

Music of Brazil

Grade Level: 1-3

Subject: Language Arts, Art, Music, Dance

Key Words: music, carnival, Blackness, identity

Recommended Time Frame: 3 days

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Summary:

This mini-unit is going to take a look at three important components of Brazilian music:

- Brazil music genres
- Carnival traditions
- Cultural and race relations

Background information:

Brazil is a country located in South America. It has fifth largest population in the world with 210 million people (the United States is third with 327 million). It is the fifth largest in size (the United States is third).

Brazil has a diverse population. The first peoples who lived in Brazil are often called Indigena or Amerindian and lived in this country for thousands of years. The next group to arrive were the Portuguese who began to settle and colonize Brazil in the 1530s. The country was named after a valuable material called Brazilwood. The Portuguese needed workers for this process, since many of the Indigenous people died due to new sicknesses that the Portuguese brought in. From the mid-1500s the Portuguese began to bring in people from Africa and enslave them. Over the centuries, almost 4 million Africans were brought. These are the largest groups in Brazil. Many Brazilians are mixed peoples.

For more information on Brazilian identity and culture, see:

- Brazilian Carnival: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Brazil/Performing-arts#ref312867>
- Afro-Brazilians History, Beats, and Culture: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/afro-brazilian-history-be_b_452877
- KAIA Kids Around the World- The Music of Brazil: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76ABfyo8Kv0>

Student Objectives

Students will be able to

- Discuss race in a constructive and insightful way
- Understand the difference between positive and negative portrayals of Blackness
- Be able to identify the ways Blackness is erased in media
- Use the creative process to learn about carnival and cultural affirmation

Essential/Driving Questions

- How does media portray Blackness and what is being implied?

- How does Brazilian music give insight into the way people move in Brazil?
- What role does art play in the history and culture of a people?

Vocabulary words:

- Afro-Brazilian
- Carnival
- Maculele
- Samba
- Bossa Nova
- Chorro
- Forro
- Pagode
- Carimbo
- Lambada
- Frevo

Materials:

- Nina Bonita* by Ana Maria Machado, illustrated by Rosana Faria, translated by Elena Iribarren (Kane Miller Book Publishing, 1996)
- Loving Me* by Angelot Ndongmo (Chocvigo Publishing, 2012)
- Chocolate Me* by Taye Diggs, illustrated by Shane Evans (Square Fish, 2015)
- The Blacker the Berry*, by Joyce Carol Thomas, illustrated by Floyd Cooper (Amistad, 2008)
- Skin Again* by Bell Hooks, illustrated by Chris Raschka (Jump at the Sun, 2017)
- Be Boy Buzz* by Bell Hooks (Jump at the Sun, 2016)
- Along the River* by Vanina Starkoff, translated by Jane Springer (Groundwood Books, 2017)
- Carnavalia! African-Brazilian Folklore and Crafts* by Liza Papi (Rizzoli International, 1994)
- Menina Mulher da Pele Preta* by Jorge Bren
- I Love My Hair* by Natasha Antastasia Tarpley, illustrated by E.B. Lewis (LB Kids, 2003)
- I Love My Hair (Sesame Street song) <https://youtu.be/enpFde5rgmw>
- I Love My Hair (Sesame Street song, Spanish version) <https://youtu.be/cYMsijAY0w>
- Lupita Nyong'o Loves Her Skin (with Elmo on Sesame Street) <https://youtu.be/xIC2hHECZ6Y>
- The Three Caballeros* scene in Bahia <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wedmjYnTPxE>
- Flexin' My Complexion* <https://youtu.be/aL-zvDq80-c>
- Rio* (2011) and *Rio 2* (2014) movies
- If possible, various Brazilian instruments
- For self-portraits:

- pocket mirrors
- paper
- crayons
- pastels
- markers (especially, flesh-toned markers)
- pencils
- erasers
- construction paper (various flesh-coloured tones)
- gluesticks
- scissors
- yarn
- various false hair textures (can be purchased at beauty supply stores)
- For costume design:
 - Paper plates
 - Ribbons on spools (different colours)
 - Glue
 - Scissors
 - Scrap fabric (assorted textures and colours including felt, lace)
 - Sequins
 - Sparkles
 - A child's silhouette copied onto cardstock or construction paper

Learning Plan

Activity 1: Representation of Black Identity

Through music, books, and art, students can discuss how Blackness is portrayed. Discuss the differences between positive and negative portrayals. Racial pride and cultural understanding.

Objectives:

- Students will discuss portrayals and erasure of Afro-Brazilians in the media
- Students will create an image/picture of themselves that depicts their unique features

Procedure:

1. Read *Nina Bonita* to students. Read *Loving Me* by Angelot Ndongmo. On another day, read another book from the list:
 - *Chocolate Me* by Taye Diggs
 - *The Blacker the Berry*
 - *Skin Again* by Bell Hooks
 - *Be Boy Buzz* by Bell Hooks
 - *I love my hair* by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley
2. Create a Venn Diagram with students to talk about what it means to be black in comparison between *Nina Bonita* and the other book.
3. How did it differ?
4. How is it similar?
5. If there are two versions of the *Nina Bonita/Menina Bonita do laco de fita*, ask students:
 - a. Why are there two versions of the illustrations?
 - b. What are some positive and negative features of each version of the book?
 - c. Why might this book be problematic?
6. Listen to “Menina Mulher da Pele Preta” by Jorge Bren
English Lyrics
<https://lyricstranslate.com/en/menina-mulher-da-pele-preta-add-english-title-here.html>
7. Watch
 - I love my hair (Sesame Street song) <https://youtu.be/enpFde5rgmw>
 - I love my hair (Sesame Street song, Spanish version) <https://youtu.be/cYMsiwjAY0w>
 - Lupita Nyong’o Loves Her Skin (with Elmo on Sesame Street) <https://youtu.be/xIC2hHECZ6Y>
 - *The Three Caballeros* scene in Bahia (Disney movie erases African/Black origin)
 - *Flexin’ my Complexion* <https://youtu.be/aL-zvDg80-c>
 - *Rio* (2011) and *Rio 2* (2014) movies
8. Ask students: How have these movies each erased Blackness? Or minimized Black/African cultural references?

9. As a class, look at images of Yemanjá. Discuss what message these different portrayals communicate and how audiences may interpret them or be influenced by them.

Assessment:

1. Have students create their own mixed-media self-portraits (see materials above)
2. After completing them, find a place in the room to put them on display.
3. If time permits, allow each student to talk briefly about their creation and artistic choices.

Activity 2: Samba and other genres

How do we use music to accompany daily activities? Rhythm and songs accompany these activities in Brazil.

Objectives:

- Students will look at the different ways that people move and get around in Brazil
- Students will use movement to further immerse themselves in the learning experience about Brazilian rhythms

Procedure:

1. Read book: *Along the River* by Vanina Starkoff, translated by Jane Springer, 2017.
2. Create a soundscape that incorporates the sounds of instruments of Brazil.
3. Discuss with students which musical instruments they would use to help tell this story.
4. Listen to samples of music from the following genres over the course of a few classes
 - Maculele
 - Samba
 - Bossa Nova
 - Chorro
 - Forro
 - Pagode
 - Carimbo
 - Lambada
 - Frevo
5. Discuss and name the instruments that are heard
6. Play: Help students to learn the names of typical Brazilian instruments. Allow the students opportunities to practice and experiment with these instruments if you have access to them. Play songs and allow students to accompany them with an instrument.
7. Watch and move:
 - Watch videos showing the dances of each genre
 - Maculele- learn to do this dance with pairs of sticks

Assessment:

1. Break students into small groups.
2. Have each group choose a Brazilian musical genre and study it by listening to the music and watching videos of people dancing.
3. Have a mini talent show where each group teaches the rest of the class a dance move of the genre they chose.

Activity 3: Carnival

The purpose of this workshop is to provide students with the opportunity to explore Writing (listen to the story “Malaika’s Costume”, connect the author’s writing process with their writing process, interview an author) and Arts by Carnival headpiece-making, singing, dancing to music, seeing examples of Carnival costumes and how it is celebrated throughout the Caribbean. Students will be able to make a connection between Writing (1st STEAM area) and Arts (2nd STEAM area), and apply it to a story that they have heard and had a chance to interact with (real world) by writing an extension or “fan fiction” piece that extends the story (end product).

Objective:

- Learn about how Carnival is used as a way to help Afro-Brazilians to retain their cultures, languages, and histories.
- Develop skills and craftsmanship with materials, tools and techniques
- Use the creative process to plan, organize and problem solve
- Understand how art has influenced and defined history and culture
- Make personal connections with visual art

Procedure:

1. (1hr) Read *Malaika’s Costume* to students.
 - Students select a theme or topic that was brought up in the story with teacher prompts (e.g., Canada, Caribbean, recycling, grandmother-granddaughter relationships).
 - Look at pictures of different Carnival Costumes and watch videos of kiddie Carnivals. Discuss what materials are used in the designing of the costumes.
2. (1hr) Select a theme. Design a costume for Carnival using the materials provided on a paper doll silhouette.
3. (45min) Redesign headpiece or redefine

Assessment:

Have students design their own carnival costume.

