



## Section

# 2

# Argentina to Venezuela

### Guide to Reading

#### Main Idea

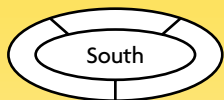
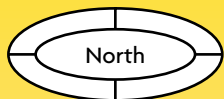
Brazil's neighboring countries have a diverse array of landforms, climates, and cultures.

#### Terms to Know

- pampas
- *estancia*
- gaucho
- hydroelectric power
- llanos
- altitude
- caudillo

#### Reading Strategy

Create a diagram like this one. Fill in the names of Brazil's neighbors to the north and south, and then write at least one key fact about the people from each country.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

## Exploring Our World

The traditional music of Paraguay seems to be out of place with the rest of its culture. The harp is the country's national instrument, and Paraguayans are famous for their slow, mournful guitar playing. In contrast, the traditional dances are much livelier. Here, a woman performs the bottle dance—a difficult feat even though the bottles are attached to one another.



**S**outh of Brazil lie **Argentina**, **Uruguay**, and **Paraguay**. North of Brazil is Caribbean South America, which includes **Venezuela**, **Guyana**, **Suriname**, and **French Guiana**.

### Argentina

Argentina is South America's second-largest country, after Brazil. Its southern tip reaches almost to the continent of Antarctica. Argentina is about the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River.

The Andes tower over the western part of Argentina. Snowcapped peaks and clear blue lakes attract tourists for skiing and hiking. **Aconcagua** (AH•kohn•KAH•gwah) soars to a height of 22,834 feet (6,960 m), making it the highest mountain in the Western Hemisphere.

South and east of the Andes lies a dry, windswept plateau called **Patagonia**. Most of Patagonia gets little rain and has poor soil. As a result, sheep raising is the only major economic activity there.

## Brazil and Its Neighbors: Economic Activity



Resources			
	Bauxite		Iron ore
	Coal		Manganese
	Copper		Natural gas
	Diamonds		Petroleum
	Fishing		Silver
	Forest		Tin
	Gold		Uranium
			Zinc

Land Use	
	Commercial farming
	Subsistence farming
	Ranching
	Forests
	Little or no activity
	Manufacturing area

### Applying Map Skills

1. What agricultural activities take place throughout Argentina?
2. In what countries is gold mined?

Find NGS online map resources @ [www.nationalgeographic.com/maps](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/maps)

The center of Argentina has vast treeless plains known as the **pampas**. Similar to the Great Plains of the United States, the pampas are home to farmers who grow grains and ranchers who raise livestock. More than two-thirds of Argentina's people live in this region.

**Argentina's Economy** Argentina's economy depends heavily on farming and ranching. The country's major farm products include beef, sugarcane, wheat, soybeans, and corn. Huge **estancias** (ay•STAHN•see•ahs), or ranches, cover the pampas. **Gauchos** (GOW•chohs), or cowhands, take care of the livestock on the ranches. Gauchos are the national symbol of Argentina, admired for their independence and horse-riding skills. The livestock that the gauchos herd and tend are a vital part of the country's economy. Beef and food products are Argentina's chief exports. Turn to page 246 to read more about gauchos.

Argentina is one of the most industrialized countries in South America. Most of the country's factories are in or near **Buenos Aires**, Argentina's capital and largest city. The leading manufactured goods are food products, automobiles, chemicals, textiles, books, and magazines.

Petroleum is Argentina's most valuable mineral resource. The country's major oil fields are in Patagonia and the Andes. Other minerals, such as zinc, iron ore, copper, tin, and uranium, are mined in the Andes as well. Despite these resources, Argentina's economy has struggled during the early years of the twenty-first century.

**Argentina's History** In the late 1500s, Spaniards settled in the area that is now Buenos Aires. By 1800 the city was a flourishing port. In 1816 a general named José de San Martín led Argentina in its fight for freedom from Spain. After independence, the country was torn apart by civil war. By the mid-1850s, a strong national government had emerged, and Argentina entered a time of prosperity. During the first half of the 1900s, however, Argentina's elected leaders governed poorly. The economy suffered, and the military took over.



One of these military leaders, Juan Perón, became a dictator in the late 1940s. With his popular wife, Eva, at his side, Perón tried to improve the economy and give more help to workers. His crackdown on freedom of speech and the press made people unhappy, however. In 1955 a revolt drove Perón from power, and democracy returned.

Military officers again took control of Argentina in the 1970s. They ruled harshly, and political violence resulted in the deaths of many people. In 1982 Argentina suffered defeat in a war with the United Kingdom for control of the **Falkland Islands**. The Falklands, known in Argentina as the Malvinas, lie in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Argentina. The military stepped down, and elected leaders regained control of the government when Argentina lost this war.

Today Argentina is a democratic republic. As in the United States, the national government is much stronger than the 23 provincial, or state, governments. A powerful elected president leads the nation for a four-year term. A legislature with two houses makes the laws.

**Argentina's People** About 85 percent of Argentina's people are of European ancestry. During the late 1800s, immigrants in large numbers came to Argentina from Spain and Italy. Their arrival greatly influenced Argentina's society and culture. Many more immigrants arrived from Europe after World War II. European ways of life are stronger in Argentina today than in most other Latin American countries.

The official language of Argentina is Spanish, although the language includes many Italian words. Most people are Roman Catholic. About 90 percent of Argentina's people live in cities and towns. More than 13 million people live in Buenos Aires and its suburbs. Buenos Aires has wide streets and European-style buildings. Its citizens call themselves *porteños* (pohr•TAY•nyohs), which means "people of the port." Many have a passion for the national dance of Argentina, the tango.

 **Reading Check** Why does Argentina have a strong European culture?

## Uruguay and Paraguay

Uruguay and Paraguay differ from each other in environment, population, and development. Uruguay has a mild climate, rolling hilly plains and rich grasslands. This nation is a buffer zone between the two powerful nations of Brazil and Argentina. Originally settled by the Portuguese, then taken over by Spain, Uruguay revolted against both countries and eventually became completely independent in 1828.

Immigration from Spain and Italy and the introduction of sheep are keys to Uruguay's development. The country's 3.4 million people, half of whom live in the capital city of **Montevideo**, are mostly of European descent. Uruguay's economy depends on raising sheep and cattle. In fact, sheep and cattle outnumber people by ten to one, and about 70 percent of the country is pasture. Animal products—meat, wool, and hides—top Uruguay's exports. The major industries—textiles, footwear, and leather goods—use the products of the vast animal herds. Large haciendas are complemented by many medium-sized and



**Web Activity** Visit *The World and Its People* Web site at [twip.glencoe.com](http://twip.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 8—Student Web Activities** to learn about Paraguay.





small farms. The Uruguayans have the highest literacy rate, the lowest population growth rate, the best diet, and one of the highest standards of living of any South American country. Spanish is the official language, and the Roman Catholic faith is the major religion.

**Paraguay** In Paraguay, the society and economy have followed quite a different course. The eastern third of Paraguay, with its rich soils and fertile grasslands, was settled by the Spanish. The western two-thirds of the country, a great forest area known as the **Gran Chaco**, was brought into the Spanish territory by Roman Catholic missionaries.

In the 1800s and 1900s, a series of wars severely hurt Paraguay, destroying the economy of the country. After the worst of these—the five-year war against Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay in the 1860s—Paraguay’s male population was cut in half. Experts estimate that Paraguay also lost 55,000 square miles of territory.

Forestry and farming are Paraguay’s major economic activities. Large cattle ranches cover much of the country. Most farmers, however, grow grains, cotton, soybeans, and cassava on small plots. Cassava roots can be ground up to make tapioca. They can also be sliced and fried just like potatoes.

Paraguay also exports electricity. The country has the world’s largest hydroelectric power generator at the Itaipu (ee•TY•poo) Dam, on the Paraná River. **Hydroelectric power** is electricity that is generated by flowing water. Paraguay sells nearly 90 percent of the electricity it produces to neighboring countries.

Paraguayans today are mostly of mixed Guaraní—a Native American group—and Spanish ancestry. Both Spanish and Guaraní are official languages, but more people speak Guaraní. Most people practice the Roman Catholic faith. About one-half of the people live in cities. **Asunción** (ah•soon•see•OHN) is the capital and largest city.

Paraguayan arts are influenced by Guaraní culture. Guaraní lace is Paraguay’s most famous handicraft. Like people in Uruguay, the people of Paraguay enjoy meat dishes and sip *yerba maté*, a tealike drink.

 **Reading Check** What important export is generated at the Itaipu Dam?

## Venezuela

Venezuela (VEH•nuh•ZWAY•luh) is the westernmost country of Caribbean South America. In the northwest lie the lowland coastal areas surrounding **Lake Maracaibo** (MAH•rah•KY•boh), the largest lake in South America. Swamps fill much of this area, and few people live here. The great number of towering oil wells, however, give you a clue that rich oil fields lie under the lake and along its shores. Venezuela has more oil reserves than any other country in the Americas.

The Andean highlands begin south of the lake and are part of the Andes mountain ranges. This area includes most of the nation’s cities, including **Caracas** (kah•RAH•kajs), the capital and largest city. East of the highlands, you see grassy plains known as the **llanos** (LAH•nohs). The llanos have many ranches, farms, and oil fields. Venezuela’s most

## Believe It! Or Not!

### Roping a Capybara

Capybaras are the world’s largest rodents. They can grow to be 2 feet tall and 4 feet long, and weigh more than 100 pounds. Found in Central and South America, capybaras (ka•pih•BAR•uhs) live along rivers and lakes and eat vegetation. Here, a gaucho ropes a dog-sized capybara in Venezuela. Some Venezuelans eat capybara during the Easter season.





important river—the **Orinoco**—flows across the llanos. This river is a valuable source of hydroelectric power for Venezuela’s cities.

South and east of the llanos rise the Guiana Highlands, which are deeply cut by rivers. **Angel Falls**—the world’s highest waterfall—spills over a bluff in this region.

Because it is close to the Equator, Venezuela has a mostly tropical climate. In the Guiana Highlands to the south, you enter a steamy rain forest. As in Mexico, temperatures in Venezuela differ with **altitude**, or height above sea level. Higher altitudes have cooler climates.

**Venezuela’s Economy** Venezuelans once depended on crops such as coffee and cacao to earn a living. Since the 1920s, petroleum has changed the country’s economy. Venezuela is a world leader in oil production and one of the chief suppliers of oil to the United States. Because the government owns the oil industry, oil provides nearly half of the government’s income. A two-month national oil strike from December 2002 to February 2003 temporarily halted Venezuela’s economic activity. This shows how much the country relies on its oil production.

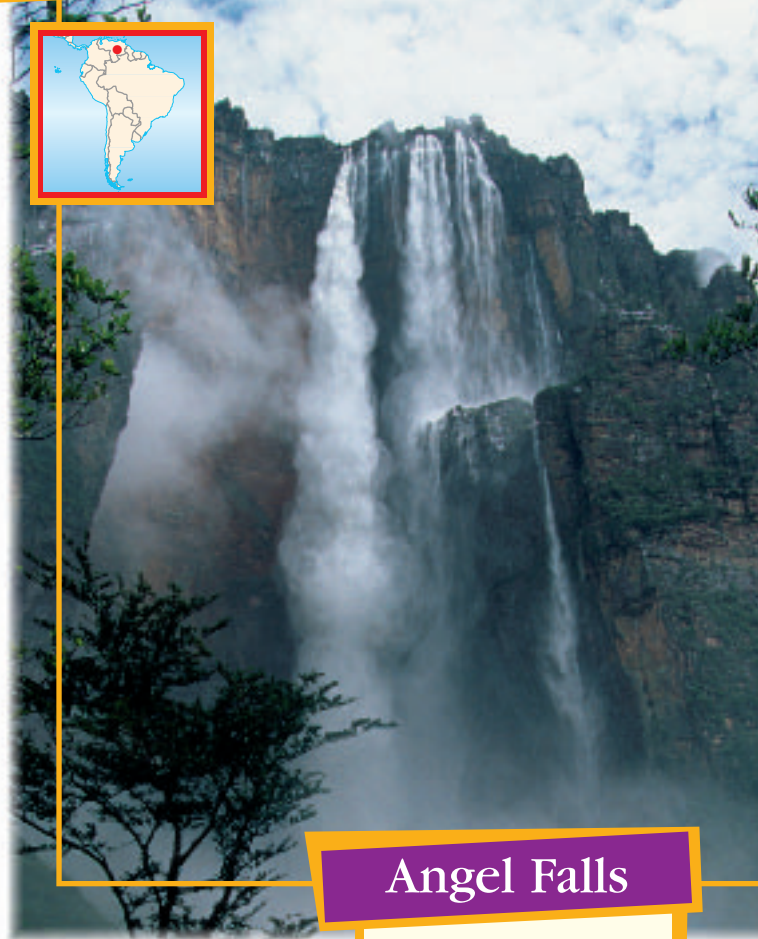
Iron ore, limestone, bauxite, gold, diamonds, and emeralds are also mined. Factories make steel, chemicals, and food products. About 10 percent of the people farm, growing sugarcane and bananas or raising cattle.

**History and Government** Originally settled by Native Americans, Venezuela became a Spanish colony in the early 1500s. With its many rivers, the land in South America reminded early Spanish explorers of Venice, Italy, which is full of canals. They named the area *Venezuela*, which means “Little Venice.”

In the early 1800s, rebellion swept across the Spanish colonial empire. Simón Bolívar (see •MOHN boh•LEE•VAHR), who was born in Venezuela, became one of the leaders of this revolt. He and his soldiers freed Venezuela and neighboring regions from Spanish rule. In 1830 Venezuela became independent.

During most of the 1800s and 1900s, the country was governed by military rulers called **caudillos** (kow•THEE•yohz). Their rule was often harsh. Since 1958, Venezuela has been a democracy led by a president and a two-house legislature.

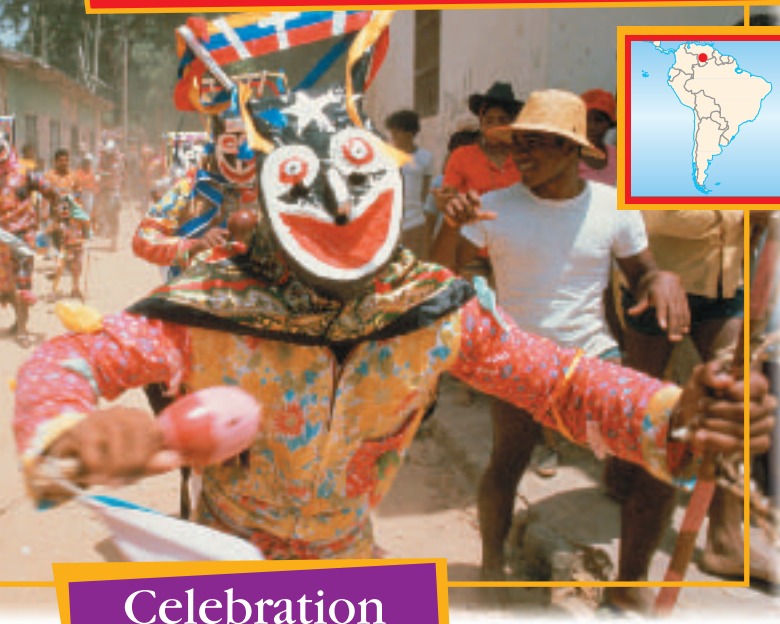
Rising oil prices during the 1970s benefited many Venezuelans. When oil prices fell in the 1990s, the country suffered. In 1998 voters



## Angel Falls

Angel Falls—the highest waterfall in the world at 3,212 feet (979 m)—roars over a cliff in Venezuela. It would take 11 football fields stacked end-to-end to reach the top.

**Economics** What is one of the rivers that provides Venezuela with hydroelectric power?



## Celebration

Venezuelan dancers in costumes and playing maracas take part in Corpus Christi, a local Roman Catholic celebration.

**Religion** What is the major religion in Venezuela?

elected a former military leader, Hugo Chávez, as president. Chávez promised to solve Venezuela's problems, but his growing power split the country into opposing groups. In 2000 the military overthrew Chávez, but street protests put him back in office. Two years later, a nationwide strike also failed to remove Chávez from office. This strike lasted three months and damaged Venezuela's already weak economy.

**Venezuela's People** Most of the 25.7 million people in Venezuela have a mix of European, African, and Native American backgrounds. Spanish is the major language of the country, and the major religion is Roman Catholicism. About 90 percent of Venezuelans live in cities. Some 2.8 million people live in Caracas, the capital, which has skyscrapers surrounded by mountains.

**✓ Reading Check** What product changed Venezuela's economy?

## The Guianas

Caribbean South America also includes the countries of Guyana (gy•AH•nuh) and Suriname (SUR•uh•NAH•muh) and the territory of French Guiana (gee•A•nuh). Guyana was a British colony called British Guiana. Suriname, once a colony of the Netherlands, was called Dutch Guiana. As a result, these three lands are called "the Guianas."

The Guianas have similar landforms. Highlands in the interiors are covered by thick rain forests. Toward the Caribbean coast, the land descends to low coastal plains. The climate is hot and tropical. Most people live on the coastal plains because of the cooling ocean winds. Sugarcane grows in Guyana and French Guiana, while rice and bananas flourish in Suriname. Many people earn their living mining gold and bauxite.

**Guyana** In the early 1600s, the Dutch were the first Europeans to settle in Guyana. They forced Native Americans and Africans to work on tobacco, coffee, and cotton farms and, later, on sugarcane plantations. The United Kingdom won possession of the Dutch colonies in the early 1800s and ended slavery. Still needing workers, the British paid Indians from Asia to move here. Today people from India make up most of Guyana's population. Another one-third are of African ancestry. Small numbers of Native Americans and Europeans also live here. Christianity and Hinduism are the chief religions. Most people speak English. **Georgetown**, the capital, is the major city.

Guyana won its independence from Britain in 1966. Guyana remains a very poor country, however, and depends on aid from the United Kingdom and other countries.






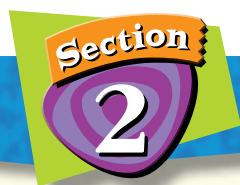
**Suriname** The British were the first Europeans to settle Suriname, but the Dutch gained control in 1667. As in Guyana, the Dutch brought enslaved Africans to work on large sugarcane plantations. Because of harsh treatment, many Africans fled into the isolated interior of the country. Their descendants still live there today. Later the Dutch hired workers from the Asian lands of India and Indonesia.

Asians form a large part of Suriname's population. About half of Suriname's people practice Christianity. The rest follow Hinduism or Islam. The main language is Dutch. **Paramaribo** (PAH•rah•MAH•ree•boh) is the capital and chief port. In 1975 Suriname won its independence from the Dutch. The country is poor, however, so it still relies on aid from the Dutch government.

**French Guiana** French Guiana became a colony of France in the 1600s and remains one today. The country is headed by a French official called a *prefect*, who lives in the capital, **Cayenne** (ky•EHN). The French government provides jobs and aid to many of French Guiana's people.

Most people in French Guiana are of African or mixed African and European ancestry. They speak French and are Roman Catholic. In Cayenne, you see sidewalk cafés and police in French uniforms. Shoppers use euros, the French currency—just as they would in Paris, France. You also see local influences, such as Carnival, Native American woodcarving, and Caribbean music and dance.

 **Reading Check** What European countries influenced the development of Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana?



## Assessment

### Defining Terms

1. **Define** pampas, *estancia*, gaucho, hydroelectric power, llanos, altitude, caudillo.

### Recalling Facts

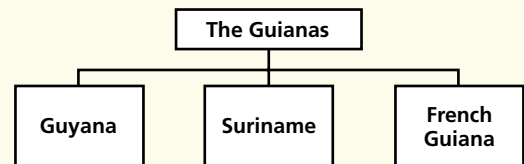
2. **Region** Describe two ways in which the pampas are similar to the Great Plains of the United States.
3. **Human/Environment Interaction** What is the significance of the Itaipu Dam?
4. **History** Who was Simón Bolívar?

### Critical Thinking

5. **Analyzing Cause and Effect** Which of Juan Perón's policies led to his removal from office?
6. **Drawing Conclusions** Why is Hinduism one of the major religions of Guyana?

### Graphic Organizer

7. **Organizing Information** Create a diagram like this one. In the top box, under the heading, list similarities about the Guianas. In the bottom boxes, under the headings, write facts about each country that show their differences.



### Applying Social Studies Skills

8. **Analyzing Maps** Look at the economic activity map on page 240. What agricultural activities take place in Venezuela?



## Guided Reading Activity 2

### Argentina to Venezuela

**DIRECTIONS: Answering Questions** Reading the section and answering the questions below will help you learn more about Brazil's neighbors. Use your textbook to write answers to the questions.

1. Describe the plateaus and plains of Argentina.

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2. On what does Argentina's economy depend?

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3. What two groups greatly influenced Argentina's society and culture?

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4. On what does Uruguay's economy depend?

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5. What is Uruguay's official language and major religion?

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6. What crops does Paraguay produce?

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7. Where are most of Venezuela's cities located?

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8. What accounts for nearly half of the Venezuelan government's income?

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9. What kind of climate do the Guianas have?

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10. What religions do people in Suriname practice?

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