

- Have your students find out about some of the unique natural resources of Puerto Rico. Divide your class into smaller groups and assign each group one of these topics: the El Yunque tropical rainforest, the coqui singing tree frog and the Puerto Rican parrot. Have each group create a booklet filled with information and pictures about its topic. Add the booklets to your classroom library. The following web site is a good starting point for student research: www.rainforestsafari.com/about.html.
- Students in Puerto Rico wear school uniforms. These uniforms often have a school crest displayed on the shirt, blouse, sweater or jacket. Have your students design and draw a school crest for your school. Brainstorm with your students what symbols and colors might be included. Have them include the name of your school in the design.
- Hurricanes often strike the island of Puerto Rico. Using books and the Internet have your students find the answers to these questions: What is the definition of a hurricane? What wind speeds define a hurricane? How are hurricanes named? Extend this activity by having your students research the five most recent hurricanes. What were their names? Where did they make landfall? How much damage was done? The following web site is a good place to start your research: www.fema.gov/kids/hurr.htm.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.taino-tribe.org/jatiboni.html
Learn the history, traditions and culture of the Taíno, the native people of Puerto Rico, at this bilingual official tribal government web site.
- www.musicofpuertorico.com/en/instruments_guiro.html
Learn about the guiro, an instrument used in traditional Puerto Rican music.
- www.naic.edu/bigtable.htm
Find information on the mission of the Arecibo Observatory and its radio telescope at this web site sponsored by the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center.

Suggested Print Resources

- Ada, Alma Flor. *My Name is Maria Isabel*. Atheneum, Maxwell Macmillan International, New York, NY; 1993.
- Gugler, Laurel Dee. *There's a Billy Goat in the Garden: Based on a Puerto Rican Folktale*. Barefoot Books, Cambridge, MA; 2003.
- London, Jonathan. *Hurricane!* Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, New York, NY; 1998.
- Montes, Marisa. *Juan Bobo Goes to Work: A Puerto Rican Folktale*. HarperCollins, New York, NY; 2000.



Puerto Rican Heritage

Grades K-4

The United States has always been a country of immigrants, rich with the customs and traditions of the many countries they represent. *American Cultures for Children* introduces students to the heritage of some of the immigrant groups that make up this diverse land. Through songs, play food, holidays and history, students are provided with an understanding of and appreciation for the cultural differences they see every day in their classrooms and neighborhoods. Everyone has at least one culture to celebrate, and this series gives children a chance to explore their heritage and share it with others.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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TITLES IN THIS SERIES

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Program Summary

Puerto Rican Heritage introduces students to the heritage, traditions and daily life of the people of Puerto Rico. Children gain an understanding of the unique commonwealth status that grants United States citizenship and the right of some self-government to the people of Puerto Rico. The sometimes difficult adjustment for Puerto Ricans who moved to mainland cities seeking better work and education opportunities is presented. Children learn the history and tour the island of Puerto Rico. They are introduced to the Taíno people, who were the first known inhabitants of the island, and they sample Puerto Rican foods and participate in the Carnival celebration. On a side trip, children visit the El Yunque rainforest, the Spanish fortress El Morro and the Arcibo Observatory. Students learn to count to ten and say a few words in Spanish. The Puerto Rican folktale “The Coqui’s Song” is retold, and the Puerto Rican folksong “El Coquí” is sung. Both tell the legend of how this native Puerto Rican tree frog may have acquired its beautiful singing voice. In an arts & crafts segment, students are given a lesson in making a Carnival mask.

Vocabulary

güiro — A musical instrument made from a notched, hollowed-out gourd. It is often featured in Puerto Rican music.

San Juan — The capital city of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

El Morro — A fortress built by the Spanish in 1539 to guard the entrance to San Juan Harbor.

Arecibo Observatory — An observatory located in Puerto Rico, that is the home of the largest single-dish radio telescope in the world.

immigrant — A person who makes a new home in a country other than his or her own.

commonwealth — An area that has ties to another country but has some power of self-government. Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States.

Ponce — The second largest city in Puerto Rico.

gourd — A fruit with a hard and inedible rind.

vejigante mask — A mask made to look like a scary beast, often worn during the Carnival celebration in Puerto Rico.

Carnival — A festival of merrymaking held before the start of the Christian holy period of Lent.

Taíno — The first known inhabitants of Puerto Rico.

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Words in Spanish

Hello = Hola

Good-bye = Adiós

friend (m) = amigo

friend (f) = amiga

Thank you = Gracias

Numbers in Spanish

One = Uno

Two = Dos

Three = Tres

Four = Cuatro

Five = Cinco

Six = Seis

Seven = Siete

Eight = Ocho

Nine = Nueve

Ten = Diez

Focus Questions

1. Puerto Ricans are citizens of what country?
2. What is an immigrant?
3. Count to three in Spanish.
4. Name the capital city of Puerto Rico.
5. What is an island?
6. Name the fortress that overlooks San Juan Harbor.
7. During what celebration would you most likely wear a *vejigante* mask?
8. What is the official language of Puerto Rico?
9. What kind of animal is a coqui?
10. What is the name of the first known inhabitants of Puerto Rico?
11. What is El Yunque?
12. How do you say “thank you” in Spanish?

Follow-up Discussion

- The weather in Puerto Rico is warm and sunny all year round. Have your students brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of living in a place where the weather never changes. What weather condition would they miss the most? Why? What weather condition would they be glad to do without?

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- Children living in Puerto Rico often learn two languages: Spanish and English. Have your students brainstorm both the good and bad points of learning and speaking two languages.
- The Arcibo Observatory in Puerto Rico is the home to the world’s largest single-dish radio telescope. One of the missions of this telescope is to search for signs of life in outer space. Have your students create a list of the ten most important things they would want to tell an outer space visitor about life on Earth.

Follow-up Activities

- Have your students plan a four-day vacation in Puerto Rico. Divide your class into smaller groups and ask them to research things to do and see in Puerto Rico. Have each group create a list of six “must-see” and “must-do” places. Include a brief description of each adventure. This web site, sponsored by the Puerto Rican Tourist Company, is a good place to start your research: www.gotopuertorico.com/index.php?language=english.
- Assign groups of students to research the geography, natural resources, climate and history of Puerto Rico. Have your students use this research to create fact sheets about Puerto Rico to display around your classroom.
- Have your students find out more about the history and tradition of the *vejigante* mask, then follow the directions given in the show and have your students make scary *vejigante* Carnival masks.
- Puerto Rico is one of the islands of the Greater Antilles. Using a large classroom map, have your students identify the other islands in this chain. Give students outline maps and have them label Puerto Rico and the oceans, seas and islands that surround it.
- Use maps, rulers and the map scale to have your students find the distance between New York City and San Juan. Extend this activity by asking students how many hours it would take to travel by plane between these two cities if the plane traveled at an average speed of 400 miles per hour.
- El Morro is the fortress that overlooks San Juan Harbor. Arrange a research visit to your public or school library and have your students find pictures and the history of this famous fort. Draw or build a classroom model of El Morro. Include an information booklet that includes the facts and history you found.
- Have your students create a classroom bulletin board featuring a large map of Puerto Rico, the location of its two largest cities and the bodies of water to the north, south, east and west. Complete your bulletin board by adding drawings of the commonwealth bird, flower and flag.

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