Country: Venezuela
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Venezuela is the 7th largest country in South America (352,144 square miles)

Caracas is the capital

Varied landscapes – mountains, coast, lowlands, plains, highlands

Tropical climate

There are many floods and landslides (that left civilians homeless in 1999, 2010)
The People of Venezuela

- **Population**: 28,047,938 (2012)
- **Official Language**: Spanish
- **Ethnic Groups**: Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arab, German, African, Indigenous
- **Literacy Rates**: 94% of adult population (2010)
  
  The literacy rate has increased greatly over the years. In the 1950s it was just over 50%, and by the 1970s it had reached 82%.
Political Information

- Life in Venezuela changed for many when Hugo Chavez came to power as president in 1999. The country divided between Chavez’s supporters and his opponents. Some programs were beneficial (reduce poverty, free health care, etc.), however, others did not like how he reached out to socialist and communist countries.

- By reaching out to other countries, many immigrants arrived in Venezuela to work (Cubans, Haitians, Chinese, Arabic, Colombians). This caused educated Venezuelans to leave the country to find work in the US.
Today, public education is free for all citizens from kindergarten through university. However, children in remote areas may only have a one room schoolhouse with poorly trained teachers or they may have no school.

About 3.7% of the GDP is for educational purposes.

Venezuela has the second highest number of people enrolled in higher education in Latin America at 83% (2009)

Elementary (Basic) education lacks a general national governing program outside of the math curriculum.
## Schools and Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Ages/Grades</th>
<th>Compulsory?</th>
<th>Subjects taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school Education</td>
<td>Age 3-6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Education</td>
<td>Age 6-11, Grades 1-6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Reading, writing, arithmetic, natural science, history, geography, civics, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Education</td>
<td>Age 11-14, Grades 7-9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sciences, Algebra, Humanities, Ethics or Catholic Religion, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversified/Professional Education</td>
<td>Age 14-17, Grades 10-11</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Humanities vs. Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Level Education (College/University)</td>
<td>17 and older</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Specific Topics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students

- 93% of Venezuelan children attend school
- Nine years of education are required
- School year = Sept. to June
- Basic education in public schools is in shifts
  - Early in the morning until 1:30pm
  - OR Early afternoon until 6:00 pm.
- All children wear uniforms
- English is taught in basic/middle education

Teachers

- Teachers are usually from the middle class
- Teachers are respected
- 88% trained

Values Without Borders.
Not all schools are the same. Depending on where you live and what your socioeconomic status is, schools are different. School and class size vary, along with teacher qualifications, and materials/resources available.

The student teacher ratio in Venezuela has decreased over the past 50 years. In the 1970s, there was 30-35 students per teacher. In 2012, there was only 12 students per teacher.
Teachers should...

- Embrace Venezuelans' body language and maintain eye contact (Venezuelans usually stand very close to person speaking, often touch each other by shaking hands, hugging, kissing, and maintain eye contact).

- Respect Venezuelans' relaxed attitude towards tardiness (New students may arrive late to class, not realizing why students in the US are not allowed to do that).
Place of Education

- Family plays the central role in their society. Close contact is maintained (especially with those who moved to the US) and families visit each other as often as possible.

- Education was not valued until after Romulo Betancourt took office in 1959. Materials were provided, teacher trainings were implemented, and new schools/universities were built.

- For example, in 1936, the illiteracy rate was 71% and only 20% of children attended school. In 1990s, the illiteracy rate was 11% and 97% of children attended school.
Immigration to the United States

- Many Venezuelans come to the US for higher education or higher salaries in the work force.
- Venezuelan Americans have settled in:
  - Florida (12,362)
  - New York (5,559)
  - California (4,575)
  - Texas (3,295)
  - New Jersey (2,130)
  - Massachusetts (1,403)
  - Maryland (1,257)

*Urban areas such as Miami, New York City, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. have the greatest number.

(1990 Census)
The US and Venezuela have been close in the past due to trade and investment relations. However, tensions increased when Hugo Chavez took office and after US President Bush was accused of supporting failed attempts to get Chavez out of office. Diplomatic relations were broke off in 2008 and reestablished under Obama in 2009.

Today, there is a sense of mutual respect but tensions are still high. Although there is tension, many Venezuelans (56%) still think favorably of the US because they are unsure of Chavez's intentions.

Venezuelans are open to English speakers because they are used to a diverse population in Venezuela (people who immigrated from Europe, South America, Caribbean, Africa).
Works Cited

Internet:
Works Cited

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Books:
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Images:


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