



Kristin Elliott

Culture Capsule



The Guarani Indians

Purpose: Introduce students to the Guarani culture.

Teaching Objectives: Teach students new vocabulary words, help students understand the deep roots that the Guarani people have in Paraguay. Spark student's curiosity in learning about other cultural aspects of the Paraguayan people.

Possible Evaluation Approaches:

- Quiz on the new vocabulary words.
- Have students write one page paper on an aspect of the Guarani culture, people, language.
- Internet assignment: Have students look up these web sites;

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/05470.html>,

<http://www.flw.com/languages/guarani.htm>,

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07045a.htm>,

<http://drake.marin.k12.ca.us/students/goslinerh/pages/guarnipage.html>,

<http://drake.marin.k12.ca.us/students/goslinerh/pages/aboutpara.html> ,

<http://www.mundomatero.com/proyectos/cristel/Legend-Guarani.html>.

Students will find a topic and write a paragraph in Spanish about what interested them.

Basic Information and Sources:

The Guaraní Indians existed before the Europeans arrived in South America. When they arrived in Argentina, they found many indians. There were different languages. The language spoken in the majority was that of the Guaraní Indians—also known as the Tupí-Guaraní. The main population of Guaraní Indians is in Paraguay. Some can be found in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Bolivia.

The Guaraní Indians were taught by Jesuits and were protected at times because of their relations with the Catholic church. Many Guaraní Indians were saved from slavery. Many missions were set up to teach the Indians music, art, crop cultivation, and also about Christ. These missions were taken over and many Indians were killed because of those that wanted to have the Guaraní Indians for slave trading.¹

The Guaraní language is currently spoken by over 4 million people in Paraguay and in adjacent portions of Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia. At the time of the Spanish conquest (16th cent.), the Guaraní lived in settlements consisting of four to eight large communal dwellings, each of which accommodated 100 people or more. Chiefs resided patrilocally, but other men lived in their wives' houses and performed bride-service. They depended primarily on intensive agriculture supplemented by fishing, hunting, and gathering; the staple crops were corn and manioc. Men cleared fields that women tilled. Although their material culture was not advanced, Guaraní songs, dances, and myths constituted a rich body of folklore. Their religion was based on an impressive and elaborate mythology ...Surviving Guaraní continue to practice communal agriculture in some rural areas and Guaraní culture has had a strong influence on present-day Paraguayan musical folklore.²

Because of the great population of Guaraní Indians in Paraguay, Paraguay has two official languages; Spanish and Guaraní. The schools in Paraguay teach both languages.

Class Presentation:

1. Possible Activities: The Spanish/Guaraní "adivinar" game. Every student will be handed out a worksheet with pictures representing vocabulary words that they learned the previous week. Examples: parts of the face and body, weather, emotions, How do you feel? Each picture on the worksheet will be accompanied by the vocabulary word in Guaraní. Each student will have the opportunity to describe one of the pictures (in Spanish). All the students will write down the Student's name (the one that is describing the picture) next to the picture that they think the Student is describing. After all have had the

¹ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07045a.htm>

² <http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/05470.html>

opportunity to describe a picture, the teacher will ask each student which picture they described, and the student will say the vocabulary word. Points can be counted for the person who got the most right. This activity will be great to review past vocabulary, and also help the students see the difference in the Guaraní language verses the Spanish language.

2. "The Mission" Video: Show a short clip of an Indian village with the people. Also one of the Cathedrals.
3. Vocabulary: Casar, Campesino, el Maíz, la Mandioca, los animales silvestres, los Indigenas, cocer, pescar, pez, pescado, la guerra, Jesuitas, Nómada.
4. Materials: Internet take home worksheet, "The Mission" video, Internet access to show class on Television, Pictures of Guaraní Indians, music if possible of Guaraní songs, Spanish/Guaraní dictionary. <http://www.romanistik.uni-mainz.de/cgi-bin/guarani/dictionary>