



123 ANDRÉS

AROUND THE AMERICAS

PERFORMANCE GUIDE

THE PARAMOUNT THEATER

ARTS

EDUCATION

This Performance Guidebook was originally produced by Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC) for their 2018-19 Education season.

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About 123 Andrés

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Andrés and Christina are the Latin Grammy-winning music duo 123 Andrés, and their award-winning music and lively concerts get the whole audience participating in Spanish and English. 123 Andrés tours nationally with concerts for kids of all ages and their families. They are known for bringing joyful sounds, passion for bilingualism and a high-energy love of music that encourages kids dancing and singing in Spanish and English.

Andrés grew up in Bogotá, Colombia, singing with his mother and learning how to play the guitar from his father at an early age. He had his first studio experience at age 8, and from there he went on to earn a Doctorate in Music and won the National Composition Contest in Colombia for one of his early songs.

Christina grew up in the Midwest in a Spanish-speaking immigrant family from Colombia. Her love for the stage started when her mom signed her up for theater and dance as a child. After college she worked in the classroom as a public school teacher and received a Masters in Education. When she joined 123 Andrés, she found her calling teaching through music.

Andrés and Christina believe in using music as a tool to encourage empathy towards others and pride in one's own culture. While teaching Spanish words and showcasing different Latin sounds, 123 Andrés also aims for children to emerge more accepting, tolerant and curious about people who are different from them.



Andrés and Christina after the 2016 Latin Grammy ceremony with their award. Photo Credit Billboard Magazine



Andrés receives a medal and recognition from his regional government in Colombia.



Interview with 123 Andrés

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In creating this performance, what ideas did you want to explore?

Andrés:

More than anything, we want children to exercise and maintain their **empathy**. They are naturally welcoming and open, and they are curious about people who are different rather than afraid of them. As adults then we often lose those qualities. We need to learn from children. The premise of the show offers a good opportunity to encourage empathy in context. At one point in the show, I am sad because I miss my friend, Juana. The children feel for me and want to help. At the end when we finally find Juana, she is a little bit nervous. She's been lost, and she needs us to be extra kind to her. The children connect with Juana and respond so beautifully with well-wishes and empathy.

The other thing we'd like to encourage is a curiosity about **geography**. In the busy school day, students might not get a chance to look at a map for a while and take the time to wonder about other countries. That urge to explore is important, and it leads to map literacy and learning that there are so many places in the world that are not part of the United States, with people living different ways and speaking different languages.

We want students of Hispanic origins, Latinx students, to see themselves represented. It is so incredible when you see the kids getting excited and throwing their hands in the air when we are looking at the map and naming the different countries. When you get to the one they or their parents came from, they feel super special and want to talk about it. It's also great for the other students because they learn about their neighbors and classmates, who come from different places.

Christina:

I think about newcomers to our school and the situations in which someone might feel unwelcome or different. How we can focus on our similarities with others and build bridges? Certainly, I'm thinking of those coming from a different country and speaking another language, but also there are plenty of children who feel different due to other factors. How we can go out of our way to be welcoming?

How do you feel that music feeds into all these purposes?

Christina:

Music itself also embraces new and different influences. When we're performing for older students we get into this more explicitly, but two of the songs we sometimes do, "The Mambo" and "La Bamba" are products of lots of cultural influences. They both have folk origins: for "The Mambo" in Cuba, and for "La Bamba" in Veracruz, Mexico. Both of these songs crossed over and were blended with elements of US music. That altered version is the one we recognize most often when we hear them now, on the radio or TV. It's super interesting because elements of music combine and transform, and we can hear the folk influences but also hear the rock and roll and jazz elements added later.

Andrés:

Yes, lots of times what we hear as Latin music is a result of musicians from Latin American cultures getting together in the US and creating something new. It happened that way with Salsa music. Musicians from Cuba and from all over the Caribbean immigrated to the United States, bringing the Mambo with them..



Interview with 123 Andrés

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Andrés (continued):

They all ended up meeting in New York City mid-twentieth century and started playing together and with American musicians. They added new elements to the original music, and the style called Salsa evolved. New York is where the term Salsa was coined, and now Salsa is known throughout the world. It became a collaboration generated by the music, but its result is bigger than the music. For example, in the late 50's at the Palladium in Manhattan, they held some of the first desegregated dances in New York with Salsa music. There were all kinds of people dancing with each other - very open and very new.



Photo credit: Darío Treviño

What is the benefit of singing together?

Andrés:

Singing as a group gets people together doing one thing. It makes us happy and relaxes us. Singing lowers your heartbeat and can even synchronize the heartbeat of people singing together. Plus, it's a great way to promote teamwork. I was reading a study that suggested that students who play or sing music together perform better at problem-solving and math and tests because they felt more at ease and in tune with each other as a group.

Not only that, but because music borrows from different places, it can unite us. It's beautiful how we can trace the clave rhythm all the way from West Africa. Then we find it in Cuba; we find it in Brazil; we can trace the DNA of the clave through all its transformations. It becomes a common musical ancestor.

Singing helps you learn. The starting lesson is geography and the Americas for every single kid that comes out. If they are asked, "where are the Americas?", they'll be able to sing the song and tell you where the Americas are because we singing that song all together like six times. They do it with their hands! They're gonna remember and understand that people speak Spanish, not only in Mexico, but in all these other places. The music will help with that.

The other big lesson they'll come away with is the importance of empathy and being nice to each other. For me, the music and singing accompany this story and give life to it. The audience gets connected to it. We don't hammer the lesson in, but the kids naturally want to help poor Juana.



Interview with 123 Andrés

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How did you get started in music?

Andrés:

I was very, very privileged and lucky in that there was music all around me in my home. My mom was always singing, and my dad played the guitar. My mom taught me my first songs, and my dad taught me how to play my first instrument.

Is it hard to move back and forth between English and Spanish?

Christina:

Sometimes it can be hard to move back and forth between English and Spanish when you are thinking and moving quickly. It gets easier the more you do it, but that's one of the awesome things about being bilingual. We encourage students to be curious about learning Spanish or sign-language or any other language so they can learn how to communicate in lots of ways to lots of people.

Andrés:

You know, even when we are babies, we make different sounds tuned to our language. Researchers figured out that babies differentiate one kind of speech from another when they are addressed regularly with different languages. They babble different sounds for each language, and eventually, they recognize that one adult is speaking one language and the other is speaking another. It's incredible! As kids, we can learn two languages at the same time.



Photo credit: Jonathan Edelman

What does having a doctorate in music mean you can do?

Andrés: (teasing) You can prescribe music when people are sick!



Listening Guide

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The music of 123 Andrés is full of beautifully simple melodies, catchy hooks, exciting Latin American rhythms, Spanish and English, and the potential for rich learning opportunities.

When thinking about engaging listeners in music that is not primarily in English, it is important to prepare the listeners for gaining understanding in other ways. Young listeners are particularly open to this idea and with a little encouragement and preparation will flow easily into understanding. Yes, even if they don't understand Spanish! Letting go of our usual desire to understand all the lyrics in order to understand the music is a freeing process.

The music of 123 Andrés guides the listener by repetition, visual cues, communicative rhythms, and at times by flowing back and forth from Spanish to English. In songs such as “Los Colores” (The Colors), Andrés sings a soothing melody backed with the Caribbean Bachata rhythm, and walks us through learning 4 colors names in Spanish- *amarillo, verde, azul, and rojo*. The context of the colors is given in English and by the end of the song we seamlessly understand that *amarillo* is yellow, *verde* is green, *azul* is blue, and *rojo* is red. A more visceral understanding is gained from songs like “¡Salta, Salta!” (Jump! Jump!). Its high energy rock en español/reggaetón fusion gives the listener no choice but to jump! “Diez Pajaritos” (Ten Little Birds), although completely in Spanish, is paired with the visual cues in performance and leaves us no doubt as to the numbers that we are counting, adding, and subtracting.

Listening to 123 Andrés Online

Below are 3 selections that will be played at the show and are available on YouTube.

“¡Salta, Salta!” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBiFqDyAZGA>

“Los Colores” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMwSKPH1C_Y

“Diez Pajaritos” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdeOmsivceU>

123 Andrés Website <http://www.123andres.com/> - Here you will find links to more selections from their albums, listed below.

Albums



¡Uno, Dos, Tres Andrés!
en español y en inglés
Best Children's Album,
2015 Latin GRAMMY Nominee



Arriba Abajo
Best Children's Album,
2016 WINNER - Latin GRAMMY



La Luna
New Album
Released 2018



Lesson Uno – Music Connects Us

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Learning Goals: Learners effectively connect and communicate in various ways, including through body language and music.

Skills:

Empathy, Problem Solving, Communicating, Comparing/Contrasting, Connecting

Essential Questions:

How can you connect to someone who does not speak the same language as you?

How is body language an effective mode of communication?

How does music communicate a feeling?

Enduring Understandings:

We may use different words, but we can still understand the same emotional message.

We can transmit our feelings to others with body language.

We may have different ways of saying it, but we have the same things to say.

Music is a universal language. We can feel it.

Materials:

Technology to play the suggested songs playlist
Speakers

Intro (10 min):

Teacher plays several musical selections of contrasting types of music. In an open space, students are encouraged to dance, move, and interpret the song. This should be done with everyone at the same time and students should move individually, avoiding physical contact with other students. They are “individually dancing in a group”.

After 30-45 seconds of each selection, teacher pauses the music, freezes students with a signal, and asks a few questions such as,

- Does the music make you feel any particular way?
- How did you want to move, listening to this music?
- Did everybody in your class dance the same way for each song?

This should be a quick whole class analysis with answers such as “Happy! I moved fast!” After listening and moving to each song, have students formulate conclusions as to whether and how music helped them connect to each other. Students discuss with shoulder partner to think of scenarios in which music can help people who don’t know each other connect and communicate.

CCSS.ELA CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.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.



Photo credit: Jose Eduardo Leon



Lesson Uno – Music Connects Us

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Suggested Songs: This list offers examples of musical styles and genres that represent many areas of Latinoamérica that will encourage varied types of movement.

1. “Vivir Mi Vida”- Marc Antony <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIUHl7WUnh4>
2. “Stand By Me”- Stand By Me <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqWexqElN68>
3. “Mi Gente”- J. Balvin, Willy William- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJgjKUK5_VA
4. “Oye Mi Amor- Maná” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcnNeGQHwDc>
5. “La Pollera Colorá”- Wilson Choperena y Juan Madera <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=289Gie5B4rg>
6. “Drume Negrita”- Mercedes Sosa <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neozL4LSFM>

Lesson (15 min):

Ask students in groups of three to devise different short playlists, using music to communicate in three different ways.

Suggestion: Make sure students know that they do not have to create these lists with actual devices in class. Also, they do not have to have the full song title or artist’s name. A bit of lyric or description is fine, especially if they can sing a bit of it, or tell you about where they heard it, for example: “sunshine in my pocket” from the Trolls movie” (Can’t Stop the Feeling!” by Justin Timberlake) or “that firework song” (“Firework” by Katie Perry).

1. For Playlist #1, choose songs that are **expressive**, that will show a class visitor something about the spirit of the class.
2. For Playlist #2, choose songs that **capture a mood**, one the students would like a visitor to feel.
3. For Playlist #3, choose songs that are **representative** and include a favorite song of each of the members of the group. Depending on time, each group can work on all the playlists or just one.
4. Ask a few groups to share their list representing the spirit of the class.
5. Post the lists in the classroom.



Photo credit: Darío Treviño

Reflection (10 minutes): Discuss with students that just like there are different kinds of people, there are different kinds of music. Sometimes being open to music from different cultures and different time periods can be another way to make connections with people that students don’t know. What different types of music have students encountered? Do students know more music from other countries?

Extensions:

1. Teachers share with students a short playlist of their own, with less contemporary music or musical styles unfamiliar to the students, that captures how the teacher sees the spirit of the class. This music can perhaps be played during a class transition.
2. Challenge students to find out a few musical favorites of a parent or other older relative. Ask them to also find out the story of where the adult first heard it, and why they liked it.



Lesson Dos – Language: Barrier to Bridge

Learning Goals: Exploring what it feels like to speak a language no one understands

Materials: Copies of Finger Spelling Handout
Finger Spelling Poster (optional)

Essential Questions:

How does sign language help others communicate?
Are there messages that everyone in the world communicates the same way?

CCSS.ELA CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.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.

Warm-up (5 min): Music is a language accessible to almost everyone. Sign language helps communicate without using sounds. Demonstrate a few words, phrases, or expressions in sign language.

Lesson (30 min): Imagine traveling to a world with no sound. Explain that the class will be staying in this world for a little while and really want to make friends there.

Suggestion: As facilitator, narrate and dramatize this 'world' during the instructions as much as possible, stressing that this is a silent world. After giving initial instructions, really work to conduct the activity completely using non-verbal communication, but if verbal instructions are needed, make them concise. Examples: Smile, wave Hello, cry, laugh, point, frown, use our hands to motion or animate, act it out, etc. This activity will work best as a quiet activity. Students will have many giggles and bodily function noises to get out at the beginning. Work to ignore and let time normalize the silence. There will be moments of frustration but strive to push through for the bigger lightbulb moments at the end.

1. Teacher gives last verbal instructions, "As you arrive in this new world, it is your goal to communicate with everyone in the room that you are happy to be their friend. To do that, you will need to meet, greet, and communicate friendliness to each person in the room." On signal, students begin activity.
2. Give signal for students to circle. Non-verbally congratulate all students on their friendliness.
3. Non-verbally communicate to students that the next step is to find out each new friend's name in the new world. Distribute the handout* of the sign language alphabet. Consider having a poster size sign language alphabet for students in addition to the personal handouts. Model the process of finger spelling one's name. Consider using a student to model. Give signal for students to begin to amble around the room asking for 2 or 3 of their new friends to sign their names.
4. Give signal for students to circle. Non-verbally ask for 2 or 3 student volunteers to sign their names. Non-verbally congratulate them. Perhaps using finger spelling.

Reflection (10 min): Move students from silent world to hearing world once more using a physical change of space if possible or a sounding signal to break the silence before speaking. Thank students non-verbally and verbally for journeying with you to the world with no sound.

Consider having students transition to a guided journal writing reflection, in keeping with the quiet theme. Guide them in answering: Did you feel frustrated? Why? What can the silent world help us learn about other people? What did we learn about ourselves? What did we learn about communicating? Do we need a specific language to communicate with others? Can we only make friends with people that speak like us?





























Lesson Dos – Finger Spelling

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*Handout is an American Sign Language resource from Education.com.

American Sign Language Finger Spelling Chart

 A	 B	 C	 D
 E	 F	 G	 H
 I	 J	 K	 L
 M	 N	 O	 P
 Q	 R	 S	 T
 U	 V	 W	 X
 y	 Z		



Lesson Tres – Storytelling

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Learning Goals: Learners narrate a creative and organized story successfully implementing elements of story and storytelling.

Skills:

Listening, Speaking, Creativity, Collaboration

Essential Questions:

What characteristics do stories share?

What makes a story “good”?

What makes a storyteller “good”?

Can music play a part in storytelling?

Enduring Understandings:

Stories have a beginning, middle, and ending that involves characters, a setting, and a problem the characters face.

Good storytellers know how to speak clearly, use inflection in their voices, and use non-verbal communication as well to engage their audience.

Materials:

Picture Prompts (page 14) for a main character, a setting, and something to include in the story. **

Large map of The Americas (as a reference)

**Before this lesson, prep picture prompts to use in a teacher demonstration. You will also need a problem for the characters to solve and possibly a way to include a song in the solution. Consider coming up with possible storylines ahead of time in order to make that much more of an engaging story during the lesson.

Intro (5 min): Ask students to recall what they know about the characteristics of a story and characteristics of a storyteller.

Hook (10 min): Have 3 different students choose one picture prompt from the various categories. Show the students each picture prompt (character, setting, and object) and let them know that you are going to invent a story right now using the 3 prompts.

Tell a very short but engaging story using your best storytelling tricks. Include snippets of a song in the solution if you feel comfortable. Use inflection in your voice, facial expressions, hand motions, and even refer to the picture prompts as visual aids when necessary.

Reflection (5 min): Ask students to take turns retelling the story to their shoulder partner. Give signal for students to direct their attention to you again and ask, “What did you remember most about the story? Why? What characteristics did the story have? What characteristics did the storyteller demonstrate?”

CCSS.ELA LITERACY.W.3.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.



About 123 Andrés

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Lesson (30 min): Today we are going to practice our story making and storytelling skills. We are going to use the picture prompts to first guide us in creating the story map. Our story will have a main character; we will describe the setting; and our character will encounter a problem. The story will have a beginning, middle, and end.

Suggestion: Have a signal that allows for smooth and clear transitions between steps of lesson.

1. Have students pair up and together choose one of each picture prompts, 3 total. At this time students will brainstorm story ideas, character names, and possible problem solutions, etc. with each other.
2. Students should now share their brainstorm ideas with the student pair group beside them.
3. Students revise their ideas and continue to cement their story. Students practice telling the story.
4. Guide student pair groups in a checklist of their story. Ask if their story has a main character, setting, problem, solution, clear ending, etc. Have students use hand signals to communicate with you yes, no, not sure.

Whole Group Reflection (10 min): Connect students with another pair to share their stories. What are the characteristics of a good story and storyteller?

Partner Reflection (10 min): Have students answer the following questions in written form or in the form of shoulder partner guided discussion, about both their own stories and the stories they heard from another pair of students.

- What elements of story did you and your partner's story have?
- What elements of storytelling did you and your partner demonstrate?
- What was exciting about the story you heard from a different pair?
- How did you come up with a problem?
- How did you solve it?
- Were you able to include a song in the solution?

Photo credit: Sabine West





Lesson Tres – Picture Prompts

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Characters

LA LLAMA



EL GECO



EL PAJARITO



Places

CENTROAMÉRICA



EL CARIBE



SURAMÉRICA



LA CASA



Objects

DINERO



LOS LENTES





Lesson Cuatro- WHERE IN LAS AMÉRICAS?

Learning Goals: Students will develop map literacy and practice deductive reasoning using previous knowledge.

Skills: Critical Thinking, Map Literacy, Collaboration

Essential Questions:

What are the Americas? How can a map help us to answer questions about the Americas?

Enduring Understandings:

Sometimes we call The United States of America just 'America', but the Americas include all of North, Central, and South America.

Maps have several tools to help use make educated guesses about climate, transportation, topography, and even culture.

Materials:

Class Map of Western Hemisphere (digital, pull-down map, globe, poster, etc)

Compass

Copies of the Explore Las Américas worksheet on page 17 and the map of the Americas handout on page 19

Classroom technology to investigate countries (optional)

Intro (10 min):

Ask students to define 'America'. Now, define 'The Americas'. Now, look at the class map of the Western Hemisphere and hone definition of 'The Americas'. Facilitate the understanding of North America, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. Ask students to compare and contrast both meanings of America.

Hook (5 min): Have a show and tell moment with a compass. Allow students to experience the compass. Facilitate a conversation about previous knowledge regarding the 4 cardinal directions. Direct the inquiry towards understanding of cold weather closer to the north and south poles, warmer climate near center, sun rising in the east, setting in the west, etc.

Lesson (30 min): Guide students through identifying their previous knowledge. (Where is the United States, Tennessee, North and South Pole, etc. We can travel from TN to Mexico by land but not by sea. We cannot travel to the Caribbean by land, etc.)

Suggestion: Have several class sets of maps, globes, and even Google maps available for students to use as a reference.

1. In pairs, students choose or are assigned a country either in Centroamérica, El Caribe, or Suramérica. They can color their country on the map of Americas outline handout on page 19. Encourage them to use the class map to make as many educated guesses about that country as possible. Students are brainstorming mode of transportation, climate, clothing preferences, local food, etc.

CCSS.ELA LITERACY.RI.3.7

Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).



Lesson Cuatro- WHERE IN LAS AMÉRICAS?

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2. Walk through an example of map inquiry and observation with the students, modeling your critical thinking and hypothesizing out loud. Consider showing this process with Mexico even though it is not in Central America, South America, or the Caribbean. Students are more likely to have background knowledge about Mexico and would feel more confident about hypothesizing about Mexico's climate, modes of transportation, etc. Modeling will also establish the vocabulary desired for this activity. Consider taking the time to invest in the scientific method vocabulary, especially facilitating an understanding of hypothesis and the value of making educated guesses.
3. Have students fill out the worksheet on page 17 with their predictions.
4. Pair/Share (5 min): Students share with the pair next to them. Use a signal to indicate when first group begins and ends, in order for second group to begin.
5. Students individually, where possible, use classroom technology to research their country. Consider modeling the query process on classroom projector. Also, where classroom technology is not available, consider reserving computer lab, or checking out books about Latin American countries from the Limitless Libraries.
6. Each pair discusses their findings with partner.

Reflection (10 min):

How many hypotheses did you and your partner need to revise? How much were you able to figure out about your country with just a map and some previous knowledge? What did you learn about your country? Did anything take you by surprise?



Photo credit: Dario Treviño



Lesson Cuatro- Worksheet

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EXPLORE LAS AMÉRICAS

1. Circle which area of the Americas you and your partner will explore.

Centroamérica

El Caribe

Suramérica

2. Circle the name of the country you and your partner will explore.

Argentina

Bolivia

Brasil

Chile

Colombia

Costa Rica

Cuba

Ecuador

El Salvador

Guatemala

Haití

Honduras

Nicaragua

Paraguay

Panamá

Perú

Puerto Rico






República Dominicana

Uruguay

Venezuela

3. Fill out the chart below.

3. Fill out the chart below.

	Characteristic of the Country	Your Hypothesis (Educated Guess)	Your Investigation/ Findings
	THE CLIMATE (El Clima) What is the weather like in this country?		
	CLOTHING (La Ropa) What kind of clothing is worn in this country?		
	TRANSPORTATION (La Transportación) How can people in this country get from one place to another?		
	THE LAND (La Tierra) What type of land will you find in this country? Mountains? Deserts? Rainforests?		
	LOCAL FOOD (La Comida Típica) What do the local recipes consist of in this country?		



Post Performance-Travel Brochures

with thanks to 123 Andrés

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Even with so much of our content on-line now, there is still a need for a printed brochure to entice travelers to visit another country with beautiful images and interesting information.

Ask students to choose a country from Central America, South America, or the Caribbean. They will research the idea and create a brochure, focusing on three main reasons to visit.

Objective –

- Students will create a tourist brochure for “Juana Tours,” a traveling company that does trips around Latin America.
- Students will include use grade-appropriate research skills to find key information about the destination countries that would make Juana’s customers feel prepared and eager to travel with her.

During the show, we learn about Juana, Andrés’ friend who likes to travel and dance. Juana is starting a travel company, and she needs help promoting her business, so we are going to help design a brochure for her.

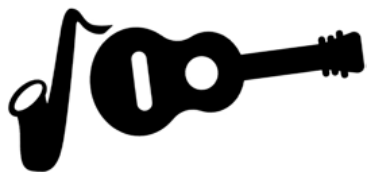
Teachers should explain to students what brochures are, and should have several travel brochures on hand for students to flip through to get ideas for what their brochure should contain.

The requirements teachers set for what the brochures should contain will vary according to the students’ grade level. Here are some ideas for what the brochures could contain:

- A large map of Latin America, with the travel destinations labeled and colored
- Images, such as the flag of the country
- Key facts about the country such as the capital city and other important cities; language(s) spoken; information about the landscape (are there plains, jungles, beaches, mountains?); Information about the climate
- A short description of the national dance and music.
- A basic dictionary for travelers with basic words like, hello, friend, the words for body parts, the words for colors. This can include words learned during the assembly, and teachers can also challenge students to find new words they think would be useful to travelers.
- Contact information (such as a made up website or phone number) for Juana’s company
- For younger students, this activity can be as simple as writing a few sentences, coloring drawings and cutting, pasting and labeling images. Older students can do more research about a country of their choice, or even use technology to produce an “infomercial” that Juana could use to promote travel to that Latin American country.
- -Grade-appropriate reference websites, such as National Geographic’s “Countries” section: <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/places/find/>



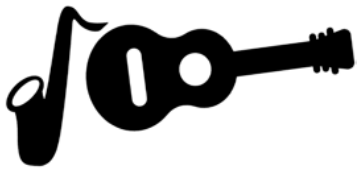
Photo credit: Darío Treviño



Map of the Americas

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Recommended Books

with thanks to 123 Andrés

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Once upon a Time: Traditional Latin American Tales/ Había Una Vez: Cuentos Tradicionales Latinoamericanos – Rueben Martínez, David Unger, and Raúl Colón (grades Preschool - 2)

Enter an enchanted world of kings and giants, where cockroaches play dress-up and coyotes fly to the moon! In this lively bilingual collection of short stories, Spain and Latin America's most beloved tales are retold for a new generation.

El Barrio - Deborah M. Newton Chocolate (grades Preschool-2)

Join a young boy as he explores his vibrant neighborhood. The city shimmers with life - at once a party, a waltz, and a heartbeat. El Barrio is his sister preparing for her quinceanera, his grandfather singing about the past, and his cousins' stories from other lands. The city is alive with the rhythms of the street. Told in lyrical language and through bold, colorful illustrations, this celebration of Hispanic culture and urban life is sure to fire children's curiosity about where they live and what they can discover in their own neighborhoods.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/ Marisol McDonald no combina - Monica Brown (grades Preschool-2)

The vivacious Peruvian-Scottish-American protagonist of this bilingual book has brown skin and hair "the color of fire." Her friends tell her that she "doesn't match," because of her appearance and her wardrobe, but when Marisol tones down her style, she realizes that it doesn't feel right. Palacio's collage work incorporates newsprint, vibrant patterns, and Peruvian motifs, echoing the message about being true to oneself.

Lola's Fandango - Anna Witte (grades K-2)

Lola lives with her parents and amazing older sister in a city apartment. It seems that everything Clementina does is perfect, and Lola has nothing special to offer. When she discovers a beautiful pair of dancing shoes while rummaging around her mother's closet, she convinces her father to teach her the flamenco so she can dance like her mother once did. They secretly practice on the roof of their building, and Lola develops duende: "Spirit. Attitude." When the family plans a surprise birthday party for their mother, Lola finally has her moment to shine.

Grandma's Records - Eric Velasquez (grades 1-3)

Every summer, Eric goes to live with his grandmother in El Barrio (Spanish Harlem) while his parents work. Through the long hot days, Grandma fills her apartment with the blaring horns and conga drums of Bomba y Plena, salsa, and merengue-the music she grew up with in Puerto Rico-sharing her memories and passions with Eric. But Eric sees Grandma in a new light when she gets them tickets to hear their favorite band in concert.

My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz/ Me llamo Celia: la vida de Celia Cruz - Monica Brown (grades 2-4)

An exuberant picture-book biography of the Cuban-born salsa singer. From its rhythmic opening, the first-person narrative dances readers through Cruz's youth in Havana, a childhood bounded by scents of nature and home, the sweet taste of sugar, and the sound of music. A singer from an early age, Cruz sang so continually that one of her teachers finally urged her to share her voice with the world. Thus encouraged, she entered competitions, undeterred when her racial heritage prevented her from competing. Undeterred,



Recommended Books

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even, when the advent of Castro's communist regime forced her to leave Cuba as a refugee. Positive even in exile, Cruz made New York City her own and took Miami by storm. The salsa-influenced prose presented in English and in Spanish is followed by a straightforward vita of the singer, noting her death in July 2003.

Latino Rainbow: Poems about Latino Americans - Carlos Cumpian (grades 3-6)

This collection of 20 poems in picture-book format introduces aspects of Latino culture in the United States. The chronologically arranged selections range in topic from the colonization of California by the Spanish, to Ellen Ochoa, the first Latina astronaut. Cumpián's poetry captures with interesting rhythms, some of the most dramatic moments of the history between Mexico and the United States. The poems will allow children to discover for themselves these interesting events and figures of importance to the Latino culture in this country.

Under the Mambo Moon -

Julia Durango (grades 4-6)

On summer nights Marisol helps out in Papi's music store. As customers come and go, they share memories of the Latin music and dance of their various homelands, expressed in a dazzling array of poetry. The diversity of Latin American music is brought to life in poems that swivel, sway, and sizzle with the rhythms of merengue, vallenatos, salsa, and samba.



Photo credit: Jose Eduardo Leon

Additional books:

What Can You Do with a Rebozo? ¿Qué puedes hacer con un rebozo?

Carmen Tafolla

What Can You Do with a Paleta?

Carmen Tafolla

Grandma's Gift/ El regalo de mi abuela

Eric Velasquez

Niño Wrestles the World/ Viva Frida Yuyi Morales

Yuyi Morales

Qué cosas dice mi abuela /The Things My Grandmother Says

Ana Galán

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