

# Whooz in the Nooz?



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Itaipu hydroelectric plant  
Image: Dario Alpern

You are. A crime has been committed and you are the prime suspect.  
Read the article to create a believable alibi.

## Massive power failure hits Brazil

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Wednesday, November 11, 2009

A massive power blackout in southern [Brazil](#) left tens of millions of people without power, with residents in major cities like [Rio de Janeiro](#) and [São Paulo](#) affected. Police called in extra officers and asked people to stay off the street when the [Itaipu hydroelectric plant](#) failed at 10:15 pm local time Tuesday (0015 GMT Wednesday) and plunged the affected areas into darkness.

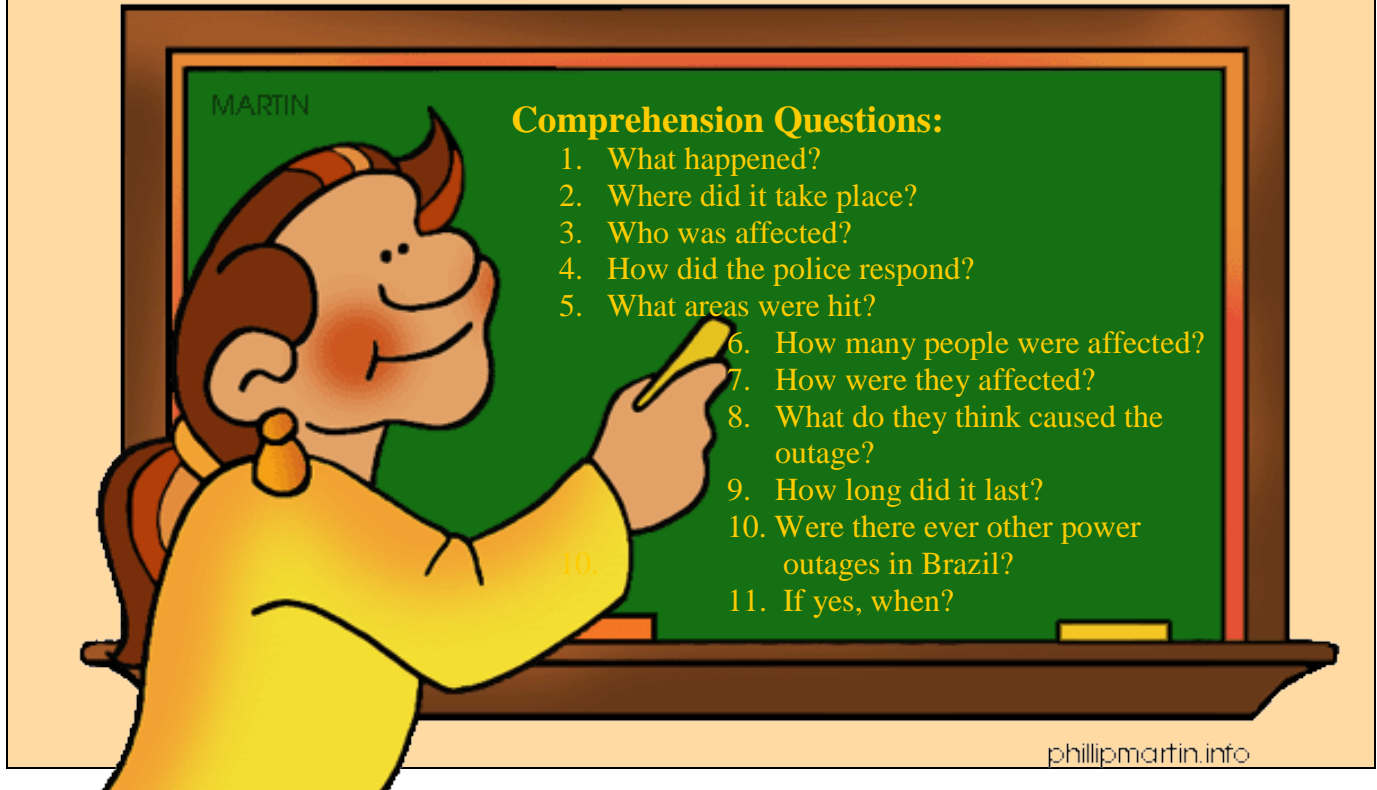
The electric plant supplies the regions of Sao Paulo, [Minas Gerais](#), [Mato Grosso](#), [Mato Grosso do Sul](#), Rio de Janeiro, [Goiás](#), [Rio Grande do Sul](#), [Paraná](#), and [Espírito Santo](#), as well as 90% of neighbouring [Paraguay](#), which was almost completely without power for fifteen minutes. Brazilian Energy Minister Edson Lobao stated that the cause of the "complete paralysis" of the

plant was not yet known, but put forward a theory that lightning may have caused the high-tension supply lines to short out.

Although this is not the first time that Brazil has had power outages, with severe loss of electricity in 2001, 2005 and 2007, radio station Bandnews estimated that 50 million people—a quarter of Brazil's population—were affected, one of the largest outages in recent history.

A few hours after the power cut, the hydroelectric plant came back on line and the affected regions gradually regained power, allowing the areas in chaos caused by lack of traffic lights and power to underground railways to return to normal, and residents to put out their candles.

# Answer the questions below:



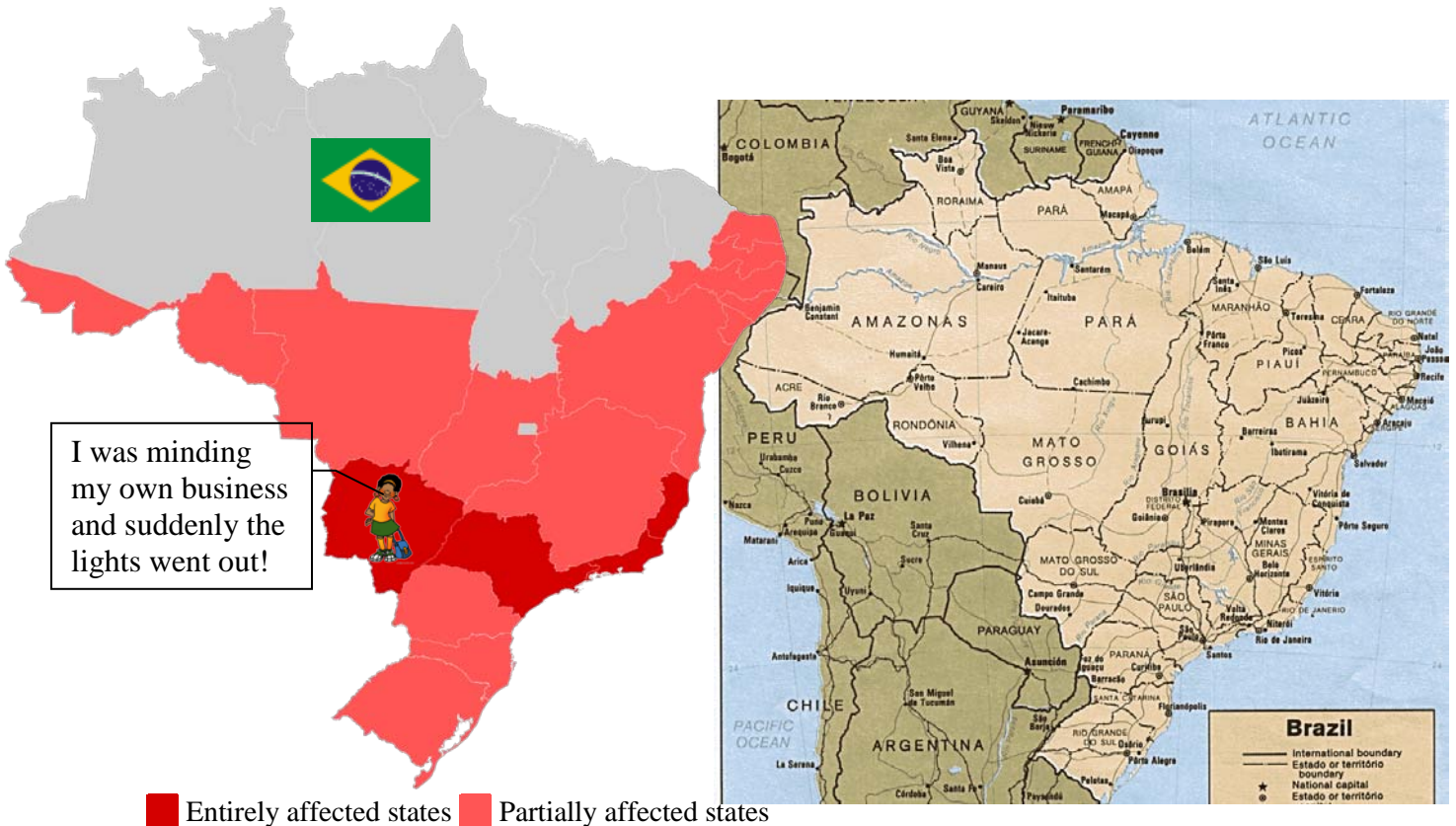
MARTIN

**Comprehension Questions:**

1. What happened?
2. Where did it take place?
3. Who was affected?
4. How did the police respond?
5. What areas were hit?
6. How many people were affected?
7. How were they affected?
8. What do they think caused the outage?
9. How long did it last?
10. Were there ever other power outages in Brazil?
11. If yes, when?

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## What states were affected?



# Where were you when the lights went out?

Use the correct preposition. Example: I was in the hospital.

\_\_ bed \_\_ the store \_\_ the beach \_\_ the living room \_\_ the kitchen \_\_ the movies  
\_\_ traffic \_\_ school \_\_ the pool \_\_ my room \_\_ the gym \_\_ my friend's house  
\_\_ the library \_\_ the shower \_\_ the mall \_\_ the park \_\_ the phone \_\_ the elevator

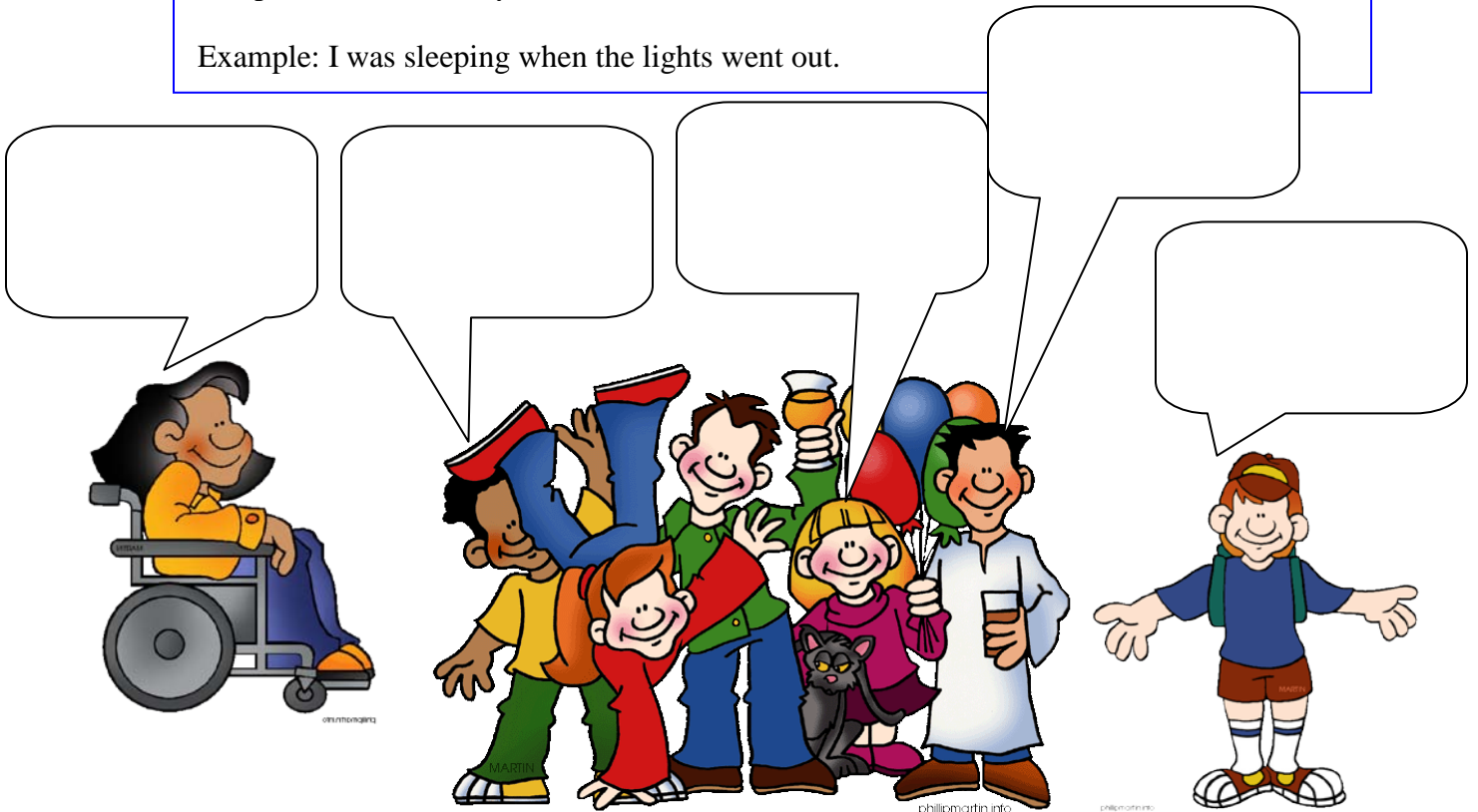
When the lights came back on it was discovered that a crime had been committed. The detectives are interviewing everyone on your block. You need to come up with an alibi. Write where you were during the power outage, why you were there, who you were with, what you were doing, and what time you got back home.

# What were you doing when the lights went out?

sleeping reading shopping riding my bike watching television cooking e-mail  
playing my guitar going home swimming doing homework exercising  
listening to music taking a shower making a movie talking on the phone

Fill in the balloons with a sentence using verbs above or your own choice.  
Use past continuous in your answer.

Example: I was sleeping when the lights went out.



Answers to the comprehension questions:

What happened?

There was a massive power blackout in southern [Brazil](#).

Where did it take place?

[Itaipu](#) is the home of the [Itaipu hydroelectric plant](#) which failed and caused the problem.

Who was affected?

The residents of [Rio de Janeiro](#) and [São Paulo](#), [Minas Gerais](#), [Mato Grosso](#), [Mato Grosso do Sul](#), Rio de Janeiro, [Goiás](#), [Rio Grande do Sul](#), [Paraná](#), and [Espírito Santo](#), and [Paraguay](#) suffered loss of power.

How did the police respond?

Police called in extra officers and asked people to stay off the street when the [Itaipu hydroelectric plant](#) failed.

What areas were hit?

of [Rio de Janeiro](#) and [São Paulo](#), [Minas Gerais](#), [Mato Grosso](#), [Mato Grosso do Sul](#), Rio de Janeiro, [Goiás](#), [Rio Grande do Sul](#), [Paraná](#), and [Espírito Santo](#), and [Paraguay](#) had a blackout.

How many people were affected?

50 million people—a quarter of Brazil's population—were affected

How were they affected?

lack of traffic lights and power to underground railways. Loss of electricity in their homes. They had to use candles.

What do they think caused the outage?

The cause of the "complete paralysis" of the plant was not yet known, but put forward a theory that lightning may have caused the high-tension supply lines to short out.

How long did it last?

A few hours after the power cut, the hydroelectric plant came back on line.

Were there ever other power outages in Brazil ?

This is not the first time that Brazil has had power outages, with severe loss of electricity in 2001, 2005 and 2007.

#### PREPOSITIONS EXERCISE

in bed   at the store   at the beach   in the living room   in the kitchen   at the movies  
in traffic   at school   at the pool   in my room   at the gym   at my friend's house  
at the library   in the shower   at the mall   at the park   on the phone   in the elevator

#### PAST CONTINUOUS

sleeping   reading   shopping   riding my bike   watching television   cooking   e-mail  
playing my guitar   going home   swimming   doing homework   exercising  
listening to music   taking a shower   making a movie   talking on the phone



EXTRA CREDIT Answer the questions:

### 1. Personal Experience

Have you ever experienced a power outage?  
Was it difficult?  
How did you cope?  
Where were you during the power outage in Brazil?

What were you doing when the lights went out?  
Were you affected?  
How did you cope?  
What things should a person keep on hand to be prepared for a blackout?

### 2. What additional information is contained in this article?

## 2009 Brazil and Paraguay blackout

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009\\_Brazil\\_and\\_Paraguay\\_blackout](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_Brazil_and_Paraguay_blackout)



[Itaipu Dam](#), the world's largest [hydroelectric plant](#) by energy generation and second-largest by installed capacity

The **2009 Brazil and Paraguay blackout** was a [power outage](#) that occurred throughout much of [Brazil](#) and for a short time the entirety of [Paraguay](#)<sup>[1]</sup>, on Tuesday, November 10, 2009, at approximately 22:15 [BST](#). It was the third [most widespread electrical blackout](#) in history.<sup>[2]<sup>[not in citation given]</sup></sup> The blackout affected an estimated 60 million people in Brazil.<sup>[3]</sup>

### The blackout

Heavy rains and strong winds caused three [transformers](#) on a key high-voltage transmission line to [short circuit](#), cutting the line and automatically causing the complete loss of 14 GW of power and the shutdown of the [Itaipu Dam](#) for the first time in its 25-year history.<sup>[4][5]</sup> The power cut, which Brazilian officials said affected 18 of the country's 26 [states](#), brought chaos to cities including [São Paulo](#), [Rio de Janeiro](#), [Belo Horizonte](#), [Campo Grande](#) and [Vitória](#).<sup>[6]</sup>

Thousands of passengers were stranded as [metro](#) trains came to a halt and buses failed to cope with the volume of passengers. There were widespread reports of road accidents as street lighting and traffic lights failed.<sup>[7]</sup> The blackout began about 22:15 on Tuesday and lasted until about 02:45 on Wednesday in São Paulo, although power was restored gradually in some places from before midnight.<sup>[8][9]</sup>

[President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva](#) arranged an emergency commission to enquire into the cause of the [blackout](#).<sup>[10]</sup> The blackout also unleashed a political stir as the Minister of Energy has been summoned to testify before [Congress](#).<sup>[11]</sup>

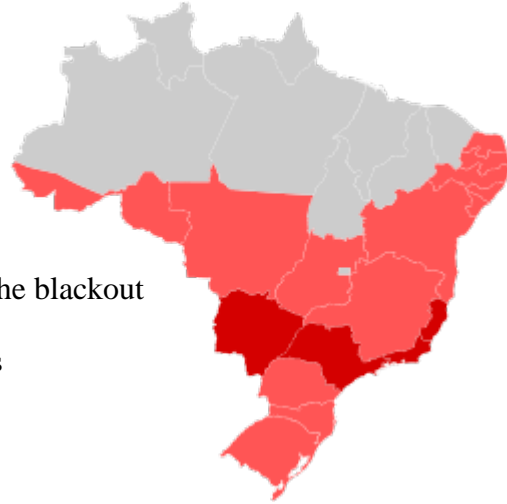
## Affected regions

### Paraguay

All of the country's territory was affected by the blackout.<sup>[12][13]</sup>

### Brazil

Map showing the locations in Brazil affected by the blackout



■ Entirely affected states ■ Partially affected states  
Entirely affected states<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

- [São Paulo](#)
- [Rio de Janeiro](#)
- [Mato Grosso do Sul](#)
- [Espírito Santo](#)

Partially affected states

- [Rio Grande do Sul](#)
- [Santa Catarina](#)
- [Paraná](#)
- [Minas Gerais](#)
- [Mato Grosso](#)
- [Goiás](#)
- [Rondônia](#)
- [Acre](#)
- [Bahia](#)
- [Sergipe](#)
- [Alagoas](#)
- [Pernambuco](#)
- [Paraíba](#)
- [Rio Grande do Norte](#)

## References

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# Does Your Alibi Pan Out?

One player is the detective.

The other players have to provide alibis where they were and what they were doing at the time of the crime.

The players try to trick the detective by giving false information that does not match the details from the article.

Example: Player 1 says "I couldn't have done the crime. I was having an MRI exam at the hospital.

The detective says. That can't be right. The hospital did not have any electricity for routine procedures. It was all used for emergency life support systems.

**START**

**I WAS AT THE BANK**

**I WAS AT THE BAKERY**

**I WAS DOING LAUNDRY**

**I WAS AT THE GYM..**

Roll the dice. Move the number of spaces indicated by the dice. Try to convince the detective that you are innocent of the crime because you were at the spot given in the space you land on.

**I WAS AT MY FRIEND'S HOUSE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES**

**I WAS WALKING THE DOG.**

**I WAS AT THE MALL BUYING SOME SHOES.**

**I WAS LISTENING TO MUSIC.**



**I WAS AT HOME COOKING DINNER**

**I WAS AT SCHOOL GETTING HELP FROM MY TEACHER.**

Alibi Information:  
Where you were:  
What time:  
With Whom:  
Why you were there:  
What time you got back home.

**I WAS ON THE PHONE WITH MY FRIEND.**

**I WAS IN MY ROOM READING.**

**I WAS TAKING A WALK AT THE BEACH.**

**I WAS WORKING ON THE COMPUTER**



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