



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*The United States of America is called by several different names, both by people who live there and by people in other countries. These names include **the USA, the United States, the US, the States and America**. The official names, the United States of America, first appears in the Declaration of Independence of 1776, when the country was called ‘the thirteen United States of America’.*

Capital	Washington, D.C.
Largest city	New York City
Major language	English
Government	Democratic federal republic
Area	3,794,083 ml ² (9,631,418km ²)
Population	298 million (US Census Bureau estimate, 2006)
Monetary unit	1 US dollar = 100 cents

The Geography of The United States

The United States is the fourth largest country in the world in land area. Forty-eight of the fifty states are in the middle of the North American continent between the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west. It is about 3000 miles (4800 kilometers) from the east coast to the west coast and about 1500 miles (2400 kilometers) from the Canadian border on the north to the Mexican border on the south. The island state of Hawaii is in the Pacific Ocean, and the state of Alaska is northwest of Canada.

The map of the next page shows the geography of the United States. The two main mountain ranges run north and south – the Appalachian Mountains in the eastern part of the United States and the Rocky Mountains in the west. Between them are the Great Plains. There is another mountain chain west of the Rockies – the Sierra Nevada and the Cascade ranges.

The longest river in the United States is the Mississippi. The Missouri and Ohio Rivers flow into the Mississippi, and the Mississippi flows south into the Gulf of Mexico. The major rivers in the western part of the United States are Colorado and the Rio Grande. The highest mountains of the Rockies form the Continental Divide. Rivers to the east of the divide flow east, and rivers to the west of it flow into the Pacific Ocean.

The Great Lakes on the northern border of the country are Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario. The Great Salt Lake is in a desert area in the western part of the United States. The Mojave, the Gila, and the Painted Deserts are in the southwestern part of the country.

(from *About the USA*, Elain Kirn)

The Fifty States

The USA is divided into 50 states.

Practice the pronunciation of the names of the states

Alabama	Hawaii	Massachusetts	New Mexico	South Dakota
Alaska	Idaho	Michigan	New York	Tennessee
Arizona	Illinois	Minnesota	North Carolina	Texas
Arkansas	Indiana	Mississippi	North Dakota	Utah
California	Iowa	Missouri	Ohio	Vermont
Colorado	Kansas	Montana	Oklahoma	Virginia
Connecticut	Kentucky	Nebraska	Oregon	Washington
Delaware	Louisiana	Nevada	Pennsylvania	West Virginia
Florida	Maine	New Hampshire	Rhode Island	Wisconsin
Georgia	Maryland	New Jersey	South Carolina	Wyoming

Postal abbreviations for the states

- *Each state has a postal abbreviation of 2 letters that people use when they address an envelope.*

You are to match the postal abbreviations with the states.

AL	MO	RI	CT	HI
CA	NH	SC	GA	IL
CO	NJ	OK	ID	KY
FL	NM	TX	IA	MT
MA	NY	UT	OH	NV
KS	NC	TN	WA	VT
MD	ND	SD	VA	MS
ME	AR	WI	WV	MI
LA	OR	WY	AZ	IN
NE	AK	PA	DE	MN

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Find the names of 20 states in the puzzle. They can be horizontal or vertical.

A	L	A	S	K	A	A	N	E	R	L	A	N	V
L	R	L	R	A	R	R	K	E	I	K	T	O	E
A	S	N	C	S	B	I	A	M	F	S	E	S	R
B	L	T	I	T	A	Z	N	T	L	S	L	P	M
A	V	S	O	N	R	O	S	E	O	H	I	O	O
M	I	Y	W	L	I	N	A	O	R	E	G	O	N
A	R	K	A	N	S	A	S	R	I	H	N	R	T
I	G	E	D	L	E	H	A	I	D	A	H	O	W
N	I	N	E	B	R	A	S	K	A	W	T	N	Y
D	N	T	N	E	M	G	L	T	S	A	E	E	O
I	I	U	F	A	A	I	A	E	R	I	X	V	M
A	A	C	A	L	I	F	O	R	N	I	A	A	I
N	A	K	E	T	N	J	T	W	I	V	S	D	N
A	X	Y	N	L	E	G	E	O	R	G	I	A	G

- **TEN LARGEST METROPOLITAN AREAS IN THE UNITED STATES**

Here is a list of the 10 largest metropolitan areas in the United States. Listen to the cassette and fill in their populations.

1. New York City, including northern New Jersey and Long Island:
2. Los Angeles, California, including Riverside and Orange County:
3. Chicago, Illinois, including Gary, Indiana, and Kenosha, Wisconsin:
4. Washington, D.C and Baltimore, Maryland :
5. San Francisco, California, including Oakland and San Jose:
6. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, including Wilmington, Delaware, and Atlantic City, New Jersey :
7. Boston, Massachusetts, including Brockton, Massachusetts, and Nashua, New Hampshire:
8. Detroit, Michigan, including Ann Arbor and Flint:
9. Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas:
10. Houston and Galveston, Texas :

- **STATE CAPITALS**

Sometimes a state capital is also the largest city in the state.

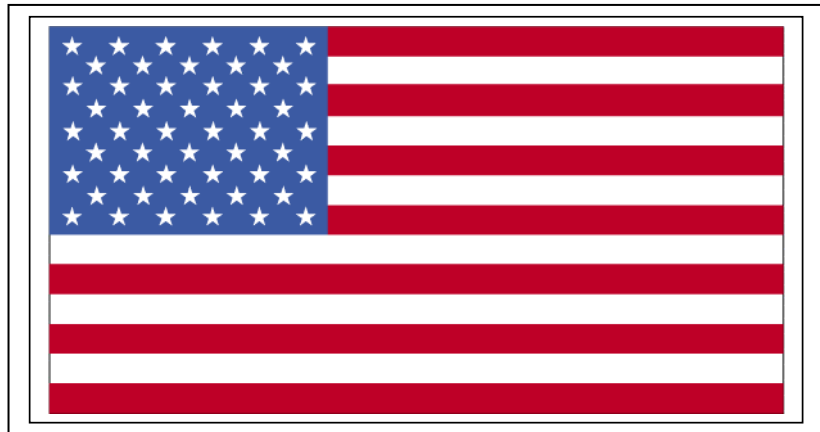
Match the names of the capital cities to the states.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. Hawaii | a. Columbia |
| 2. Indiana | b. Santa Fe |
| 3. Georgia | c. Atlanta |

4. Oklahoma
5. Massachusetts
6. South Carolina
7. New Mexico
8. New York
9. Texas
10. California

- d. Honolulu
- e. Indianapolis
- f. Albany
- g. Boston
- h. Oklahoma City
- i. Sacramento
- j. Austin

The Flag of the United States (the Stars and Stripes)



- 1/ How many stars are there in the flag?
- 2/ What do the stars stand for?
- 3/ How many stripes are there?
- 4/ What do the stripes represent?

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

by **Francis Scott Key**

- *Listen to the national anthem on the cassette and fill in the missing words below.*

1. Oh, say, can you,
By the dawn's early.....,
What so proudlyhailed
At the twilight'sgleaming?

3. And the rocket's glare,
The bombs bursting in ,
Gave proof the night
That our was still there.

2. Whose broad.....and bright..... ,
Through the perilous..... ,
O'er the ramparts we.....
Were gallantly streaming?

4. Oh, say, does that
Spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the
And the of the brave?

• **CLOZE**

Read the following information about the United States. Try to fill in the blanks with the correct words. After you have filled in as much as you can, listen to the cassette and fill all blanks.

The country in the center of this map is the United States of America . It is located on the continent of North America. Let's look at the borders of the country first. The United States has borders with just1..... other countries. The country to the north of the United States is2..... . Mexico is to the3..... .

Many important bodies of water are located in and around the United States. The Atlantic Ocean is to the4..... of the United States, and the5..... Ocean is to the west. To the south, next to Mexico, is the Gulf of Mexico. The largest group of6..... in the world is located on the border between the United States and Canada, in the eastern half of the country. These are called the7..... Lakes, and there are five of them: Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario. In the southwestern part of the United States is the Rio Grande River. It forms part of the8..... with Mexico. The most important river in the country, the Mississippi River, flows through the9..... of the country, from near the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. It is part of a large river system including the10..... River, which flows in from the west, and the Ohio River, which flows in from the11..... .

While the center of the United States is quite flat, there are12..... mountain ranges in the west and in the13..... In the West are the14..... mountains. They are a younger, higher range with many sharp, snowcapped peaks. The Appalachian15..... are in the east. They are an older, lower range, and they look rounded and very green.

The United States is divided into16..... states. Forty-eight states are on the map here. The two17..... states, Alaska and Hawaii, are separated from these forty-eight. Alaska, the.....18..... state, is to the northwest, bordering on Canada. Hawaii is a group of islands in the19..... Ocean, to the southwest of the continental United States.

Some of the important cities in the United States are marked on the map. Look for the star. The star represents Washington, D.C., the20..... of the United States. Washington, D.C., is a federal district, located21..... the states of Maryland and Virginia in the middle of the East Coast. Other important cities are represented on the map by circles. They include New York, in the Northeast,22....., in the Southeast, Houston, in Texas near the Gulf of Mexico, Los Angeles, on the West Coast in California, and23..... in the North, on the Lake Michigan, one of the Great Lakes.

The government of the United States counts the population every ten years in a census. According to the 1990 census, the population of the United States is about 249,000,000.

(from *Talking about the USA*, Janet Giannotti
& Suzanne Mele Szwarczewicz)

- **The Regions of the United States**

The fifty states in the United States can be divided into nine regions, plus Alaska and Hawaii, which are separate.

The text below provides the information about the regions. Work with your classmates to fill in the spaces on the map with the names of the regions as well as their resources and products.

The first region on the map is New England , in the Northeast. In New England , the winters are generally cold and snowy. Summers have a few hot days. You can see green mountains and maple trees in New England. You can eat lobsters and cod fish, especially in Maine and New Hampshire.

Next, moving to the south and west, is the Mid-Atlantic Region. This region is the financial center of the United States. There are large cities in the region, such as New York and Philadelphia. There are many historic places in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

The third region on the map is the Appalachian Highland Region. In the Appalachian Highland, you can find coal mines and horse farms. The mountains in the west gradually lead into a coastal plain in the east. Winters are cold, and summers are cool in the mountains. The coastal plain has a moderate climate.

Fourth in Southeast, a center of cotton and peanut farming. The Southeast Region has a lot of natural pine forests. Summers are very hot, and winters, generally, are not very cold.

Moving back to the north, the fifth region is the Great Lakes Region. It contains the industrial center of the country and also produces a lot of dairy products. Much of the land in this region is very flat. Winters are cold and summers are hot.

The Heartland, the flat land just to the east of the Rockies, is the sixth region on the map. It is also called the nation's Bread Basket because of the wheat, corn, and oats grown on large farms there. Winters can be very cold in this region.

The seventh region is called the Southwest. It is a flat, dry area where you can find cactus, cattle, and oil. The weather is generally hot, except in the mountains.

There is a lot of mining in the Mountain Region, named for the Rocky Mountains. There are also large ranches for cattle and sheep in this region. Winters are very cold in the mountains, and it snows well into the spring months.

Continuing west, the ninth region is the Pacific Coast, the center of the movie and television industry. It has a lot of fruit farming and is cool and rainy in the northern part.

The last two regions are made up of just one state each. Alaska is cold and snowy. Oil and fishing are the major industries. Hawaii has palm trees, sugar cane, and pineapples.

(from *Talking about the USA*, Janet Giannotti
& Suzanne Mele Szwarczewicz)

ECONOMY

The economic system of the United States can be described as a capitalist mixed economy, in which corporations, other private firms, and individuals make most microeconomic decisions, and governments prefer to take a smaller role in the domestic economy, although the combined role of all levels of government is relatively large, at 36% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The U.S. has a small social safety net, and regulation of businesses is slightly less than the average of developed countries. The United States' median household income in 2005 was \$43,318.

Economic activity varies greatly across the country. For example, New York City is the center of the American financial, publishing, broadcasting, and advertising industries, while Los Angeles is the most important center for film and television production. The San Francisco Bay Area and the Pacific Northwest are major centers for technology. The Midwest is known for its reliance on manufacturing and heavy industry, with Detroit serving as the historic center of the American automotive industry, and Chicago serving as the business and financial capital of the region. The Southeast is a major area for agriculture, tourism, and the lumber industry, and, because of wages and costs below the national average, it continues to attract manufacturing.

The largest sector in the United States economy is services, which employs roughly three quarters of the work force.

The economy is fueled by an abundance in natural resources such as coal, petroleum, and precious metals. However, the country still depends for much of its energy on foreign countries. In agriculture, the country is a top producer of corn, soy beans, rice, and wheat, with the Great Plains labeled as the "breadbasket of the world" for its tremendous agricultural output. The U.S. has a large tourist industry, ranking third in the world, and is also a major exporter in goods such as airplanes, steel, weapons, and electronics. Canada accounts for 19% (more than any other nation) of the United States' foreign trade, followed by China, Mexico, and Japan.

While the *per capita* income of the United States is among the highest in the world, the wealth is comparatively concentrated, with approximately 40% of the population earning less than an average resident of western Europe and the top 20% earning substantially more. Since 1975, the U.S. has a "two-tier" labor market in which virtually all the real income gains have gone to the top 20% of households. This polarization is the result of a relatively high level of economic freedom.

The social mobility of U.S. residents relative to that of other countries is the subject of much debate. Some analysts have found that social mobility in the United States is low relative to other OECD states, specifically compared to Western Europe, Scandinavia and Canada. Low social mobility may stem in part from the U.S. educational system. Public education in the United States is funded mainly by local property taxes supplemented by state revenues. This frequently results in a wide difference in funding between poor districts or poor states and more affluent jurisdictions. In addition, the practice of legacy preference at elite universities gives preference to the children of alumni, who are often wealthy. This practice reduces available spaces for better-qualified lower income students. Some analysts argue that

relative social mobility in the U.S. peaked in the 1960s and declined rapidly beginning in the 1980s. Former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan has also suggested that the growing income inequality and low class mobility of the U.S. economy may eventually threaten the entire system in the near future.

(from **Wikipedia - The free Encyclopedia**)

Sources

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United States Map

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Suggested reading

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<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/factover/homepage.htm>

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