

## The USA

### 1. Picture work. Describe the pictures and say what you know or remember about it.



### 2. Who are these people? What are they famous for?

Paris Hilton

Ernest Hemingway

Steven Spielberg

G.W. Bush

Henry Ford

### 3.

#### THE USA



#### Geography

The USA is a federation of 50 states. The country occupies almost 9,400,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It neighbours on Canada in the North and on Mexico in the south. The USA also includes Alaska on the very north of the continent, the Hawaii Islands in the Pacific Ocean and the US autonomous regions (the Virgin Islands, Guam and some more). The US are so large that there are 4 time zones.

Alaska is the largest American state. It is situated west of Canada. It was bought from Russians in 1867. The country is not much populated because of the long severe winters. Alaska is very rich in mineral resources. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Gold Rush brought many gold seekers to the area.

The USA has a varied landscape. The West is quite mountainous – **Sierra Nevada**, the **Cascade Range** and **the Cordilleras** occupy half of the continental area. Famous **Rocky Mountains** and the Great Canyon can be found in Colorado. In the middle of the state there are huge **Interior Plains**. The east contains lowlands such as the Mississippi Lowland but there is also a mountain range to be found there called **the Apalachian Mountains**. The highest peak is **Mt McKinley** in Alaska (6,194m).

The longest river is **Mississippi**, which is also the 3<sup>rd</sup> longest river in the world after the Amazon and the Nile. Other rivers are the **Missouri**, the **Ohio** and the **Rio Grande**. Rivers such as the Colorado and the Niagara with the famous Niagara Falls can be also found here. The Great Lakes are situated on the border on Canada. There are 5 of them altogether – **Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Ontario**.

In the north, climate is mild, the southern part of the US lies in the subtropical zone. Florida, the Gulf of Mexico and the Hawaii are located in the tropical zone. Alaska lies in the arctic zone.

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The USA keeps many national parks, e.g. Death Valley Desert, Yosemite, Yellowstone, or Grand Canyon National Park.



*Grand Canyon*



*Grizzly*



*Niagara Falls*



*American eagle*

## People



*Native American*

The number of inhabitants is around 298 million, with about 80% living in towns and cities. The country is the **3<sup>rd</sup> most populous** in the world behind China and India. The diversity of population is large, that's why the US is called "melting pot". Less than 1% of the people are native **Aleuts, Eskimos** and **Indians** of different tribes. More than 80% is white, 13% is **Afro-American**, then **Hispanic, Asian** and **Pacific**. Official language is English. However, because of the large numbers of immigrants, many different languages are spoken – Spanish as well as English is taught in bilingual schools in the states of California or Texas.

The Americans love playing American football, baseball, basketball and ice hockey. Sport is very important in US universities.

## Economy

Agriculture plays a major role in the US economy. Quality soil produces corn, soybeans, tomatoes, oranges, apples and tobacco. In the Hawaii there are large sugar cane and pineapple plantations.

The USA is very rich in mineral sources – gold, silver, platinum and petroleum can be found in Alaska. Also gas is produced in Texas. There are one of the world's largest resources of coal, concentrated in the Appalachian mountains too. The main trading partners are Canada, Japan, Mexico, GB and Germany. Currency: US dollar \$ = 100 cents

## Government

In the American democratic system, right and powers are divided between the individual states and federal government. The federal government has three branches:

- Executive power (the President and Executive office)
- Legislative power (both houses of Congress)
- Judiciary power (the Supreme Court and all other Federal courts)

**The President** is elected for 4 years and may be elected only twice. The President's name is Barack Obama.

**The Congress** consists of 2 houses: **the Senate** and **the House of Representatives**. They are both responsible for passing of laws, national finance, defence of nation, regulating commerce, and admitting new states to the Union. Each state has its own government and makes its own laws.

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Two parties dominate American politics – the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. US citizen must be 18 years old to vote.

### History

America is called after Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian explorer but the real father of discovery is considered **Christopher Columbus** who arrived in America in 1492.

The first inhabitants are called the "Indians", more precisely the Native Americans. (Apache, Assiniboin, Cheyenne tribes). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Spanish, French, Dutch and English had claimed land and started settlements in North America. **Indians** suffered greatly; through wars, violence and European diseases the Native American population declined by millions.

In 1607 the first English colony was founded in Virginia, 13 years later the ship **Mayflower** brought 102 Englishmen who left England because of religious persecution. Slowly, colonies began to grow, still ruled by England. Americans refused to pay tax for their goods and in 1773 a group of patriots threw tea into Boston Harbour. This event is known as "**Boston Tea Party**". The war between England and America began. On **4th July 1776** the **Declaration of Independence** was signed and USA was recognised a sovereign state.



*George Washington*

The first American president was **George Washington** and a new Constitution was adopted. In the 18th century economic and political differences grew between the Northern (e.g. Minnesota, Maine, New York) and the Southern states (Florida, Maryland, Virginia, Carolina). The North was very rich with strong economy and abolished slavery. The economy of the South depended on agriculture and growing cotton, rice, tobacco by slaves on huge plantations. These differences were the main reason of a **Civil War** – War between the North and the South (1861-1865). The North became the winner and slavery was abolished.

The 20th century sees the US as a powerful and rich state. However, problems and conflicts still occur: the fight for equality of people of all races and colours led by **Martin Luther King** ends up in his assassinating. In 1929 the stock market crashes in New York ("Black Friday") and is followed by the **Great Depression** and huge unemployment and poverty. 1941 Japanese attack **Pearl Harbour** in the Hawaii and the USA enter World War II. In 1945 Us forces drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



*Martin Luther King*



*"Little Boy" atomic bomb*



*Napalm attack in Vietnam*



*First step on the moon*



*Richard Nixon "Watergate"*

### Cities

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**New York City**

the most populous city in the USA is known for its history as a gateway for immigration to the United States and its status as a financial, cultural, transportation, and manufacturing centre.



Both state New York and the city were named for the 17th century Duke of York, James Stuart, the future king of England and Scotland. The original **Dutch settlers** purchased Manhattan (then New Amsterdam) in 1626 from Native Americans for 24 dollars. It lies on the Hudson River and is bordered by the states of New Jersey to the west, the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island. Manhattan is the oldest and most important – you can find the Wall Street here, many schools and colleges. a lot of theatres (Greenwich Village, SoHo). Today, the city still holds its status as a modern, busy, industrial center, listed as one of top 10 global financial centers.

**Los Angeles**

Spanish expression for "the angels", nicknamed "**The City of Angels**", often abbreviated as L.A. is the **2nd** largest city in the USA with its population 3.8 million. It is situated in the state



of California and was founded a Spanish Governor in 1781. Later it became a part of **Mexico** and in 1848 was {together with the rest of California} purchased by the USA. It is one of the world's centers of business, international trade, entertainment, culture, media, fashion, technology and education. As the home base of **Hollywood**, it is known as the entertainment capital of the world, leading the world in the creation of motion

**Detroit**

is in the state of Michigan is a major port city on the river Detroit, founded in 1701 by the Frenchman Antoine de la Cadillac.

Its name originates from the French word "détroit" for **strait**, characterizing its location on the river connecting The Great Lakes.

Known as the world's traditional **automotive center**, is a synonym for the American automobile industry and an important source of popular music legacies celebrated by the city's 2 familiar nicknames. The **Moto City** and **Motown**.  
 California city a financial, cultural and transportation center of SF Bay Area. Extremely popular international tourist destination, renowned for its chilly summer fog, steep rolling



hills, mix of Victorian and modern architecture and its famous landmarks including **Golden Gate Bridge**, the **cable cars**, and **Chinatown** - the biggest Chinese community outside of Asia live here. From the coast you can also see the well-known **Alcatraz**, once the prison was serving his sentence. From the prison you can hear the noise of the **Golden Gate** and named it after **Saint Francis of Assisi**. The Californian **Gold Rush** in the 19th century propelled the city into a period of rapid growth, increasing the

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4.

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## 5. The USA General Knowledge Quiz

- How many states are there in the US?
  - 49
  - 50
  - 51(b)
- What are the main political parties in the US?
  - The Republicans and the Democrats
  - The Republicans and the Socialists
  - The Conservatives and the Democrats(a)
- What do Americans celebrate on the 4th July?
  - Thansgiving
  - Discovery of America
  - Independence Day(c)
- Which president freed the slaves?
  - Thomas Jefferson
  - Abraham Lincoln
  - Bill Clinton(b)
- Who was the first person to walk on the moon?
  - John Glenn
  - Neil Armstrong
  - Edwin Aldrin(b, c)
- What was the name of the ship that brought first British (pilgrims) into America?
  - Mayflower
  - Titanic
  - Carpathia(a)
- The Statue of Liberty was a gift to the USA from:
  - Netherlands
  - Great Britain
  - France(c)
- "The Watergate" was a political scandal that revealed that:
  - President Kennedy had had an affair with Marilyn Monroe
  - President Truman's employees had been getting bribed
  - President Nixon had had a tape recording system to get information from the rival Democratic Party(c)



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9. The state with the highest number of execution is:

- a) Alabama
- b) New York
- c) Texas

(c)

10. Nation sport in the USA nowadays is:

- a) Rugby
- b) Ice-hockey
- c) Baseball

(c)