



# Ayiti, The Pearl of the Antilles with Inez Barlatier & Family

**MTC study guide**



Inez Barlatier was taught how to play musical instruments by her father, Jan Sebon, who played in the band Kazak International and taught African drums at her school, DASH (Design and Architecture Senior High). His “distinctive, infectious sound” has always stayed

with her as a source of inspiration. From the time she was 12 years old, Inez would drive to Miami Beach, Florida every Friday night with her father and younger sister. For three hours, her family’s musical group would play to tourists dining at *Tap Tap*, a colorful Haitian restaurant on Fifth Street. Murals by artists from the island nation adorned the walls, including one behind the stage that was painted by her father. Inez grew up in a home filled with constant sounds of jazz and Haitian roots music.

*“All my new material, as a beginning songwriter, was first performed at Tap Tap. It’s where I learned my lyrics had a positive effect on people.” Inez Barlatier.*

## **Post-Performance Reflection Questions:**

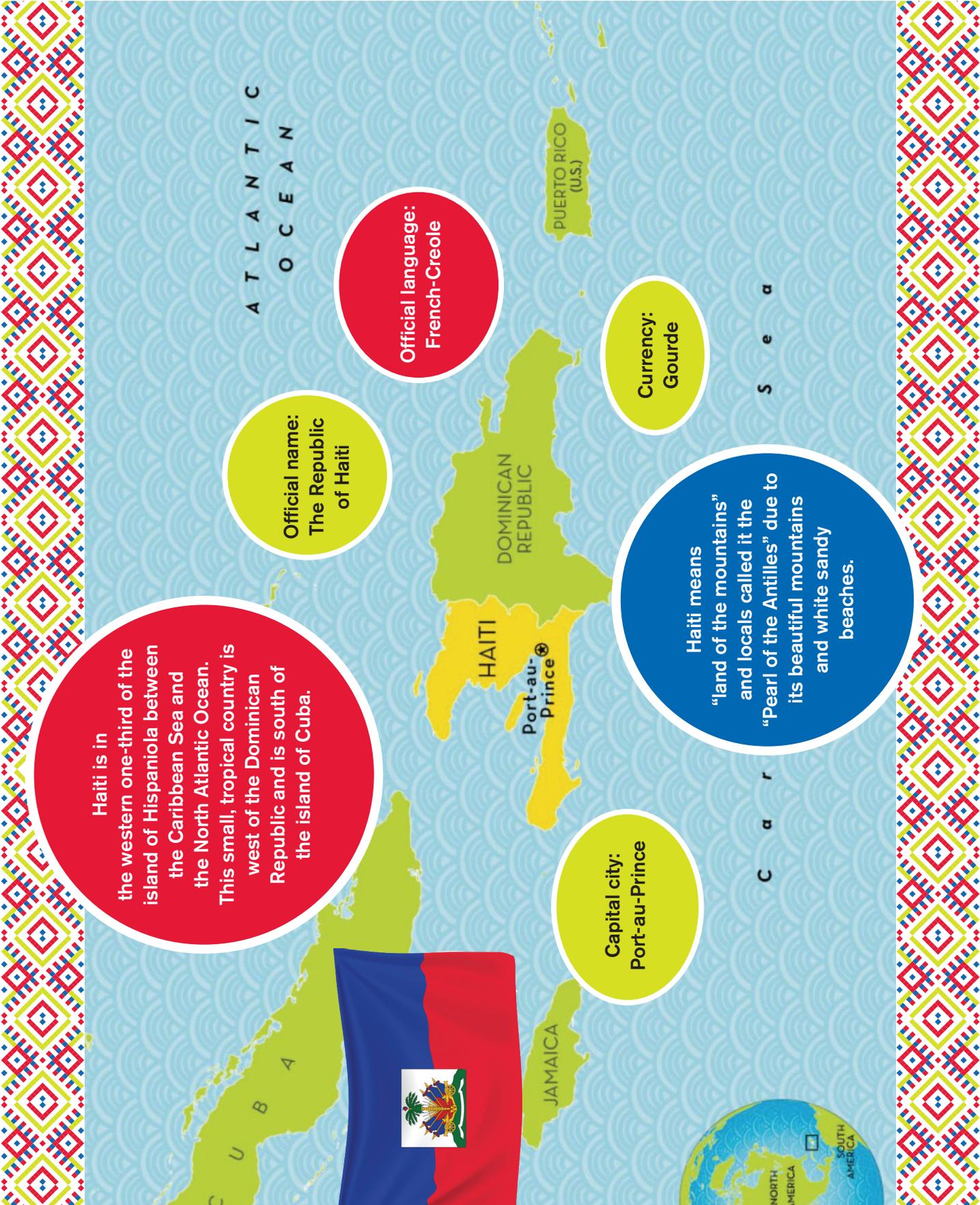
*What was your favorite song from the concert?*

*How many languages did you hear in the concert?*

*What country did the musicians sing/talk about?*

*What can you tell us about that country?*

*Did any of the musicians tell stories? If so, which ones?*



Haiti is in the western one-third of the island of Hispaniola between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. This small, tropical country is west of the Dominican Republic and is south of the island of Cuba.

Official name:  
The Republic  
of Haiti

Official language:  
French-Creole

Currency:  
Gourde

Haiti means "land of the mountains" and locals called it the "Pearl of the Antilles" due to its beautiful mountains and white sandy beaches.

Capital city:  
Port-au-Prince



# The Drumming Circle

During the show, Inez introduces her musicians and the instruments they play. She pays particular attention to the drums and explains that even though they originate from different parts of the world, they can be played together to create beautiful rhythms such as Taino, Senti, Kongo and Yanvalou.

Here are some of the drums you may have seen on stage:

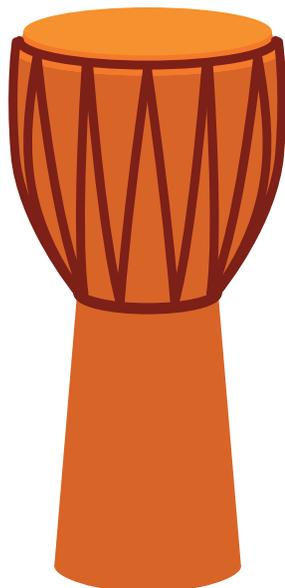


## DUNUN

Inez plays a dunun drum, originally from West Africa. A dunun is a rope-tuned cylindrical drum with a rawhide skin at both ends. Most commonly using cow or goat, the dunun drum is played with a stick and makes a high sound and a low sound.

## DJEMBE

Inez' father, Sebon, was playing the djembe or jembe. Originally from West Africa, this is a rope-tuned skin-covered goblet drum played with bare hands. It is played in many countries around the world, and according to the Bambara people in Mali, the name of the djembe comes from the saying, "Anke djé, anke bé" which translates to "everyone gather together in peace" and defines the drum's purpose.



## TANBOU

Inez' good friend, Gerald, was playing the tanbou drum. This is the national musical instrument of Haiti and a type of barrel drum. The drum is used in many Haitian music genres and has been influential in the rest of the Caribbean and Latin American world.

## CONGA

Finally, Inez' other close friend, Ralph, was playing the conga drum. This is also known as tumbadora, is a tall, narrow, single-headed drum originally from Cuba.



*"If you listen, a drum can talk and say its own name." Jan Sebon, musician, Inez' father.*

# Together We Are Strong

During the show, Inez talks about her culture and what she feels is important. One of the things we learn is that there is a motto on the Haitian flag which reads “L’Union Fait La Force,” which means “unity is strength” or “together we are strong.” In the following two activities, your students are going to explore this theme by working together in team to solve a problem.

## ACTIVITY 1: THE FARMER CROSSING THE SEA

Just like the farmer, the mermaid and the whale, your students are going to work together to solve their problem. You will need four blankets or four beach towels.

1. Divide the class into groups. Each group should have four to eight students.
2. Clear a space in the classroom or you may want to do this in the school dining hall. With masking tape, create a starting line and finish line on opposite sides of the space.
3. Ask one group stand behind the starting line. Give them a towel or blanket and explain that this is their fishing boat or raft and their objective is to get from the starting line to the finish line as quickly as possible, while keeping everyone’s feet ON the towel. Explain that if any team member’s feet touch the floor, they must start over while the clock continues to run. Encourage them to work together to make a plan of action.
4. They can use any technique they can think of.
5. Use a stopwatch to time each team. The team that accomplishes this task the fastest wins. Encourage each group to work together and support one another’s ideas and the team who does this most effectively wins extra points!

## ACTIVITY 2: HUMAN KNOT

Just like in the previous activity, your students are going to have to work together and use their observation and communication skills.



1. Begin by asking your students to stand in a close circle.
2. Now encourage them to all reach out and grab two hands (however, it cannot be the person next to them, nor can they grab both hands from the same person).
3. Students ‘untie’ their human knot, without ever letting go of any hands.
4. When a group has finished untying their knot, the whole group sits down.
5. Encourage students to work slowly and carefully, with an awareness of how their movements affect others in the knot. Some knots are easy to untie, and others take a lot of communication and negotiation!
6. Increase the complexity of this ensemble building game by asking students to complete it in silence, by making the number of students in each group larger, or by trying to untie a whole class knot!

### Reflection Questions

- *What is a motto?*
- *What do they mean by “together they are strong”?*
- *Did you see the musicians working together during the show?*
- *Did you and your team work together in these activities?*
- *In what ways are we stronger together?*
- *When do you think that’s true in your life?*