

CATEGORY: BRAZIL: NOW

CONCEPT: RACE/ETHNICITY, social class, migration

ACTIVITY: BRAZIL: A RACIAL MELTING POT. This is an analysis of the racial characteristics of modern Brazil, with some historical background. The concept of the "Melting Pot" is frequently used in many Social Studies programs throughout the country in order to describe the ethnic composition of the American people.

OBJECTIVES: The student will be able to describe the ethnic composition of Brazil, tracing some historic facts. A personal analysis of the characteristics of the Brazilian population will be carried out by the student, who will interpret and manipulate given data and transform the findings into pie charts. The "melting pot" concept will be understood and applied in the elaboration of a poster.

MATERIALS: Reproductions of the worksheet  
Magazines  
Cardboard, colored pencils and markers, scissors, glue

PROCEDURE: Hand out the article and attached worksheet. Allow for discussion and questions while the students read. They may need help in calculating the percentages, so you are encouraged to do the first few as a group. Pie charts were introduced in the unit on Venezuelan population. To complete the unit you may want to compare the North American "melting pot" with what is known about Brazil.

HELPFUL HINTS: The question of "race" is indeed a slippery topic. One of the important aspects of this unit is its stress on different possible interpretations of the word "race" and racial categories. It would be good to discuss this in class. Here are some facts which can encourage thought and discussion.

1. Among the "racial" categories in the U.S. census are the following:
  - a.) White = 100% European ancestry
  - b.) Black = any % of African ancestry
  - c.) Hispanic = Spanish speaking or culturally "Hispanic"
  - d.) Native American = any percentage Indian heritage

Isn't there some lack of exactness in our concept of race? What about a Black Puerto Rican? A Chicano who is also of Indian heritage?

2. Hispanics all over the world celebrate "El Día de la Raza" on Columbus Day. The "Day of the Race" celebrates a common language, common customs, common religion . . . just about everything except common color.

**LEVEL: MIDDLE GRADES**

**Source:** Gibbs, Virginia G. *Latin America: Curriculum Materials for the Middle Grades*. Center for Latin America, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. 1985. 1989.

VOCABULARY: melting pot, race, miscegenation

RESOURCES: Marvin Harris, Patterns of Race in the Americas, New York: Walker, 1964 (excellent study of attitudes towards race in the Americas, North and South). Carl N. Degler, Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States, New York: McMillan, 1971. Magnus Morner, Race Mixture in the History of Latin America, Boston: Little, Brown, 1967. Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization, New York: Knopf, 1964.

## BRAZIL: A RACIAL MELTING POT

When Brazil was discovered in 1500 by a Portuguese captain named Pedro Alvares Cabral, its population consisted of Indians. It is estimated that 2-4 million Indians lived in the area at that time. Soon after European discovery, this Portuguese colony received waves of immigrants of many nationalities, including African slaves. Thus, Brazil became probably the biggest racial melting-pot in the world. During the early colonial days there was widespread intermarriage between people of different races. This process of mixing is called "miscegenation." Marriage and family between Blacks and Whites, Whites and Indians, Blacks and Indians, plus second and third generation mixes produced offspring classified many different ways: mulato, cafuso, caboclo, mameluco, and mestiço. Over time, intermarriage has produced a rich variety of individuals of almost infinite skin shades and racial characteristics. These people all have one thing in common: They are Brazilians.

Throughout the country, especially among people of the younger generation, there is almost a total lack of race consciousness. In other words, the question of race to determine friendships, marriage, treatment and the like is pretty much ignored. Just in case, there are a series of laws to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race. There is a growing tendency on the part of the non-white population, whatever their shades of color, to refer to themselves just as "moreno," which means brunette or dark.

The total population of Brazil, in 1982, was 119,070,865 inhabitants. The racial distribution of the population is given on this chart:

CÔR (Color)					
(sex)	(white)	(black)	(yellow)	(mixed)	(not declared)
SEXO	BRANCA	PRETA	AMARELA	PARDA	SEM DECLARAÇÃO
(men)					
HOMENS	31,948,987	3,530,052	390,637	23,120,915	155,508
(women)					
MULHERES	33,263,772	3,479,052	364,258	22,658,551	159,133
TOTAL	65,212,759	7,009,104	754,895	45,779,466	314,641

Source: Anuário Estatístico do Brasil - 1982

Let's look for a moment at the terms used to designate different groups. For the classification, the word "côr" (color) is used rather than race. Other terms are "branca" (White-European origin), "preta" (Black), "parda" (mixed). This chart can be misleading to people in the U.S. because of the distinction between "color" and "race." For example, a person who would be considered a light-skinned Black in the U.S., might be considered White in Brazil. In other words, in the U.S. a person with any amount of Black ancestry is classified as Black regardless of skin color. In Brazil, the classification is much looser and often up to individual perception. Also, since difference of color is not considered an important issue, many people simply did not respond to the voluntary question on the 1982 census.

While most Brazilians descend from Portuguese and/or Africans, there have been several other important currents of immigration that have helped make up the population of Brazil. There are important German communities in the southern states of the country: Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Paraná. About 600,000 Japanese settled around the city of São Paulo where they carry out intensive truck gardening. There are also large communities of Hungarians, Italians, Lebanese, Poles, Russians, Spaniards and Syrians. Irish, Scottish and Dutch have also settled in Brazil in relatively large numbers.

There are clearly many types of people in Brazil. It is impossible to say what a typical Brazilian looks like. Olive skinned and curly black hair, dark brown skin and red hair, blond and blue-eyed, all are Brazilian and have a part in the wonderful variety of foods, music, accents and people to be found in the country.

Here are a series of activities to help understand Brazil's racial mixture:

1. Using the table given to you in the reading, further analyze Brazil's population by calculating percentages. For example:

a) You want to know what percentage of Brazil's population is categorized as White.

Total population	=	119,070,865
Total White population	=	65,212,759

$$\text{percentage of white population} = \frac{\text{total white population} \times 100\%}{\text{total population}}$$

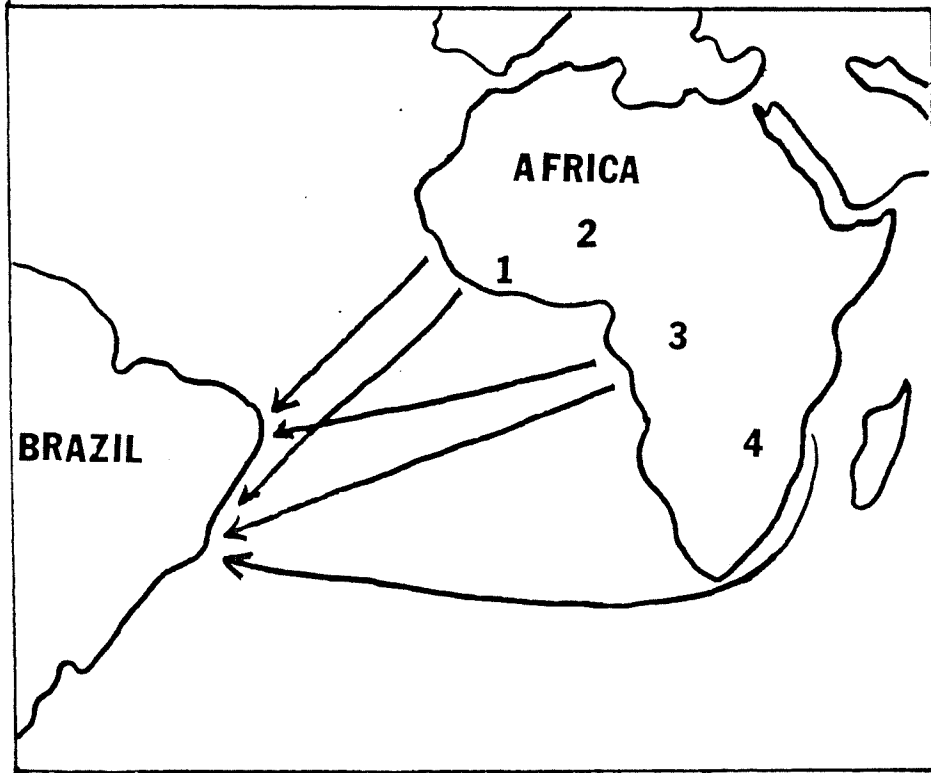
b) You want to know what percentage of the white population is male.

Total white population	=	65,212,759
Total white male population	=	31,948,987

$$\text{percentage of white males} = \frac{31,948,987 \times 100\%}{65,212,759}$$

You can continue these calculations for the other population groups and establish the percentages for each.

2. Make pie charts of all your calculations, using colored pencils to enhance the drawings.
3. With pictures from magazines and your pie charts make a poster with the title "Brazil: A True Melting Pot." Have scissors, glue, markers and cardboard on hand to make the poster.



Map Showing Distribution of Major African Cultures in Brazil

1. Sudanese
2. Islamic Sudanese
3. Angola-Congo Bantu
4. Mozambique Bantu

