

LEVELED BOOKS

# Argentina



Written by Winifred Towey

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## Focus Question

What makes Argentina an interesting country to study?

## Words to Know

citizens

cultures

elected

festivals

gaucho

geography

mammals

provinces

textiles

Front cover: Snowcapped mountains in an Argentine national park

Title page: Harvesting grapes in Argentina

Page 3: An Argentine boy with his llama

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Argentina

Countries Around the World

Level S Leveled Book

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## Table of Contents

Where Is It? .....	4
People .....	6
Land .....	8
History .....	10
Celebrations .....	12
Food .....	13
Conclusion .....	14
Glossary .....	16



## Where Is It?

Argentina is the second-largest country in South America and the eighth-largest country in the world. Its land covers 2,736,690 square kilometers (1,056,642 sq. mi.). Argentina lies between the Andes Mountains, the longest mountain chain on Earth, and the Atlantic Ocean. The countries of Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Chile border Argentina.

Twenty-three **provinces** make up Argentina. Each one has its own government with its own laws. However, every province must follow the laws of the national government of Argentina.

The capital and largest city in Argentina is Buenos Aires. Its population is more than fifteen million people. Buenos Aires—the name means “fair winds”—boasts the widest street in the world. Avenida 9 de Julio (July 9th Avenue) honors the date that Argentina became free from Spain.

Known for its friendly people, Buenos Aires is home to many people from Europe and the rest of the world. As a result, Buenos Aires is also the most European-looking capital city in South America.



This Buenos Aires monument is called an *obelisk*. It sits in the middle of the widest street in the world.



Farmers harvest soybeans. Argentina is one of the largest food-producing countries in the world.

## People

More than forty-three million people live in Argentina. About nine out of ten people live in or near the country's large cities.

Argentina is the third-largest moneymaker in Latin America, after Brazil and Mexico. People mine gold and silver in its mountains and rivers. Farmers grow crops such as beans, lemons, grapes, and wheat for local use. They also send these crops to other countries.

Most people in Argentina work in service jobs. Others make automobiles, **textiles**, and energy. Some people hold jobs in the movies; about eighty films are produced there every year.

The Catholic faith is the main religion of Argentina. However, people also practice the Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, and Mormon religions.

People call Argentina a “melting pot.” This is because many different kinds of people came together to form a new nation. Argentina has always welcomed people from other countries. Many people who live there have parents or grandparents who came from Europe.

The main language of Argentina is Spanish. However, since most people in Argentina have family members from different countries, some people speak other languages as well.



European-style buildings can be seen in Villa General Belgrano, a district in the province of Córdoba.



## Land

Shaped like a long triangle, Argentina has mountains, deserts, plains, and lakes. Its **geography** includes five areas. The Andes Mountains sit between Argentina and Chile. The Pampas produces food. Patagonia is known for its beauty. The Littoral has jungles and swamps. The last area, the Gran Chaco, is a lowland in the northwest.

Argentina is alive with many kinds of birds and **mammals**. Penguins, tapirs, howler monkeys, and jaguars all live there.

One of the most beautiful places in Argentina is Iguazú Falls. Formed millions of years ago, they are some of the tallest and widest waterfalls in the world. *Iguazú* means “big water.”

The Andes Mountains are another beautiful sight to see. The mountain range stretches along the full length of western South America. The Andes range is about 7,242 kilometers (4,500 mi.) long and runs through seven countries. It is the longest mountain chain in the world.

Iguazú Falls are one of the seven natural wonders of the world.



Mount Aconcagua, in the Andes, is the highest mountain peak in the Americas.



## History

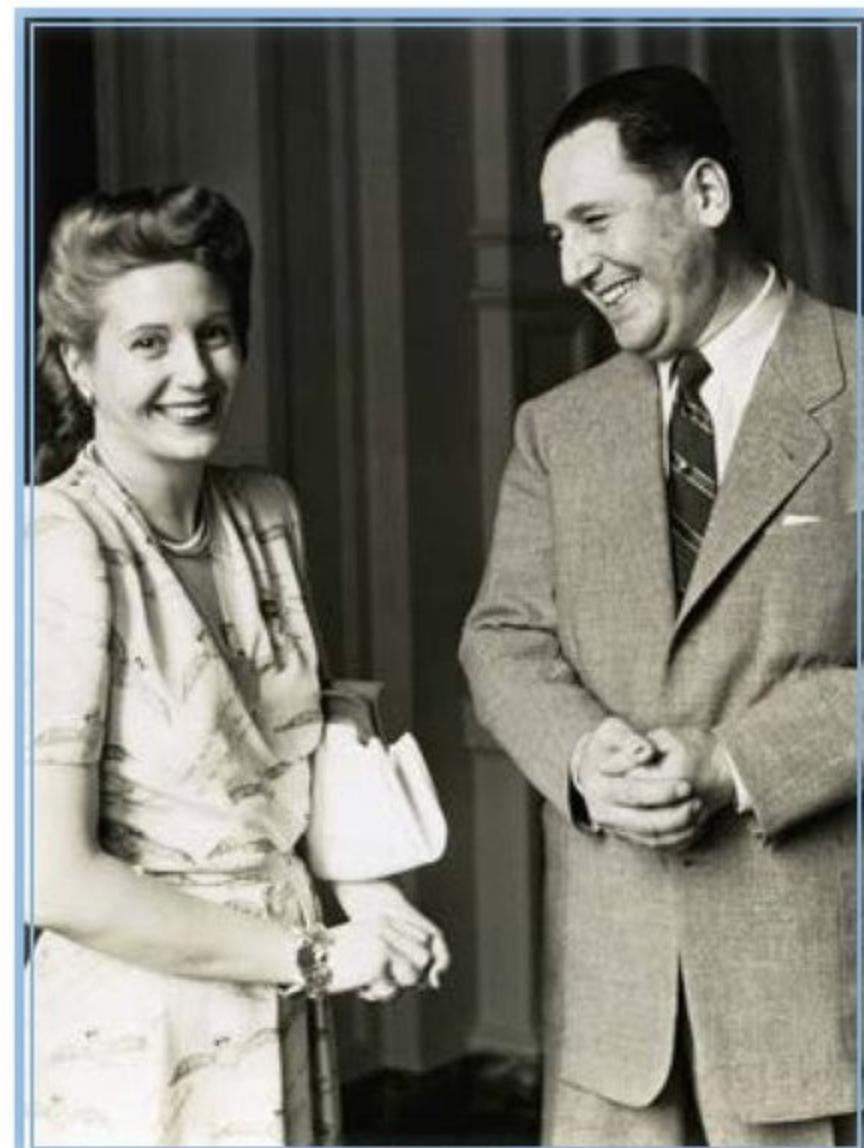
Argentina has had a long and troubled past. Native peoples lived there undisturbed for thousands of years. That changed when the Spanish invaded and took over the country in the 1500s. Many native people were killed for protecting their land.

Spanish rule finally ended in 1816. It was then that Argentina wanted to become its own country. Rules for a new government were set up in 1853, and Buenos Aires became its capital in 1880.

The years from 1880 to 1914 are called the “Golden Age” of Argentina. The country had a lot of money, which it used to build roads, railroads, and parks.

In 1929, the government ran into money problems as banks around the world failed. Because of this, army leaders started to run the country. Those leaders stayed in power from 1929 to 1943. Then Juan Perón helped take over the government. Perón was well known for helping working and poor people.

In 1946, the people elected Juan Perón president. Although he and his wife, Eva, were well liked, Juan became too powerful. As a result, he lost most of his followers. In 1955, during his second term as president, Perón fled to Spain.



Juan Perón and his wife, Eva, were very popular with poor people. Eva, also known as Evita, worked hard to win women the right to vote.

Perón returned to Argentina in 1973. He ran for president again and won. He died the following year. Today, many people in Argentina remember Juan and Eva Perón as leaders who helped the country.

After Perón's rule, the government remained in trouble for a long time. However, in the early part of the twenty-first century, more people began to take part in their government. They voted for leaders who shared their views. Even though their past was hard, the people of Argentina now have hope for tomorrow.

## Celebrations

Every year, Argentina comes alive with **festivals**. One of them is Carnival. During this festival, people build huge, colorful floats that parade down the street. Musicians, dancers, and others enjoy the event. People also have fun dressing up as clowns, animals, and cartoon characters.

The **Gaucho** Festival of San Antonio de Areco is another popular event. During this festival, gauchos show their skill with horses during a ten-day celebration in November. It includes bronco riding, dancing, and parades.

Another big celebration in Argentina is on July 9. This holiday marks the date when Argentina separated from Spain. People often celebrate with food and parades.

### Gauchos

Gauchos are South American cowboys. They are proud of their horses. It is said that "a gaucho without a horse is a man without feet."





Different regions of Argentina have different kinds of empanadas (top). A family grills meat in an open pit at a picnic (bottom).



## Food

The Spanish, French, and Italian people who moved to Argentina have helped shape what people eat. Today, foods from all these **cultures** are popular in Argentina.

People often grill steak on an open pit or barbecue. Empanadas are popular, too. These small, tasty pies can be filled with meat, vegetables, cheese, or fruit. People also enjoy Italian food such as pasta and pizza.

Many people in Argentina drink a tea called *yerba maté*. They say it gives them energy and helps them stay alert.



The buildings of Buenos Aires glow in the waters of the port at night.

## Conclusion

Argentina is a country with **citizens** from all over the world. During the past twenty years, people from China, South Korea, and other Asian countries have chosen to live there.

Argentina is a modern country. It believes in equal rights for all and wants its citizens to take part in government. It also understands the importance of protecting its land. Although unrest was part of its history, the people of Argentina hold great hope for their future.



**Population:** 43,646,358

**Land:** 2,736,690 sq km (1,056,642 sq. mi.)

**Capital City:** Buenos Aires

**Primary Language:** Spanish

**Primary Religion:** Roman Catholic

**Name of Currency:** Argentine peso



Source: Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook (2016)

## Glossary

<b>citizens</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	official members of a country or state (p. 14)
<b>cultures</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	ideas and customs of certain groups of people (p. 13)
<b>elected</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	chose a member of government by voting for him or her (p. 11)
<b>festivals</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	celebrations or organized series of cultural events (p. 12)
<b>gaucho</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a cowboy of the South American grassy plains (p. 12)
<b>geography</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the natural features of Earth's surface; the study of those features (p. 8)
<b>mammals</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	warm-blooded animals with a backbone and hair or fur that are born live (p. 8)
<b>provinces</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the largest areas that some countries are divided into (p. 4)
<b>textiles</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	fabric that is woven or knitted (p. 6)

# Argentina

A Reading A-Z Level S Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,048

## Connections

### Writing

Make a travel diary describing a pretend trip to Argentina. Include interesting details and fun facts about the places you visited. Use information from the book and outside resources.

### Social Studies and Art

Create a visual representation of Argentina's diverse cultures. Include pictures and words to convey your ideas.

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