining as conducted in the Brazilian marketplace.
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### Materials

- Student Handout: **Items from the Open/Retail Market**
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### Activities

1. Ask the students if they have ever heard of or been to an “open market”.
    - a. Discuss with the students that in Brazil people can buy various products such as fruit, clothing, jewelry, and toys from individual markets in large buildings and/or outside.
    - b. Explain that an open market is much like a garage sale found here in the United States. As found at garage sales, there are no designated prices, all prices can be negotiated.
    - c. As a class try to come up with a definition of an “open market” and write it on the board.
  2. Discuss with the class where and how people in the United States buy many of the same products.
    - a. Explain to the students that in the United States instead of an open market our economy is based on a retail market, where all of the items are priced accordingly and prices are non-negotiable.
    - b. As a class try to come up with a definition of a “retail market” and write it on the board.
  3. Write the word “Brazil” on the board underneath the definition of “open market”. Write the word “United States” underneath the definition of “retail market”.
    - a. Place the materials on a desk in the front of the room.
    - b. Have the students decide which items were purchased in the open market and which were purchased in a retail market.
    - c. Write the names of the items under the correct market.
    - d. If there are items that cannot be placed into a specific market (such as fruit) write the name of the item in the middle of the board.
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4. Discuss with the students the prices of each of the products.
    - a. Have the students identify a price for each of the products in both the open and retail market.
    - b. Discuss with the students that many of the open market prices may be lower than discussed in class.
    - c. Practice bartering with the students for some of the products discussed in the open market. Put emphasis on the fact that in a retail market unless marked down you cannot change the price of a product.
  5. Have the class begin to think of items they would want to try to sell if they were a part of the open market of Brazil.
    - a. Tell the students that in the future they will be in charge of creating their own market.
    - b. Ask the students why they chose this item?
    - c. Would selling an item like this be enough to support your family?
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## Items from the Open/Retail Market

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<b>From the “Open Market”</b>	<b>From the “Retail Market”</b>
1) Carnival Mask	1) Cameras
2) Wooden Flute	2) Jacket
3) Jewelry	3) Shoes
4) Dress	4) Jewelry
5) Shoes	5) Birthday Card
6) Fruit	6) Vegetables
7) Cashews	7) DVDs
8) Jeans	8) Ties
9) Purses	9) Light bulbs
10) CDs	10) Toothbrush

# 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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# Nas Escolas

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1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



## A Brazilian Student

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*Boa tarde!* My name is Ana, and I am 16 years old. My family is very proud of the fact that I have made it to my 8<sup>th</sup> and final mandatory year of school. Of the 1,000 students that started 1<sup>st</sup> grade with me, only 170 of us remain. In fact, half of my class quit school by the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Many of them had to begin working by age 10, so they couldn't work and go to school at the same time.

I am fortunate because both of my parents are employed. I live in a large city in Northeastern Brazil called Recife. Of the 2.9 million people in my city, less than half are employed. Although my parents are both school teachers, we do not have enough money to move out of my *favela*, or slum, and into an apartment.

My parents want me to leave school after I finish high school so that I can become a teacher like them, but I don't want to become a teacher for a couple of reasons. First of all, I don't want to have to travel to teach at many different schools. Since school only lasts 2-3 hours a day for us, my parents have to teach a morning, an afternoon, and a night session at 3 different schools in order to be considered employed full-time.

I go to night school from 7 pm – 10 pm daily, so I spend most of my days alone. However, I leave for school at 4 pm each day because I take 3 different busses to get there. I don't even arrive home until after midnight, so I often sleep in.

I'm lucky that I don't have to cook because I get a free meal, like all other students in my school. I also don't have to worry about what to wear because our school requires a uniform, like most public schools. Homework is not a problem for me, too, because my teacher does not assign it to us. In fact, teachers are often absent and we don't have substitutes, so class just gets cancelled.

Overall, I do enjoy my teachers and classes. We are required to learn Portuguese, Social Studies, History, Geography, Physics, Biology, and Math. We also have special classes that teach us traditional music and dances of Brazil. In gym, we learn *capoeira*, which is a form of martial arts that originates from the slave heritage of Brazil.

Those students who decide to stay in school must attend 75% of the time and score at least a 75% on their assessments. Many students do not, so often our classes are filled with students who range in age. For example: the oldest student in my 8<sup>th</sup> grade is 37 years old, and I am one of the youngest at 16 years old. It's also nice to be able to study with my best friend's dad!

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Behavior and discipline can sometimes become a problem because of the large age differences. Other contributing factors could be the lack of resources and the poor school structure. Don't think I'm totally complaining about our problems. I happen to enjoy the amount of freedom I have. We are able to socialize throughout the school day, even in class!

Well, it's December and the school year is almost over. Wish me luck in my final exams. And, I hope to write more again when I return to school next year in February!

Até logo,

Ana

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# An American Student

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Whats up! My name is Dillyn. I am a 14 year old student in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Next year, I will be in the high school, which means I will graduate in 4 years. I've known most of my classmates since Kindergarten and some are also my best friends. I can't wait until I turn 16 to get my driver's license, which means freedom. I'll finally be able to get a part-time job at the food court in the mall. I can use my money on whatever I want: clothes, CD's, movies and going out.

My weekdays can be very hectic. I balance basketball practice five days a week, with 1 night a week devoted to the Yearbook Club. My two passions are playing ball and taking photos. If my dreams of becoming an NBA basketball pro don't work out (since I'm only 5'2"), I need to keep my grades up so I can get into a decent university.

I go to school from 7am to 3pm and stay at least 2 hours afterward with either basketball or Yearbook Club. A typical dinner is on the run, usually my choice: McDonalds or pizza. As soon as I get home I check my e-mail and instant message my friends. Next, I do as much homework as my mind will let me, normally 2 hours worth.

Let's talk more about school. Overall, I do enjoy my teachers and classes. We are required to learn English, Reading, Social Studies, Science, Math, and a foreign language. We have special classes like: Gym, Music, Art, Tech Ed, and Computers. During class, the teachers expect us to pay attention and we can socialize and visit friends at lunch. I'm lucky that my mom packs my lunch everyday, because I would hate to waste \$2.50 on a school lunch. I use that money to buy chips and cookies from the vending machines before b-ball practice. Don't get me wrong, everything isn't horrible; overall it's not the best tasting food.

Besides good food, my image matters. My parents mainly complain about the cost of my clothing. I like to get new outfits, shoes and cell phones whenever they will buy them for me. It is very important that I look good at all times.

I just thought of the first place to wear my new outfit. Once a month the school hosts a school dance, where everyone is invited. Normally someone's parent drops a group of us off at the school and someone else's picks us up. My parents joke that they can drive to my school with their eyes closed since they drive me to school in the morning instead of making me ride the bus.

Well, it's December, and the school year is almost half over. I know I'll have a great 10 days off during Winter Break. See you in the New Year.

Later,

Dillyn

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# Race in Brazil and the U.S.: A Comparison

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## Objectives

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

- Explain the concept of “racial democracy” as it is used in Brazil.
  - Apply the concepts of *unum* and *pluribus* to racial relationships in Brazil.
  - Apply the concepts of inclusivity and exclusivity to racial relations in Brazil.
  - Compare and contrast American and Brazilian views of race relations.
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## Materials

- Student Handout: **Race and Class in Brazil**
  - Student Handout: **An African-American in Brazil**
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## Activities

1. Write the terms *unum* and *pluribus* on the chalkboard.
    - a. Ask students if they are familiar with these terms and if they have ever heard them before. (Emphasize that the motto of the United States “E pluribus unum” means “Out of many, one.”)
    - b. Circle the term “unum” and emphasize that all societies contain forces of unum: they are the forces in society that people share; those ideas, experiences, and aspects of culture that make people feel as though they belong to the group.
    - c. Ask students to share the things that unite them together as a group: school spirit, etc.
    - d. Circle the term “pluribus” and explain that all societies also contain forces of pluribus: they are those forces that drive wedges between people in society, things that separate and divide them.
    - e. Ask students to share the things that separate them and make them different from one another: religion, ethnicity, neighborhoods, etc.
  2. Write the terms *inclusive* and *exclusive* on the chalkboard.
    - a. Circle the term “exclusive” and explain that in an exclusive society, power, economic opportunity, and social participation are restricted to a select few. Those people who do not possess the necessary qualifications and characteristics are left on the outside looking in.
    - b. Circle the term “inclusive” and explain that inclusive societies are based on tolerance and acceptance of diversity. In these societies, everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.
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**Activities  
(continued)**

- c. Ask students to hypothesize whether exclusive societies have a high degree of pluribus or unum? Why? (Explain to them that, since forces of pluribus tend to divide, they will result in polarization and exclusivity if they are allowed to dominate.)
  - d. Ask students to hypothesize whether inclusive societies have a high degree of pluribus or unum? Why? (Explain to them that, since forces of unum tend to unite, they tend to result in a more egalitarian system.)
3. Distribute the student handout entitled Race and Class in Brazil.
    - a. Direct students to read the first section of the handout: “A History of Race in Brazil.”
    - b. Ask students to determine based on the reading if Brazil appears to be a homogenous or a multi-ethnic society? In what sense does this early racial history mirror that of the United States? In what ways does it differ?
    - c. Direct students to read the second section of the handout: “Casa Grande e Senzala.”
    - d. Ask students to summarize Freyre’s arguments about why Brazil can be termed a “racial democracy.” Would this be a force of unum or pluribus? Would such a society be inclusive or exclusive? Why?
  4. Direct students to read the section entitled “The American and Brazilian Concepts of Race.”
    - a. Ask students to explain the fundamental differences in the American and Brazilian concepts of race. Which appears to more based on a pluribus approach to race? Why?
    - b. Ask students to explain which of these approaches would appear to result in a more inclusive society? Why?
    - c. Direct students to read the final section: “Does racism exist in Brazil?”
    - d. Ask students to answer the question reflected in the title. Do blacks appear to have equal opportunity in Brazil? Why or why not?
    - e. Divide the class into discussion groups. Based on the information they have read, direct each group to determine whether the United States or Brazil appears to have a more inclusive society based on race and ethnicity. (Insist that students provide a rationale and cite evidence for their positions.)
    - f. When the groups have reached their conclusions, direct each group to share theirs with the class.

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**Activities  
(continued)**

5. Distribute the student handout entitled **An African-American in Brazil.**
    - a. Direct students to read the first section of the handout: “A Personal Quest.”
    - b. Ask students to summarize the goal of this American traveler’s research in Brazil. What is her ethnic background? Why would she be curious about the reality of Freyre’s “racial democracy” theory?
    - c. Direct students to read the second section of the handout: “Porto Galihnos.”
    - d. Ask students to summarize the traveler’s experiences. Based on her interactions, what appear to be the Brazilian attitudes toward race? Do they confirm Freyre’s theory? Does Brazilian society appear to be inclusive or exclusive regarding race?
    - e. Direct students to read the next segment: “While Shopping.”
    - f. Ask students to hypothesize whether this experience confirms or refutes their previous observations? Why?
  6. Direct students to read the next two sections: “At the Museum” and “In the Schools.”
    - a. Ask students to explain, based on these encounters, whether or not Freyre’s racial democracy concept is true in reality? Why?
    - b. Ask students to explain the significance of the changes being discussed in the school curriculum? Would this result in a more inclusive or exclusive history of Brazil? Why?
    - c. Direct students to read the next three sections: “On Zumbi,” “An Interesting Dinner” and “Views on Racism.”
    - d. Ask students to explain what these experiences reveal about the reality of race in Brazil.
  7. Concluding Activity
    - a. Assign students to compose an essay in which they give their analysis of the African-American traveler’s experiences in Brazil.
    - b. Ask students to explain whether or not the writer perceives racial prejudice in Brazil.
    - c. Explain that students must provide at least three examples to prove their hypothesis.
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# Race and Class in Brazil

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## A History of Race in Brazil

The conventional way of viewing the question of race and ethnicity in Brazil is to see the country as some sort of fusion of three ethnic groups – white, black, and American Indian. That is in a general sense the case, but the notion is complicated by the great variety of ethnicities that exist in each of these three groups.

The conquest of Brazil was undertaken by adventurers and *degredados* (persons who had been expelled to the colonies from Portugal for a crime). Unlike the Spanish, who found high civilizations of great population, the Portuguese encountered fairly sparse populations of Amerindians. Unlike the English, the Portuguese did not colonize in family groups, so a Portuguese-Indian hybrid was characteristic of the early colonial population.

The Portuguese also brought large numbers of African slaves to the Americas. Of the roughly six million Africans who survived the Atlantic crossing, almost two-thirds went to Brazil. With the arrival of African slaves, all three groups blended, and by the end of the colonial period it would have been difficult to identify many in Brazil as purely European.

The rapid decline in Amerindian population, due primarily to disease, and the continued importation of African slaves made the population largely black and mulatto for almost two centuries – in 1818 the population of Brazil was 60% black.

In the early nineteenth century, waves of European immigrants began arriving in Brazil. As a result, the population of Brazil became markedly “whiter” than it was in the colonial period. Immigrants came in largest numbers from Portugal, Germany, and Italy. Others included Swiss, Spanish, Czech, Russian, Ukrainian and Polish immigrants. Some immigrants arrived from outside the Europe, including Syria, Lebanon, and Japan. Most of these immigrants went to São Paulo, with lesser numbers going to Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul. (The largest Japanese population outside of Japan is located in São Paulo.)

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## *Casa Grande e Senzala*

Gilberto Freyre (1900 – 1987) was a Brazilian author, professor, and congressman. In 1933, he published the landmark *Casa Grande e Senzala* (*The Great House and the Slave Quarters*), an anthropological and psychological study of Brazilian society. In this work, Freyre argued that the country's racial mixture of Indians, Africans, and Europeans could be seen in a positive light and put forth the idea that Brazil was an example to the world of racial harmony. This has led to a widespread belief of Brazil as a “racial democracy” in which various ethnic groups have commingled to such an extraordinary degree that race is not an issue.

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**The American and Brazilian Concepts of Race**

Although there is considerable historical similarity between Brazil and the United States with regard to race – relatively low indigenous population, importation of African slaves, large-scale European immigration – there is a marked contrast between them today. One revealing contrast is in the terminology used to designate racial mixture between black and white. Throughout much of U.S. history, terms such as mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, and high yellow were used to indicate the degree of African-American ancestry. Today, the United States has adopted a generally binary system in which individuals are thought of as either black or white.

In Brazil, however, a gamut of literally hundreds of terms ranging from *branco fino* (“fine white”) to *negro retinto* (“very dark black”) is used. Intermediate terms include *branco da Bahia* or *branco da terra*, *moreno*, *sarará*, *mulato claro*, *pardo*, *mulato escuro*, *cabo verde*, *cabra*, and *preto* or *crioulo*, roughly on a white to black continuum.

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**Does racism exist in Brazil?**

Brazil has never had separate facilities for different races, and there has never been a race riot in Brazil. A law passed in 1951 and a clause of the 1988 Constitution specifically prohibit racial discrimination. However, blacks are few and far between in the higher ranks of the military, the diplomatic corps, and major corporations. They are by far the majority in such occupations as laundress, porter, and dock worker. Whites outnumber nonwhites in the professions by a ratio of three to one, while half the population working in agriculture and domestic service is nonwhite.

Brazilians are somewhat bewildered by the American view of race. For example, someone like Andrew Young does not look black enough to be called black in Brazil. In addition, because he has held high elective office and wears a suit, this would disqualify him from being considered “black” in Brazil. The adage in Brazil is that “money whitens.”

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**Source**

Adapted from *Culture and Customs of Brazil* by Jon S. Vincent. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 2003, pp. 17 - 23

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## An African-American in Brazil

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### A Personal Quest

Before leaving for Brazil, I was exposed to Gilberto Freyre's concept of racial democracy as expressed in *Casa Grande e Senzala*. Was there really racial democracy in Brazil? As an African-American woman, I wondered how much of it I would find to be true for myself or at all.

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### Porto Galihnos

In the past, Porto Galihnos was where they brought African slaves into the region. Today, it is a crowded, popular beach full of tourists and vendors. While at Porto Galihnos I spoke to a male traveling companion in our group about race relations in Brazil. His theory at this point was that every place should be like Brazil. He felt really that people really got along well. My reply was that it seemed so on the surface, but I still questioned what I was seeing. His viewpoint was from that of a white American male and mine was from that of a black American female.

We talked about the differences in reactions to blacks and whites being seen together in the United States and in Brazil. Shock was not a reaction you saw in Brazil. There were no apparent stares or reactions to blacks and whites being together. Times have brought about change in the United States, but not to the degree of acceptability which seems to be the case in Brazil.

Suddenly, in the midst of our conversation two men strolling the beach for a paying audience came up to us and started making up a song. They sang to us about being a couple. Neither of them questioned that he could be anything other than my husband. Both of them were older men. One had slightly tanned skin and the other was a golden brown. My friend gave them a tip and mentioned to me that they gave no thought about our color.

I was also interested in examining the color of the beach vendors. My traveling companion thought the coloring of the vendors was varied. My other traveling companion, a female, did not. She had walked all around the beach and felt most vendors were black or at least what we considered black. Her response brought up another interesting question. What is black? To her as a white American female, how is "black" determined? To a Brazilian what does "black" mean?

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### While Shopping

When a female companion and I were out shopping, she came up to me and immediately let me know that a child thought we were related. This boy wanted to be our guide. He was about eleven. He thought my friend was my mother, although I am a definite brown and she is a definite white. It did surprise me. Biracial families do exist in the United States, but Brazilian families seem to be of many different shades.

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**At the Museum**

When we visited a museum, I was interested in the statue of a black man that appeared in the entrance way. I asked the tour guide about it. He said it was a slave dressed up by his Portuguese master and taught all the manners to welcome well-to-do foreign guests. It was this master's objective to show that black slaves could do what any man could mentally, but the foreign guests were insulted to be met and welcomed by a black slave.

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**In the Schools**

Throughout our stay we visited a variety of schools. It was surprising to me to see so many of the people that were in charge of education were what I considered to be black. I asked each one about racism. They expressed that there was an inequality in education that was being addressed by laws. One solution to address racism was the curriculum in the schools. White Europeans would not be the only ones given credit for contributing to the history of Brazil. Native Americans, blacks and Europeans would all be given credit for the development of Brazil. Well, this problem sounded very familiar. It was not just European descendants that helped to make the United States. African-Americans, Native Americans and other ethnic groups contributed as well.

The schools informed me that there was a black history month. I was happy to hear that. They celebrate in November. My traveling group and I shared that we celebrate in February and we celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday in January.

However, when I asked students to tell me what they knew about Zumbi, there were only two schools where students knew who he was. (He was a heroic black leader who led a *quilombo* – a refuge for runaway slaves – in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.) Both of these schools were model schools which had been recently reformed. When asked people in the general population, many did not know him. One taxi driver I befriended told me that they celebrate a day for him in May. There are *festas* (parties).

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**On Zumbi**

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**An Interesting  
Dinner**

One educator invited me to a dinner because of my research on race in Brazil. She belonged to a group of women mostly of African descent. The purpose of the group was to discuss issues that plagued people of African descent, but also issues affecting women. I was honored and excited to be invited.

It was an elegant night in a fine restaurant seldom attended by blacks. (I was told most, historically, didn't have the money to attend.) Here sat well-educated and well-known women. Most of these women had dominant features of African ancestry. There were those that wore their hair in braids and a few that I am sure could have traced their roots back to an African tribe. When it was time to pray, I did not realize it was going to be an African god to whom I was praying. When it was time to sing, I wanted to sing. It was not Portuguese. It was an African language; I was that is Yoruba. As they sang, the crowd broke out into a dance. It was an African dance. My African connections to my past were not so close back in the United States.

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**Views on  
Racism**

As I took classes in Brazil, I questioned my professors about laws and racism in Brazil. Their response was that there were laws on racism. They also said there would be no laws if racism did not exist.

One of our helpful Brazilian guides of white ancestry worked with groups studying racial problems. She explained to me what "*boa aparencia*" was. It means the "good appearance," which is code for looking white. I had seen billboards (advertisements) with this expression, but I had not previously realized the significance.

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