

Lesson 908: Brazil’s Butantan Institute – Where Venomous Critters find a Welcome

<https://intheamericas.org/works/908-brazils-butantan-institute-where-venomous-critters-find-a-welcome/>

Learning Objective	Discussion Prompts	Lesson Activities	Vocabulary
<p>Students will learn about the venomous creatures in Brazil and the antivenom produced by the Butantan Institute in the state of São Paulo.</p>	<p>Discuss the unintended consequences of deforestation and displacement of animals to the rest of the people in the region.</p> <p>The host states that peoples of the Americas have a fascination for snakes and that they recognize their power, and that fascination is seen represented in artworks in different historical periods. Discuss if the above statement is true today. How do snakes help improve people’s lives?</p>	<p>Suppose you are a herpetologist and you have been bitten by one of the venomous snakes common to your area. Write an email to the Butantan Institute telling them the type of snake, location of the encounter, where the snake bit you and symptoms you are having to see if they have an antivenom to treat you.</p> <p>Design a new symbolic safekeeping charm using a new amphibian species which is also part reptilian, having a patterned skin colored like a snake, very few scales, and it did not lose the baby tail to be sold at the Butantan’s gift shop. Write a brief explanation to tag with the item.</p>	<p>amphibians</p> <p>arachnid</p> <p>arthropods</p> <p>biometric</p> <p>bushmaster</p> <p>contiguous</p>
<p>Social Studies Standards</p>	<p>Discuss the process of getting the venom to create antivenom, the cataloguing of the snakes and the importance of the laboratory.</p>	<p>The host talked about the amphibians and reptiles of the Americas. Research, list and categorize the top 10 most venomous amphibians and reptiles of the African continent and compare with the ones in the Americas. Write a paragraph about your findings.</p>	<p>extraction</p> <p>herpetologist</p>
<p>Individuals, Groups, & Institutions: B, G</p>	<p>When comparing population, Brazil has around 213 million inhabitants while the United States has around 330 million. Talk with your peers about some of the possible reasons that Brazilians have a higher rate of venomous encounter.</p>	<p>A local teacher brought his pet snake to his classroom so his students could learn about it and help take care of the pet. Parents are furious with the teacher about his choice. List at least 5 reasons parents are upset with the teacher and justify their reasons. List 5 reasons why the teacher had the right to have the snake at school and justify your reasons.</p>	<p>thermographic</p> <p>venomous</p>

Brazil is larger than the contiguous United States, and it is mostly tropical. It is not surprising that it is home to a host of venomous critters, mostly scorpions, spiders, and snakes. Each year many tens of thousands of Brazilians are stung or bitten, requiring treatment. Many of them and many thousands of victims in other countries as well, owe their lives to antivenin produced by the Butantan Institute in São Paulo.