

# **Puerto Rico: Home Away From Home in the U.S.**

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## **Overview**

The largest and most established groups of Hispanic immigrants in the United States are from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. The word “Hispanic” refers to a population whose ancestry resides in Spain or countries that are former Spanish colonies and who share many cultural traits including Spanish as a common language. This unit is intended to provide students with a fuller picture of our global society by increasing opportunities for them to learn more about Hispanic people in the United States. I have chosen to focus this unit on the people of Puerto Rico. Even though Puerto Ricans and U.S. citizens, they are in the unique position of being both citizen and immigrant in the United States

The premise of my curriculum unit is to assist sixth grade students who study Latin America in their World Cultures class to explore the culture and heritage of Puerto Ricans here in the United States, particularly New York City, and within their homeland.

We will investigate this culture by using the five themes of geography to compare and contrast life in Puerto Rico and New York City. The purpose is to give students the opportunity to develop in their role of citizen an acceptance of diversity among different cultures. This will be accomplished through various activities each with a focus on “The Five Themes of Geography”, which have been incorporated in this unit. Through this exploration we will also utilize educational standards in communication and citizenship.

## **Rationale**

As citizens, it is very easy to accept people who are like us. Many of our students have not experienced people who speak different languages or who have customs different from their own. As we explore New York City and Puerto Rico our learners should develop an awareness and acceptance of a culture that is different from their own.

For most of our learners, knowledge of the history and culture of Hispanic people will give them the chance to better understand their own culture and heritage. They will be given the opportunity to compare and contrast their own culture to the culture of Puerto Rico.

In order to understand the Puerto Rican culture here in the United States, the learner will need to investigate the background of why Puerto Ricans immigrated largely to a state that was over 1,000 miles from their homeland. We will take a look at the history of Puerto Rico, the migration of Puerto Ricans from their homeland to New York City, and present day Puerto Ricans.

### *The History of Puerto Rico from 1400-1600*

Puerto Rico has a long and rich history. As early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Taino Indians, who migrated from South America, inhabited the island of Puerto Rico. The Taino Indians lived in small villages, were organized by clans, and were led by a chief. Known as a peaceful people. They had a limited knowledge of agriculture so therefore they subsisted off of pineapples, cassava, sweet potatoes and seafood.

On November 19, 1493, the Taino Indians were greeted with the merchant seamen from Christopher Columbus' second voyage to the New World. Columbus set sail from Spain under the leadership of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to establish mass colonization. On the island that the Taino Indians called *Boriken*, which means "land of the great lords", Columbus found at least 50,000 inhabitants. Greeted warmly, Columbus was awed by the generosity of the Tainos when they showed him gold nuggets in the river and told him to take all he wanted. Spanish colonization begins in 1508, and credited with ambition, Ponce de Leon, a lieutenant to Columbus, assists Puerto Rico to become Spain's most important military outpost in the Caribbean.

Once Spain occupied and controlled the island of Puerto Rico it is imperative that we look at the timeline of how Christianity was instituted. In 1509, Juan Ponce de Leon was granted governor of the island from Ferdinand, the King of Spain. His first edict was to distribute Tainos among the officials and colonists for free wages and forced labor. Several priests, who were brought by Ponce de Leon, witnessed cruel and inhumane treatment of the Tainos. The priests protested the Tainos treatment and a new agreement were established. Under the new rule, the Spaniards were required to pay the Tainos for their labor and to teach them about Catholicism. This agreement did not last long. Soon the Spaniards continued in their old ways of forcing the Tainos to work from dawn to dusk under the threats of corporal punishment and even death. This leads to a revolt, where over 6,000 Tainos were executed. The Tainos were a defeated people. They did not have the resources necessary to overtake Ponce de Leon and the colonists. Since Puerto Rico had strong ties to Spain, whose main religion is Catholicism, Pope Julius II established two dioceses. These dioceses were instituted to minister and baptize the Tainos to the Roman Catholic faith. Currently, 85% of Puerto Rico still follows this faith. Still today, each town celebrates its patron saint feast day that it was named after with a huge celebration.

In 1513, African slaves arrive in Puerto Rico. Due to fact that the Spaniards lost many Taino Indians during the revolt in 1511, they needed to replenish their free labor. As more and more ships from Spain arrived—with no women, the Spanish men intermingled with the African and Taino women. Thus we now have three cultures mixing together. As time passes, the freed slaves help mold the culture. The impact of this melding can still be felt today.

The rest of the 1500's begin the industrialization of their resources. Agriculturally, sugar becomes the most important product. At this time the first sugar cane processing plant is built. The coconut tree is introduced to the island. The gold mines are depleted. Ginger replaces sugar as its main cash crop.

Politically at his time, Puerto Rico was concerned with the threats from Europe. Britain recognized the strategic location of the island, so it was necessary to construct massive forts around the capital city of San Juan for protection. Sir Francis Drake tries to conquer the island by setting San Juan on fire. He is unsuccessful. The British navy is more successful in gaining control over the island for a few months, but they must retreat due to an outbreak of the plague.

*1600-1800*

This period of time shows very little change. Holland tries unsuccessfully to conquer San Juan. The first census is taken under the direction of Charles III of Spain. The population count shows 44,883 inhabitants on the island. In 1797 the French-Spanish declare war on England. Again the British fail to take control of the island.

### *1800-1900*

During this one hundred year time span, growth and change flourished in Puerto Rico. With government, Puerto Rico was recognized as a Spanish colony. They had the opportunity to represent the island and acquired the right to vote. Division of the territory was established into provinces with local councils. Each council could promote its own prosperity and defend its interests. Foreigners were admitted, and trade was established outside of the island. The initial gold supply was exhausted, so cattle, sugar cane, tobacco, and coffee became the main investments.

As a result of trade, the island experienced the wrath of pirates and smugglers. Even the Americans became involved in these escapades. America had to send a ship to capture Pirate Roberto Cofresi that ended in a bloody battle and execution of Cofresi. Due to the easy access of invaders the governors of Puerto Rico receive absolute governing facilities.

In 1868, Spanish revolutionaries, made up of several hundred men and women, revolted against Spain to gain their independence. As a result of this uprising, the first political parties were established. The Liberal Reformist Party and the Liberal Conservative Party were formed. These were the first true political organizations in the island. Although these revolutionaries began to establish influence of their views of the islands well being, Spain still controls.

Thirty years later, politically many changes occur. A new government is formed. Governor General Manuel Macias gave town councils complete control in local issues. Soon after, the Spanish-American war began. The United States under the leadership of President McKinley, first defeated Spain in Cuba, then proceeded to Puerto Rico. By August in 1898, the United States had acquired Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Manila. The United States outnumbered the Spanish in troops, and the natives greeted the soldiers with enthusiasm. In December, the Treaty of Paris is signed and all Spanish troops leave the island.

With the United States in power a shift in practices also occurred. Freedom of assembly, speech, and religion were decreed. Government employees were given

an eight-hour workday. The U. S. Postal Service was transferred to the island. They installed a highway and bridge system. The government lottery was abolished, cock fighting was prohibited, and they began a centralized health system.

Prior to the Spanish-American war, slavery still exists. In 1870, the Moret Law gives slaves born after September 17, 1868 and slaves over the age of 60 their freedom. It wasn't until 1873 that the Spanish National Assembly ends slavery. It however, did not come without concessions. Owners of slaves were paid 35 million pesetas for each slave, and the slaves were forced to still continue to work for three more years.

In this time period, technology begins to flourish. The printing press was introduced to the island, which enabled literary works to be published. The first book of poems and many novels were printed and released for the public to enjoy. Even though the people lived in extreme poverty ironically the literacy rate was 83 percent.

### *1900-1999*

With the island now under the commonwealth of the United States, it was necessary for the government to establish Puerto Rico's position. In order to do this they enacted the Jones Act. Here is an account of what the Jones Act entailed:

On December 5, 1916, the Jones Act is approved, with this law:

1. Puerto Rico becomes U.S. territory ("organized but unincorporated,")
2. U.S. nationalizes all Puerto Ricans as citizens and allows Puerto Ricans to elect their legislature. As citizens, they were now allowed to join the army, only 300 rejected the citizenship and many others refused to join the army. During World War I, over 18,000 Puerto Ricans served.
3. Separated the three governmental powers: the legislative, the executive and the judicial.
4. A bill of rights was created.
5. Arranged that elections were to be celebrated every four years. ((Welcome to Puerto Rico4)

United States President Woodrow Wilson signed the Jones Act. With this law, it separated the three government powers into the executive, legislative, and

judicial. Puerto Rico's Senate had 19 members and the House of Representatives had 39 members. The United States still maintained control over the fiscal and economic matters on the island. The Governor of Puerto Rico and the President of the United States could veto legislature at any time. The United States also exercised authority over the mail, immigration, defense, and other government matters.

### *2000-2003*

Today, Puerto Rico is still under the control of the United States. Puerto Rico remains in close proximity to the United States. Many economic opportunities still remain there, and it has a strategic location for the defense of the Panama Canal. Despite a general dissatisfaction with their relationship with the United States, Puerto Rico still favors some kind of association with the U.S. They believe that there are substantial economic and political benefits. Because of these beliefs they are willing to forego their independence and self-governance.

Even though Puerto Rico falls under the same laws of the U.S., there are still some major differences. There are no federal income taxes paid by individuals or corporations in Puerto Rico, but it is off set by their own levy of taxes, which is almost at the same level. But on the flip side, Puerto Rican citizens are treated less favorably under some federal programs, such as; Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid, and food stamps. The Social Security Income Program does not apply to Puerto Rico, but they have a similar program. They are not given the right to vote for the President and Vice-President of the United States.

Puerto Rico could have the opportunity to choose statehood or give them full independence. With close to 3 million citizens, they would have the fortunateness to gain the same equalities of the other fifty states. But many Puerto Ricans are not willing to forego their culture. Most Puerto Ricans feel that they have a distinctive culture, language, and national identity of their own. Most are not willing to give that up. Even if they were to become independent, many feel that they do not want to lose their citizenship. They enjoy one of the highest standards of living of any Latin people, despite the fact that they have they lowest income of any U.S. state.

More recently. a crucial issue that has plagued the island finally became resolved on May 1, 2003. In 1939 the U.S. Navy purchased the island of Vieques to use as a bombing range. The U.S. Navy had years of war games that Puerto Ricans were against. But, their dissatisfaction of the bombings intensified by the accidental killing of a Puerto Rican civilian in 1991. This action caused frequent demonstrations that led to number of protestors to be arrested and given jail

sentences for participating in the protests during naval exercises. Puerto Rico's governor, Sila Maria Calderon, sided with the protestors and urged the U.S. to shutdown the bombing range and handover the territory to Puerto Rico. She sponsored a referendum in which voters overwhelmingly favored the return of Vieques to Puerto Rico. In response to this vote, President George W. Bush pledged to abandon the military use of Vieques, which occurred this year. Also significant in recent history is the election in 2000. Voters indicated significant gains for statehood. Many more voters chose statehood over independence, but the vote was greater to allow no change. Any vote to change the island's status would have to be approved by the U.S. Congress.

### *Migration of Puerto Ricans to New York City*

Migration to the United States from Puerto Rico came in three distinct waves. The first immigrants arrived during the period of 1900-1945. Thousands of men were transported mainly to construct ships and armaments during World War I, since the American workforce had a scarcity of men. These men established their families in New York City, particularly in the areas of Brooklyn, East Harlem, the Bronx, the Lower East Side, and the Upper West Side.

The second wave, from 1946-1964, is known as "The Great Migration." During this period Puerto Rican communities that were already established in New York, increased their numbers and expanded their borders. During this time "Operation Bootstrap", which government designed to promote U.S. corporations to industrialize and urbanize the islands by providing low wages and tax incentives. During this time Puerto Rico improved in many ways. Improvements were made in the areas of education, housing, drinking water, electrical, sewage systems, roads, and transportation. Residents of Puerto Rico felt a clear sense of development and progress. However, the industries that were attracted to the island did not provide sufficient jobs. With increased population and displaced workers, the growing population could not be accommodated. So the surplus labor force migrated to New York City where the demands of labor jobs were plentiful. Then mayor Robert Wagner sent agent to the island and publicly announced that any Puerto Rican that was willing to work could come to New York City. This led more than one million Puerto Ricans to leave the island to seek "paradise" in the land of milk and honey.

The last wave of migration dates from 1965-till present. Clearly migration trends seem to revolve around the economy of both countries. Researchers have agreed that when the national income went up and unemployment went down in the United States Puerto Rican migration increased. Wages and unemployment

rates in Puerto Rico and the United States also affected migration to the United States and back to Puerto Rico. It can be assumed that Puerto Ricans migrated when job opportunities looked better in the United States and worse in Puerto Rico. Since Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States, it has given them the freedom to go back and forth between the island and the mainland even if there are restrictions on immigration.

### *Puerto Ricans in New York City in 2003*

Today the population of Puerto Ricans in New York City has steadily declined over the past decade compared to the first time they arrived in record numbers over 60 years ago. This decline has been given many reasons. The first is that many have moved to the suburbs or relocated due to job availability. The second reason, I feel, is a significant one. More than one-third of Puerto Ricans are leaving the city bound for the island, including a significant number of people who are born in the States. There has been the belief that their ties to Puerto Rico have caused them to resist acculturation. Many Puerto Ricans feel that they are betraying their homeland if they give up their dream of going back to the island.

Even though there are many successful contributions made by Puerto Ricans from political gains to contributions made in the arts, Puerto Ricans are still living below the poverty line at a higher rate than any other minority group in the United States. Some experts believe that Puerto Ricans continue to struggle because they are living in the poorest neighborhoods, segregated communities, go to the worst schools, and are in the lowest paying jobs. An increased demand of skilled workers has impacted Puerto Ricans since barely 10 percent hold a college degree. Language used to be a factor that led to poverty, but now, most Puerto Ricans are English speaking and there still is a lack of significant progress in educating Puerto Ricans. Poverty can be rooted in the low wage manufacturing jobs that first lured them to New York. Many that came were agricultural workers displaced by industrialization on the island.

Many sociologists also believe that poverty was compounded by the Puerto Rican experience with welfare. Arriving as American citizens, they were entitled to the social services denied to many new immigrants. Among single mothers with young children, who often found welfare more attractive than a low paying job with no benefits, public assistance kept many from job experiences and kept them in poverty. Many are young single women with very little education to help them break out of this cycle.

## *The Culture of Puerto Rico*

The traditions of the island, as well as in most of Latin America, are deeply rooted in Catholicism. Over the years, and through contact with other cultures, faiths and the secular life, some customs have changed. Therefore, regardless of religious affiliation, everyone participates. Puerto Ricans are a warm, friendly, outgoing people and love to celebrate! Food, friends, and music are the three essential elements for a Puerto Rican family. We will look at the cuisine, music, and family traditions to define Puerto Rican culture.

### *Cuisine*

Traditional Puerto Rican foods have a Spanish, African, and Taino influence that blend together. The mingling of these flavors has been passed down from generation to generation. A distinct aroma that many Puerto Rican kitchens have is a blend of herbs and spices, such as, peppercorns, oregano, garlic, salt, olive oil, and lime juice that is rubbed into meats before roasting. Main ingredients of Puerto Rican dishes include fried beefsteak, stews, veal, chicken, fresh ham, lamb or roast leg of pork. They also enjoy breaded calf brains, calf kidneys, and stuffed beef tongue!!! Fruits and vegetables are bountiful. Chayote is a favorite vegetable that resembles a summer squash. Another popular vegetable is breadfruit, which is similar to a sweet potato. This veggie accompanies many main dishes and can be prepared in different ways. The most popular fruit is the plantain. Since a plantain cannot be eaten raw (it comes from the banana family), it is harvested while it is still green, and can be baked, fried, or boiled. Of course there are many more foods that are native to Puerto Rico, but I wanted to touch on just a few of the most popular ones so that my students would have a basis to compare foods that they eat to those that are popular with Puerto Ricans.

### *Music*

Although folk, classical, and bomba can be found on the island, the most popular and famous music is the salsa. The salsa was originally developed in the Puerto Rican communities. It is derived from the Cuban and African-Caribbean heritage that incorporates the rumba, mambo, cha-cha, guaguanco, and merengue. Salsa was born in the nightclubs of New York City. Its fast moving beat has made it one of the most famous rhythms in the world. Other instruments that are typically used in Puerto Rican music are the guiro, cuatro, maracas, bongos, timbales, conga drums, claves, and a cowbell. The bomba is a favorite of the islanders. It is a musical event that allows the dancer to interact with the drummer. Sometimes this is described as a duel between the drummer and the dancer. Bomba is considered the most popular folk music on the island. I think my students would be excited to look at the music in Puerto Rico. It would give them the chance to experiment with a variety of music that may not be familiar to them.

### Traditions

Many traditions were brought to the mainland to hold on to a part of their heritage. Puerto Rican families are viewed as close knit. The extended family, elders included, are respected and revered. Families often gather for celebration of holidays, birthdays, and weddings. Many traditions revolve around Catholicism since most Puerto Ricans practice this religion. These holidays, Parrandas, Misas de aguinaldos, Nochebuena, Año Viejo, Año Nuevo, Santos Inocentes, Velorios cantados, Tres Reyes Magos, and Octavas, are celebrated starting after Thanksgiving until January 8<sup>th</sup> of each year. These holidays center around the birth of Jesus Christ. In Puerto Rico each town celebrates its patron saint with food, parades, dances, and religious processions. These celebrations can last up to one week. Another great celebration is quinceaneros. This event is centuries old and still is revered today. Quinceaneros is the transition from childhood to adulthood for a girl who has turned fifteen. A young lady usually celebrates this tradition with a religious ceremony and festivities that last into the night. My students would be intrigued to learn about rituals that are very different from their own and the reason that they are celebrated in that manner. It will give them the opportunity to compare their own traditions to that of Puerto Rico.

### Objectives

Through research students will gain awareness and appreciate the culture of Puerto Rican in New York City. They will utilize the Five Themes of Geography to embark on an expedition that will take them from Puerto Rico to New York just as the Puerto Ricans did beginning at the turn of the century. Through cooperative work groups' students will explore the Puerto Rican culture and share their findings with the class. Students will summarize their learning orally and in written form. They will also compare and contrast their own culture to that of the Puerto Ricans.

### Strategies

Each day during a seven-day time frame the student will be given various activities to explore the Puerto Rican culture. They will utilize map skills to identify land and water borders, label major cities, and landforms. They will examine the history and traditions of the Puerto Rican people through research. This research will lead to oral reports, written reports, making maps, and comparing and contrasting the relationship of their own culture to that of Puerto Rico. Each lesson will be given an activity that when completed will assess the student's knowledge of a particular theme.

## Classroom Activities

### Day One

Each one of my classes last for 45 minutes, therefore each lesson will be approximately that long. On day one we will develop a definition of culture and how it relates to how people live. As an anticipatory set, show students large pictures of Puerto Rican people dressed in their native clothes. (Do not tell the students who the people are in the picture, save that secret for tomorrow). Ask students to speculate who they think they are and what they are doing. Record their answers on the board. Hang the pictures where the students can see them. Tell students we will be examining the culture of these people, but first we need to define what culture is. Divide the students into pairs, and give them a piece of chart paper. Prompt the students to look at the pictures and think about what would be important to include that is part of their culture. On the chart paper, have the students brainstorm and quickly list as many of the characteristics of culture that they can. Give a five-minute time limit. Students will hang the paper and a spokesperson will share their responses. The conclusion of the lesson will be a culmination of each groups responses and decide as a class what the definition of “culture” is. Post this definition to refer back to as we continue this unit.

### Day Two

Today we will begin by reviewing who the students thought the people in the picture were. Reveal that the people in the pictures are Puerto Ricans. Look at the responses from yesterday to see if this was guessed. The anticipatory set will be to discuss how a culture forms. Each student will record the answers in their notebook in case the student needs to come back to refer to it. Next, explain to the students that we will examine the history of Puerto Rico. Pass out the following worksheet that the student will complete individually. This worksheet comes from the web site, [www.elboricua.com](http://www.elboricua.com), Puerto Rico Studies for Kids. After the student completes the worksheet, have each student, in their notebook, list two or three key words or phrases that would be important to the culture of the Puerto Ricans. Next, beside each word or phrase explain why the word or phrase is important to their culture. For example: Taino Indians- shared their home and food with Spanish. We will then use a class chart to record the students responses on it. Conclusion of the lesson will be verbally reviewing the history of Puerto Rico. The assessment will be students giving a specific examples of what events took place in Puerto Rican history that lead to the forming their own culture.

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<p align="center"><b>Introduction to Puerto Rican History</b></p> <p align="center">20 questions</p>	<p>NAME _____</p> <p>DATE _____</p>
<p><b>Puerto Rico</b> is located in the Caribbean Ocean. It is the smallest of the Greater Antilles Islands, which include Cuba (the largest), La Española (Haiti and the República Dominicana sharing an island), and Jamaica. Puerto Rico is only 100 miles long by 35 miles wide. It is 1000 miles from Miami.</p>	<p><b>Name the Greater Antilles Islands</b></p> <p>1) _____</p> <p>2) _____</p> <p>3) _____</p> <p>4) _____</p>
<p>Puerto Rico is often referred to as Borinquen or Borikén, indigenous names, as well as Isla del Encanto, and Perla del Caribe. Puerto Ricans refer to themselves as Puertorriqueños or Boricuas. Boricua is used as a term of endearment and cultural affirmation.</p>	<p><b>List 3 other names for Puerto Rico.</b></p> <p>5) _____</p> <p>6) _____</p> <p>7) _____</p> <p><b>An endearing name for Puerto Ricans is:</b></p> <p>8) _____</p>
<p>Before the Spaniards discovered Puerto Rico, it was populated by Taino Indians. The Tainos were a peaceful, gentle nation. They welcomed the conquistadores and shared their homes and food and gave the Spaniards many gifts.</p>	<p><b>Which Indian nation made Puerto Rico their home?</b></p> <p>9) _____</p>
<p>Christopher Columbus sailed from Spain in his second voyage and discovered Puerto Rico on November 19, 1493. He named the island San Juan Bautista. Columbus thought this island to be very beautiful and wrote so in his diary. Soon after the island's name was changed to Puerto Rico.</p>	<p><b>Who discovered Puerto Rico?</b></p> <p>10) _____</p> <p><b>What is the date of Discovery?</b></p> <p>11) _____</p>
<p>Juan Ponce de León colonized Borinquen in 1508 and became its first governor. The Spaniard conquistadores were looking for gold. They made slaves of the Indians slowly killing them from overwork. Soon thereafter African families were brought to the island as slaves.</p>	<p><b>Who was Puerto Rico's first governor?</b></p> <p>12) _____</p> <p>What year did colonization begin in Puerto Rico?</p> <p>13) _____</p> <p>What were the Spaniards looking for?</p>

	14)
<p>Juan Ponce de León, the explorer, was born in Valencia, Spain, in 1460. As a teenager he joined Spanish forces that defeated the Moors. In 1493 he accompanied Cristóforo Colombo in his second voyage to America. Later Ponce de León was granted a commission to explore Borinquen. He then set out to colonize the island of San Juan Bautista and build the first settlement called Caparra. He served as first governor from 1509-12. During his term as governor the island's name was changed from San Juan Bautista to Puerto Rico.</p> <p>Ponce de Leon went on to many other accomplishments. His tomb is found at the San Juan Cathedral in Old San Juan. His family estate is the Casa Blanca, another popular tourist site.</p>	<p><b>Ponce de León served as governor of Puerto Rico</b></p> <p>15) from _____</p> <p>16) to _____</p> <p><b>Puerto Rico's first settlement was named</b></p> <p>17)</p>
<p>Many families from Spain and other European nations moved to the island. Slowly Taíno Indians married either Africans or Europeans forming a new ethnic group called Criollos. Today there are many European, African, and Criollo families in Puerto Rico.</p>	<p><b>Which groups of people make up Puerto Rico's criollo group?</b></p> <p>18)</p> <p>19)</p> <p>20)</p>

### Day Three

We will look at the Puerto Rican history of migration to New York today. First review the history of Puerto Rico. The teacher will announce, “Today we have two special guests. The first guest is Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ that is from BET News station. Our next guest is Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ from New York City. She/he is here to represent the Puerto Rican community to discuss his/her life in New York and Puerto Rico. Choose two students to read the following account:

**Interviewer:** Good day! Where are you from and what brings you to Pittsburgh?

**Puerto Rican:** I was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico and came to Brooklyn New York when I was 8 years old. Your teacher asked me to come and speak to you about my migration from Puerto Rico to New York City.

**Interviewer:** What was it like in Puerto Rico? Tell us about it.

**Puerto Rican:** Well, you know Puerto Rico is an island that is located in the West Indies. It’s a beautiful island where the temperature is between 70-80 degrees all year long. Many tourists come to vacation and enjoy themselves at the beach. I will give you a little of the history. Spain conquered us and settled there in 1508. We were under Spanish rule until the United States took us over after the Spanish-American War in 1898. Today we are a commonwealth of the United States and enjoy many of same things you do. We are free to travel between the island and the mainland since we are citizens of the United States. In Puerto Rico both Spanish and English is spoken, but most people still prefer to speak Spanish. Most people are Roman Catholic and my religion is very much revered.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell us about your family?

**Puerto Rican:** I have a wonderful family that I am very close to. I have three younger brothers and two older sisters. Since my mother works very long hours at the factory, we have to help each other with the chores at our house. We live in an apartment building with many other families. I don’t have my own room; I share it with my sisters and grandmother. Many of my aunts and uncles live nearby and we enjoy getting together to celebrate on many occasions.

**Interviewer:** Why did you come to live in New York?

**Puerto Rican:** My mother lost her sewing job in Puerto Rico. We had relatives in the United States that encouraged her to move us here and live with them until my mom could find a job. So my mother put us on an airplane and brought us to New York. It didn’t take her long to find work, but the job does not pay well, and she has to work long hours so we can stay here.

**Interviewer:** What is it like when you came to live in New York City?

**Puerto Rican:** I was very frightened and scared when I first came to New York City. The apartment building was very large with lots of locks on the door. My mother would not let us go outside and play because there was garbage thrown all over the sidewalks and lots of people there until all hours of the night making lots of noise. I was so excited to go to school, but when I got there they told me I had

to go back a grade. You see, I did not speak English so well and I did not understand what the teacher was saying to me. Even though I was an A student in Puerto Rico, I could not read or write English very well. I was made fun of in school when I was young because I could not speak English like the other children. What I found very hard to deal with is that Puerto Ricans that lived in New York did not talk to me and neither would the African American kids. They thought my family was trying to take jobs from them. Sometimes life was very difficult, especially if my mother lost her job and we had to go on welfare. But times have changed, I am in college now and I can hardly wait to graduate so I can help my mother so she doesn't have to work so hard at the factory

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much for sharing your life story with us. Are there any questions from the audience?

At this time the teacher would take the place of the Puerto Rican and the audience member who asks the question will be the interviewer. Hopefully, this interview will spark a discussion that the teacher can give more info about migration that was not covered in the interview.

To assess the students knowledge about migration from Puerto Rico to New York have the students summarize in one paragraph how life must have been for people who migrated. To conclude the lesson let students share their paragraph with the class.

#### Day Four

Today our focus will be on the first theme of geography, which is location. For the anticipatory set today, first show a large outline map of Puerto Rico and ask the students if they know what country this is. Looking at the map ask the students to speculate information about Puerto Rico. What can they tell about Puerto Rico just by looking at the picture? Second, show a large outline map of New York City. Ask the student to identify this map. What can they tell about New York City just by looking at the map? Ask the students if they see any commonalities about these two places. Record these answers on the board. Explain to the students that we will be seeking the location Puerto Rico and New York City by utilizing our map skills. You may have to recap the following vocabulary words: relative location and absolute location to make sure students understand how to utilize these skills to complete the assignment. Next, the student with a partner and a map will complete the following worksheet:

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Names \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions by using the map.

1. Using a compass, describe where Puerto Rico is located in relation to North America. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Using a compass, describe where New York is located in relation to North America. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Find the relative location of Puerto Rico. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Find the relative location of New York City. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Find the absolute location using latitude and longitude of Puerto Rico. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Find the absolute location using latitude and longitude of New York City. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Guesstimate in miles the distance between Puerto Rico and New York City. What is your answer in miles? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Using a ruler and scale from your map, measure the exact distance between Puerto Rico and New York City in miles? \_\_\_\_\_

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Evaluation will be the completion of the worksheet. We will go over the answers on the worksheet. Ask: Is there anything that the students found fascinating? What new things did they learn about? Is there something else they want to know?

To conclude the lesson we will review the identity of the two maps, Puerto Rico and New York City. And review their location in relation to the world.

Day Five

This lesson will revolve around the second theme of geography, which is Place. Today we will utilize our map skills to become a cartographer. The student will have had prior experience with mapping. The purpose of making these maps is to give the student a mental picture of where the most important landforms, bodies of water, and where cities are located in each of these places. As the student enters the room hand each student a packet of work. The packet will contain one outline map of Puerto Rico, one outline map of New York City, one world atlas, and a paper stating the locations for each of these places to identify. The first outline map will be of Puerto Rico. Students will identify and label the Caribbean Sea, the North Atlantic Ocean, Ponce, de Viegues, Guayama, Rio Grande de Anasco River, Rio Grande de Manati River, Lags Loiza, Cerrode Punta, and El Yungue. With the second outline map of New York City, the students will identify Atlantic Ocean, Jamaica Bay, East River, Hudson River, Long Island Sound, Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx.

We will conclude the lesson by having various students come up to the large map on the wall and locate the places that the teacher asks for. This will give all students the opportunity to check their maps for accuracy. The assessment will be labeling both maps accurately with all the locations. My student's sill love to color, so I have them decorate their maps. I only stress that they make sure everything is readable for me to grade.

### Day Six

We will look at the third theme of geography, which is Human Environment/Interaction. With this lesson we will look at the way people interact with their environment. I have found a web site, [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) that gives a wonderful history and facts about New York City and Puerto Rico. I will photocopy this information to pass out as a packet for student to research specific information. The anticipatory set for this lesson is to review and discuss what human environment interaction means. To begin the lesson, break the students in to groups of three or four give each group of students a packet of facts taken from the web site. Students will research and do the following worksheet. Give a twenty-minute time frame to complete the work. To conclude the lesson ask the students where they would prefer to live and why. The assessment will be the completion of the assignment and participation in the concluding activity.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Complete the following table using the research packet.

	New York	Puerto Rico
Population		
Natural Resources		
Modes of Transportation		
Advantatages for Human Settlement		
Disadvantages for Human Settlement		
Climate/Effect on people		
Language(s)		

Day Seven

Today we will look at the fourth theme of geography, Movement. In this lesson we will explore movement in various ways. I chose this activity so my students can reinforce their map skills. The anticipatory set is to review what movement means and then to list on the board various modes of travel in the world. Discuss with students. Begin the lesson with giving each student an atlas map and a large sheet of blank paper. The students will draw a map from Puerto Rico to New York. They must be accurate, drawing all the different places they will travel through to reach their destination. They will then chart their journey on the map, and choose various modes of travel. They will utilize a key box and create various symbols that correspond to their mode of travel. To conclude this lesson ask the students, what people base their decisions on how to travel. Assessment will be meeting the objective, which is completing the map.

#### Day Eight

On day eight we will we will look at the fifth theme of geography, Region. In this lesson we will play a bingo game that will review and reinforce the different regions from Puerto Rico and New York City. Prior to the lesson prepare empty bingo grids to give one to each student. Place the vocabulary words on the blackboard: Spanish, English, democracy, commonwealth, four seasons, warm weather all year, Caribbean Sea, the North Atlantic Ocean, Ponce, de Viegues, Guayama, Rio Grande de Anasco River, Rio Grande de Manati River, Lags Loiza, Cerrode Punta, and El Yungue, Atlantic Ocean, Jamaica Bay, East River, Hudson River, Long Island Sound, Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx. The anticipatory set will be to question and review the definition of region. The lesson will begin with the student choosing eight of the vocabulary words to put on their bingo grid. Students will place a marker on the card if they have the item that is chosen. When a student gets three in a row, they yell out **region**, and then must identify if the word refers to Puerto Rico or New York City. Make sure you give a prize for correct bingos. Assessment will be the students' participation in the game.

#### Day Nine

This will be the culminating lesson that the student will have the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned in the past eight days. In today's lesson the student will write a paper that will compare and contrast their life to a person who is from Puerto Rico. Hopefully, this will help the student develop a tolerance for cultural diversity. The anticipatory set will be that the class will brainstorm and list ten characteristics or life experiences of a person of Puerto Rican decent. I

will then instruct them to list ten characteristic of their own life style in their notebook, For the lesson today, the students will look at those characteristics and decide which ones are similar and which ones are different. They will then construct a one-page essay to compare and contrast their own life to that of a Puerto Rican. The concluding activity will focus on a discussion of what seminars did they find. The assessment for this lesson is the completion of the one page essay.

### **Bibliography and Resources for Teachers and Students**

Korrol, Virginia E. From Colonia to Community: The history of Puerto Ricans In New York City. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

This novel covers all aspects of the Puerto Rican migration to New York City. It includes settlement patterns, community development and issues That Puerto Ricans face today.

Gonzalez, Juan. Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America. New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc., 2000.

This novel features real life family stories that show the conditions that led them to leave their homeland and how they changed the cultural landscape of the United States.

Santiago, Esmeralda. Almost A Woman. New York: Random House, 1998.

An excellent coming of age story of an immigrant that shares her life with the reader.

Mohr, Nicholasa. Going Home. New York: Putham Books for Young Readers, 1999.

A story of a young Puerto Rican girl from New York who feels like an Outsider when she visits Puerto Rico for the first time.

Flores, Juan. From Bomba to Hip-Hop: Puerto Rican culture and Latino Identity. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

This book discusses the issues that influence the Puerto Rican identity in the United States.

Duany, Jorge. Puerto Rican Nation On the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

The author brings new insight on the strong sharing of culture between the island and the mainland.

Korrel, Virginia Sanchez. From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York 1917-1948. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Information Service, Inc., 1983.

This book gives the complete history of the first wave of migration.

Fernandez, Ronald; Cueto, Gail; Mendez, Serafin. Puerto Rico Past and Present: An Encyclopedia. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998.

The only reference ready guide to the history, society, and culture of Puerto Rico.

Torres, Andres. The Puerto Rican Movement: Voice from the Diaspora. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

This novel reflects on the political and social movements in the U.S.

Ingram, John D. Puerto Rican Independence: Who's Choice? The People of Puerto Rico or the United States Government? Chicago: John Marshall Law School, 2001.

A concise argument on pros and cons for Puerto Rico's independence.

Rodriguez, Clara E. Puerto Ricans: Born in the U.S.A. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991.

An account of Puerto Rican survival in the U.S. is supported by statistics.

## Websites and Internet Resources for Teachers and Students

[www.welcometopuertorico.com](http://www.welcometopuertorico.com) (Everything you ever wanted to know about Puerto Rico)

[www.independencia.net](http://www.independencia.net) (The struggle for Puerto Rico's independence)

[www.dailyprincetonian.com](http://www.dailyprincetonian.com) (The U.S. navy in Vieques)

[www.palanter.org](http://www.palanter.org) (A short history of migration from Puerto Rico to New York)

[www.puertorico-herald.org](http://www.puertorico-herald.org) (Puerto Rican holiday traditions)

[www.trincoll.edu](http://www.trincoll.edu) (Puerto Rican migration and political experiences in the U.S.)

[www.bateylink.org](http://www.bateylink.org) (History of Puerto Rico)

[www.sscnet.ucla.edu](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu) (The 200 census of New York City)

[www.lehman.cuny.edu](http://www.lehman.cuny.edu) (History of Puerto Ricans in New York City)

[www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) (Facts and history of New York and Puerto Rico)

[www.ohioline.osu.edu](http://www.ohioline.osu.edu) (Puerto Ricans food habits in America)

[www.puertorico-herald.org](http://www.puertorico-herald.org). (50<sup>th</sup> year celebration of commonwealth)

[www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org) (U.S. navy in Vieques article)

[www.naswnyc.org](http://www.naswnyc.org) (A forum on the relationship of Puerto Ricans in NYC)

[www.tnis.state.tx.us/5themes.html](http://www.tnis.state.tx.us/5themes.html) (Great activities on the 5 themes of geography)

[www.princeton.edu](http://www.princeton.edu) (Latinos in the U.S.)

[www.elborica.com](http://www.elborica.com) (Great website for worksheets and history of Puerto Rican holidays)

[www.spanishamericanwar.com](http://www.spanishamericanwar.com) (Complete history of the Spanish-American war)

## **Videos for Teachers and Students**

*Puerto Ricans*. Schlessinger Video Products, Chelsea House Publishers, 1997.

*Discover Puerto Rico*. AAA Video Series, 1999.

*Families of Puerto Rico*. Master Communications, 2000.

*Puerto Rico:History and Culture*. Video Knowledge Learning Library, 2000.

*Puerto Ricans*. Schlessinger Media, 1993

*Puerto Rican Heritage*. Schlessinger Media, 1993.

## **Appendix- Content Standards**

### Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade, in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.

## Mathematics

2. All students compute, measure and estimate to solve theoretical and practical problems, using appropriate tools, including modern technology such as calculators and computers.
3. All students apply the concepts of patterns, functions and relations to solve theoretical and practical problems.
6. All students evaluate, infer and draw appropriate conclusions from charts, tables and graphs, showing the relationships between data and real-world situations.

## Citizenship

1. All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures groups and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States, assess their own relationships between geography and historical, economic and cultural development.
2. All students demonstrate understanding of themes and patterns of geography, know the location of major bodies of water, landmasses and nations, and describe the relationships between geography and historical, economic and cultural development.
3. All students describe the development and operations of economic, political, legal and governmental systems in the United States, assess their own relationships to those systems, and compare them to those in other nations.
4. All students examine and evaluate problems facing citizens in their communities, state, nations, and world by incorporating concepts and methods of inquiry of the various social sciences.
5. All students develop and defend a position on current events, confronting the United States and other nations, conducting research, analyzing alternatives, organizing evidence and arguments, and making oral presentations.
6. All students explain the basic economic concepts and the development and operation of economic systems in the United States and other nations, and making informed decisions about economic issues.
7. All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.
8. All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.
9. All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States and other nations.