

**Big Question: Which BRIC nation will emerge as a future superpower?**

Lesson	Essential Knowledge
<p><b>Lesson One – Superpower Status</b></p>  <p>POTENTIAL SUPERPOWERS</p>  <p>BRICS Brazil · Russia · India · China · South Africa</p>  <p><b>Words: 214</b></p>	<p>A <b>superpower</b> is a state with a dominant position characterised by its extensive ability to exert influence or project power upon a global scale. The term ‘superpower’ was first introduced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was commonly associated with the <u>UK</u>, <u>USA</u> and the <u>USSR</u>. Many geographers associate ‘<b>superpower status</b>’ with a country being an ‘<b>empire</b>’. For example, the British Empire was the largest in history, exerting power and control over a quarter of the world and controlling over 20% of the world’s population. Britain’s power come from their <b>military and naval status</b>, along with <b>extensive trade networks</b> brought on by their rapid <b>development</b> during the <b>Industrial Revolution</b>. Consequently, the 20<sup>th</sup> century <b>World War’s</b> brought British <b>bankruptcy</b>, where the new superpowers of <u>USA</u> and the <u>Soviet Union</u> (USSR – Present day <u>Russia</u>) emerged as the new heavyweights in global affairs, but this was not celebrated, instead the <b>Cold War</b> emerged, lasting until 1989. The criteria of a superpower are very broad, which looks at a country’s <b>population</b>, <b>GDP (Gross Domestic Product)</b>, <b>nuclear warheads</b>, total amount of top 500 <b>TNC’s</b>, military strength, trading networks, <b>political stability</b> and <b>cultural attractiveness</b> e.g. music, sports, social media, technology. However, criteria such as <b>debt</b>, <b>corruption</b>, <b>crime</b>, <b>war</b> and <b>epidemics</b> are examples of obstacles preventing a country from achieving superpower status.</p>
<p><b>Lesson Two – Brazil: Cultural Conflicts</b></p>   <p><b>Words: 207</b></p>	<p>The first of the <b>BRIC nations</b> consists of Brazil, the South American heavyweight with a reputation for their exotic and <b>highly biodiverse Amazonia rainforest</b>, their iconic <b>carnival festivals</b> and their history of fanatic footballers such as Pele, Ronaldinho and Neymar. Brazil began <b>industrialising</b> in the 1930’s (over 170 years behind Britain), which transformed their economy by <b>mass producing</b> and <b>exporting</b> steel, automobiles and coffee. This brought many national and international <b>economic benefits</b>, such as the country’s 7% annual average increase in <b>GDP</b>, along with the countries <b>50+ year trade agreement</b> with <u>Germany</u> mass producing automobiles for <b>TNC</b> Volkswagen. However, different groups of people have not experienced these benefits equally. Since Brazil’s period of industrialising, almost 20% of the entire Amazon rainforest has been lost through <b>deforestation</b>, <b>forest fires</b>, <b>cattle ranching</b>, <b>urbanisation</b> and <b>plantation</b> fields for cocoa beans and palm oil. This has led to the <b>destruction of natural habitats</b> and threatened the lifestyles and culture of <b>indigenous</b> groups, such as the Yanomamo and Kayapo tribes. Furthermore, Brazilian residents have sought <b>opportunities</b> in rapidly expanding <b>urban</b> environments such as Rio de Janeiro, which has consequently led to the growth of the <b>favelas</b> (Brazilian <b>slums</b> and <b>shantytowns</b>), which today, has led to a reputation of <b>overpopulation</b>, <b>crime</b> and <b>corruption</b>.</p>
<p><b>Lesson Three – Russia: From Collapse To Creation</b></p>   <p><b>Words: 239</b></p>	<p>The second of the <b>BRIC nations</b> consists of Russia, a former superpower known as the <b>USSR (Soviet Union)</b> in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century period until their collapse in 1991. However, moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Russia has turned many heads with their <b>technological</b>, <b>architecture</b> and <b>cultural</b> transformations. The former superpower collapsed in 1991, following a series of events surrounding <b>bankruptcy</b>, a declining military and the collapse of a <b>Communist</b> government. In addition, Russia had to relinquish thousands of <b>manufacturing stations</b>, leading to widespread <b>unemployment</b> and a 30% decline in the nation’s <b>GDP</b> in 1991. However, one unexpected event led to an increase in social, economic and political pressure upon the USSR, which was the <b>1986 Chernobyl Disaster</b>. The event led to the explosion and release of massive quantities of <b>radioactive material</b> into present day <u>Belarus</u>, <u>Ukraine</u> and <u>Russia</u> (previously all within the USSR), which has created a 2,200km<sup>2</sup> <b>exclusion zone</b> marked as the most radioactive location on Earth. Nevertheless, the Russia of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has transformed dramatically, but with much work still to be done. Russia is now one of the most economically productive countries in the world in terms of <b>importing</b> and <b>exporting</b> goods, with profits invested into <b>infrastructure</b> and <b>public services</b>, such as education and healthcare. Russia continues to serve as an important partner in the <b>EU</b> and <b>NATO</b>, and continues to attract <b>tourists</b> globally to learn about Russia’s history spanning from their collapse to creation.</p>

#### Lesson Four – India: Tourist Take-Aways



Words: 244

The third of the **BRIC nations** consists of India, a country who experienced over 200 years of **colonialization** by the **British Empire**, to now being the largest **democratic** population on the planet, along with a prediction of surpassing **China** by having the world's largest population by 2030 (1.38 billion in 2021, 200 million behind **China**). For the last two decades, India's annual **GDP** growth ranges from 6% to 8.1%, and is predicted to rise to over 10% by 2025. By 2050, India is projected to have 220 million more workers than **China**, along with **outsourcing** large talent pools of labour to **developed** countries (such as the **UK, USA, China** and **Japan**), which annually brings almost \$100 billion in **revenue** to Indian based companies. India continues to break records and rival dominating global countries, but the country offers but more than economic growth. On average, India receives between 10-15 million **tourists** annually, which dwindles in comparison to the likes of **USA, China** and **France** who all receive between 75-85 million tourists annually. Millions visit India for their **religious heritage, biodiverse biomes** and iconic **landmarks**, but **poverty, corruption** and **street scammers** are highlighted reasons why tourists are scared to venture the streets of India's thriving cities. Indian states such as **Maharashtra** and **Bihar** are two highlighted locations, where residents, migrants and tourists experience a variety of **push** and **pull** factors, but in decades to come, India could be the newly emerging **powerhouse** of the Asian continent.

#### Lesson Five – China: The World's Workshop



Words: 275

The fourth of the **BRIC nations** consists of China, a country changed by the world, and a country changing the world. Every day, China is in the **media**, dominating world news about being the fastest growing country (expecting to overtake the US by 2040 as the **largest economy** in the world). The country has undergone a century of transformation, and shows few signs of slowing down in their **social, economic or environmental** change. Despite these initial positives and the huge advances in **living standards** for Chinese residents in **megacity metropolises** such as **Beijing** and **Chongqing**, there are a reported 250-300 million Chinese residents who live on less than \$1 a day. China in terms of leader board rankings for population, GDP, economic productivity and much more, stand at the top with a clear margin of difference between them and second place. However, with the vast range between China's **richest** and **poorest** residents, thousands began to question the reasons for this large difference. No nation of China's population size has ever attempted to **industrialise**, and with first attempts, always leads to mistakes made. Since 1995, over 300 million **rural** residents of China have no access to safe water and over 800 million **lack basic sanitation**, which led to over 150 million migrating from **rural** to **urban** environments in China. With staggering **population density** statistics, over 3 million residents of Chinese cities are **homeless**, a projected 13 million **unemployed**, and those that are employed, work an average 58 hour working week, with over 150 million working in **sweatshops** (unregulated factories) that receive no state benefits of safety protection in the event of losing their job, injury, or death.

#### Lesson Six – South Africa: Africa's Cultural Capital – Cape Town



Words: 236

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Words: 1,415

The last and fifth of the **BRIC nations** consists of South Africa, the third richest country in Africa, but the key **driving political force** in the African Union in supporting **peace, equality** and **development** for all 52 nations in the continent. Commonly referred to as the '**Rainbow Nation**' for the diversity of **cultural, racial** and **ethnic groups**, South Africa is regularly associated with the motto "unity in diversity" following the collapse of the **apartheid** system at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which involved **racial segregation** which the white minority imposed on non-whites. However, within the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the capital city and **seaport** of **Cape Town** has not only become the **social, economic and political** driving force of South Africa's recent **development**, but is regarded to as one of Africa's most **historical** and **prosperous cities** paving the way for the development of Africa. Attracting an average of 30 million **tourists** annually, visitors highlight the unique history, the varying **landscapes** of **beaches, mountains, grasslands** and **forests**, along with being one of the largest **vineyards** of wine for the European market. South Africa is unique when comparing to the **emerging** giants of Brazil, Russia, India and China, as the African heavyweight, is seen as an outlier and a lightweight compared to these other nations. However, when contrasting, the statistics and data of South Africa's **population** and **economy** continue to shock and remain ahead of the other BRIC nations.