



Brazilian Music and Culture in the United States

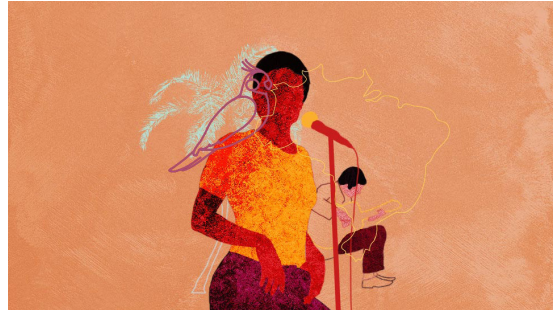
OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What is the influence of Brazilian music and culture in the United States?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will examine Brazilian music and culture and its influence in the United States. Specifically, students will examine the Brazilian musical style Bossa Nova and the Brazilian martial art Capoeira. Additionally, they will identify two women Brazilian singers, Carmen Miranda and Anitta, that have had successful careers in the U.S. Students will investigate Brazilian culture through documents, online archives, articles, podcasts, videos, and songs.



Bossa Nova is a rhythm that was born in Brazil in the 1950s, specifically in the city of Rio de Janeiro. “Rio” is known for its stunning natural landscape, lively culture, and a bohemian atmosphere. Bossa Nova drew inspiration from both the music of Brazilian Samba and American Jazz. But it also eventually influenced the evolution of Jazz.

Bossa Nova became popular in the United States due to the U.S. government’s Good Neighbor policy that was established by President Franklin Roosevelt’s administration in 1933. The policy sought to establish better relations and ease political tensions between the U.S. and Latin American countries. One of the methods to do so was through the sharing of music and culture. As a result of the Good Neighbor policy, great American musicians like Stan Getz collaborated with Brazilian Bossa Nova trailblazers like João Gilberto, Antônio Carlos (Tom) Jobim, and Vinicius de Moraes. A popular example of these musical collaborations can be heard in the 1967 album *Francis Albert Sinatra & Antônio Carlos Jobim*, by Frank Sinatra and Antônio Jobim. The influence of the Good Neighbor policy endures to this day and can be heard in the recent work of contemporary artists like Billie Eilish and her song, “Billy Bossa Nova.”

In addition to music, other types of Brazilian culture have been brought to the U.S. Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art with African roots that combines elements of self-defense, music, dance, and acrobatics. Capoeira was developed by enslaved Brazilians who were creating a method of self-defense but had to camouflage their movements from their captors in dance steps and displays of acrobatics. Due to this history, Capoeira is considered a symbol and practice of resistance. As a result of the Good Neighbor policy, Capoeira masters, and the Brazilian community at large, migrated to the United States in greater numbers. In doing so, examples of Capoeira began to appear in American movies and television.

Additional examples of the Good Neighbor policy’s success can be found in the careers of Carmen Miranda and Anitta. They are both Brazilian women musicians that have had success in

the American music industry and helped popularize Brazilian culture in the United States. Starting in the 1930s, Carmen Miranda became an international cultural symbol of Brazil as she appeared in Hollywood movies performing Samba and Bossa Nova. She also helped popularize Brazilian fashion. Anitta is a contemporary Brazilian singer and songwriter that has achieved international recognition and collaborated with contemporary American singers, including Cardi B, Madonna, Major Lazer, and Snoop Dogg. Anitta was the first Brazilian to be awarded an MTV Video Music Award in 2022 and was nominated for the Grammy Award for Best New Artist in 2023, the first Brazilian to be nominated in the category in 50 years.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- The influence of Brazilian Music and Culture in the United States
- The origins of Bossa Nova and Capoeira
- The influence of the Bossa Nova on Jazz and contemporary American music
- The Brazilian women, Carmen Miranda and Anitta, and their success as musicians in the United States
- How Brazilian culture was disseminated in the United States through migration
- President Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy and how Carmen Miranda facilitated a closer relationship between the United States and Brazil, and Latin America in general

2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to identify and analyze cultural links between Brazil and the United States by researching online archives, playing online educational video games, viewing videos, and listening to music.

ACTIVITIES

PREPARATION:

1. Set up three stations around the classroom for a small group activity. Each station will need a device that connects to the internet. Load the following materials into each station:

Station 1: Bossa Nova

- Handout - Bossa Nova

Station 2: Capoeira

- Handout - Capoeira

Station 3: Carmen Miranda and Anitta

- Handout - Carmen Miranda and Anitta
2. Load this link (<https://bit.ly/BrazilKahoot>) for the online educational game, *Kahoot!* in preparation for the motivational activity. (*Students may access the game on their individual device or the game can be displayed on a single screen in the classroom and played as a group activity. If the game is played as a group activity, students can participate by raising a sheet of paper with their answer when prompted to do so.*)

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Display **Image 1, Brazil** and ask students:
 - What comes to mind when you think of the country of Brazil? (*Allow time for student reflection and then ask student volunteers to share.*)
2. Gauge student knowledge of Brazil by playing the online educational game, *Kahoot!* using this link: <https://bit.ly/BrazilKahoot>. (*Students may access the game on their individual device or the game can be displayed on a single screen in the classroom and played as a group activity. If the game is played as a group activity, students can participate by raising a sheet of paper with their answer when prompted to do so.*)
3. Reconvene as a class and ask students:
 - Did the game cover anything that you already knew about Brazil? If so, what did you already know?
 - Did you discover anything new about Brazil by playing the game? If so, what did you discover?

- Were you surprised by anything about Brazil by playing the game? If so, what surprised you?
- Is there anything else about Brazil that wasn't covered in the game that you hope to learn? If so, what do you hope to learn?

PROCEDURE

1. Inform students that they will be participating in an activity to examine Brazilian music and culture and identify its influence in the United States.
2. Show **Image 2, Station Activity Choice Board**. Ask students to choose one the of three stations based on what they already know about the topic, or based on what they think the topic might be about based upon the picture.
 - In which Brazilian city did Bossa Nova originate?
 - From which continent does Capoeira have its historical roots?
 - How was Carmen Miranda connected to the U.S.'s Good Neighbor policy?
3. Reconvene as a class and ask student groups to share what they discovered at their stations. If helpful, consider asking the following questions to gauge comprehension:

Station 1: Bossa Nova

- Handout - Bossa Nova

Station 2: Capoeira

- Handout - Capoeira

Station 3: Carmen Miranda and Anitta

- Handout - Carmen Miranda and Anitta

4. Finally, ask students:

- What aspects of this lesson resonated with you the most? Why?

SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Inform students that they will be participating in an online scavenger hunt to discover and explore elements of Brazilian culture within their own communities.
2. Distribute **Handout - Brazilian Culture Scavenger Hunt**. Instruct students to follow the directions on the handout to use the internet with the handout to find examples of Brazilian culture in their community.
3. Reconvene as a class and ask students to share what they discovered on their scavenger hunt. Then ask students:
 - To what degree is Brazilian culture represented where you live?



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Analyze these photographs by Pierre Verger documenting Capoeira: <https://www.pierreverger.org/br/acervo-foto/portfolios/capoeira.html>.
2. Read about the documentary, *Carmen Miranda: Bananas is My Business*: <https://variety.com/1995/film/reviews/carmen-miranda-bananas-is-my-business-1200442209/>

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS*College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (K-12)*

Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Reading 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Craft and Structure 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (K-12)

Text Types and Purposes 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (K-12)

Comprehension & Collaboration 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension & Collaboration 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Presentation of Knowledge 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language (K-12)

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.



Language 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 3: People, Place, and Environments

Theme 7: Production, Distribution, and Consumption

Theme 9: Global Connections

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION (NAFME)

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Connecting 11: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

Connecting

Anchor Standards 11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.



RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

- Handout - Bossa Nova
- Handout - Capoeira
- Handout - Carmen Miranda and Anitta
- Handout - Brazilian Culture Scavenger Hunt