

# The United States

## ● What does the countryside look like?

In the US, you can find many national parks and different landscapes / climates. There are mountains / deserts / forests / redwood forests / rivers / lakes / swamps / beaches. Some of the most famous places are the Grand Canyon / the Rocky Mountains / the Mississippi River and national parks like Yosemite / Yellowstone. The highest mountain in the US is Mount McKinley (6,194 m) in Alaska.

The Great Lakes – Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior – are found on the US border with Canada. The Grand Canyon is a large canyon system in Arizona.

## ● What are some of the most famous cities in America? What can you tell me about them?

Washington, DC is the capital city. New York City is the largest city by... population / number of people. It is an important centre of... business / finance / art / media. Los Angeles is... famed / renowned for films and the famous actors / actresses. New Orleans is known as the birthplace of jazz and as the centre of French-American culture. It was badly damaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Atlanta, in Georgia, is the home of Coca Cola and CNN.

+ other parts - true in general is so

## ● Could you describe some typical American sports and pastimes?

Baseball is called America's favourite pastime. It is a bat-and-ball sport. A person hits a ball thrown at them and tries to run around a playing field called a diamond. American football requires players to run with an egg-shaped ball over the line of the opposition. Players wear protective padding and helmets. Another popular sport is basketball. The object / aim... of the game is to throw a ball through a hoop / basket.

## ● What do you know about American history?

The US gained its independence from Britain on 4 July, 1776. It is now celebrated as Independence Day / the Fourth of July. The American Civil War was fought from 1861–1865. Eleven Southern slave-keeping states declared their separation from the United States and formed the Confederate States of America / the Confederacy. They fought against the Northern States / the Union / the states where slavery had been abolished. After the surprise Japanese attack on the US Naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, the US entered into the Second World War. The US suffered from a terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, during which the World Trade Towers in New York City were completely destroyed and the Pentagon in Washington, DC was severely damaged.

## ● What can you tell me about the American system of government?

The US is a federal state / a union of self-governing states united by a central government. The head of each state is the governor. The federal government consists of three branches. The law-making / legislative power is concentrated in / lies with Congress which is made up of / divided into the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are 435 members in the House of Representatives and 100 senators, two from each state. The president is the head of the executive power / federal government. The Supreme Court exercises / holds judicial power.

## Who are some famous people from America?

There are millions of famous American people, but the most famous are George Washington (1732-1799) In 1789 he became the first president of the United States. He was labelled 'father of his country'. Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was from a poor family and was self educated. During his time as president he led the United States through the American Civil war, and abolished (ebolišt) (=zrušil) slavery. Mark Twain (1835-1910)'s birth name was actually Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He was an American author and humorist made famous by his 'great American novel' Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. William Faulkner called Twain the father of American literature. Henry Ford (1863-1947) was a founder [faundr] (=zakladatel) of the Ford Motor Company. He became one of the richest and well known people of the world. Elvis Presley (1935-1977) was called 'the King of rock-n-roll', he was one of the most important cultural [kal-čr-l] icons of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) was an American fiction author and journalist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1954 he won the Nobel Prize in literature. Today his works are known as American classics. Hemingway had four wives in his lifetime and tragically committed suicide [sjuisajd] (=sebevražda). Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962) was an actress and a major sex symbol of the 1950's. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) was a clergyman [klerdžimen] (=duchovní), leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. He was assassinated [esesinejtyd] (=zavražděn). Neil Armstrong (1930 -2012) was a famous American astronaut, Armstrong was the first person to walk on the moon. Bill Gates (1955) chairman and former CEO of the world's largest personal-computer software company, Microsoft. Michael Jackson (1958-2009) the king of pop. Barack Obama (1961) 44<sup>th</sup> President of the USA. He is the first African-American to hold the office.

## ● Would you like to go to the US? Why? Why not?

Absolutely / sure / yes, I love American... culture / style / humour. It must be a very interesting place. The American landscape is beautiful. The US is the wealthiest nation / country in the world. It would be a good opportunity to make money. No / no way / absolutely not... because American people are superficial / materialistic. There is a lot of crime. It doesn't have such an interesting history.

## Geography

- The USA is composed of **50 states** and one **federal district** (Washington D.C.).
- 48 states of the USA are situated in the northern part of the American continent.
- The USA is surrounded by the **Atlantic Ocean** in the east and by the **Pacific Ocean** in the west.
- The USA has borders with **Canada** in the north and with **Mexico** in the south.
- **Alaska**, the 49<sup>th</sup> state, occupies the north-western end of North America.
- **Hawaii**, the 50<sup>th</sup> state, is situated in the Pacific Ocean.

## Mountains



- The US's best-known mountains are the **Rocky Mountains** on the west coast.
- The **Appalachian Mountains** are on the east coast and the country between them is quite flat and low.
- The highest mountain, **Mount McKinley** (6,194 m) is situated in Alaska.

## Rivers



- The USA has many rivers, e. g.:
  - the **Mississippi** (the longest river)
  - the **Missouri**
  - the **Rio Grande**, the **Yukon** (the longest river in Alaska, 3000 m).

## Lakes



- The **Great Lakes** are located in north-eastern North America, on the Canada-United States border.
- They consist of **Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario**.
- They form the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth
- They contain 21% of the world's surface fresh water.

## Climate



- There are various variations of climate in the USA.
- In the north, the climate is **mild**.
- The southern part of US lies in the **subtropical zone**.
- Florida, the Gulf of Mexico and the Hawaii are situated in the **tropical zone**.
- Alaska is the coldest area and it lies in the **arctic zone**.

## Natural parks



- The USA is also known for its great National parks (there are 59 of them) like:
  - **Arches National Park** (top picture)
  - **Rocky Mountains National Park**
  - **Yellowstone National Park**
  - **Grand Canyon National Park**
  - **Yosemite National Park** (bottom p.)
  - **Death Valley National Park**
  - **Sequoia National Park** and many others.

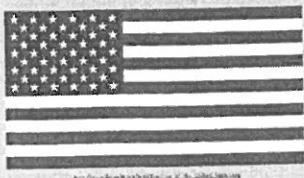
## Population

- About 300 million people live in the USA.
- It is the third most populous country in the world.
- There are many ethnic groups in the US.
- Five basic categories are: **White** (81.7%), **Black** (12.9%), **Asian** (4.2%), **Native**, these are Amerindian and Alaska native (1%), native Hawaiian and other **Pacific islander** (0.2%).
- One of the largest ethnic groups, **Hispanic**, is not an official ethnic group.
- Official language is English but in many areas people speak Spanish.

- As a land of immigrants USA is one of the world's most ethnically diverse nations.
- The first African blacks were transported to the New World in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century as slaves and they formed a large minority.
- In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the largest numbers of European immigrants were from England, Ireland, and Germany.
- Nowadays most immigrants come from Mexico, China, Philippines, India, Cuba, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Vietnam, Jamaica, South Korea, and Guatemala.

## The flag

- The U. S. national flag is known as the "**Stars and Stripes**".
- It has 13 white and red stripes represent the original 13 colonies.
- 50 white stars in a blue field represent the 50 states of the union.
- A bald Eagle is the national bird of the United States since 1782.



## American system of Government

- The US is a federal state.
- The head of each state is the governor.
- The federal government consists of three branches:
  - **Legislative**
    - Congress which is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives.
    - There are 435 members in the House of Representatives and 100 senators, two from each state.
  - **Executive**
    - The president (who is the head of the executive power) and his cabinet. There is no prime minister.
  - **Judicial**
    - The Supreme Court holds judicial power.

## The capital city, the president and the monetary system

- The capital city of the US is Washington, D. C. (District of Columbia).
- **Barack Hussein Obama II** is the forty-fourth and current President of the U.S.A.
- He is the first African-American president ever.
- The currency in the USA is the dollar (\$), divided into 100 cents (c).