

Virtual Tour of Ecuador
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Objectives:

- Introduce students to Ecuador
- Build Spanish vocabulary incorporating a selection of activities
- Complete meaningful tasks in the target language
- Understand certain facets of Ecuadorian society, culture and biodiversity

Tasks:

Students will embark upon a virtual tour of a lifetime. During this trip, students will “visit” Ecuador and be introduced to a multitude of flora, fauna, people and traditions. Because Ecuador enjoys such diversity, culturally and geographically, students will enjoy the differences and richness among the landscapes and peoples. From the highlands to the coast, from the Galápagos Islands to the *Oriente*, each student will be exposed to numerous customs, the Spanish language, culture and animals from the center of the Earth. As they participate in this virtual journey, they will complete a wide array of activities, expanding their Spanish language skills, as well as gleaning information about Ecuador and the world.

This is an experience of a lifetime. There is no set amount of time to complete this activity, nor are these lessons and ideas set in stone. The virtual tour has the flexibility to be as short or as long as desired. My students are first-year language learners in sixth grade. The following tasks can be explored in great depth at advanced grade levels. The level of vocabulary and detail can develop greatly from grade to grade. While each of these activities take place in the foreign language classroom, they encompass other disciplines, such as science, English, art and geography to name just a few.

Día 1-Students prepare for their “departure” to Ecuador. Completing the necessary information on a passport, or *el pasaporte*, is crucial. Students will be asked to complete a form with their personal information in Spanish. Once this is complete, they will submit it to the teacher and await their passport.

El pasaporte

_____	_____
nombre	apellido

dirección	
_____	_____
ciudad & código postal	país de origen

número de teléfono	
_____	_____
fecha de nacimiento	edad

Día 2-Students need to gather all the necessary items before they leave. Today they will be presented with their *billetes* and *tarjetas de embarque*.

Once they have received their tickets and boarding passes, they will need to show them and their passport to “board” the plane in the next few days.

El billete de avión

_____	_____
nombre	apellido
_____	_____
número de vuelo	asiento

fecha	

línea aérea	

La tarjeta de embarque

_____	_____
nombre	apellido
_____	_____
fecha	número de vuelo

puerta	

Día 3-¿Qué ropa necesitas?

Each student will prepare for this trip by packing their *maleta*. By compiling a list, students plan to bring the necessary items for their travels. Working in groups, students will finalize the list of all items they wish to take with them. Remind them about the various climates and weather conditions. Once they have composed their lists in Spanish, they will assemble their *maleta*. Using a file folder cut out in the shape of a suitcase, each student will decorate and attach a picture of the clothing

and other necessities, labeling them in Spanish. (Old magazines and catalogues work very well for this task, as does clip art.) Each student must have their bags packed before the trip.

La lista de ropa y las necesidades

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

Día 4-El aeropuerto y la aduana: Quito, Ecuador

As the students enter *el aeropuerto*, their *pasaporte* will get stamped. *Los pasajeros* will locate *los asientos* for the flight to Quito. The classroom will be set up like *un avión* and students will locate their seat. While *abordo*, students will watch an in-flight movie. I have selected *Global Trekker: Ecuador*. This introduction to Ecuador will begin the journey.

Días 5, 6 & 7-Las Islas Galápagos

Charles Darwin Foundation, Galápagos Islands: <http://www.darwinfoundation.org/>

Our first adventure in Ecuador begins with the infamous Galápagos Islands, home to a variety of endemic species. Here, students will island hop in hopes of viewing the animals that inhabit these majestic islands (Española, Isabela, San Cristóbal y Santa Cruz). They will break up into exploratory research groups. Each group will receive a set of animal pictures and words cards in Spanish to match accordingly. After they match the animals, they will divide them up among their *biomas*. One follow-up activity will be a trip to the Bronx Zoo to explore and experience some of these these animals. Pictures taken on my trip can assist students, as well as enhance our zoo trip. These pictures can be shared on a SmartBoard. After the trip to the zoo, each *bioma* will construct an animal from clay. The students will be able to identify, describe and categorize the animals in Spanish.

Días 8 y 9-El Mercado de Otavalo

A trip to Ecuador wouldn't be complete without a trip to one of South America's largest, if not the largest, outdoor market. Most students never experience

shopping outside a mall. Each group of students can create their own store in the market and represent authentic Ecuadorian items. Finding specific items on a shopping list makes this activity a scavenger hunt, allowing for students to communicate in the target language.

Some items included in the market could be clothing, fruits, vegetables, musical instruments and local, traditional items found in Ecuador. Because of the large Ecuadorian population in Queens, New York, there are a wide variety of authentic items and materials available to me as resources. Food could be brought in from authentic restaurants in the neighborhood.

Día 10-Biodiversity & the Environment: Manta, Ecuador

The students have been exposed to a vast amount of information that sets Ecuador apart from many other countries. From animals to fruits and vegetables, to the distinct regions of the country, Ecuador is unique in many ways. Students can continue to explore these topics by implementing cultural exchange or a pen-pal program. They may also connect with Ecuadorians in their own community. Another possibility is adopting a school in Ecuador to help assist with supplies, enhance language learning and share ideas among students and teachers. My school is currently planning to collect donations of supplies for schools in Ecuador.

In my school community, students are required to complete community service hours. Some activities include an environmental beach clean up and water testing for Earth science classes. While these are not necessarily connected to Ecuador, they fall under the category of conservation and biodiversity. Reusable fuel

and recycling might be other activities in which students could become involved with their own community. This will assist the global community at large.

Día 11-La comunidad ecuatoriana

New York City hosts the largest community of Ecuadorians in the United States. My students have the wonderful opportunity to explore the Ecuadorian community in Queens, New York. Traveling to Queens for lunch and exploration of the neighborhood will allow students to communicate in the target language with “locals,” as well as connecting with Ecuadorians.

Here are some local activities dealing with the local Ecuadorian community:

Danbury, CT, Local Community:

<http://www.ci.danbury.ct.us/content/39/75/3256.aspx>

“Don’t Call me Puerto Rican” Feature Story:

<http://www.youthcomm.org/NYC%20Features/March2004/NYC-2004-03-09.htm>

Ecuadorians in NYC: <http://www.tqnyc.org/NYC030493/ECUADOR.html>

Día 12-La música tradicional

One facet of South America is its love of music. This aspect defines many countries as well as the traditional Latin sounds, rhythms and instruments. One traditional song from Esmeraldas, one of the northwestern most regions of Ecuador, is *Chocolate*. This region has been heavily influenced by the Caribbean, including its music. *La quena* and *la zampoña* are two instruments with which students can accompany the music, while they sing. This song is particularly fun for students, as

it is about chocolate, one of Ecuador's domestic products. In the end they also enjoy drinking the tasty beverage.

Día 13-El mundo

As the students have had the opportunity to explore those elements found in Ecuador, it is imperative that they are able to relate these topics and areas of interest to their own lives and communities. One local resource I have discovered is Whole Foods Supermarkets. Part of their business plan and measure of success is "The Sustainability and Development" of their products and environments:

<http://www.wholefoods.com/>.

Students need to be made aware of the global economy and economic markets in their own backyard. They can further research and encounter other programs and environmental projects in the area. One example of an ongoing environmental project is the electric company's exploration of windmills as a free resource. Currently, these windmills are generating electricity. While implementing these new devices, they continue to develop educational plans with local schools and energy consumers in mind.

Día 14-Día de la batalla de Pichincha, el 24 de mayo

This day is an important day in Ecuadorian history. A culminating celebration could end on this day, having studied and worked with Ecuador throughout the school year. While this "virtual tour" has opened the eyes of my students, it has only shown them a minute fraction of this impressive, yet hidden, country. Students will have a better understanding as to its importance on a global

scale. Students can complete their studies of Ecuador with a *fiesta* and incorporate all aspects learned on this journey. The Battle of Pichincha was Ecuador's largest victory over Spain, while gaining its independence. Students have now been exposed to an incredible plethora of ideas, people, cultures, customs, language skills and facts that help define Ecuador and its importance to South America and the world. While these activities are by no means the only tasks for the classroom and community, it is an excellent starting point to explore this fascinating nation.