

## All About Uruguay

### Overview:

An important part of becoming a global citizen is learning about different countries in the world. In this lesson students will learn about the people, traditions, food, and lifestyles of Uruguay and create a mock television program highlighting what they have learned.

**Grade Level:** 6-12

### Subject:

Language Arts, Geography

### Learning Objectives:

Students will do the following:

- create graphic organizers
- conduct Internet research
- engage in small-group and whole-group discussion
- summarize and synthesize information
- write scripts
- create a mock television program
- respond to writing prompts

### Learning Activities

#### Building Background

##### Activity One: An Introduction

*The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to Uruguay.*

1. As a class, visit Google Earth at <http://earth.google.com/> and download the free application that allows one to “fly” on Earth to view satellite imagery, maps, terrain, 3D buildings, and other aspects of the physical world. To locate the capital of Uruguay in relation to your location, type in the address of your school and “Montevideo, Uruguay.”
2. Divide the class into five small groups and ask each group to create a poster about Uruguay containing sketches, images, and text. Provide students with the resources listed below as inspiration for their posters.

- <http://www.uruwashi.org/About%20Uruguay.htm#Uruguay%20-%20A%20Profile>
- [http://video.nationalgeographic.com/places/countries/country\\_uruguay.html](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/places/countries/country_uruguay.html)

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uy.html>

3. Have each group present its poster to the entire class. Ask each group to share the most surprising thing they learned about Uruguay.

### **Activity Two: Personal Connections**

*The purpose of this activity is to give students an opportunity to reflect on cultural celebrations.*

1. Share the following information with the class. This information was written by a graduate student from Uruguay and features information about different aspects of her country's culture.

#### The Uruguayan Carnival

Though not as famous as the one in Venice or the one in Rio de Janeiro, the Uruguayan Carnival ('Carnaval' in Spanish) has to be one of the longest celebrations It starts in late January and lasts until mid March. It is a tradition that goes back many, many years and it's an essential element of our culture. I know very few Uruguayans who do not enjoy 'Carnaval'. Many different things go on during Carnival, but the main attractions are the performances by groups called 'murgas'. You could say they are hybrids of a theater troupe and a capella group. Year after year, they put together a new show, designing beautiful costumes and writing original songs and skits. Their performance is not only interesting in terms of its artistic merits (the style is very unique, I think), but also in terms of the content (and the level of engagement of the audience they achieve). The lyrics consist of commentary/critique/parodies of the events of the year, both local and global. There's always humour, but they usually touch on important issues.... politics, education, corruption, poverty, etc.

There is an official competition that takes place in a big outdoor Summer Theater (remember it's Summer down there at that time), and it's also broadcast on TV every day. The murgas get judged for everything, from the vocal arrangements to the lyrics, to the costumes and the scenic display. The days when they are not competing on the big stage, they travel from neighborhood to neighborhood in a bus, and perform in smaller stages that have been set up for the Carnival season. Every murga has its fans, just like a rock band; the interesting thing is that their appeal reaches across generations. It's very common for whole families to go to the theater or the local stages (called 'tablados') and spend the evening (a little like a football or baseball game here, there is a lot of eating and drinking involved (mostly beer and 'mate' (see below))). This is one of the things I miss the most. It's an incredible experience, and great discussions ensue after every performance.

Source: L. Britos (2009)

Invite the students to share their responses to this excerpt. Ask the students to compare the experience described with their own cultural celebrations.

### **Activity Three: What Would It Be Like?**

*The purpose of this activity is to provide students with a framework for understanding how to learn about someone else's culture and life experiences.*

1. Divide the class into six small groups. Give the first three groups the scenario listed below.

#### Scenario One

Your parents have just told you that your family will be moving to Uruguay because your mother has been given an exciting opportunity to study and work there. You will be leaving in two months. Brainstorm a list of questions that you want to know about your new home.

Give the second three groups the scenario listed below.

#### Scenario Two

Your parents have just told you that close relatives from Uruguay are moving to the United States and that they will be living with your family for the next few months. They have a son who will be attending middle school and a daughter who will be in high school. Brainstorm a list of things that you think would be helpful to the new students as they begin school in this country.

2. Ask each group to share its brainstormed lists with the class. Lead a class discussion comparing the lists. Have students discuss their thoughts about the experience of coming to a new country and how and what one learns from new cultural experiences.

### **Steps for Learning**

#### **Activity One: News & Information**

*The purpose of this activity is to provide students with an opportunity to explore how information is presented in varied kinds of media programs.*

1. Ask the students to brainstorm a list of news and information television programs. As a class, discuss the kinds of information each show highlights and the format each show uses to present information. You may also choose to visit the websites of the following programs to give students ideas:
  - 60 Minutes <http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/60minutes/main3415.shtml>
  - National Geographic Channel <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/>

- CNN Anderson Cooper 360 <http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/>
- The History Channel <http://www.history.com/>

Ask the students to brainstorm a list of television shows that appeal to them and reasons why they find the shows appealing. Compare this list to the previous list and discuss the differences and similarities. Tell the class that they will be using what they learned to create their own video for a mock television program on Uruguay.

### **Activity Two: Create Your Program**

*The purpose of this activity is give students an opportunity to synthesize what they have learned.*

1. Divide the class into small working groups. As a class, choose a program theme. Then decide what the segments of the program will be. You should plan on each segment lasting approximately two to four minutes. For example, you might choose to focus on daily life of Uruguay, arts and music, geography, history, or politics. Choose one group to act as the Host/Narrator.

To help the groups decide what area they would like to focus on, encourage them to conduct Internet and library resources on Uruguay. The following is a list of resources that students can use to begin researching:

- CIA World Factbook: Uruguay <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uy.html>
- The Art of Uruguay <http://www.uruwashi.org/Art%20Exhibitions.htm>
- Music from Uruguay <http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org/searchresults.aspx?sPhrase=Uruguayan&sType=culturegroup>
- <http://www.uruwashi.org/About%20Uruguay.htm#Uruguay%20-%20A%20Profile>
- [http://video.nationalgeographic.com/places/countries/country\\_uruguay.html](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/places/countries/country_uruguay.html)
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uy.html>
- A description of a murga: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murga>

2. Have the students summarize what they learned and write their scripts. Give students an opportunity to practice.

3. Encourage the students to incorporate varied media in their performance. For example, they might take digital photos, create movie clips or use drawings. If possible, videotape the presentation. Invite others in the school and community to view the students' work.

### **Activity Three: Reflection Time**

*The purpose of this activity is to give students an opportunity to reflect on what they learned.*

1. Ask the students to respond in writing to the following prompts in writing journals:

- What are some ways that you can learn about another person's culture?
- What can you learn by living in a different place?
- Would you like to live in a different place? Why or why not?
- What are some ways that you can teach other's about your culture?

2. Ask the students to share their responses in pairs. Then invite the students to share their thoughts and ideas with the entire class.

### **Extension Activity: Mate**

1. Provide the students with the information below.

Mate: Uruguayan Tea

Uruguayans drink a special kind of tea, called mate (pronounced /ma-teh/). Hot water is poured over ground leaves on a gourd and sipped using a metal straw. At all times, you'll see people on the streets with their thermos under their arms and their mates in hand. Virtually everyone owns a special bag to carry the thermos, mate and metal straw. Mate is our "coffee". Apart from the caffeine it contributes, its main value is in the interactions that occur around it, as the mate is usually shared in a group (everyone sips from the same gourd, taking turns).

2. Have the students watch a video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKNMOGqpzYA> that shows how to make mate. If possible, try making mate in your classroom.

## National Education Standards

[www.mcrel.org](http://www.mcrel.org)

### READING

**Standard 7.** Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

"<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=7&standardID=7>"  
<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=7&standardID=7>

#### Level III (Grades 6-8)

1. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., electronic texts; textbooks; biographical sketches; directions; essays; primary source historical documents, including letters and diaries; print media, including editorials, news stories, periodicals, and magazines; consumer, workplace, and public documents, including catalogs, technical directions, procedures, and bus routes)

3. Summarizes and paraphrases information in texts (e.g., arranges information in chronological, logical, or sequential order; conveys main ideas, critical details, and underlying meaning; uses own words or quoted materials; preserves author's perspective and voice)

#### Level IV (Grades 9-12)

1. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, catalogs, job-related materials, schedules, speeches, memoranda, public documents, maps)

### WRITING

#### Standard 4.

Gathers and uses information for research purposes

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=7&standardID=4>"  
<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=7&standardID=4>

### **Level III (Grades 6-8)**

3. Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics (e.g., magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, schedules, journals, phone directories, globes, atlases, almanacs, technological sources)

### **Level IV (Grades 9-12)**

2. Uses a variety of print and electronic sources to gather information for research topics (e.g., news sources such as magazines, radio, television, newspapers; government publications; microfiche; telephone information services; databases; field studies; speeches; technical documents; periodicals; Internet)

## **GEOGRAPHY**

**Standard 6.** Understands that culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/reference.asp?item=benchmark&BenchmarkID=2915&subjectID=8>

### **Level III (Grades 6-8)**

## **WORKING WITH OTHERS**

**Standard 1.**

Contributes to the overall effort of a group

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=22&StandardID=1> " \t "\_new" <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=22&StandardID=1>

### **Level IV (Grade K-12)**