

# Brazil

In this section, you will learn about the culture, economics, and life of Brazil.

All questions require at least **THREE** sentences on own paper.

## PLACES & TERMS

**Treaty of Tordesillas** agreement between Spain and Portugal that gave Portugal control over the land that became Brazil

**Carnival** the most colorful feast day in Brazil

**samba** a Brazilian dance with African influences

**capoeira** martial art and dance that developed in Brazil from African origins

## History: A Divided Continent

Spain and Portugal reached an agreement to divide South America. In the resulting **Treaty of Tordesillas** (1494), Portugal gained control over the land that was to become Brazil. Brazil is the largest country in South America.

The first Portuguese colonists hoped to find gold or silver, but they were disappointed. They cleared areas of forest and created sugar plantations. The demand for sugar soon made Brazil a source of wealth for Portugal.

Settlement occurred along the coast. Here, cities such as Rio de Janeiro grew up. Land farther west was cleared to produce more sugar. The Portuguese conquered some of the region's tribes and put them to work on the sugar plantations. Unfortunately, European diseases killed many of the natives. The Portuguese brought slaves from Africa to replace them.

In 1807, Napoleon's forces invaded Portugal. The Portuguese royal family sailed to Brazil. For 14 years, Brazil was the heart of the Portuguese Empire. After Napoleon's defeat in 1815, many Brazilians demanded independence. A petition signed by thousands of Brazilians asked Dom Pedro, son of Portugal's King John, to rule Brazil. In September 1822, he declared Brazil's independence.

### 1. What was the Treaty of Tordesillas?

Answer in at least **THREE SENTENCES** on own paper.

## A National Culture

The dominant influences in Brazilian culture are Portuguese, Native American, and African. When Europeans began arriving in 1500, millions of native peoples lived in the region. Today, only about 200,000 survive in the Amazon rain forest. Many natives died from diseases that the Europeans had.

Brazil has become home to many immigrants. There are immigrants from Portugal, Germany, Italy, Spain, Lebanon, Syria, and Japan.

The Portuguese brought their language and Catholicism with them. Brazil today has the largest Catholic population in the world. Protestants make up almost 20 percent of the population. Many others practice local religions.

A new capital, Brasília, was built in the interior of Brazil beginning in 1957. Part of the reason for locating the capital 600 miles inland was to draw people to the interior.

## 2. From what countries did Brazil's immigrants come?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

## An Economic Giant Awakens

Brazil's economy is the tenth largest in the world. Natural resources help make Brazil an industrial power. There are deposits of many minerals used in manufacturing, such as iron and bauxite.

More than a thousand rivers, including the Amazon, wind through Brazil. Power plants along these rivers produce electricity. Brazil also has large reserves of oil and natural gas.

Brazil is one of the most industrialized nations in South America. It has one of the largest steel plants in the region. It is a leading maker of automobiles. More than half of Brazil's cars use ethanol.

Despite economic success, there is still a wide gap between rich and poor in Brazil. Increasing urbanization reflects people's desires to improve their lives. By 1996, more than 75 percent of the people lived in cities.

About 80 percent of Brazil's population lives within 200 miles of the sea. But there has been a move west as the government encourages settlement in the interior.

## 3. What are some of Brazil's industries?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

## Brazilian Life Today

Brazil is a country of great variety in its city life, music, and holidays.

The most colorful feast day in Brazil is Carnival. In Rio de Janeiro, people in costumes ride floats through the streets of the city. The celebrations of Carnival take place to the music of the samba, a Brazilian dance with African influences.

Capoeira is a martial art and dance that developed in Brazil from African origins. Angolans who were taken to Brazil by the Portuguese brought this martial art and dance with them.

Brasília is the political capital of Brazil. São Paulo is Brazil's economic heart and largest city. But Rio de Janeiro is considered the cultural center of Brazil.

There is a darker side to life in Rio. It is caused by the widening gap between rich and poor. Desperately poor slums, called *favelas*, dot the hillsides. Crime waves and drug abuse are two results of the terrible poverty. Recently, however, government officials have launched programs to bring in electrical power, paved streets, and sewers.

## 4. What influenced Brazil's music and dance?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.