

Hemispheres

Understanding Migration

Curriculum Resources for the Classroom

Hemispheres is a partnership of:

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Center for Middle Eastern Studies
Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies
South Asia Institute

in the College of Liberal Arts
at the University of Texas at Austin

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Student Activity: Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil

Time needed:

1 class period (45 min.–1 hour) should be sufficient to complete the reading and T-Chart or writing prompt activities. The writing prompt may be done in class or assigned as homework. (Although the T-Chart and writing prompt activities complement each other, it is not necessary—and may be redundant—to assign both to your students.)

Supplies for this activity:

- Map of the world (not included)
- Reading: *Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil*
- Either the *T-Chart: Brazil* worksheet (p. 30) or the *Writing Prompt: Brazil* worksheet (p. 32)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board

Preparation:

Have students identify Brazil on a map of the world. Compare its size to that of the United States. You may also wish to use the map on page 55 to identify the location of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

You may wish to go over the following terms with your students:

- **Rural:** something or someone that is from or about the countryside.
- **Slum:** a group of houses or a neighborhood that is in bad condition where very poor people live.
- **Urban:** something or someone that is from or about a city.

Class activities:

Distribute the *Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil* reading to all students. Have them read quietly.

Variation 1:

Distribute the *T-Chart: Brazil* worksheet and have students complete the chart individually or in small groups. When finished, draw a T-Chart on the board and have each student or group offer one point and write it in the appropriate place on the board. Continue until all of the unique points offered by students are included. Discuss the results with the class. Ask students to compare the answers they gave with the answers that others gave. Are there any similarities? Are there any differences? Why? Or why not? Ask for a show of hands to determine which side the students feel has a stronger argument. Ask one or two students to explain their reasons.

Variation 2:

After students have finished reading, replicate the T-Chart from the *T-Chart: Brazil* worksheet on the board. Complete the T-Chart by having students suggest points in favor of and in opposition to urban migration and write them in the appropriate column. As a follow-up to this activity, you may wish to assign the *Writing Prompt: Brazil* worksheet as homework or an in-class activity.

Variation 3:

Assign both the *Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil* reading and the *Writing Prompt: Brazil* worksheet as homework. In class the next day, replicate the T-Chart from the *T-Chart: Brazil* worksheet on the board. Complete the T-Chart by having students suggest points in favor of and in opposition to urban migration and write them in the appropriate column. Continue until all of the unique points offered by students are included. Discuss the results with the class. Ask students to compare the answers they gave with the answers that others gave. Are there any similarities? Are there any differences? Why? Or why not? Ask for a show of hands to determine which side students supported in their writing, and have some of the students read the conclusion from their writing prompt out loud to the class.

Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil

Brazil is one of many Latin American countries that has faced a trend of rural–urban migration. People in the countryside are poor, and move to try to find a better life in Brazil’s cities. But they often lack the skills to get good jobs, and are forced to live in *favelas* (shantytowns). Read the following and think about why people from rural areas would choose to stay or go to the big cities.

I am 12 years old and I live in Rio de Janeiro, a city of about 6 million people. My family moved here a year ago from our small farm in the Northeast—after years of drought, we had no choice but to leave our land because we didn’t have enough food to eat. Nothing would grow, and we had to kill our cows and chickens before they died of hunger. Now we live in a favela, an overcrowded, dirty city slum on a steep hill.

When we got here, my father collected spare pieces of metal, cardboard, and anything else he could find to build a house. We built our house on a piece of land where no one else was living, but we don’t own the land and our house could wash away during a heavy rainstorm. We don’t have electricity or running water. After we moved, my little brother got very sick from drinking dirty water.

My parents can’t find jobs because they don’t have a lot of skills. My father spends his days picking plastic, newspapers, and aluminum cans out of dumpsters to recycle them for a little bit of money. My mother is a washerwoman: she makes a few dollars a week washing other people’s laundry. She works 12 hours every day, and her arms always hurt from having to scrub everything by hand.

We haven’t eaten meat since moving to the city, but at least we have some food every day...and sometimes mom buys some bones to make a tasty soup. My parents’ earn enough money to buy us rice and beans, but they aren’t able to save money to build a better house or to send us to school. My brothers and I have started to help my father collect recycling. I wish I could go to school with my friends at home, but this is our life now...

I’m a 13-year old who lives in the countryside of the state of Ceará, one of Brazil’s poorest states. Years ago, my family began practicing aviculture on our family farm—we raise chickens. But the droughts made it hard to keep the chickens alive and without the chickens, we didn’t earn enough money. Also, two big corporations bought up a lot of land in the area—they own more than half of the land in our county—and we ended up having to sell them our land in order to get money to survive. Now my parents can’t find work because there aren’t any jobs and we don’t even have our own land to grow food.

My parents are thinking about moving to the city in order to find stable work. Lots of my aunts and uncles have already left and they say they are making much better wages. There are more jobs in the city and you can always find something if you’re hardworking. They also say that they’ve been able to find good housing and that it’s easier to live in the city—everything is close: schools, hospitals, shopping. They feel less isolated than they did here in the country.

Since last year, my mother has been sick and it is hard to get her to the doctor. The closest hospital is more than two hours away. It would be good to be in the city, where she can get the help she needs. My father read in the newspaper that people who live in the city live longer than those who live in rural areas: health care and nutrition are much better.

I’m a little afraid of life in the big city—of all those people and the fast-paced life—but I hope that my family can make a better life than we have here.

Aviculture: the industry of raising birds.

Shantytown: a poor area of a city where people live in shacks and huts. Brazil’s shantytowns are called favelas, and the people who live in them are called favelados.

T-CHART: BRAZIL

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Assignment: Read the passages on *Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil*. Then complete the chart below, listing reasons why people from the countryside might want to migrate to the city in the left column, and reasons why people from the countryside might not want to migrate to the city in the right column.

Make as many points as you need for each side. The first three are already labeled for you.

Reasons to move to the city	Reasons to stay in the countryside
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Which side do you agree with? Cite examples from the text to support your answer:

About Hemispheres

Created in 1996, Hemispheres is the international outreach consortium at the University of Texas at Austin. Hemispheres utilizes University resources to promote and assist with world studies education for K–12 and postsecondary schools, businesses, civic and non-profit organizations, the media, governmental agencies, and the general public.

Comprised of UT's four federally funded National Resource Centers (NRCs) dedicated to the study and teaching of Latin America; the Middle East; Russia, East Europe & Eurasia; and South Asia, Hemispheres offers a variety of free and low-cost services to these groups and more. Each center coordinates its own outreach programming, including management of its lending library, speakers bureau, public lectures, and conferences, all of which are reinforced by collaborative promotion of our resources to an ever-widening audience in the educational community and beyond.

Hemispheres fulfills its mission through: coordination of pre-service and in-service training and resource workshops for educators; promotion of outreach resources and activities via exhibits at appropriate state- and nation-wide educator conferences; participation in public outreach events as organized by the consortium as well as by other organizations; and consultation on appropriate methods for implementing world studies content in school, business, and community initiatives.

For more information, visit the Hemispheres Web site at:
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