

ANALYZING DATA

SOUTH AMERICA: COMPARING ECONOMIES

Data about the 12 countries of South America show a wide range of rich and poor nations.

Argentina, for example, has a high standard of living, while Bolivia's economy struggles.

There is a gap between the rich and poor within countries as well. Some people live in cities with cars, universities, and computers. Others live in mountain villages without electricity or in crowded urban shantytowns.

This chart compares the per capita (per person)

gross domestic product (GDP) of the South American countries with the U.S. and the world average. GDP is used as one measure of a country's wealth. The chart also compares other figures that help gauge a country's standard of living. For instance, HDI is a statistic developed by the United Nations to measure the overall quality of life, and is expressed as a number between 0 (the lowest) and 1 (highest). Study the chart, then answer the questions on the following page.

COUNTRY	PER CAPITA GDP	HDI	LIFE EXPECTANCY (male/female)	LITERACY RATE (male/female)
Argentina	\$14,200	0.860	71/79	97/97%
Bolivia	\$4,500	0.723	63/67	93/81%
Brazil	\$10,100	0.807	69/75	88/89%
Chile	\$14,900	0.874	75/81	96/96%
Colombia	\$8,900	0.787	69/76	93/93%
Ecuador	\$7,500	0.807	72/78	92/90%
Guyana	\$3,900	0.725	63/68	99/99%
Paraguay	\$4,200	0.752	69/73	95/93%
Peru	\$8,400	0.788	68/73	94/82%
Suriname	\$8,900	0.770	66/73	92/87%
Uruguay	\$12,200	0.859	72/79	98/98%
Venezuela	\$13,500	0.826	70/76	93/93%
United States	\$47,000	0.950	75/81	99/99%
World	\$10,500	0.743	64/68	87/77%

SOURCES: 2008 World Factbook (Central Intelligence Agency); 2008 World Population Data Sheet (Population Reference Bureau); HDI, Human Development Report 2007-2008 (United Nations Development Programme)

QUESTIONS

1. Which South American country has the highest GDP per capita?
 - (A) Argentina
 - (B) Chile
 - (C) Suriname
 - (D) Venezuela

2. Colombia's GDP per capita is
 - (A) more than Guyana's but less than Peru's.
 - (B) more than Brazil's but less than Argentina's.
 - (C) more than Ecuador's but less than Venezuela's.
 - (D) less than Uruguay's and Peru's.

3. Which two South American countries have HDIs below the world average?
 - (A) Bolivia and Guyana
 - (B) Brazil and Paraguay
 - (C) Colombia and Ecuador
 - (D) Guyana and Paraguay

4. Judging by the per capita GDP and HDI, which three countries have the lowest standard of living?
 - (A) Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru
 - (B) Bolivia, Guyana, and Paraguay
 - (C) Ecuador, Peru, and Suriname
 - (D) Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay

5. A *disparity* is a condition in which two things are unequal. Which country on this chart has the greatest disparity in literacy rate between males and females?
 - (A) Bolivia
 - (B) Paraguay
 - (C) Suriname
 - (D) world average

6. Based on literacy rate, life expectancy, and HDI, which three South American countries have a standard of living closest to the United States'?

7. Bolivia and Paraguay are two of South America's poorest countries. Both are landlocked (have no access to the ocean). How might this affect their economies?

8. How might a low GDP affect the overall quality of life in a country?

9. In the last 50 years, most South American countries have experienced revolutions and other political violence. How might economic inequality cause this?

10. Although Colombia has a per capita GDP below the world average, it also has a higher literacy rate and life expectancy. What could be some reasons for this discrepancy? _____
