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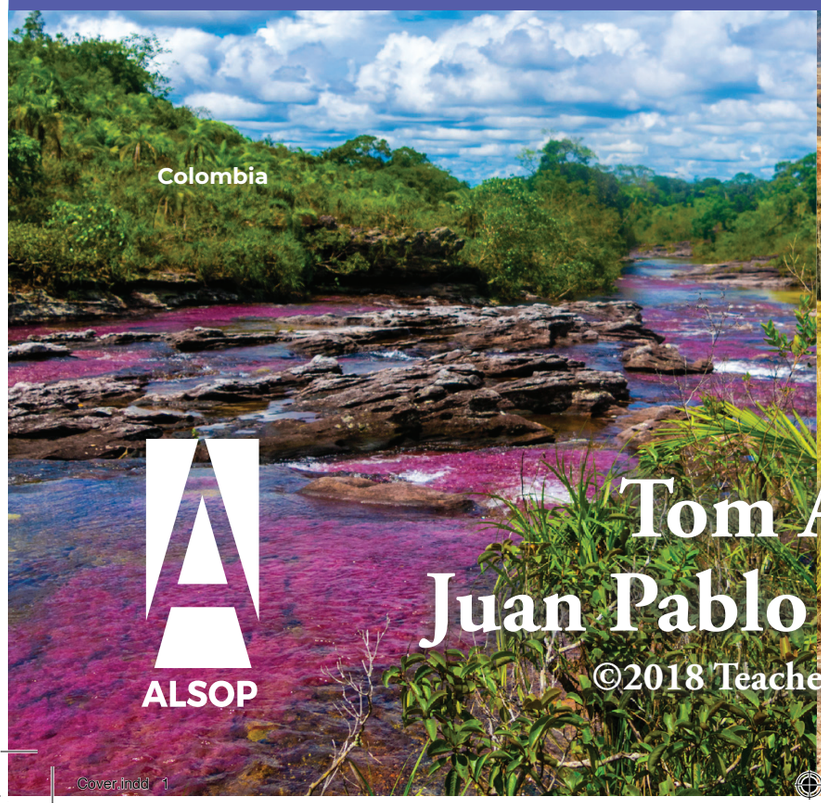
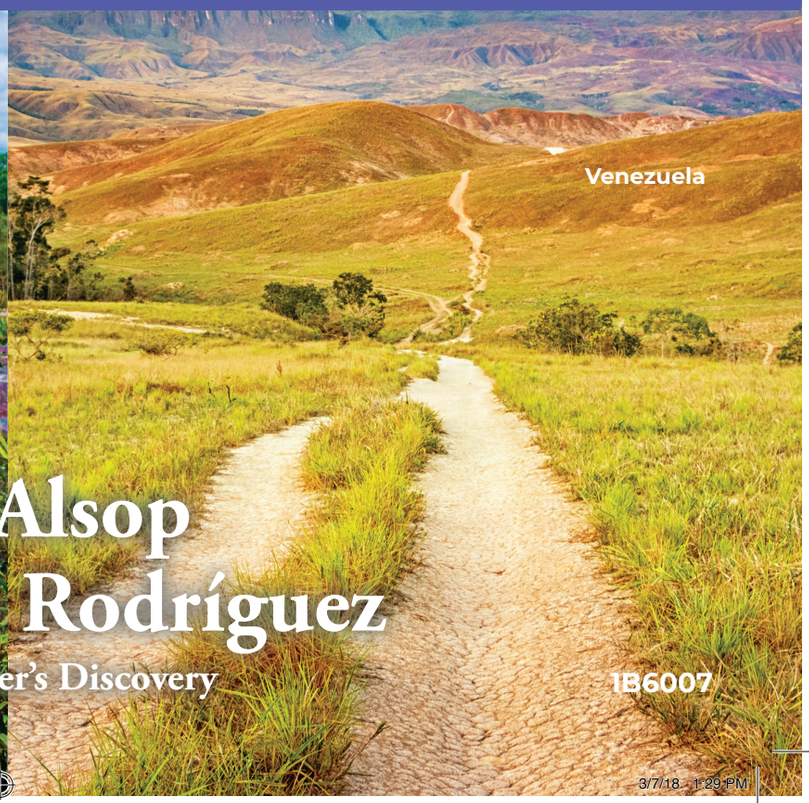
PANORAMA CULTURAL

22 Spanish-Speaking Countries





ALSOP

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Contenido

ALSOP

Página

Introduction/How to Use 4
Toward an Understanding of Culture 5
World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages 7
Suggested Grading Scales/Rubrics/Other Ideas 8
Mapa de España, México, y Guinea Ecuatorial 11
Mapa de Centroamérica y el Caribe 12
Mapa de Sudamérica 13

Aventura cultural

1. Argentina 14
2. Bolivia 19
3. Chile 24
4. Colombia 29
5. Costa Rica 34
6. Cuba 39
7. Ecuador 44
8. El Salvador 49
9. España 54
10. Estados Unidos 59
11. Guatemala 64
12. Guinea Ecuatorial 69
13. Honduras 74
14. México 79
15. Nicaragua 84
16. Panamá 89
17. Paraguay 94
18. Perú 99
19. Puerto Rico 104
20. República Dominicana 109
21. Uruguay 114
22. Venezuela 119

Fuentes/Enlaces de la web para las fotos 124
Fuentes/Enlaces de la web/Fuentes nativas 126

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Introduction/How to Use

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Day 1 (45 minutes to complete)

STEP 1 Make copies of the "Toward an Understanding of Culture" and the Maps pages and hand out to the students. Ask students to keep these copies for future use. Divide the class into teams of three. Discuss with the class what **Products of Culture**, **Practices**, and **Perspectives** are. Review the location on the map of the country you plan to study.

STEP 2 Make copies of each of the five pages for the *Aventura cultural* country you select: ***Información útil***, ***Productos de la cultura***, ***Realia/lo auténtico***, ***Más sobre productos de la cultura***, ***Situaciones,*** and ***Proyectos/Pensemos un poco más***. Hand out copies of the five pages to each student. You can choose one country for the entire class or give each team of three a different country to study.

STEP 3 Students take turns reading aloud the information from the ***Información útil*** and ***Productos de la cultura*** lists. Have them use their Maps pages to locate their country on the outline map on the ***Información útil/Productos de la cultura*** page.

Day 2 (45 minutes to complete)

STEP 1 Each member of the team of three does the ***Realia/lo auténtico*** section and writes the answers on their paper.

STEP 2 Have students work on the ***Más sobre productos de la cultura*** section with their team of three. They are to take turns reading the ***Más sobre productos de la cultura*** section, and each is to write the answers on their paper.

STEP 3 Each team of three is to act out the ***Situaciones*** section at their seats.

STEP 4 Each team of three is to pick one project from ***Proyectos/Pensemos un poco más*** to present to the class. They are to start planning the project in class. What they do not finish, they are to finish as homework so they can present their projects the next day in class.

Day 3 (45 minutes to complete)

STEP 1 Have the groups of three present their projects in front of the class. Award a grade for this work.

STEP 2 Collect the ***Más sobre productos de la cultura*** and the ***Realia/lo auténtico*** pages at the end of class. Award a grade for this work as well.

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Toward an Understanding of Culture

Most world language teachers often think of culture as being of two types, big **C** culture and small **c** culture. Culture dealing with history; masterpieces of painting, music, and literature; government; economy; and geography are included in big **C** culture. Small **c** culture includes ways of daily life and how people behave. Thus, shopping, eating, games, movies, and concerts all belong to small **c** culture.

Over the years, disagreement concerning the classification developed among language educators. Why is literature a big **C** item? Could it also be a small **c**? Could music be a big **C** and a small **c**? ACTFL, to help facilitate this issue, included in their Culture Standard (Culture is one of the five **C**s) the concepts of ***Productos de la cultura***, ***Prácticas***, and ***Perspectivas***—the three Ps.

Productos de la cultura are tangible or intangible objects of the culture. Examples of realia in this category are: people, food, stamps, money, ticket stubs, newspapers (online and/or physical), monuments, language, videos, movies, churches, museums, paintings, novels, poems, and photos of cultural events. Furthermore, it also includes buses, taxis, cars, neighborhood stores, and sites such as bakeries, markets, hospitals, banks, hotels, beauty salons, apartments, etc. Mountain ranges, bodies of water, jungles, and deserts all have an impact on our lives. How does weather influence our lives in how we dress and what we eat? Humans are responsible for defining the boundaries and geography of our world.

Of course, we must include the products that exist within each one of the products and buildings of the ***Productos de la cultura***. For instance, in a bakery, we can include types of bread and the baker; in a market, types of food; in a museum, the paintings and the gift shop; in a clothing store, the clothes; and in a hospital, the emergency room, the operating room, waiting room, etc. When language is included as a product, we can see the blend of language and culture into one inseparable and intriguing form of communication.

Prácticas include how things are done using the products. How do people buy a newspaper at a kiosk in Madrid? How do they pay? When do they buy the newspaper? What is the money used for? How much does it cost? What else does one look at while buying a newspaper at a kiosk? Do they accept a debit or credit card? Or is it cash only?

Prácticas in a museum can include: What do people say in the world language when they buy their tickets to enter a landmark? Can they use a credit or debit card to pay for the tickets? What paintings are the most popular? How much time do people spend viewing a popular painting? Is the atmosphere a serious one? Do people talk or is it relatively quiet? What would you say when you ask for directions to get to a gallery on the second floor? What can we learn about daily life if we observe a famous painting from the 19th century?

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Toward an Understanding of Culture

Perspectivas often ask the question, "Why": Why do people buy a newspaper in the street and not subscribe to home delivery? Why do people go to a kiosk to buy a newspaper or magazine? What values, attitudes, and/or beliefs of the target language society can we observe here? What feelings are expressed? Is there interest in learning about the economy, sports, government, or entertainment? When we ask "why," we begin to compare our culture with another. We may start judging why there are similarities and differences.

What ***Perspectivas*** do we learn about in a museum? Why are the people there? What are their attitudes about paintings? Is art important to them? Why? Are people courteous to one another while they tour the museum? Are people friendly to one another? Are they helpful in answering questions? Do they want to increase their knowledge about art? Is art highly valued by them? Is justice or liberty portrayed in some of the paintings?

Lastly, we must try to teach our students the importance of understanding diversity and cultural differences and similarities. We must teach them to be sensitive to and tolerant of people of other cultures. Positivity is the answer. We must be positive in our presentations and encourage students to explore, to be curious, to work creatively in teams, and to think about culture. What is it and how can we observe it? No matter whether we all agree about the definition of culture, by using the three Ps, we can dig in to thoroughly explain culture. Culture then becomes a blend of ***Productos***, ***Prácticas***, and ***Perspectivas***! Culture is a way of life, history, literature, painting, customs, language, attitudes, behavior, and value. It is real. It is who and what we and other cultures are. It is everyday life. It is dynamic and fun! Enjoy your 22 ***Aventuras culturales***! Have fun!

Acknowledgment to ACTFL for the three Ps—**Products of Culture**, **Practices**, and **Perspectives** for teaching culture. ***Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 22nd Century*** (2006).

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