



## **Américas Award Guide: Brazil**

The Américas Award, which began in 1993, was founded by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) to encourage and commend authors and illustrators who produce children's and young adult literature with themes concerning Latin America. More information can be found on the CLASP website (<http://claspprograms.org/americasaward>). Each year the award names two winners, honorable mentions and commended titles. The books listed below are those books which address issues of relevance to teaching about Brazil. Lists of other Américas Award winning books can be found on the CLASP website.



## Américas Book Award Resources Focusing on Brazil

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### *A is for the Americas*

By Cynthia Chin-Lee and Terri de la Peña. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sánchez. 1999. 32 pages. An alphabetical exploration of the Americas introduces young readers to the wide range of people, places, and cultures that make up our hemisphere. A brief description and brightly colored illustration accompanies each letter and the corresponding word, j is for jalapeño ... k is for kayak ... l is for Lake Titicaca. Young children will gain a good sense of both the immensity and the diversity of the Americas as a whole. (Grades K-3) **1999 Commended Title.**

### *Asphalt Angels*

By Ineke Holtwijk. Translated from the Dutch by Wanda Boeke. 1999. 184 pages. A gritty, realistic novel about street kids in contemporary Rio de Janeiro is narrated by 13-year-old Alex, the newest member of a group of peers who call themselves the Asphalt Angels. Life on the streets is tough and the Angels do what they have to in order to survive, including stealing, drug-running, and prostituting themselves. Because Alex is a thoughtful kid who agonizes over every act of wrong-doing and flat-out refuses to engage in some criminal behavior, this compelling novel will inspire discussions of ethics and moral decisions on the part of older students. (Grades 8 and up) **1999 Commended Title.**

### *Capoeira: Game! Dance! Martial Art!*

By George Ancona. 2007. 48 pages. Capoeira it's a game, a dance, a martial art! It's a way of expressing oneself through movement and music. With action-packed photographs and accessible text, readers are introduced to this exciting, popular game. At Madinga Academy in Oakland, California, a group of girls and boys practice the acrobatic moves of capoeira. Then they begin to play games to the infectious, rhythmic beat of traditional music and singing. On to Brazil to experience capoeira in its historic birthplace, where it dates back four hundred years. Back in Oakland, at an end-of-year ceremony, students receive their colored ropes indicating their levels of accomplishment. They also look forward to next year, and the fun of expressing themselves through the game, dance and martial art of capoeira. (Grades 3 and up) **2008 Commended Title.**

**Classroom Resources:** [http://www.leeandlow.com/p/capoeira\\_tg.mhtml](http://www.leeandlow.com/p/capoeira_tg.mhtml)

### *Carnaval*

By George Ancona. 1999. 32 pages. Ancona's exquisite color photographs document the preparations leading up the annual five-day festival in Olinda, Brazil, as well as details related to specific Carnival events. In an explanatory note, the author indicates that he specifically chose to focus on this small town in northeastern Brazil because everyone in the town participates in the celebration of folklore, music, and cultural traditions that demonstrate Brazil's rich blend of African, European and Native peoples. (Grades 2-6) **1999 Commended Title.**

**Classroom Resources:**

<http://lasp.einaudi.cornell.edu/system/files/Carnaval%20Activity%20Plan.pdf>  
[http://www.internationalfolkart.org/eventsedu/education/carnaval\\_activities.pdf](http://www.internationalfolkart.org/eventsedu/education/carnaval_activities.pdf)



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### **How Night Came from the Sea: A Story from Brazil**

Retold by Mary-Joan Gerson. Illustrated by Carla Golembe. 1994. 32 pages An African sea goddess, Iemanja, brings the gift of night to the land of daylight, thus permitting rest under Brazil's hot sun. Author's note discusses the African Diaspora in Brazil, and the religion of Candomble. (Ages 4-8) **1995 Commended Title.**

**Classroom Resources:** <http://www.slideshare.net/mrstwalker2011/433-how-night-came-from-the-sea>

### ***Jade and Iron: Latin American Tales from Two Cultures***

Edited by Patricia Aldana. Translated by Hugh Hazelton. Illustrated by Luis Garay. 64 pages. With thoughtful presentation, the editor has selected a broad cross-section of stories that represent the indigenous and European cultures of Latin America. The collection was drawn from a rich variety of narrative sources, both oral and written, originally published in various Latin American countries. (Grades 2 and up) **1997 Commended Title.**

**Classroom Resources:** <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/1913>

### ***Me in the Middle***

By Ana Maria Machado. Illustrated by Caroline Merola. Translated by David Unger. 2002. (Originally published as *Bisa Bia Bisa Bel* by Salamandra, Rio de Janeiro, 1982.) 110 pages. Ten-year-old Isabel (Bel) helps her mother clean out a cluttered closet and in the process discovers an old photo of her grandmother, Bisa Bea, neatly tucked away in an old trunk. Soon Bisa (grandmother) Bea becomes Bel's imaginary friend. Her conversations with her grandmother lead to yet more fantasy when Bel imagines herself as the grandmother of a future granddaughter. As other children begin to have conversations about their ancestors, they soon discover forgotten histories of exile and struggle. Written by one of Brazil's foremost children's writers and recipient of the 2000 Hans Christian Andersen Award, the text is enhanced with expressive black and white watercolor illustrations. (Grades 3 and up). **2003 Commended Title.**

### ***Pelé King of Soccer / Pelé el rey del fútbol***

By Monica Brown. Illustrated by Rudy Gutiérrez. 2009. 36 pages. Giant bright and bold swirls of colorful illustrations tell as much about the life of Pelé, born Edson Arantes do Nascimento, as does the short text. Readers see clear images of his young face and symbols of Brazilian life and culture juxtaposed with blurry shots of his body in action, and impossibly high flying soccer balls. The story begins with the sound of a sports commentator, singing adult Pelé's praises and speculating on his next great feat, and then flashes back through his life, depicting how he came to be such an international star, even as humble as his beginnings may have been. The text is in Spanish and English. (Grades 1-6) **2010 Commended Title.**

**Classroom Resources:** [http://www.monicabrown.net/files/Pele\\_Curriculum\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.monicabrown.net/files/Pele_Curriculum_Guide.pdf)

### ***Victoria Goes to Brazil***

By Maria de Fatima Campos. Frances Lincoln, 2009. 36 pages.

This beautiful travel log tells of a little girl's trip with her mother to her family's homeland of Brazil. Personal photos illustrate Victoria's adventure through well-known and unfamiliar sites, introducing the reader to the diversity and fun of this South American country. The text is



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straightforward and informative; every reader will learn something new from this journey. Our traveler, by the way, just happens to have Down Syndrome, but you would never know it, since it's never mentioned or discussed anywhere except the endnote. This delivers the message loud: kids are kids and culture is cool. (Grades 1-3) **2010 Commended Title.**