

Latin America - You Are There!

WebQuest Description: An exploration of the lively, energetic, flavorful, and authentic local cultures of Latin American nations.

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum: Social Studies

Keywords: Latin America, culture, world geography, blog

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Introduction

You are a professional travel blogger and are heading to beautiful Latin America to launch your new blog called You Are There! In three different Latin American countries, you'll experience as much of local life as you can, diving into languages, food and drink, religion, leisure, sports, holidays and celebrations, arts and music, customs and traditions, dress, and any other cultural aspects that you find significant or interesting. Look for the most cool parts of life in your three countries that make your place so unique. The local flavors and flare is what makes travel abroad so rewarding and so much fun! Your blog's readers will be depending upon you to dash them away for an escape into a new world, so you must not only be detailed and descriptive, but also exciting and bold in your writing. This blog should appear like a journal (a real blog) that will chronicle what you see, experience, and enjoy for the days of your travel.

1. You will select three Latin American nations upon which to report. - one from South America (but not Brazil) - one from Central America (Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, or Panama) - one from the Caribbean islands (Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico*, Bahamas, Trinidad & Tobago, or Barbados) Do not be afraid to visit countries that you are not too familiar with already. All of these nations have fascinating, lively, and beautiful cultures and locations. Branch out!
2. Online and in the library you will research the local culture of your nations. Some helpful research links are included on the Libguide; DO NOT USE WIKIPEDIA OR SIMPLY GOOGLE SEARCH YOUR NATIONS. You are looking for examples and description of any cultural aspect that you could witness or experience if you actually traveled to or lived in these nations. Culture includes any of the elements we have discussed in class, such as: language, religion, arts, music, food, clothing, architecture, housing, leisure activities, sports, traditions, customs, behavior, holidays, celebrations, history, economics, government, currency, or any other feature that distinguishes one group's way of life from another's. *** Remember that there should be a difference from how the locals live, to what tourists seek out. This project should include many different features than the city report from first semester. Activities that you could do in any country or are not specific only to yours are not a good idea - no tourist traps or big chains. ***
3. You will transfer your deep research findings into a descriptive, engaging, and well-crafted travel blog for readers to keep up with your journey and experiences. You will be in each country for 2 full days of adventure/encounters and can experience basically anything you want in the nation.

Tasks

For all three countries:

1. Begin each nation with an introductory section (150 word minimum) that kicks off your travels. Pretend here that you are writing while you wait at the airport, or are on the plane as you are heading toward the new country. What do you know before you get there from having read about the place? (You will have done research before travelling - what do you know going into the country?) What are you looking forward to? What essential information can you pass on to the reader? In this section you must discuss both physical geography and standard of living for the country, including specific examples of each. Set up the trip in this section!
2. Your blog must then include one entry for each day (two per country), detailing what you did, where you went, and what you experienced that day. Each day must contain a minimum of 300 words. Be descriptive and specific in how you write. Explain fully and remember the readers are depending on you - they don't know really anything about where you are!
3. As you did with the introduction, end each country with a brief conclusion as you leave - what lessons/memories will you take with you and what made this country so special? 100 word minimum for each conclusion.
4. As you format your blog and get it to look just the way you want, be sure that every entry has pictures to display what you experienced and really give this project a realistic feel. *** It is very important that you understand what your role is in this project, and that you write every word with that position in mind. Always steer the writing toward your specific readers who want to discover with you the places and peoples. This is a lesson in writing with purpose, or understanding tone and voice in writing. (That also means 1st person and past tense are necessary.) Lastly, each county is different, and accordingly each section of your blog should be too. Do not make a carbon copy of how you handle each country and repeat it - that appears lazy and reads as boring.

Process

1. As usual for research, you must produce a bibliography in Noodletools, including of all the sources you used to compile the project. In Noodletools, be sure to share your work into the folder "2021 Latin America C/E Block". There will be an early bibliography due (check your assignments), and then you are expected to update it as you find additional sources along the way. Remember that all sources that you consult must be in Noodletools. You must use at least three sources per country, including at least three types of sources overall (book, e book, website, online database/encyclopedia). Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All words must be your own, and as we will discuss in class, this writing should have an engaging and unique voice. You have a purpose and a specific audience in mind, so you need to write toward those goals.
2. You will be required to use the Notecard function in Noodletools to help you compile material and then turn it into your own writing. Further instructions will be

provided in class, but this will include homework grades for completing research as assigned in class.3. You will use those notecards to help you write a rough draft of all three countries. You must do so in Google Docs. Pictures are not yet required for the rough draft.4. Next you will be responsible for reviewing one of your classmates' blogs, using the same evaluation requirements that I will be using in the end. Include constructive comments in each entry for the blogs you evaluate. Everyone must have comments for each day/post of their partner's blog. You will be graded upon how effectively you advise your partner, and we will discuss the expectations and process of this stage in class. You can then work the suggestions and comments made for you by your classmates into a revision stage, before the final blog is submitted to me for a grade.5. You will copy/paste your draft into your final blog. Format it to look how you want, and make it your own. We will go over in class how to do this.

Evaluation

This project will count as 25% of your 3rd quarter grade. Good luck, and safe travels!

Category and Score	Insufficient	Adequate	Well done	Excellent	Score
Tone / spirit of the project	Writing is bland and author has not embraced the role they are playing. Portions of the assignment may have been submitted late.	Writing is more descriptive but the author only vaguely nears the role they are playing. Portions of the assignment may have been submitted late.	Writing is colorful, descriptive, and engaging, as the author has embraced their role. All due dates were fulfilled.	Writing is truly captivating and fun to read because the author is extremely convincing in their role. All due dates were fulfilled.	20%
Evidence and examples	Author does not meet 300 words per entry and include at least one image per entry.	Author includes 300 words and one image per entry; provides few relevant and interesting cultural features per entry.	Author includes more than 300 words and one image per entry; provides several relevant and interesting cultural features per entry.	Author includes more than 300 words and one image per entry; provides many relevant and interesting cultural features per entry.	20% per country (3)
Properly formatted bibliography	Does not include the minimum number of sources or apply MLA formatting.	Includes the minimum number of sources but does not properly apply MLA formatting.	Includes the minimum number of sources and does apply MLA formatting.	Includes more than the minimum number of sources and does apply MLA formatting.	10%
Constructive peer evaluation	Shows no signs of careful evaluation and does not provide helpful comments for their peers.	Evaluation has been performed with some care and comments are sporadic.	Evaluation is detailed with a comment for each entry.	Evaluation is very detailed with multiple meaningful comments for each entry.	10%
				Total Score	100%

Conclusion

There are a number of due dates to this project, but the final one is Tuesday February 9. Follow the assignments on Scholar to keep up with them, but they are also listed here:Tuesday January 12: Bibliography. Must be shared in the correct inbox in Noodletools. Includes the minimum number of sources (3 x 3 = 9), as well as three types of sources.Tuesday January 19: Notecards for at least one country must have been entered into Noodletools.Friday January 22: Notecards for a second country must have been entered into Noodletools.Tuesday January 26: Notecards for the third country must have been entered into Noodletools.Tuesday February 2: Rough Draft is due in Google Docs. Follow the written requirements, and share project by 8:00 a.m. with Mr. McMurray and your assigned partner.Thursday February 4: all partner comments must be entered through the comment function in Google Docs by today.Tuesday February 9: final blog due. Follow in class directions on how to submit it.