

LIVE FROM BRAZIL!



READING

Grades: 3-5

Objectives: Students will read and interpret informational text, practice their note-taking strategy while becoming familiar with basic information about the nation of Brazil.

What's Inside?

- nonfiction reading about Brazil
- graphic note organizer

Sources: Britannica Kids and CILC Maker Space

BRAZIL



INTRODUCTION

The largest country in South America, Brazil takes up about half of the continent. It is one of the world's largest and most economically important countries. It is also filled with some of the greatest natural treasures on Earth. Brazil's Amazon River basin, including the Amazon rainforest, is one of Earth's richest areas of plant and animal life. The Iguazú Falls in the south is one of the country's most famous natural wonders. Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking nation in South America. While language sets it apart from its neighbors, however, the country has much in common with the rest of the region. The capital is Brasília.

GEOGRAPHY

Brazil shares borders with every South American nation except Ecuador and Chile. The Atlantic Ocean lies to the east. To the south is Uruguay; to the southwest are Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia; to the west, Peru; to the northwest, Colombia; and to the north are Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and the territory of French Guiana. The country covers an area of 3,300,171 square miles (8,547,404 square kilometers).



In such a large country there are many different geographical regions. The two that dominate the landscape are the Amazon River basin in the north and the Brazilian Highlands, or Plateau, in the center, east, and south. The northeastern coast is flat and dry; the central part of the Brazilian Highlands is mostly grassland; and the southeastern coast includes narrow plains and scenic mountains. In the central-western part of Brazil is a vast wetland called the Pantanal.

The Amazon, with its many large tributaries, is the world's largest river system. Other major rivers in Brazil include the Paraguay, the Paraná, the Tocantins, the Araguaia, and the São Francisco.



Brazil is the world's largest tropical country. In the rainforest, temperatures average 80° F (27° C) all year round and rainfall is heavy. South of the Amazon lowland the climate becomes more varied. Along the coast temperatures can reach as low as 57° F (14° C), and during winter there are sometimes freezing temperatures in the southern hills.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The Amazon rainforest has the most varied plant life on Earth, with about 50,000 different species. Individual plants of each species are widely scattered throughout the forest. This helps them survive blight, disease, and pests.

The animal life along the Amazon is equally diverse. Because of the tall trees, very little sunlight reaches the ground. Most animals therefore live in the trees, at different heights up to the treetops at about 150 feet (45 meters), where food and sunlight are plentiful.





hyacinth macaw



jaguar



capybaras



armadillo

Animals living in the tree canopy include tree frogs and salamanders, monkeys, swarms of insects, and hundreds of types of birds. Parrots, macaws, and hummingbirds are common. Brazil has tens of thousands of butterflies—more than any other place in the world.

Larger animals in the rainforest include jaguars, tapirs, pumas, and sloths. Along the riverbanks can be found the world's largest rodent, the capybara, as well as alligators, boa constrictors, and turtles. The river itself contains a wide variety of fish, including electric eels, catfish, and the famous piranha. Manatees and freshwater dolphins are also common.

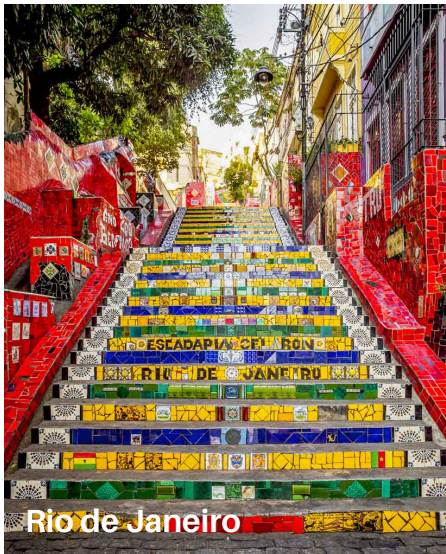
Outside the Amazon basin, in the Pantanal wetland, are great numbers of birds, reptiles, insects, and larger animals such as anteaters and armadillos. In the southeastern part of the country, where many of Brazil's largest cities are located, most of the original forests have been destroyed to make way for the cities. Because of this, few wild animals remain in southeastern Brazil.

In the drier northeastern region of Brazil, the plant cover is low and spread out. It is known as caatinga, from an Indian term meaning "white forest." Thicker woodlands known as agreste grow in moister areas, mainly between the caatinga and the coast. Covered in thorns, these woods may in places reach heights of up to 30 feet (10 meters), with interlocking branches that make them hard to get through.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Brazil's population is a mix of several different ethnic groups. These include descendants of the original Indians, the Portuguese who colonized the region beginning in the 1500s, and the Africans whom the Portuguese brought as slaves to work their plantations and mines. Starting in the mid-1800s, thousands of European settlers from Italy, Germany, and parts of eastern Europe began to move to the country. Later, in the early 1900s, large groups of Japanese also moved to Brazil. From the earliest days of Brazil's colonial history, these groups have intermarried, so that today most Brazilians have a variety of ancestors.

The Portuguese language, enriched by Indian and African influences, is the official language of Brazil. Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion, though a number of Indian and African beliefs are also still practiced.



More than 80 percent of Brazil's people live in cities or towns, and 12 of those cities have more than 1 million inhabitants each. São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are two of the world's largest cities. Some of the other major cities are Salvador, Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza, Brasília, Recife, and Pôrto Alegre. Most of the rural population is concentrated along the east coast or in the southern highlands, though more and more rural families have moved inland, to the Amazon basin and elsewhere, to clear forests to make room for farms and mines.



BRITANNICA KIDS

Source: <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Brazil/345654>

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Name _____

Taking Notes

Directions: Use this organizer to take notes on the essay.

list of key words

words I need to define

summary of main points

interesting facts

questions I have