



CURRENT ISSUES ON LATIN AMERICA

Level: *grades 10-12*

Course: *political science, social studies,
history*

Lesson Overview

Working individually and in cooperative groups, the learner will participate in a panel presentation to the rest of the class using the research material found in the Latin America Data Base. The panel will conclude with a question and answer session. Discussion on other topics pertinent to the panel topic should be encouraged.

Objectives

- 1) develop research skills using the Latin America Data Base (LADB),
- 2) create an avenue for in-depth learning that breaks stereotypes,
- 3) practice critical thinking skills in evaluating information that is pertinent to the topic, and
- 4) understand better Latin America and its relationship to the USA

Time need

7-8 days for the entire unit

Materials

- Computer lab (with printer connected to all computers) with access to the Internet and a subscription to LADB.
- Sign-up list of student groups with their assigned search words
- Posters, travel magazines, National Geographic magazines on Latin America—Try contacting your local travel agent for help.

by
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Procedure

Day 1

Start the lesson by showing the natural beauty, tourist meccas and events in Latin America (Macchu Picchu, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico's pyramids, rain forests and wildlife, Galapagos, etc.) using the posters and magazines.

Then handout a fact sheet with the names of countries, capital cities, geographic areas, current presidents, economic resources, monetary units and their equivalency to US dollar. I plan on having my freshman students create this fact sheet using the U.S. State Department Fact Book on the Internet. Go over the fact sheet by asking students questions about the facts, for example "Which countries produce copper?" or "What is Bolivia's main mineral resource?" To reinforce geography you may want to use a blank outline map on an overhead and ask for countries and capitals, presidents, etc.

Then explain to students that they are going to work researching issues and problems on Latin America using LADB. Let them know the names of the different research groups and have them sign up. Some groups may be small (for example see items 26 and 27 under CHILDREN) others may be as big as 5-6 students (such as HUMAN RIGHTS, MILITARY AND UNITED NATIONS). See attached material. Tell them to keep their fact sheets handy for reference.

Days 2 and 3

Before students go to the lab, give them an information sheet explaining the procedure to logon LADB and begin the search. Explain how to narrow and expand searching on the data base. This is provided to you by the LADB. Once in the lab, each student will logon to LADB and procede to search. Be available for help.

Search Time.

Days 4 and 5

Students reconvene by groups to share and analyze the information they have printed from their searches. For homework, each student must design a visual aid or utilize one.

Days 6 and 7

Group presentations. While groups are presenting, class will evaluate presenters on a scale of 1-4, based on: 1) organization, 2) clarity, 3) eye contact with the class, 4) voice, 5) visual aid. Presenters will do a self-evaluation in a paragraph both as a group and as an individual. Teacher will evaluate presenters individually based on content and thoroughness of research.

Day 8:

Class discussion on issues raised in presentations, facilitated by teacher. You may ask: "What should be the role of the U.S. in relationship to Latin America?"

Groups and Search Words

GROUP 1: HUMAN RIGHTS, MILITARY AND UNITED NATIONS

1. Peru, human rights, UN, La Cantuta, Sendero
2. Argentina, "The Official Story", Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, disappeared, dirty war, mea culpa
3. Chile, Letelier, Townley, Pinochet, Contreras, Espinoza
4. El Salvador, Maryknoll, Atlacatl, death squads, truth commission
5. military, School of the Americas, U.S., military aid, CIA

GROUP 2: POLITICAL CORRUPTION, ELECTION FRAUD, DRUGS,

6. Haiti, elections, fraud, Aristide
7. Ecuador, Duran Ballen, corruption
8. Colombia, drugs, drug cartel, Botero
9. unemployment, poverty (Precede search words with these countries: Guatemala, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua)

GROUP 3: CATHOLIC CHURCH, EVANGELICAL SECTS, FEMINISM

10. Mexico, Catholic Church, Chiapas, Ruiz
11. Guatemala, Rigoberta Menchu, feminism, URNG, (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca)
12. Brazil, Rio, Police, corruption, military
13. Peru, Lima, Women, Vaso de Leche, poverty
14. El Salvador, Opus Dei, Bishop, Evangelical Churches (Sects), Catholic Church, Saenz
15. Nicaragua, FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional), women
16. Nicaragua, Catholic Church, Vatican, Cardenal, Obando

GROUP 4: UNEMPLOYMENT, NAFTA, WORLD BANK, TRANSNATIONALS, EXPLOITATION

17. Brazil, unemployment, favela, Sao Paulo, Rio, foreign debt
18. World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Neoliberal standards, IDB, economic restructuring.
19. North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, strikes, Costa Rica
20. Ecuador, Amazon Basin, Mining, oil, exploitation, Texaco

GROUP 5: ECOLOGY, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

21. Brazil, rainforest, economy, indigenous people, diseases, loggers, deforestation
22. Brazil, gold mining, indigenous people
23. Brazil, marketing rainforest products, rubber tapping
24. Brazil, Mitsubishi, Rainforest Action Network, rainforest, logging, deforestation
25. Brazil, Burger King, cattle ranches, deforestation, biodiversity

GROUP 6: CHILDREN

(Preceded by Guatemala, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico)

26. children, kidnapping, adoption
27. children, poverty, education

GROUP 7: RACISM, PREJUDICE, ANTISEMITISM

28. Bolivia, racism, prejudice, Cholo, women, Mestizo
29. Argentina, antisemitism, human rights, Jew
30. Brazil, racism, prejudice, Blacks, women

Bibliography

The Latin America Data Base (LADB)

URL: *<http://ladb.unm.edu>*

CIA Handbook

URL: *<http://www.research.att.com/cgi-wald/dbaccess/411>*