



**FOCUS  
ON THE  
USA**



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Ф74

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Навчальний посібник призначений для широкого кола користувачів, зокрема студентів факультетів іноземної філології, а також учнів шкіл та ліцеїв з поглибленим вивченням англійської мови. Його метою є збагачення знань про Сполучені Штати Америки та формування лінгвокраїнознавчої компетенції, що є необхідною умовою для ефективної міжкультурної комунікації.

Навчальний посібник охоплює ключові аспекти американського суспільства, зокрема географію, символіку, систему освіти, політичну систему та державні інституції. Структура кожного розділу включає теоретичний матеріал, систему завдань для аудиторної та самостійної роботи, а також тести й запитання для самоперевірки.

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## PREFACE

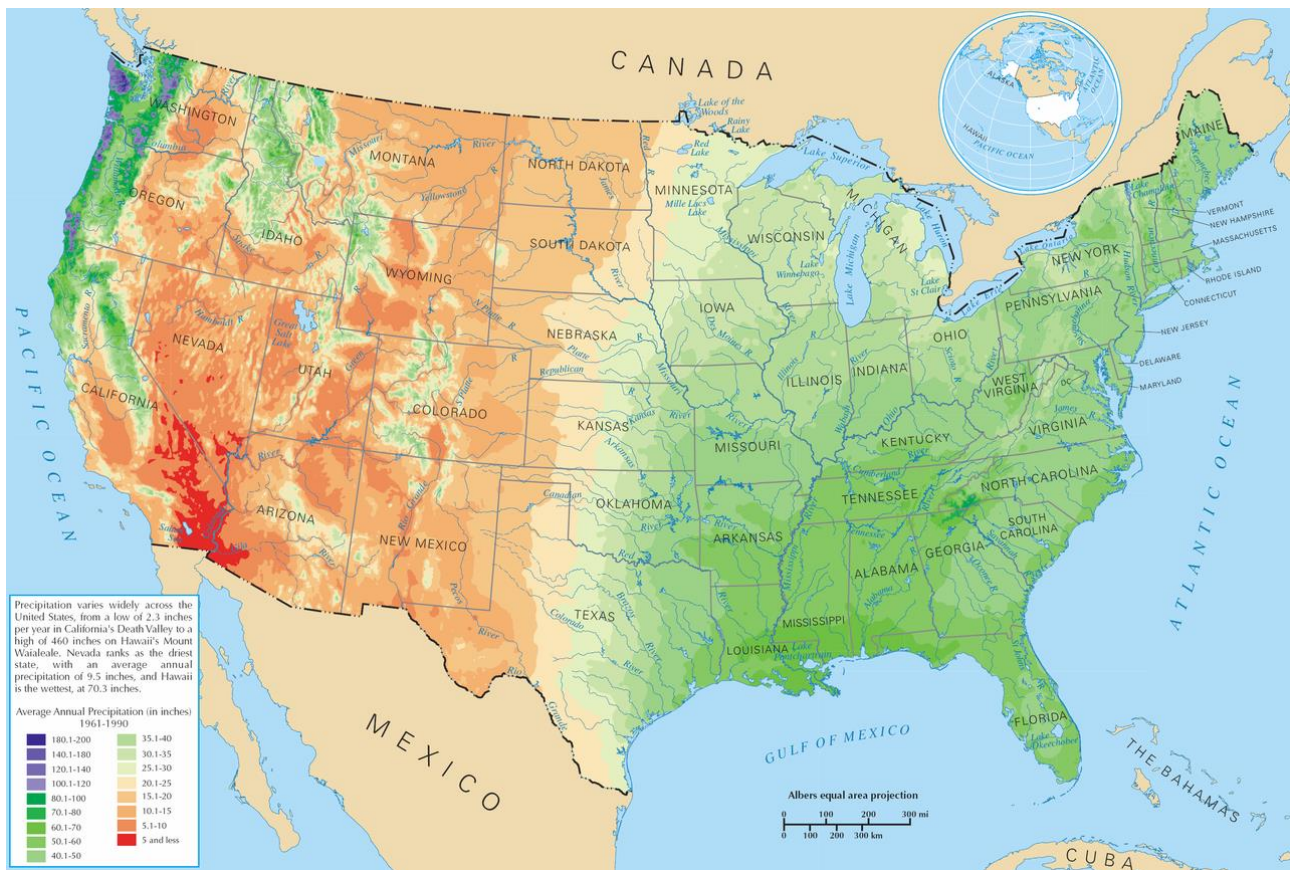
This course book, *Focus on the USA*, has been developed specifically for students studying the discipline *Language and Country studies*. It aims to deepen students' understanding of the country through a comprehensive overview of its geography, history, political structure, cultural traditions, and prominent figures while simultaneously enriching their English language skills in a meaningful, context-based manner.

The course encourages students not only to acquire knowledge but also to reflect on cultural identity, diversity, and shared values – central themes in the study of linguocultural competence. Each unit includes informational texts, vocabulary development tasks, comprehension and discussion questions.

This book is intended for classroom use in higher education institutions, but it can also serve as a helpful resource for independent learners interested in American culture and civilization. It supports the educational goal of forming globally aware citizens capable of engaging in intercultural communication with both linguistic accuracy and cultural sensitivity.



# CHAPTER 1. Geographical Position of the USA



<b>Continent</b>	North America
<b>Area:</b>	9,826,675 km <sup>2</sup>
- Total	
- Land	93.24%
- Water	6.76%
<b>Coastline</b>	19,920 km
<b>Borders</b>	Canada: 8,864 km Mexico: 3,327 km
<b>Highest point</b>	Denali (6,190.5m (20,310 ft))
<b>Lowest point</b>	Badwater Basin (-85 m (-279 ft))
<b>Longest river</b>	Missouri River (3,767 km)
<b>Largest lake</b>	Lake Superior (58,000 km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Climate</b>	Diverse: Ranges from warm-summer continental in the far north to tropical in the far south. West: mostly semi-arid to desert, Mountains: alpine, Northeast: humid continental, Southeast: humid subtropical, Coast of California: Mediterranean, Pacific Northwest: cool temperate oceanic, Alaska: mostly

subarctic, Hawaii, South Florida, and the territories:  
tropical

**Terrain**

Vast central plain, Interior Highlands and low mountains in Midwest, mountains and valleys in the mid-south, coastal flatland near the Gulf and Atlantic coast, complete with mangrove forests and temperate, subtropical, and tropical laurel forest and jungle, canyons, basins, plateaus, and mountains in west, hills and low mountains in east; intermittent hilly and mountainous regions in Great Plains, with occasional badland topography; rugged mountains and broad river valleys in Alaska; rugged, volcanic topography in Hawaii and the territories.

**Natural hazards**

Tsunamis; volcanoes; earthquake activity around Pacific Basin; hurricanes along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts; tornadoes in the Midwest and Southeast; mud slides in California; forest fires in the west; flooding; permafrost in northern Alaska.

The United states of America (USA) is located in North America, covering an area of approximately 9.8 million square kilometers, making it the third-largest country in the world by total area, after Russia and Canada. The country occupies the central part of North America and extends from the Pacific Ocean in the west to the Atlantic Ocean in the east and from Canada in the north to Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico in the south. In addition to the 48 contiguous states, the USA includes two important non-contiguous states: Alaska, the largest state by area, borders the Pacific Ocean to the south and southwest, the Bering Strait to the west, and the Arctic Ocean to the north and Hawaii, the only U.S. state composed entirely of islands, lies far to the southwest of the mainland in the Pacific Ocean. The United States also holds a number of overseas territories, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Caribbean, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands in the western Pacific, and American Samoa in the South Pacific.

The total area of the United States is approximately 9.8 million square kilometres. Its vast size contributes to the country's remarkable geographic

diversity, resulting in a wide range of landscapes, climates, and ecosystems across the territory.

From the arctic tundra and towering mountains of Alaska to the tropical beaches of Hawaii and Florida, the United States encompasses nearly every type of natural environment. The Rocky Mountains rise dramatically in the west, while the Great Plains stretch across the heartland, offering some of the most fertile agricultural land in the world. To the east, the Appalachian Mountains form an ancient, forested chain, and along the coasts, diverse shorelines vary from rugged cliffs to sandy beaches and vast wetlands. Additionally, the United States contains some of the world's most famous natural landmarks, such as the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park, Niagara Falls, and the Everglades, which attract millions of visitors each year and highlight the country's commitment to conservation and environmental protection.

This geographic and ecological diversity has played a key role in shaping the country's economic development, regional cultures, and population distribution, making the United States not only a land of varied landscapes but also of varied human experiences.

Administratively, the United States consists of 50 states and the District of Columbia, where the capital of the country, Washington, D.C. is located. The country can be divided into six main regions, and each region has its own unique features, culture, and economy. Let's explore these regions, which help shape the identity of the United States.

1. **New England** is a distinct and historically rich region in the northeastern corner of the United States, comprising six states: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.





This region is known not only for its natural beauty including rugged coastlines, dense forests, rolling hills, and vibrant autumn foliage but also for its foundational role in American history. New England was one of the earliest areas settled by European colonists, notably the Pilgrims, who arrived on the Mayflower in 1620 and established Plymouth Colony in present-day Massachusetts. Throughout the colonial era, New England became a center of commerce, education, and political thought. It played a crucial role during the American Revolution, with key events such as the Boston Tea Party and the battles of Lexington and Concord occurring on its soil. Many of the region's historic towns and cities still preserve their colonial architecture and revolutionary landmarks.

Culturally, New England maintains a strong regional identity, characterized by traditions such as town meetings, local governance, maritime heritage, and a focus on education. It is home to some of the nation's most prestigious universities, including Harvard University (founded in 1636) and Yale University (founded in 1701), which have shaped American intellectual and cultural life for centuries.

Economically, the region has evolved from its early roots in fishing, shipbuilding, and manufacturing to a modern economy driven by finance, healthcare, technology, education, and tourism. The picturesque small towns, coastal villages, and mountain resorts attract millions of visitors each year, especially during the fall when the foliage transforms into a vivid display of red, orange, and gold.

Today, New England's diverse population, rich cultural institutions, and strong sense of historical continuity continue to shape not only the identity of the region itself but also its contributions to the broader story of the United States.

2. **The Middle Atlantic Region** of the United States includes the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.).



This region serves as a vital economic, political, and cultural center of the country. Historically, it has played a key role as a gateway for immigrants arriving from Europe during the 19th and early 20th centuries, with Ellis Island in New York Harbor serving as the main entry point for millions of newcomers seeking a new life in America.

The Middle Atlantic is home to New York City, the largest and most populous city in the United States, often referred to as a global center of finance, media, culture, and international diplomacy. Other major urban centers in the region include Philadelphia, known for its deep historical significance as the birthplace of American independence, and Washington, D.C., the seat of the federal government and home to national landmarks such as the White House, the U.S. Capitol, and the Supreme Court.

Geographically, the region features a mix of coastal plains, rolling hills, rivers, and mountain ranges such as the Alleghenies. It has a moderate climate that supports a variety of agricultural activities, particularly in Pennsylvania and parts of New York. The region's rivers including the Hudson, Delaware, and Potomac have historically played crucial roles in transportation, commerce, and settlement.

Economically, the Middle Atlantic region is one of the most industrialized and urbanized parts of the country, with strengths in finance, government, healthcare, technology, education, transportation, and manufacturing. The Port of New York and New Jersey is one of the busiest ports on the East Coast, underscoring the region's importance in domestic and international trade.

Culturally, the Middle Atlantic region is a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups, languages, and traditions, reflecting its long history of immigration and urbanization. It is home to world-class museums, theaters, universities, sports teams, and media institutions, making it one of the most dynamic and influential regions in the United States.

3. **The Southern region** of the United States, often simply called “**The South**” includes a large group of states, typically: Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Texas. Sometimes Oklahoma is also considered part of the South due to its cultural and historical ties.



Historically, the South played a central role in early American history, particularly in agriculture, plantation economies, and the Civil War. It was the heart of the Confederacy during the Civil War (1861–1865), and its history is marked by slavery, Reconstruction, and the long struggle for civil rights, which has profoundly influenced the region’s identity and development.

Geographically, the South is incredibly diverse. It includes coastal plains, mountain ranges (such as the Appalachians), river valleys (including the Mississippi River, the longest in North America), swamps (like the Everglades in Florida), and rolling farmland. The region generally experiences a humid subtropical climate, with hot summers and mild winters, making it ideal for agriculture.

The Southern economy has evolved from its historical reliance on cotton, tobacco, and rice to a more diversified structure including energy, finance, aerospace, technology, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture. Texas, for example, is a major center for the energy industry and space research, while Florida thrives on tourism and retirement communities.

4. **The Midwest** often called “**America’s Heartland**,” includes twelve states: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. The region is known for its agricultural productivity, industrial history, and its representation of traditional American values such as hard work, community spirit, and resilience.





Geographically, the Midwest is characterized by vast plains, fertile farmland, river systems, and the Great Lakes. The region contains major portions of the Mississippi River Basin and is home to four of the five Great Lakes (Michigan, Superior, Huron, and Erie), which are crucial for transportation, trade, and natural resources. The terrain is mostly flat or gently rolling, which makes it ideal for crop farming and livestock production.

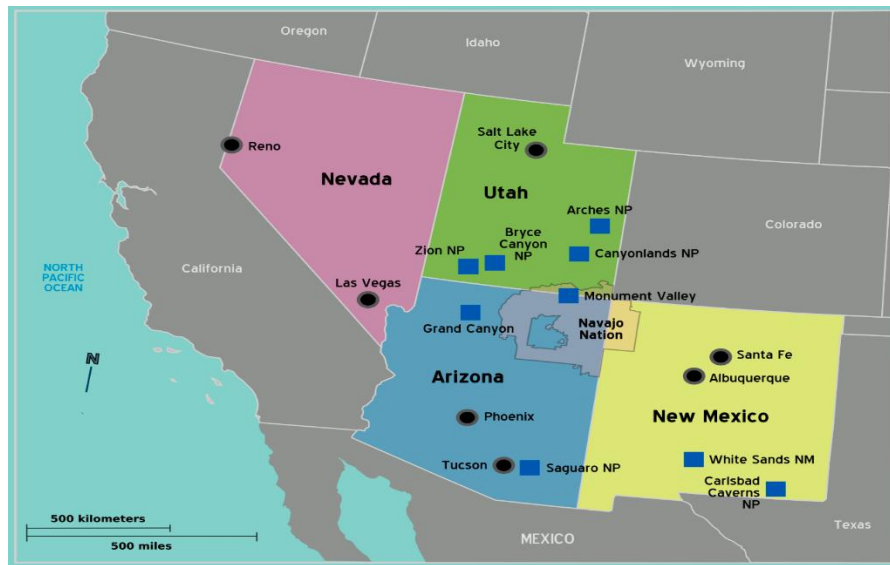
The Midwest plays a vital role in the agricultural economy of the United States and is a leading producer of corn, soybeans, wheat, dairy products, beef, and pork. In addition to agriculture, the region has a strong industrial legacy, particularly in automobile manufacturing, steel production, and machinery, especially in cities like Detroit (known as “Motor City”), Chicago, Cleveland, and St. Louis. Though some areas faced economic decline due to deindustrialization in the late 20th century, many Midwestern cities have reinvented themselves as centers of technology, education, healthcare, logistics, and renewable energy.

The Midwest also has a rich cultural landscape influenced by European immigration, especially German, Scandinavian, Polish, and Irish communities and is known for its regional dialects, festivals, folk traditions, and Midwestern hospitality.

Today, the Midwest continues to symbolize the economic backbone and cultural core of the United States, balancing its rural heritage with modern innovation and development.

5. **The Southwest** is a unique and striking region of the United States, typically including the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and

Oklahoma, though sometimes parts of Nevada, Utah, and southern California are also sometimes considered part of the region due to their geographic and cultural characteristics.



This region is renowned for its dramatic landscapes, which include deserts, canyons, plateaus, and mountain ranges. Notable natural features include the Grand Canyon in Arizona, Monument Valley, the Painted Desert. The climate is generally arid to semi-arid, with hot summers and mild winters, although mountainous areas experience cooler temperatures and even snow.

The Southwest has a rich multicultural heritage, shaped by centuries of Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo-American influence. Numerous Indigenous nations such as the Navajo, Hopi, Apache, and Pueblo have deep historical and cultural roots in the region. Spanish colonization, which began in the 16th century, left a lasting legacy in architecture, place names, religion, and language still evident today in the strong Hispanic and Latino presence across the region.

Economically, the Southwest is diverse and dynamic. The region is known for its energy production (especially oil and natural gas in Texas and Oklahoma), technology and aerospace industries, agriculture, cattle ranching, and a growing tourism sector.

The Southwest is also famous for its distinctive Southwestern architecture, Tex-Mex cuisine, artistic traditions (especially Native American crafts and jewelry), and music, which reflects the blending of cultural influences.

6. **The Western region of the United States**, commonly referred to as “the West” includes a wide array of states with vastly different climates, landscapes, and cultures. It typically comprises Colorado, Wyoming,

Montana, Utah, California, Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii. This region is known for its diverse geography, including mountains, coastal areas, and vast wilderness life.



Geographically, the West is known for its spectacular natural beauty and dramatic contrasts. From the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and Montana to the Great Basin deserts of Nevada and Utah; from the Pacific coastline of California, Oregon, and Washington to the volcanic islands of Hawaii; and from the forests and glaciers of Alaska to the fertile Central Valley of California this region encompasses nearly every type of natural environment found in North America.

*The climate of the West varies greatly:*

- **Alaska** has arctic and subarctic climates.
- **Hawaii** enjoys a tropical climate.
- **California** has everything from Mediterranean coasts to alpine highlands and deserts.
- The **interior West** tends to be arid or semi-arid, with hot summers and cold winters.

Culturally, the West is a blend of Native American heritage, Spanish colonial influence, Asian and Pacific Islander communities, and pioneer traditions from the era of westward expansion. The region has long symbolized freedom, opportunity, and the frontier spirit in American history. Many Native American tribes continue to play a significant cultural and political role, particularly in states like New Mexico, Arizona, Montana, and Alaska.

Economically, the West is one of the most dynamic and varied regions in the country. It includes:



- The tech and innovation hubs of Silicon Valley in California and Seattle in Washington.
- The film and entertainment industry centered in Los Angeles.
- Major agricultural zones, particularly in California's Central Valley.
- Tourism hotspots like Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite, Hawaii's beaches, and Alaska's wilderness.
- A strong presence in energy, mining, and outdoor recreation industries in the Mountain states.

The West also leads in environmental awareness, renewable energy development, and progressive social movements, reflecting its diverse population and forward-thinking character.



The United States displays a remarkably diverse physical geography, ranging from vast mountain ranges and expansive plains to rugged coastlines and deep river valleys. **The Appalachian Mountains**, located in the eastern part of the country, are among the oldest mountain ranges in the world. Stretching from Alabama to Canada, these mountains are relatively low in elevation but rich in biodiversity and natural resources. To the west, the Rocky Mountains extend from New Mexico through the United States into Canada. This range contains some of the continent's highest peaks and serves as a major source of freshwater for the western U.S. Between these two major mountain systems lies the Great Plains – a vast, flat region known for being one of the most fertile agricultural areas in the world. This region supports large-scale farming and cattle ranching,

forming the backbone of the nation's agricultural economy. Further west, beyond the Rockies, are **the Intermontane Plateaus**, including the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin. These areas are characterized by deserts, canyons, and arid landscapes, offering some of the most dramatic scenery in the country.

**The Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains**, found in California and the Pacific Northwest respectively, are younger and more rugged ranges. They are known for their scenic beauty, volcanic activity, and high elevations.

The highest point in the United States is **Denali (formerly Mount McKinley)** in Alaska, standing at 6,190 meters (20,130 feet) while the lowest point is **Death Valley** in California at 86 meters (282 feet) below sea level, also one of the hottest places on Earth.



**Denali** is the third most prominent and third-most isolated peak on Earth, after Mount Everest. Located in the Alaska Range in the interior of the U.S. state of Alaska, Denali is the centerpiece of Denali National Park and Preserve.

“Denali” comes from Koyukon, a traditional Native Alaskan language, and means “the tall one.” This name had been used for many generations and was used by early non-Native researchers and naturalists. But in 1896, William A. Dickey, a prospector, began calling Denali “Mount McKinley,” in honor of William McKinley, a presidential candidate at the time. After McKinley became president and was later assassinated, Congress formally recognized the name in 1917, despite McKinley's tenuous ties to Alaska (he had never visited). But Native Alaskans, as well as locals of varied backgrounds, continued to call the mountain Denali.



**Death Valley** is the lowest, hottest, and driest place in North America. It got its name due to the extreme hardships faced by pioneers and settlers attempting to cross the valley during the 19th century. Located in eastern California, near the border with Nevada, Death Valley is part of the Mojave Desert and lies 86 meters (282 feet) below sea level at its lowest point.

Summer daytime temperatures in Death Valley frequently reach 120°F (50°C) in the shade, and temperatures as high as 134°F (56.7°C) have been recorded the highest air temperature ever measured on Earth. In contrast, winter temperatures are mild, and nighttime lows rarely fall to freezing. The average annual rainfall is extremely low only about 2 inches (50 millimeters).

Despite its harsh climate, Death Valley supports a surprising variety of plants and animals. Vegetation includes saltgrass, rushes, tamarisks, cacti, and seasonal desert wildflowers that bloom briefly after rare rains. Among the animals inhabiting the area are cottontail rabbits, kangaroo rats, coyotes, bobcats, numerous species of lizards, and the region's largest native mammal, the desert bighorn sheep.

Today, Death Valley's extreme landscapes and otherworldly beauty draw both tourists and scientists from around the world. The area was officially designated Death Valley National Park in 1994, protecting its unique desert ecosystem, cultural heritage, and geological features for future generations.



The **Grand Canyon** is one of the most iconic natural landmarks in the United States and one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. It is located in the state of Arizona, within the Grand Canyon National Park, which was established in 1919 and is one of the most visited national parks in the country.



The canyon was carved over millions of years by the Colorado River, which continues to flow through it today. The Grand Canyon is approximately 446 kilometers (277 miles) long, up to 29 kilometers (18 miles) wide, and over 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) deep in some places. The Grand Canyon is not only a geological marvel but also a place of great cultural and spiritual importance. It has been home to Native American tribes for thousands of years.

Today, the Grand Canyon is a symbol of the American West and draws more than 5 million visitors each year from around the world. Visitors can hike, raft, take scenic flights, or simply enjoy the views from observation points such as Grand Canyon Village, Bright Angel Trail, and the South Rim, which is the most accessible and popular area.

The **Skywalk**, a glass bridge that extends out over the canyon's edge on the Hualapai Reservation, provides a thrilling perspective of the depths below. The Grand Canyon continues to be a center for scientific research, ecotourism, and conservation, and it remains a powerful reminder of nature's ability to shape the Earth over time.





**Monument Valley** is one of the most recognizable and iconic landscapes of the American Southwest, located on the Arizona–Utah border within the Navajo Nation Reservation. It is famous for its dramatic red sandstone buttes, mesas, and spires, which rise majestically from the flat desert floor, creating a scene that has become symbolic of the American West.

The area is part of the larger Colorado Plateau, and its stunning landforms were shaped over millions of years through erosion by wind and water. The vivid red color of the rocks comes from iron oxide, while the darker blue-gray hues are the result of manganese oxide.

The valley gained global fame through its association with **Hollywood Western films**, particularly those directed by *John Ford*, who used the landscape as the backdrop for movies such as *Stagecoach* (1939) and *The Searchers* (1956). Since then, Monument Valley has appeared in numerous movies, commercials, and music videos, contributing to its legendary status.





**The Painted Desert** is a beautifully colored, arid region located primarily in northern Arizona, extending from near the Grand Canyon southeast into the Petrified Forest National Park. It is named for its spectacular and vibrant bands of red, orange, pink, lavender, gray, and white rocks that seem to “paint” the desert landscape, especially at sunrise and sunset.

This visually striking terrain is part of the larger Colorado Plateau, and its colorful rock formations are made up of layered sedimentary rocks and volcanic ash dating back to the Triassic Period, over 200 million years ago. The stunning color variations are due to differing mineral content and the oxidation of iron and manganese in the rocks.

Although the Painted Desert appears harsh and barren, it hosts a fragile desert ecosystem with specially adapted plants, reptiles, insects, and birds that thrive in the dry environment. The region receives little rainfall and has hot summers and cold winters, typical of a high desert climate.

Visitors can access the Painted Desert through **Petrified Forest National Park**, which offers scenic drives, viewpoints, hiking trails, and interpretive centers. It is often visited in combination with the park’s other main attraction – the petrified wood deposits, where ancient trees have been fossilized into colorful stone.



These iconic landscapes reflect the extraordinary physical diversity of the United States. Yet the natural beauty of the country is not limited to landforms alone.

Flowing between mountains, across plains, and through valleys, the **rivers and lakes** of the United States are equally significant features of its geography. They have shaped the land for millions of years and continue to sustain ecosystems, enable agriculture, support transportation, and supply water to countless communities.

**The Mississippi River** is one of America's longest and most iconic rivers, stretching about 3,780 kilometers (2,350 miles) from its source at Lake Itasca in Minnesota all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico. It flows through ten U.S. states, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Long before European explorers arrived, Native American tribes depended on the river for transportation, fishing, hunting, and trade, making it a vital lifeline for their communities. Nicknamed the "**Father of Waters**," the Mississippi has played a central role in American history, economy, and culture. Today, it serves as one of the world's major commercial waterways, transporting over 500 million tons of cargo every year, including grain, coal, and petroleum products. The river is also an important source of drinking water for more than 18 million people.



Beyond its economic importance, the Mississippi River is rich in natural beauty and biodiversity. It supports over 260 species of fish more than any other river system in North America and is a critical flyway for about 40% of North America's migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Interestingly, the river is also famous for its powerful floods, which have shaped not only the physical landscape but also human settlement patterns along its banks.

Interestingly, while the Mississippi is world-famous, **the Missouri River** is actually even longer, making it the longest river in North America. The Missouri River begins in the Rocky Mountains of western Montana and travels about 3,900 kilometers (2,341 miles) before it joins the Mississippi River near St. Louis, Missouri. Because of its high silt and sediment content, the Missouri has earned the nickname "**Big Muddy.**" Like the Mississippi, the Missouri River was a key transportation and trade route for Native American peoples and later for explorers, fur traders, and settlers moving westward during the 19th century.



Another important river is the **Rio Grande**, which runs 1,900 miles from Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico. Not only is it a vital waterway, but it also marks the boundary between the United States and Mexico, making it a significant geographical and political feature.

The **Colorado River**, flowing 1,450 miles from the Rocky Mountains, is well known for its role in shaping the **Grand Canyon** over millions of years. It provides essential water and power to the southwestern United States and is crucial to the states of Arizona, Nevada, and California, as well as northern Mexico.

In the northwest, the **Columbia River** runs 1,240 miles from the Canadian Rockies to the Pacific Ocean. It plays an essential role in powering the region,

especially with the Grand Coulee Dam, the largest power-producing dam in the United States.

The United States has thousands of lakes of all kinds and sizes from massive freshwater basins to unique salty lakes. Among the most famous are **the Great Lakes**, located along the northern border between the United States and Canada. This group includes **Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario**, together forming the largest group of freshwater lakes in the world by surface area.

**Lake Superior** is the largest, deepest, and coldest of North America's five Great Lakes. It is not only the biggest of the group but also the largest freshwater lake by surface area in the world, covering about 82,100 square kilometers (31,700 square miles). Its massive size and impressive natural features make it a key landmark in the geography, ecology, economy, and culture of the United States and Canada.

Lake Superior is bordered by the U.S. states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, as well as the Canadian province of Ontario. The lake's maximum depth reaches 406 meters (1,332 feet), making it the deepest of the Great Lakes, and its average depth is about 147 meters (483 feet). Because of its depth and northern latitude, Lake Superior's waters stay cold year-round, rarely warming above 10°C (50°F) even in summer.



Lake Superior is home to a rich and diverse ecosystem, supporting over 80 species of fish, including lake trout, whitefish, walleye, and salmon. Its clear, cold waters provide ideal conditions for these species, though invasive species

like sea lampreys and zebra mussels have posed ecological challenges in recent decades. The surrounding forests, wetlands, and rocky shorelines offer vital habitats for wildlife such as bald eagles, black bears, moose, and wolves.

**Lake Michigan** is one of North America's five Great Lakes and holds a special distinction: it is the only Great Lake located entirely within the United States. Bordered by the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana, it is the second-largest Great Lake by volume and the third-largest by surface area, covering about 58,000 square kilometers (22,400 square miles). Its vast waters and shores have shaped the history, economy, and culture of the American Midwest.

The lake's maximum depth is 281 meters (923 feet), and its average depth is around 85 meters (279 feet). Its long shoreline about 2,640 kilometers (1,640 miles) is famous for its diverse landscapes, including sandy beaches, rolling dunes, rocky bluffs, and busy port cities.



Lake Michigan supports a wide variety of plant and animal life. It is home to native fish species such as lake trout, whitefish, and perch, as well as introduced species like Chinook and Coho salmon, which were brought in to control the invasive alewife population. Lake Michigan's eastern shore, especially in Michigan, is lined with giant freshwater sand dunes — among the

largest in the world — some reaching over 140 meters (450 feet) high. These dunes are a key feature of local parks and nature reserves.

**Lake Huron** borders the Canadian province of Ontario to the east and the U.S. state of Michigan to the west. Lake Huron connects to Lake Michigan through the narrow Straits of Mackinac, and to the south, it connects to Lake Erie through the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, and the Detroit River. Its maximum depth reaches about 229 meters (750 feet), and its shoreline extends over 6,100 kilometers (3,790 miles) the longest shoreline of all the Great Lakes, thanks to its thousands of islands, bays, and inlets.

Lake Huron is also famous for its many old shipwrecks, especially near Thunder Bay on the Canadian side, making it a popular destination for scuba divers and underwater explorers. On the Michigan side, the lake is lined with sandy beaches, while the Canadian side is known for its rocky cliffs, dense forests, and peaceful coves.



**Lake Erie** is the fourth-largest of the Great Lakes by surface area (about 25,700 square kilometers or 9,910 square miles) but the smallest by volume and the shallowest, with an average depth of only 19 meters (62 feet) and a maximum depth of about 64 meters (210 feet). Despite its smaller size, Lake Erie plays an outsized role in the ecology, economy, and history of the Great Lakes region.





Lake Erie lies between the United States and Canada, touching the U.S. states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Michigan, and the Canadian province of Ontario. It connects to Lake Huron through the Detroit River and to Lake Ontario via the Niagara River, which famously creates Niagara Falls as it flows out of Lake Erie.

Because it is the shallowest Great Lake, Lake Erie warms up the fastest in summer and freezes more completely in winter compared to the other lakes. Its shallow depth also means it is especially vulnerable to storms, with powerful winds creating tall waves known as “seiches,” which can suddenly flood shorelines.

The lake’s name comes from the Erie people, whose name is thought to mean “long tail,” possibly referring to the panther, an animal important in their culture.

During the War of 1812, Lake Erie was the site of the famous Battle of Lake Erie, in which U.S. naval forces secured a critical victory against the British. Today, many historic sites and museums along the lake’s shores commemorate this history.

**Lake Ontario** is the smallest by surface area of the five Great Lakes, covering about 19,000 square kilometers (7,340 square miles), but it holds a vital place in the Great Lakes system. It forms part of the border between the United States (New York State) and Canada (Ontario province), giving the lake its name. Lake Ontario is the final link in the Great Lakes chain before the water flows out to the Atlantic Ocean. It connects to Lake Erie through the Niagara River, which famously plunges over Niagara Falls before entering Lake Ontario. From there, the water exits through the St. Lawrence River, beginning a long journey to the ocean.



Lake Ontario has a maximum depth of about 244 meters (802 feet) and an average depth of around 86 meters (283 feet). Its shoreline stretches over 1,140 kilometers (710 miles), lined with both major cities like Toronto, Canada's largest city and peaceful rural landscapes.

**Niagara Falls** stands as one of the world's most magnificent natural wonders, captivating visitors with its thunderous roar and breathtaking display of power. Located on the border between the United States and Canada, this iconic landmark draws millions of tourists annually who come to witness its awe-inspiring beauty.



Niagara Falls consists of three distinct waterfalls: the Horseshoe Falls (Canadian Falls), the American Falls, and the smaller Bridal Veil Falls. These falls formed approximately 12,000 years ago when glaciers receded at the end of the last ice age, leaving behind massive amounts of water that carved channels through the Niagara Escarpment.

The Niagara River connects Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, with the falls situated along this 36-mile waterway. At the falls, water plunges over a vertical drop ranging from 167 feet at the Horseshoe Falls to 70 feet at the American Falls.

Throughout history, Niagara Falls has served as more than just a natural spectacle. Native American tribes including the Seneca considered the falls sacred. In the late 18th century, European settlers began establishing communities around the falls, recognizing its potential for power generation. By the 19th century, Niagara Falls had become a popular tourist destination and honeymoon spot. The area's tourism boom led to increased development and eventually, efforts to preserve the natural landscape.

The Niagara River and its falls represent a vital ecosystem supporting diverse plant and fish species. The falls also serve as an important source of hydroelectric power for both the United States and Canada. Several power plants harness the tremendous energy of the falling water, providing clean electricity to millions of homes.

### **Questions for Self-Assessment**

1. Where is the United States located geographically, and what is its approximate total area?
2. What are the two non-contiguous states of the USA, and what are their geographic features?
3. Name at least three overseas territories of the United States.
4. How does the geographical diversity of the USA influence its climate and ecosystems?
5. Which mountain ranges are located in the eastern and western parts of the USA?
6. What are the highest and lowest geographical points in the United States? Where are they located?
7. What are the six main geographic regions of the USA? Briefly describe the distinguishing features of each.

8. What role do rivers such as the Mississippi and Missouri play in the economy and environment of the USA?
9. Which Great Lakes form the border between the USA and Canada? What are the key features of Lake Superior?
10. Why is Niagara Falls considered both a natural and economic landmark?

**Task I. Map Labeling.**

**Using a blank map of the USA, label the following:**

- The six geographic regions (New England, Middle Atlantic, the South, the Midwest, the Southwest, the West)
- Major rivers: Mississippi, Missouri, Rio Grande, Colorado, Columbia
- All five Great Lakes
- At least three major cities (e.g., New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles)





## **Task II. True or false**

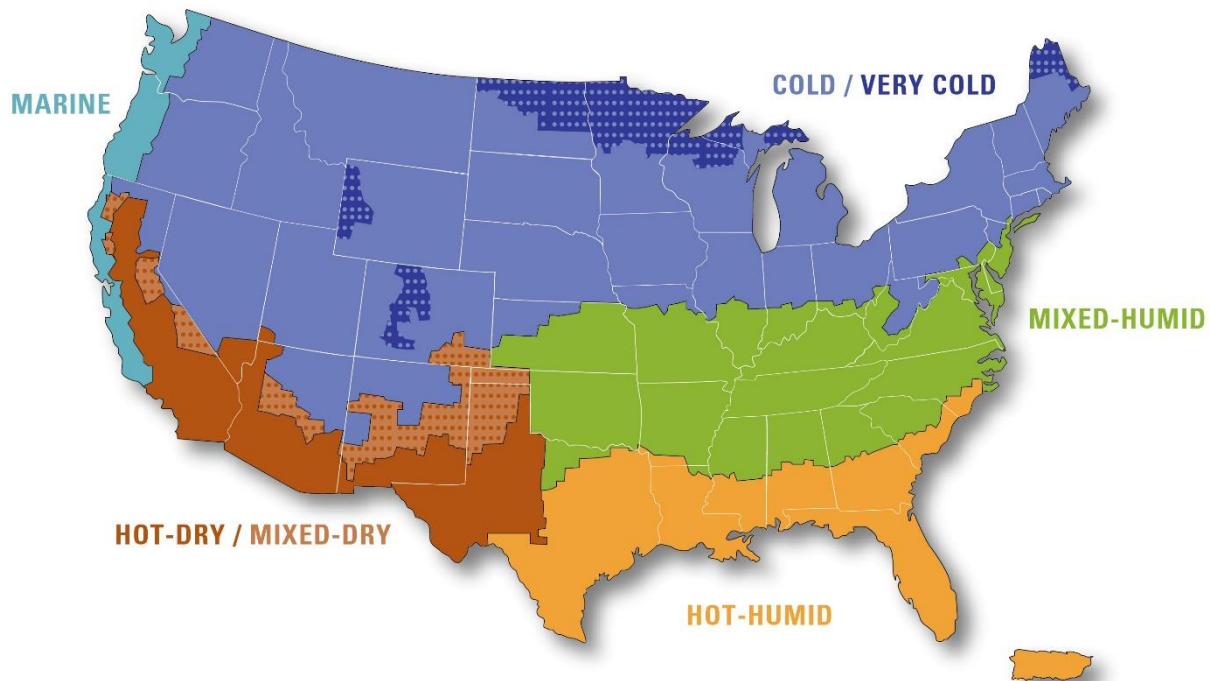
1. The USA is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest country in the world after Russia and Canada.
2. The highest peak is Mount McKinley in Alaska.
3. The Rio Grand forms a national boundary between the USA and Mexico.
4. The Missuori is the father of waters.
5. Among fresh water lakes the Great Salt Lake in Utah and the Salton Sea in California are the most famous.
6. The famous Niagara Falls precipitate from the height of 50 metres.
7. Lake Michigan is shared by the United States and Canada.
8. The Rocky Mountains stretch into Canada.
9. The Mississippi River flows into the Atlantic Ocean.
10. Hawaii is the only U.S. state made up entirely of islands.

## **Task III. Fill in the blanks.**

1. The \_\_\_ Mountains, located in the western part of the USA, contain some of the highest peaks on the continent.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ River is the longest river in North America.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the highest point in the United States, located in Alaska.
4. The \_\_ Plains are known for being one of the most fertile agricultural areas in the world.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the only one of the Great Lakes located entirely within the United States.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ Desert is famous for its vivid colors and layered rock formations.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ River carved the Grand Canyon over millions of years.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the lowest, driest, and hottest place in North America.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ region includes states like Massachusetts, Vermont, and Connecticut.
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ River forms part of the border between the United States and Mexico.

## CHAPTER 2. Climate of the United States of America

The climate of the United States is extremely diverse due to the country's large size, varied topography, and geographic location across multiple latitudes. From Arctic conditions in the far north to tropical climates in the south, the USA encompasses nearly every major climate type in the world.



The immense size of the country means it stretches across several climatic zones, resulting in significant in weather patterns. Conditions range from the warm, humid environments of the Southeast to the arid deserts of the Southwest. In parts of southern Arizona and Florida, winter is virtually absent, while northern states such as Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota experience long, cold, and harsh winters. In the Northeast and upper Midwest, a humid continental climate prevails, with cold winters, hot summers, and clear seasonal transitions. Cities like New York, Chicago, and Boston experience all four seasons distinctly.

The Southeast, including states like Florida and Georgia, is characterized by a humid subtropical climate, with hot, humid summers and mild winters, often accompanied by thunderstorms and hurricanes.

The Great Plains, lying between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, exhibit a **continental climate** with hot summers, cold winters, and frequent tornadoes, making the region prone to extreme weather.

## **Major Climate Zones of the United States**

Due to its vast size, varied topography, and latitudinal range, the United States encompasses nearly every major climate zone found on Earth. These zones significantly influence the country's natural landscapes, biodiversity, economic activity, and way of life. Below is a detailed overview of the primary climate zones found within the United States:

### ***1. Arctic and Subarctic (Alaska)***

This climate zone is characteristic of northern and interior Alaska, particularly above the Arctic Circle. It features:

- Extremely long, cold winters with temperatures frequently dropping below  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-22^{\circ}\text{F}$ );
- Short, cool summers, often lasting no more than 1-2 months;
- Low annual precipitation, mostly in the form of snow;
- Snow cover that can persist for more than six months each year.

This climate limits agriculture and shapes a unique way of life, especially for Alaska's Indigenous communities.

### ***2. Tropical (Hawaii and Southern Florida)***

This zone includes Hawaii and the southern tip of Florida, notably the Florida Keys and Miami region. It is marked by:

- Warm temperatures throughout the year, averaging  $24-27^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $75-81^{\circ}\text{F}$ );
- High humidity and frequent rainfall, especially in summer;
- A pronounced wet season, often between May and October;
- Hurricane activity, especially in Florida during hurricane season (June-November);

### ***3. Humid Continental (Northeast, Midwest, Great Lakes Region)***

Found across the Northeastern U.S., the Upper Midwest, and around the Great Lakes, this zone experiences:

- Four well-defined seasons, including cold, snowy winters and hot, humid summers;
- Moderate to high precipitation year-round;
- Snowstorms and blizzards in winter, especially near the Great Lakes.

States like Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania are representative of this zone.

### ***4. Humid Subtropical (Southeast)***

Covering much of the Southeastern United States, including Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and parts of Texas, this zone is characterized by:

- Hot, humid summers with average temperatures around  $30^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $86^{\circ}\text{F}$ );

- Mild winters with occasional frost but rare snowfall;
- Frequent thunderstorms and tornadoes in spring and summer;
- Hurricane risks along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts.

#### **5. *Semi-Arid and Arid (Southwest and Parts of the West)***

Present in states such as Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah, these climates include:

- Hot, dry summers and mild, cooler winters;
- Low annual rainfall;
- Desert landscapes and plateaus;
- Temperature extremes between day and night.

#### **6. *Mediterranean (Coastal California)***

This climate is found primarily along California's coast, especially around Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco, and features:

- Warm to hot, dry summers with abundant sunshine;
- Mild, wet winters, with most precipitation falling between November and March;
- Periodic droughts and wildfires in dry seasons;

#### **7. *Marine West Coast (Pacific Northwest)***

Located in Washington, Oregon, and parts of northern California, this zone has:

- Mild temperatures year-round;
- High precipitation, especially in winter;
- Cloudy, wet winters and cool, drier summers;
- Dense forests and mossy undergrowth, contributing to the region's lush, green appearance.

#### **8. *Mountain Climate (Rocky Mountains, Sierra Nevada, Cascades)***

Found in high-elevation areas of the western interior, including Colorado, Utah, Montana, and parts of California, this zone is defined by:

- Cool to cold temperatures depending on elevation;
- Heavy snowfall in winter, making it ideal for winter sports;
- Cool, short summers and thin air at high altitudes.

### **Natural Disasters and Extreme Weather in the United States**

Because of its wide range of climates and landforms, the U.S. is prone to multiple types of natural disasters. These events vary in intensity and frequency across regions, with significant impact on infrastructure, agriculture, public health, and the environment.

Below is an overview of the most common and impactful natural hazards across the country:



## ***1. Hurricanes***

Location: Primarily affect the Gulf Coast (e.g., Texas, Louisiana, Florida) and Atlantic Seaboard (e.g., North Carolina, South Carolina).

Season: June - November, peaking in August and September.

Description: Massive tropical storms that form over warm ocean waters, bringing strong winds, heavy rainfall, storm surges, and flooding.

Examples: Hurricane Katrina (2005), Hurricane Harvey (2017), Hurricane Ian (2022).

## ***2. Tornadoes***

Location: Most common in the Great Plains and Midwest, a region known as “Tornado Alley”, including Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri.

Season: Primarily spring and early summer.

Description: Rapidly rotating columns of air extending from thunderstorms to the ground, with wind speeds that can exceed 300 km/h (190 mph).

## ***3. Flooding***

Location: Can occur anywhere, but most frequent along major river systems like the Mississippi, Missouri, and in low-lying coastal regions.

Types:

## ***4. Wildfires***

Location: Common in California, the Southwest, and the Rocky Mountain region.

Season: Late summer to autumn, especially during dry, windy periods.

Description: Fires that spread quickly through dry vegetation, often triggered by lightning, human activity, or utility lines.

## ***5. Blizzards and Ice Storms***

Location: Northeastern, Midwestern, and northern states.

Season: Winter

Description: Severe snowstorms with high winds and low visibility. Ice storms involve freezing rain that coats surfaces with thick ice.

## ***6. Droughts and Heatwaves***

Location: Particularly affect the Southwest, Great Plains, and parts of California.

## ***7. Earthquakes and Volcanic Activity***

Location:

Earthquakes: Most common in California, along the San Andreas Fault; also occur in Alaska and Pacific Northwest.

Volcanoes: Found primarily in the Cascade Range (e.g., Mount St. Helens in Washington, Mount Rainier) and Hawaii (e.g., Mauna Loa, Kilauea).

The climate of the United States is one of the most diverse in the world due to the country's vast size, varied topography, and geographic location across multiple latitudes. The nation spans nearly every major climate zone from Arctic conditions in Alaska to tropical climates in Hawaii and southern Florida resulting in a wide range of weather patterns, landscapes, economic activities, and ways of life.

This climatic diversity includes humid continental regions in the Northeast, arid deserts in the Southwest, marine coastal zones in the Pacific Northwest, and mountainous climates in the Rockies. Consequently, the United States faces a variety of natural hazards such as hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, wildfires, blizzards, and earthquakes. Therefore, the climate of the USA not only shapes its natural and cultural environment but also presents ongoing challenges in terms of environmental safety, disaster preparedness, and sustainable development.

### Questions for Self-Assessment

1. Why is the climate of the United States so diverse?
2. What are the main characteristics of a humid continental climate? Which regions of the U.S. have this climate?
3. How does the Mediterranean climate influence agriculture in California?
4. What is "Tornado Alley" and why is it prone to tornadoes?
5. Which climate zone is most prone to drought and wildfires, and why?
6. How do natural disasters affect the economic life of specific regions?
7. What are the major types of flooding that occur in the U.S.?
8. How does elevation influence the climate in mountainous areas?

### Task I. Match the climate zone with its characteristics

Climate zone	Description
1. Humid continental	a. Long, severe winters and short, cool summers, found in Alaska
2. Marine west coast	b. Year-round warmth and heavy rainfall; hurricanes possible
3. Mediterranean	c. Distinct seasons with snowy winters and hot summers; Great Lakes region
4. Tropical	d. Mild, wet winters and dry summers; found in coastal California
5. Arctic/Subarctic	e. Cloudy, wet winters and cool summers; found in Oregon and Washington

## **Task II. Multiple Choice Quiz**

**1. Which of the following states experiences a tropical climate?**

- A) Alaska
- B) Illinois
- C) Florida
- D) Colorado

**2. Tornado Alley includes all of the following states except:**

- A) Texas
- B) Oklahoma
- C) New York
- D) Kansas

**3. Which U.S. region is most affected by hurricanes?**

- A) Great Lakes
- B) Gulf Coast
- C) Pacific Northwest
- D) Southwest

**4. What type of climate does most of California's coast have?**

- A) Humid Continental
- B) Mediterranean
- C) Marine West Coast
- D) Tropical

**5. Which natural disaster is most likely in the state of Oregon?**

- A) Tornado
- B) Earthquake
- C) Wildfire
- D) Volcanic eruption

**6. Which of the following natural disasters is most common in Alaska?**

- A) Hurricanes
- B) Earthquakes
- C) Tornadoes
- D) Dust storms

### Task III. Match each region with the correct climate type

1. Alaska
2. Florida
3. California Coast
4. Great Plains
5. Pacific Northwest
6. Nevada and Arizona

#### Climate Types:

- a) Humid Subtropical
- b) Marine West Coast
- c) Mediterranean
- d) Arctic/Subarctic
- e) Continental
- f) Arid/Semi-arid

### Task IV. Match the words in the box to the photos.

A. Hurricane	a violent wind that has a circular movement, especially in the West Atlantic Ocean
B. Tornado	a strong, dangerous wind that forms itself into an upside-down spinning cone and is able to destroy buildings as it moves across the ground
C. Flooding	a situation in which an area is covered with water, especially from rain
D. Wildfire	a fire that is burning strongly and out of control on an area of grass or bushes in the countryside
E. Blizzard	a severe snow storm with strong winds
F. Ice Storm	a storm in which frozen rain falls and covers everything with ice
G. Drought	a long period when there is little or no rain
H. Heatwave	a period of time such as a few weeks when the weather is much hotter than usual
I. Earthquake	a sudden violent movement of the earth's surface, sometimes causing great damage







## CHAPTER 3. States and Cities of the USA

The United States of America is a federal republic consisting of 50 states, a federal district (Washington, D.C.), and several territories. This administrative and territorial structure reflects both the political principles of federalism and the historical development of the country.

### States and Federalism

Each of the 50 states has its own constitution, government, and legal system. While all states are united under the federal government, they maintain a significant degree of autonomy in areas such as education, transportation, health care, and law enforcement. The powers of the federal government and the state governments are defined by the U.S. Constitution. States have their own governors, legislatures (usually bicameral), and court systems. This division of power helps balance centralized authority with local self-governance. State laws may differ widely, for example, legal drinking age, speed limits and tax structures vary from one state to another.



### Washington, D.C. – The Federal District

Washington, D.C. (District of Columbia) is the **capital city** of the United States. It is not part of any state and is governed by a special federal district authority. It houses major institutions of the federal government, including the White House, the Capitol, and the Supreme Court. Although residents of D.C. elect a mayor and a city council, the U.S. Congress has the authority to overturn

local laws. D.C. residents gained the right to vote in presidential elections in 1961 through the 23rd Amendment. However, the district has no voting representatives in Congress, which remains a point of political debate.

### **List of the 50 States of the USA**

1. Alabama	2. Alaska	3. Arizona	4. Arkansas	5. California
6. Colorado	7. Connecticut	8. Delaware	9. Florida	10. Georgia
11. Hawaii	12. Idaho	13. Illinois	14. Indiana	15. Iowa
16. Kansas	17. Kentucky	18. Louisiana	19. Maine	20. Maryland
21. Massachusetts	22. Michigan	23. Minnesota	24. Mississippi	25. Missouri
26. Montana	27. Nebraska	28. Nevada	29. New Hampshire	30. New Jersey
31. New Mexico	32. New York	33. North Carolina	34. North Dakota	35. Ohio
36. Oklahoma	37. Oregon	38. Pennsylvania	39. Rhode Island	40. South Carolina
41. South Dakota	42. Tennessee	43. Texas	44. Utah	45. Vermont
46. Virginia	47. Washington	48. West Virginia	49. Wisconsin	50. Wyoming

### **US Cities**

The United States is home to numerous major cities, each with distinct cultural, historical, and economic significance. Cities serve as centers of population, commerce, education, and innovation.

#### ***New York City, New York***

New York City, often abbreviated as NYC, is the largest city in the United States by population, with over 8 million residents and more than 20 million in its metropolitan area. Known globally as "***The Big Apple***", the city is a major cultural, financial, and political center, both nationally and internationally.





Located in the state of New York, NYC comprises five boroughs:

***Manhattan*** – the economic and cultural core of the city, home to Wall Street, Broadway, Central Park, and many museums.

***Brooklyn*** – known for its vibrant arts scene, historic brownstone neighborhoods, and diverse communities.

***The Bronx*** – the birthplace of hip-hop and home to the New York Yankees baseball team and the Bronx Zoo.



### ***Global Financial Capital***

New York is often referred to as the financial capital of the world. It is the headquarters of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and NASDAQ, located in Wall Street, the heart of the financial district in Lower Manhattan. Major multinational banks, investment firms, and insurance companies operate from this city.

## ***Landmarks and Attractions***

NYC is known for its iconic landmarks, which symbolize both American identity and global aspirations:

- ***The Statue of Liberty***, gifted by France in 1886, welcomes immigrants and visitors arriving by sea.

*The statue was a gift from the people of France to the people of the United States to commemorate the centennial of American independence (1776–1876) and to celebrate the two countries' shared values of liberty and democracy. It was designed by French sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, with the internal structure engineered by Gustave Eiffel, who later built the Eiffel Tower.*



*The Statue of Liberty quickly became a symbol of hope and opportunity, especially for immigrants arriving in the United States by ship during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Located near Ellis Island, the main immigration processing station at the time, the statue was often the first glimpse of America*



*for millions of newcomers. Today, the Statue of Liberty is part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, managed by the National Park Service. It attracts millions of visitors each year who can:*

- Take a ferry ride from Manhattan or New Jersey*
- Explore the pedestal museum*
- Climb up to the crown (with reservation)*
- Learn about U.S. immigration history through nearby Ellis Island Immigration Museum*

*The statue was designated a National Monument in 1924 and became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984.*

- **Times Square** is a neon-lit commercial intersection famous for its digital billboards and New Year’s Eve celebrations.*

*Times Square is one of the most recognizable and vibrant landmarks in New York City and the entire United States. Located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, at the intersection of Broadway and Seventh Avenue, it is often referred to as “The Crossroads of the World.” Known for its bright lights, towering digital billboards, bustling crowds, and around-the-clock activity, Times Square is both a commercial hub and a symbol of American popular culture.*



*Times Square is most famous for its massive LED displays and neon signs that light up the skyline day and night. These enormous digital billboards advertise everything from Broadway shows and consumer products to global brands and streaming platforms.*



*The lights are so bright that Times Square is clearly visible from space and is one of the most photographed places on Earth. The constant visual stimulation makes it a favorite setting for films, TV shows, and advertising campaigns.*



*One of the most iconic events in Times Square is the annual New Year's Eve Ball Drop, a tradition that began in 1907. Each year on December 31, hundreds of thousands of people gather in the square — and millions more watch on television — to count down the final seconds of the year.*

*At midnight, a crystal ball covered in thousands of LED lights descends a flagpole atop One Times Square, marking the beginning of the new year. The event includes live music, celebrity appearances, confetti showers, and fireworks.*





- **Central Park** is a large green oasis in the heart of Manhattan, offering recreation, concerts, and cultural activities.

*Central Park is the most famous urban park in the United States and one of the most visited city parks in the world. Located in the heart of Manhattan, New York City, it stretches from 59th Street to 110th Street and spans 843 acres (about 3.4 square kilometers). Often described as a "green oasis" in the middle of a bustling metropolis, Central Park offers a peaceful retreat, a venue for recreation, and a stage for cultural events — all surrounded by skyscrapers and city life.*



*Central Park provides New Yorkers and visitors with countless opportunities for outdoor activities and leisure. It includes:*

- *Walking, jogging, and biking paths that wind through scenic landscapes*
- *Rowboats and gondolas available for rent on The Lake*
- *Playgrounds and sports fields for baseball, soccer, and basketball*
- *Horse-drawn carriage rides for tourists*
- *Ice skating rinks in winter (notably Wollman Rink)*
- *Open spaces like Sheep Meadow and The Great Lawn for picnicking and sunbathing*







- ***Empire State Building*** and ***One World Trade Center*** are two of the most iconic skyscrapers in the United States. Both structures rise high above the skyline of **New York City**, representing two defining traits of American identity: ambition and resilience. Though built in different centuries and under vastly different historical circumstances, each building has become a symbol of national pride, innovation, and strength.

*The **Empire State Building** was completed in 1931, during the Great Depression, a time of severe economic hardship in the United States. Despite these challenges, the construction of the skyscraper was a remarkable feat of engineering and speed. It took just 13 months to complete and stood as the tallest building in the world for nearly 40 years.*

- ***Height:*** 1,454 feet (443 meters), including its antenna
- ***Floors:*** 102
- ***Location:*** Fifth Avenue between 33rd and 34th Streets in Manhattan



*One World Trade Center, also known as the Freedom Tower, was built as part of the reconstruction of the World Trade Center complex after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, in which the original Twin Towers were destroyed and nearly 3,000 lives were lost.*

*Completed in 2014, the building stands as a tribute to the victims, a monument to American resilience, and a beacon of recovery and unity.*

- **Height:** 1,776 feet (541 meters) – a symbolic number referencing the year of American independence
- **Floors:** 104
- **Location:** Lower Manhattan, adjacent to the **9/11 Memorial and Museum**



New York City is a world capital of the arts and media:

**Broadway theaters** in Manhattan produce world-class plays and musicals. “**Broadway**” refers to both a street in Manhattan and the professional theater district surrounding it. The term specifically applies to 41 professional theaters, each with a seating capacity of 500 or more, located in the Theater District around Times Square and along Broadway Avenue.





**New York City** is widely regarded as the media capital of the United States and one of the most influential media hubs in the world. It is home to the headquarters of the three major American television networks **NBC**, **CBS**, and **ABC** as well as numerous prominent publishing houses that shape news, entertainment, and literary culture both nationally and internationally.



### ***NBC (National Broadcasting Company)***

- Founded in 1926, NBC is one of the oldest and most established broadcasters in the U.S.
- Its headquarters are located in 30 Rockefeller Plaza in Midtown Manhattan, part of the iconic Rockefeller Center.
- NBC produces:

*NBC Nightly News* (national evening news)

*Today* (morning news and lifestyle)

Popular shows like *Saturday Night Live*, *The Tonight Show*, and *Law & Order*

**CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System)**

- Established in 1927, CBS is known for its broad mix of news, drama, and entertainment programming.
- Its headquarters are located on West 57th Street, Manhattan.
- Key CBS programs include:

*60 Minutes* is one of the longest-running investigative journalism shows

*CBS Evening News*

**ABC (American Broadcasting Company)**

- Founded in 1943, ABC's headquarters are based in Lincoln Square, Upper West Side of Manhattan.
- ABC is known for:

*Good Morning America* (morning news show broadcast live from **Times Square**)

*World News Tonight with David Muir*

Hit shows like *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Bachelor*, and *Shark Tank*

**ABC** is part of **The Walt Disney Company**, and many of its entertainment and children's programs have global reach.

New York is a major transportation hub:

New York City is famous not only for its skyscrapers and vibrant neighborhoods but also for its **diverse and interconnected transportation system**. The **New York City Subway** is not only a vital part of the city's transportation system but also one of the most iconic and complex urban transit networks in the world. It plays a key role in the daily life of millions of people and reflects the scale, history, and diversity of New York City itself.

The New York City Subway system began operation on October 27, 1904, making it one of the oldest subway systems in the world. The original line ran from City Hall to 145th Street and was an immediate success, carrying more than 100,000 passengers on its first day.

Since then, the subway has expanded dramatically and become an essential part of life in the city, especially for commuters who live in outer boroughs but work in Manhattan.







Taxis are most common in Manhattan, especially in busy commercial and tourist areas. They are particularly useful for short-to-medium trips, or when travelers have heavy luggage or limited mobility.



- **New York City** was the first capital of the United States under the Constitution. George Washington took his oath of office there in 1789.
- **Over 800 languages** are spoken in New York City making it the most linguistically diverse city in the world.
- The city's nickname "**The Big Apple**" was popularized by jazz musicians in the 1920s, who used it as a slang term for playing the big-time venues of NYC.
- The **Statue of Liberty** was a gift from France in 1886 and was shipped to the U.S. in 350 pieces packed in 214 crates.
- **Yellow taxis** became the standard in 1915 because yellow was considered the most visible color from a distance.
- The **Brooklyn Bridge**, completed in 1883, was the first steel-wire suspension bridge in the world and an engineering marvel of its time.
- **Broadway theaters** attract more visitors each year than all of the New York City sports teams combined.
- If NYC were a country, its economy would rank among the top 20 largest economies in the world.



- **Central Park** is larger than the principality of Monaco and has its own zoo, lakes, castle, and theater.

### *Los Angeles, California*

**Los Angeles** (L.A.) is the second-largest city in the United States, located on the Pacific coast in Southern California. With a population of nearly 4 million people and more than 13 million in the greater metropolitan area, L.A. is a leading center of entertainment, culture, international trade, education, and innovation.

Los Angeles is internationally recognized as the heart of the **film and television industry**. The neighborhood of **Hollywood**, once a small independent city, became the birthplace of American cinema in the early 20th century.

Today, L.A. is home to:

- Major film studios: **Warner Bros., Universal Studios, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures**
- Prestigious film schools: **USC School of Cinematic Arts, UCLA Film & Television**
- Major awards: **The Academy Awards (Oscars)** are held annually in L.A.

Los Angeles is one of the most visited cities in the United States thanks to its wide range of attractions that reflect its cultural diversity, entertainment legacy, and natural beauty. From famous landmarks to museums and beaches, the city offers something for everyone.

#### *1. Hollywood Sign*

The world-famous Hollywood Sign, perched on the hills above the city, is an iconic symbol of the entertainment industry. It originally read "Hollywoodland" and was later shortened. Hiking trails in Griffith Park provide excellent views of the sign and the city skyline.



## ***2. Walk of Fame***

The **Hollywood Walk of Fame** is one of the most iconic and visited landmarks in Los Angeles, California. Located along **Hollywood Boulevard** and parts of Vine Street, it features more than 2,700 stars embedded in the sidewalks, honoring outstanding figures in the world of entertainment.



The stars honor individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to five major categories:

- 1. Motion Pictures (film actors, directors, producers)*
- 2. Television*
- 3. Music / Recording Industry*
- 4. Radio*
- 5. Live Theatre / Performance*

Notable recipients include:

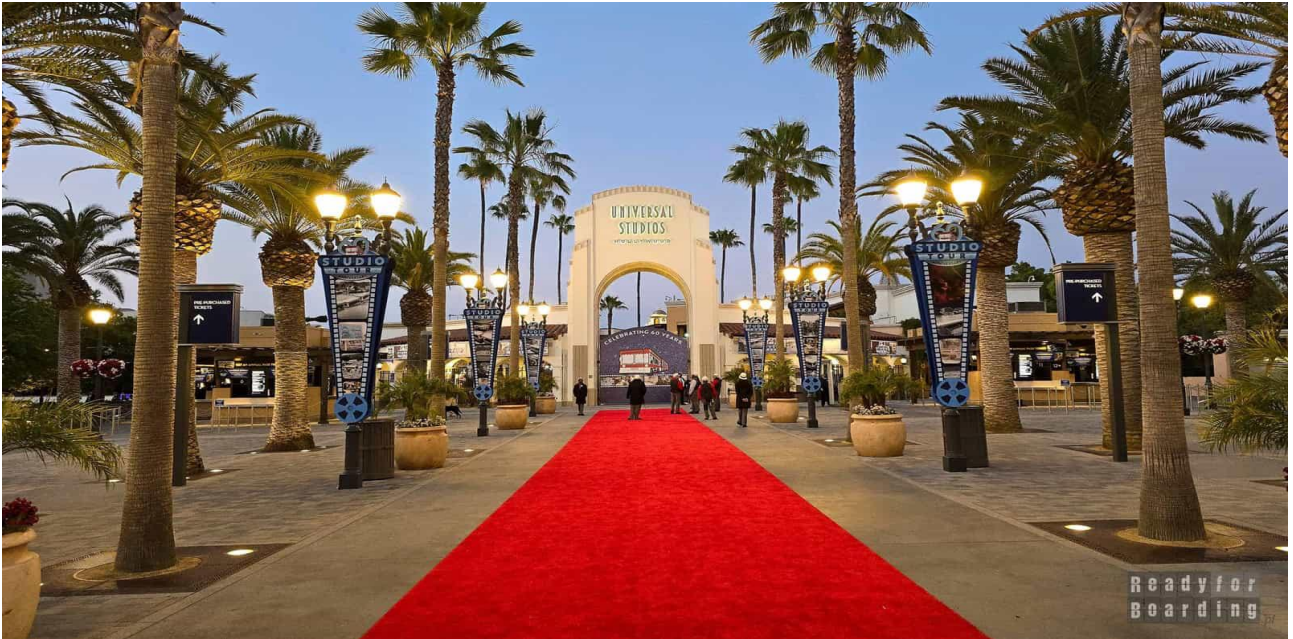
- *Walt Disney*
- *Marilyn Monroe*
- *The Beatles*
- *Michael Jackson*
- *Lucille Ball*
- *Steven Spielberg*
- *Elton John*

More recently, fictional characters such as Mickey Mouse, Godzilla, and The Simpsons have also received stars. To receive a star, a celebrity must be nominated and selected by a committee. A fee (currently over \$50,000) is paid to fund the installation and maintenance of the star, and the recipient must agree to attend a public unveiling ceremony.



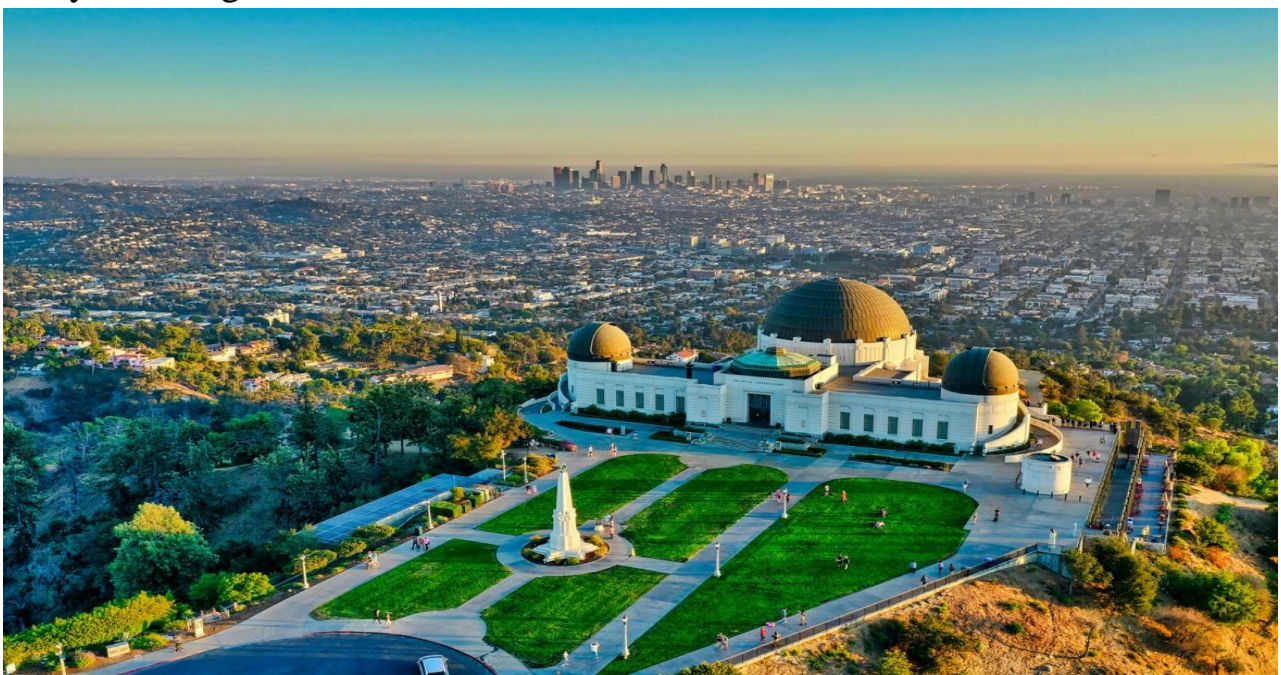
### ***3. Universal Studios Hollywood***

**Universal Studios Hollywood** is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Los Angeles and a unique blend of working film studio and world-class theme park. Located in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles, it offers visitors a one-of-a-kind opportunity to experience the magic of cinema, enjoy thrilling rides, and go behind the scenes of real movie production.



### ***4. Griffith Observatory and Griffith Park***

The Griffith Observatory is a free-admission public facility offering exhibitions on astronomy and space. From its terraces, visitors enjoy spectacular views of Los Angeles, including the downtown skyline, the Pacific Ocean, and the Hollywood Sign.





- ***Los Angeles*** means “*The Angels*” in Spanish. Its full original name was *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles del Río Porciúncula*.
- ***Hollywood*** was originally an agricultural community. It became the center of the film industry in the 1910s due to its sunny climate and varied landscapes.
- ***The Academy Awards (Oscars)*** ceremony has been held in Los Angeles since 1929.
- L.A. has ***no official city center***. It is made up of dozens of neighborhoods, each with its own unique identity, from glamorous Beverly Hills to artsy Silver Lake.
- ***Los Angeles has more cars than people***, and some of the world’s most complex freeway systems.
- L.A. has more than ***75 miles (120 km)*** of coastline, with famous beaches like ***Santa Monica, Venice, and Malibu***.

### ***Chicago, Illinois***

Chicago, the third-largest city in the United States by population, is located in the state of Illinois, on the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan. With a population of nearly 2.7 million in the city. Often referred to as the “***Windy City***,” Chicago is renowned for its world-class architecture, rich cultural traditions, and dynamic urban life. It has played a crucial role in American history, particularly in industrial growth, labor movements, jazz music, and modern urban planning.





Chicago is widely considered the birthplace of modern architecture. After the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, the city was rapidly rebuilt, becoming a center for architectural innovation. It is home to pioneering skyscrapers and buildings designed by legendary architects such as:

- *Louis Sullivan*
- *Frank Lloyd Wright*
- *Mies van der Rohe*

Notable landmarks include:

- ***Willis Tower***



***Willis Tower***, formerly known as the Sears Tower, is one of the most famous skyscrapers in the United States. Located in Chicago, he rises to a height of 1,451 feet (442 meters) and has 110 stories. Completed in 1973, he was the tallest building in the world for 25 years.

Today, Willis Tower is home to offices, restaurants, and the popular Skydeck, located on the 103rd floor, where visitors can step out onto The Ledge. It is a glass balcony offering breathtaking views of Chicago and beyond.

- *John Hancock Center*



The building is one of the most iconic skyscrapers in Chicago and stands as a symbol of American architectural innovation. Officially named 875 North Michigan Avenue, it rises 1,128 feet above the city with 100 floors and was completed in 1969. It was designed by architect Bruce Graham and structural engineer Fazlur Rahman Khan, who introduced the revolutionary trussed-tube structure, visible in its famous X-shaped exterior bracing.

John Hancock Center is a mixed-use building, combining offices, luxury apartments, shops, restaurants, and a broadcasting center. On his 94th floor, it welcomes visitors to the 360 CHICAGO Observation Deck, offering panoramic views of Lake Michigan, the city skyline, and four U.S. states. The attraction also includes TILT, a moving glass platform that leans forward for thrilling city views.



- *Aqua Tower*



*Aqua Tower* is a modern skyscraper located in downtown Chicago. It rises to a height of 859 feet (262 meters) and has 82 stories. Completed in 2009, it was designed by architect Jeanne Gang, making it one of the tallest buildings in the world designed by a woman.

The most striking feature is its wave-like façade, created by irregularly shaped balconies that give the appearance of flowing water. It combines residential apartments, a hotel, offices, and retail spaces, making it a fully mixed-use tower. Aqua Tower is also known for its sustainable design, including energy-saving systems and green roofs. The represents Chicago's innovation in combining beauty, functionality, and environmental responsibility.

Chicago has a diverse and vibrant cultural life. It is one of the best cities in the U.S. for live music, theater, and museums.

Chicago is home to some of the most famous museums and cultural attractions in the United States. These institutions not only preserve history, art, and science but also offer interactive and educational experiences for all ages.



## *The Art Institute of Chicago*



Founded in 1879, the Art Institute of Chicago is one of the oldest and largest art museums in the United States. It houses an outstanding collection of paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts from around the world. The museum is especially known for iconic masterpieces such as:

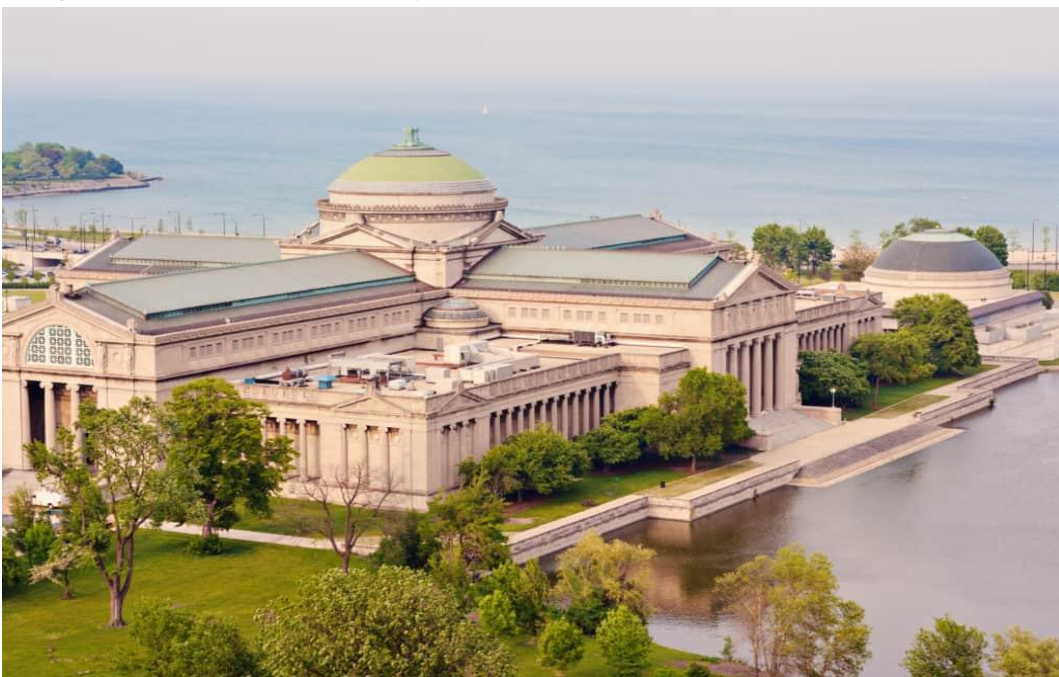
*“A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte” by Georges Seurat*

*“Water Lilies” by Claude Monet*

*“The Bedroom” by Vincent van Gogh*

*“American Gothic” by Grant Wood*

## *Museum of Science and Industry*



Located in Jackson Park, this is one of the largest science museums in the Western Hemisphere. It features hundreds of hands-on exhibits that make science fun and accessible. Visitors can:

- Walk through a full-size replica of a coal mine
- Explore a real German U-boat from World War II
- Learn about genetics, weather, transportation, and space exploration

It's a favorite destination for school groups and families.







*The Museum Campus*



Along the shore of Lake Michigan lies Chicago's scenic **Museum Campus**, a cultural hub that brings together three major institutions:



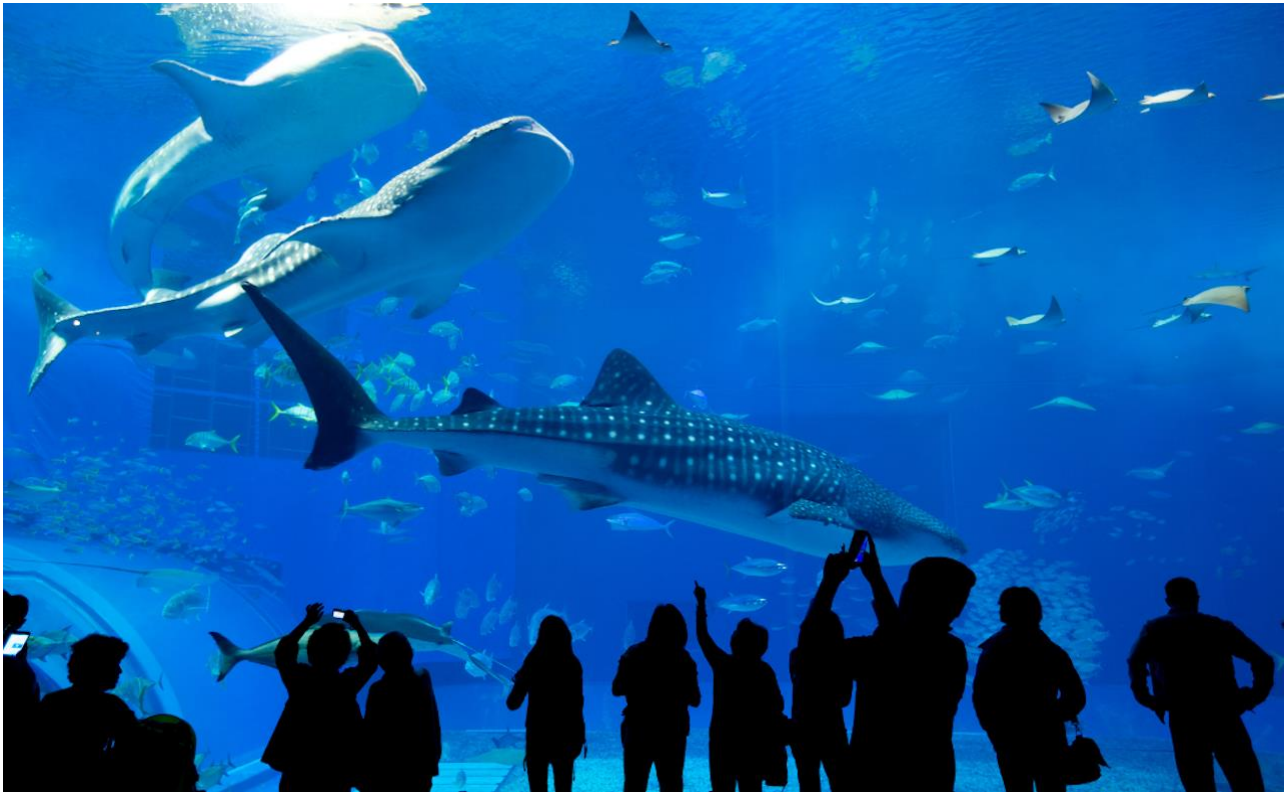


**The Field Museum:** A natural history museum famous for its dinosaur skeletons, especially **SUE**, the world's most complete *Tyrannosaurus rex*. It also showcases exhibits on ancient civilizations, gems and minerals, and biological diversity.

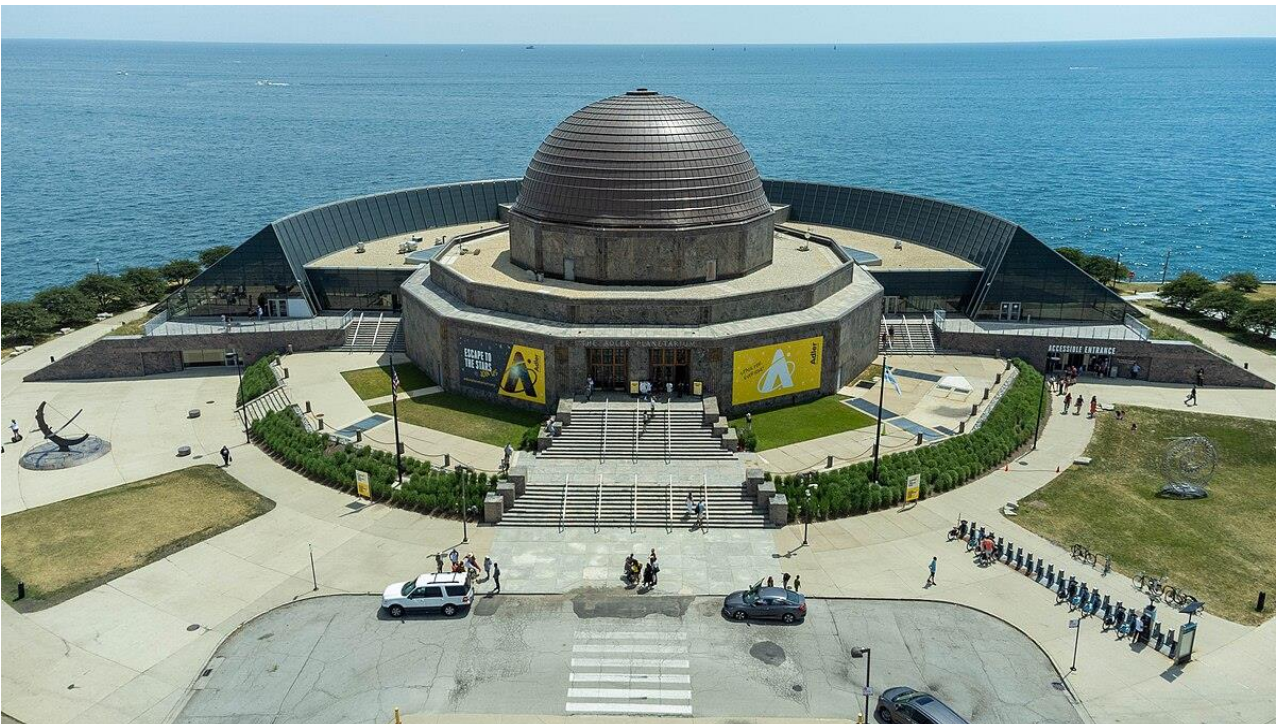




**Shedd Aquarium:** One of the largest indoor aquariums in the world, featuring over 30,000 aquatic animals. Visitors can see dolphins, sea otters, sharks, and tropical fish in specially designed ecosystems like the Caribbean Reef and Amazon River habitats.



**Adler Planetarium:** The first planetarium in the U.S., offering immersive sky shows, space exhibits, and interactive displays about astronomy and space travel. It also provides breathtaking views of the Chicago skyline.





## ***Houston, Texas***

Houston is the largest city in the state of Texas and the fourth-largest city in the United States by population, with over 2.3 million residents in the city. Located in southeast Texas, near the Gulf of Mexico, Houston is one of the fastest-growing and most economically dynamic urban centers in the country.

Founded in 1836 and named after General Sam Houston, a hero of the Texas Revolution, the city has grown from a regional trading post into a global city of innovation, energy, science, and culture.



Houston is often called the "***Energy Capital of the World***" because it is home to more than 5,000 energy-related companies. The city plays a central role in the oil and gas industry, from exploration and production to refining and distribution. Houston also increasingly supports the development of clean energy technologies, such as wind and solar power.

Houston is world-renowned as the center of American space exploration. This reputation is largely due to the ***NASA Johnson Space Center (JSC)***, established in 1961. The center has played a vital role in some of the most significant moments in space history.





### ***NASA Johnson Space Center***

Located southeast of downtown Houston, this major NASA facility has long been at the heart of U.S. human spaceflight. Its main responsibilities include:

- **Mission Control Center:** Famous for guiding space missions, it coordinated legendary operations such as **Apollo 11**, the first successful moon landing in 1969. It was also involved in handling emergencies like the **Apollo 13** mission, which gave rise to the now iconic phrase: “*Houston, we have a problem.*”
- **Astronaut Training:** The center trains astronauts for missions aboard the **International Space Station (ISS)** and prepares them for the physical and technical challenges of space travel. This includes simulations, underwater training, and zero-gravity exercises.
- **Human Spaceflight Research:** Scientists at JSC conduct ongoing research into how space travel affects the human body and how to improve space technology for future missions to the Moon, Mars, and beyond.



- **Houston** has one of the youngest populations among major U.S. cities, with a median age under 35, making it a vibrant and fast-evolving metropolis.
- The city is named after **Sam Houston**, but interestingly, he never actually lived in the city that bears his name.

- *The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo* is the largest event of its kind in the world. It attracts over 2 million visitors annually and features concerts, exhibitions, and traditional rodeo events.
- Houston is considered one of the *best cities for food lovers*, with over 10,000 restaurants representing more than 70 countries and regions. It is especially known for its Vietnamese, Mexican, and Southern fusion cuisine.
- The city hosts the *annual Houston Art Car Parade*, the largest event of its kind in the world, where people decorate and display wildly imaginative cars as works of moving art.

### *San Francisco, California*

San Francisco, located in Northern California on the Pacific Coast, is one of the most iconic and influential cities in the United States. San Francisco is internationally known for its stunning scenery, liberal values, diverse population, and cutting-edge technology sector. Built on a series of hills overlooking the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay, the city is famous for its steep streets, colorful architecture, historic cable cars, and dramatic fog that often rolls in from the coast.

#### *The Golden Gate Bridge and Natural Beauty*

Perhaps the most recognizable symbol of San Francisco is the Golden Gate Bridge, completed in 1937. This orange-red suspension bridge connects San Francisco to Marin County and is often considered one of the modern wonders of the world. Millions of visitors each year walk, bike, or drive across it, enjoying panoramic views of the bay and ocean.





The city also boasts natural attractions and parks, including:

***Golden Gate Park*** is one of the largest and most famous urban parks in the United States, even larger than New York's Central Park. Stretching over 1,000 acres, it offers a diverse mix of natural beauty and cultural attractions. Visitors can explore lush gardens such as the Japanese Tea Garden and the San Francisco Botanical Garden, stroll around peaceful lakes, or visit renowned institutions like the de Young Museum and the California Academy of Sciences. The park also hosts open-air concerts, art installations, and sports facilities, making it a central gathering place for recreation, education, and cultural events.



***Twin Peaks*** consists of two prominent hills located near the geographic center of San Francisco. Rising about 925 feet (282 meters) above sea level, they provide some of the most spectacular panoramic views of the entire city, the Bay, and beyond. Accessible by car or on foot, Twin Peaks is a favorite destination for both tourists and locals, especially during sunrise and sunset. On clear days, visitors can see landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz Island, and downtown skyscrapers.





*Alamo Square* is a historic residential neighborhood best known for its iconic row of Victorian and Edwardian houses known as the "Painted Ladies." These colorful homes, set against the backdrop of the San Francisco skyline, have become one of the city's most photographed locations and a symbol of its architectural charm. The square itself includes a scenic park with walking paths, playgrounds, and stunning views, especially popular with photographers, picnickers, and fans of American pop culture.



### *Silicon Valley and Technological Leadership*

San Francisco and its neighboring cities form the core of **Silicon Valley**, a region globally recognized as the epicenter of high-tech innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment.



Located in the southern part of the San Francisco Bay Area, Silicon Valley is home to some of the world's most influential technology companies, start-ups, and research institutions that continue to shape the digital future of the planet. Many of today's largest and most powerful tech corporations have their headquarters in Silicon Valley, including:

- **Google** in *Mountain View* – a leader in search engines, mobile operating systems (Android), and artificial intelligence.
- **Apple** in *Cupertino* – a global innovator in consumer electronics, software, and digital services, known for the iPhone, Mac, and iOS ecosystem.
- **Meta (formerly Facebook)** in *Menlo Park* – a pioneer in social media, virtual reality, and digital platforms.
- **Twitter** – a key platform for real-time news and global communication, originally based in San Francisco.

These companies are not only technological leaders but also major economic drivers, shaping global markets, influencing communication, education, health care, and even politics. The influence of Silicon Valley extends far beyond the borders of California. Technologies developed in this region have revolutionized global industries, transformed how people interact, and created entirely new economic sectors. Innovations from Silicon Valley impact everything from transportation (e.g., self-driving cars) to healthcare (e.g., wearable health devices), communication (e.g., cloud platforms and social media), and environmental sustainability (e.g., solar energy technologies).



- San Francisco's ***Chinatown*** is ***the oldest and one of the largest*** in North America. Established in 1848, it remains a vibrant cultural and commercial center.
- The ***Bay Bridge***, often overshadowed by the Golden Gate Bridge, is actually longer and older. It connects San Francisco with Oakland and carries more daily traffic.
- ***Anchor Brewing Company***, founded in 1896, was one of the first craft breweries in America and helped start the modern craft beer movement.



- *San Francisco is one of the few U.S. cities where wild parrots live freely.*  
The famous “Parrots of Telegraph Hill” are a local curiosity and the subject of a well-known documentary.
- The city’s *fog is so distinctive* that locals gave it a name “*Karl the Fog*” and it even has a popular Twitter and Instagram presence.

### **Questions for Self-Assessment**

1. How many states are there in the United States of America, and what type of government system does the country have?
2. What are some powers that individual U.S. states have under the federal system?
3. What makes Washington, D.C. different from the 50 states in terms of governance and representation?
4. What was the purpose of the 23rd Amendment in relation to Washington, D.C.?
5. Name three examples of how state laws can differ across the United States.
6. What are the five boroughs of New York City, and what is one unique feature of each?
7. Why is New York City considered a global financial center? Which institutions are located there?
8. What is the historical and symbolic significance of the Statue of Liberty? Who designed it?
9. Describe two major events or landmarks associated with Times Square. Why is it internationally recognized?
10. What are some recreational and cultural opportunities that Central Park offers to residents and visitors?

**Task I. Read the statements and mark them as True (T) or False (F).**

**Correct the false statements.**

1. The United States consists of 48 states and a federal district.
2. Each U.S. state has its own constitution and legal system.
3. Washington, D.C. is part of the state of Maryland.
4. D.C. residents can vote in presidential elections.
5. All state laws are the same across the country.
6. New York City is made up of five boroughs, including Manhattan and Brooklyn.
7. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from Italy to the United States.



8. The U.S. Constitution defines the powers of both state and federal governments.
9. Times Square is best known for its peaceful gardens and quiet residential neighborhoods.
10. The Empire State Building and One World Trade Center are both located in New York City.

**Task II. Match the following U.S. states with their capital cities. Write the correct letter (A–J) next to each state.**

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. California    | A. Tallahassee |
| 2. Texas         | B. Sacramento  |
| 3. Florida       | C. Albany      |
| 4. New York      | D. Austin      |
| 5. Illinois      | E. Springfield |
| 6. Pennsylvania  | F. Harrisburg  |
| 7. Georgia       | G. Phoenix     |
| 8. Ohio          | H. Columbus    |
| 9. Massachusetts | I. Boston      |
| 10. Arizona      | J. Atlanta     |

**Task III. Choose the correct answer**

1. **How many states are there in the United States?**
  - a) 48
  - b) 49
  - c) 50
  - d) 51
2. **Which city is the capital of the United States?**
  - a) New York City
  - b) Washington, D.C.
  - c) Philadelphia
  - d) Boston
3. **Which of the following is *not* a borough of New York City?**
  - a) Brooklyn
  - b) Queens
  - c) Manhattan
  - d) Harlem
4. **Which city is home to the Statue of Liberty?**
  - a) Boston

- b) Washington, D.C.
  - c) New York City
  - d) Philadelphia
5. **Which U.S. city is nicknamed "The Big Apple"?**
- a) San Francisco
  - b) New York City
  - c) Chicago
  - d) Los Angeles
6. **Which U.S. city is known for Wall Street and Times Square?**
- a) Boston
  - b) Washington, D.C.
  - c) New York City
  - d) Atlanta
7. **What is the name of the federal district that serves as the U.S. capital?**
- a) Columbia
  - b) Washington, D.C.
  - c) District of Maryland
  - d) Capitol Hill
8. **Which state is New York City located in?**
- a) New Jersey
  - b) New York
  - c) Connecticut
  - d) Pennsylvania
9. **Which of the following cities is *not* among the four most populous in the U.S.?**
- a) Chicago
  - b) Houston
  - c) Los Angeles
  - d) Boston
10. **Which monument symbolizes liberty and was a gift from France?**
- a) Empire State Building
  - b) Mount Rushmore
  - c) Statue of Liberty
  - d) Lincoln Memorial

**Task IV. Identify on the map. Use a blank U.S. map to complete the following tasks:**

1. Label at least 10 states of your choice. Write the names clearly within or next to their borders.
2. Mark and label the federal district – Washington, D.C.
3. Indicate the location of the following four major U.S. cities:
  - New York City
  - Los Angeles
  - Chicago
  - Houston





## CHAPTER 4. National Symbols of the USA

National symbols are powerful representations of a country's identity, history, and values. They serve as unifying elements that connect people across regions, generations, and cultural backgrounds. In the United States, national symbols reflect the country's founding principles – liberty, democracy, and unity as well as its cultural diversity and historical struggles.

American national symbols appear in official ceremonies, public buildings, currency, education, sports, and international diplomacy. They are not only visual or physical emblems but also carry deep emotional significance for citizens and are widely recognized around the world.

### The Great Seal of the United States



The Great Seal is used to authenticate important government documents and symbolizes federal authority. It was officially adopted in 1782. The obverse side of the seal features a bald eagle holding an olive branch (symbolizing peace) in its right talon and arrows (representing military readiness) in its left. Above the eagle's head is a constellation of thirteen stars, representing the original thirteen colonies. The motto *E Pluribus Unum*, meaning "Out of many, one," emphasizes unity in diversity.

The reverse side of the seal, rarely seen, shows an unfinished pyramid with the Eye of Providence above it and the Latin phrase *Annuit Coeptis* ("He [God] has favored our undertakings"). The seal appears on U.S. passports, military insignia, and the one-dollar bill.

## **The Bald Eagle**

The bald eagle is one of the most powerful and enduring symbols of the United States. It was officially chosen as the national bird and emblem of the country in 1782, the same year the Great Seal of the United States was adopted. Since then, the bald eagle has come to represent core American values such as freedom, independence, strength, and resilience.



The Founding Fathers chose the bald eagle not only for its majestic appearance but also for its symbolic meaning. As a bird native only to North America, it represented something uniquely American. With its sharp vision, powerful wingspan, and commanding presence, the bald eagle was seen as a natural symbol of authority, dignity, and liberty.

The bald eagle appears on numerous official emblems, government seals, coins, and passports. It is also commonly displayed during military ceremonies, presidential inaugurations, and national holidays such as Independence Day (July 4) and Veterans Day (November 11).

In nature, bald eagles can be seen soaring across the skies of Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, Florida, and many national parks and reserves throughout the country.

### ***Did You Know?***

The bald eagle is not actually bald. The name comes from an older meaning of "bald," which meant "white-headed."

## The American Flag

Often referred to as the “*Stars and Stripes*,” the flag of the United States is one of the most powerful and widely recognized symbols of the country. It represents the ideals of freedom, unity, democracy, and national identity. Throughout American history, the flag has been a source of pride, a symbol of protest, and a unifying emblem during moments of celebration and crisis.



The current design of the U.S. flag consists of:

- **13 horizontal stripes** – 7 red and 6 white – which represent the **original 13 colonies** that declared independence from Great Britain in 1776.
- A **blue rectangle** (called the *union*) in the upper left-hand corner containing 50 white five-pointed stars, each representing one of the 50 states in the Union.

Each element of the flag carries symbolic meaning:

- **Red** symbolizes **valor and bravery**
- **White** stands for **purity and innocence**
- **Blue** represents **vigilance, perseverance, and justice**

According to popular legend, the first flag was sewn by **Betsy Ross**, a Philadelphia seamstress and upholsterer, at the request of George Washington and two other members of a congressional committee. While no historical documents confirm this meeting or commission, the story was widely promoted by her descendants in the 19th century and has become a cherished part of American folklore.



Whether or not Betsy Ross created the first flag, she certainly contributed to the flag-making trade and supported the patriot cause during the Revolution.



The current 50-star version was adopted on **July 4, 1960**, after Hawaii became the 50th state. Despite its evolving design, the flag has remained a constant symbol of the country's growth and unity.

The American flag is prominently displayed:

- On **government buildings, schools, and military bases**
- During **national holidays**, such as **Independence Day (July 4)**, **Memorial Day**, and **Veterans Day**
- At **international events**, including Olympic Games, to represent the U.S.
- At **funerals of military personnel**, where it is draped over coffins and later folded and presented to the family



Brought to you by 

## ***The U.S. Flag Code***

Because the flag holds such significance, the United States has established the U.S. Flag Code, a set of guidelines governing its display and treatment. According to the code:

- The flag must never touch the ground.
- It should be displayed from sunrise to sunset unless properly illuminated at night.
- It should be flown at half-staff in times of national mourning.
- When a flag becomes worn or damaged, it must be retired respectfully, typically by burning in a ceremonial manner.

## **The Statue of Liberty**

The **Statue of Liberty** is one of the most recognizable and enduring symbols of the United States. Located on Liberty Island in New York Harbor, the statue has welcomed generations of immigrants, visitors, and citizens as a powerful emblem of liberty, hope, and democracy.



The statue was a gift from the people of France to the people of the United States, commemorating the centennial of American independence (1776–1876) and celebrating the shared values of freedom and democratic government between the two nations. Designed by French sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, the internal iron framework was engineered by Gustave Eiffel, who would later design the Eiffel Tower. The statue was constructed in France, disassembled, and then shipped to the U.S. in 350 pieces packed into over 200 crates. It was reassembled on Liberty Island and officially dedicated on October 28, 1886.

The full name of the statue is “**Liberty Enlightening the World.**” Every element of its design carries symbolic meaning:

**Torch** (right hand): Represents enlightenment and the path to liberty.



**Tablet** (left hand): Inscribed with the date JULY IV MDCCLXXVI (July 4, 1776), marking the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

**Broken chains and shackles** at her feet: Symbolize freedom from tyranny and oppression.

**Seven spikes on the crown:** Represent the seven continents and seven seas, reinforcing the statue's universal message of freedom.

**Robe and pose:** Echo classical images of Roman goddesses, conveying dignity and strength.

The statue is made of copper and stands approximately 305 feet (93 meters) from the ground to the top of the torch, including its pedestal. It was the tallest iron structure ever built at the time of its completion.

### **The National Anthem – “The Star-Spangled Banner”**

“The Star-Spangled Banner” is the **national anthem of the United States** and one of the most powerful musical symbols of American identity and patriotism. Its stirring lyrics and historical significance make it an enduring reminder of national resilience, sacrifice, and pride.



Written by Francis Scott Key during the War of 1812, “The Star-Spangled Banner” was inspired by the sight of the American flag still flying after the British bombardment of Fort McHenry. It was adopted as the national anthem in 1931. The anthem’s lyrics express resilience and patriotism, and it is played at public events, sports games, and national celebrations. Although its range and vocabulary are challenging, the anthem continues to be a powerful emotional expression of American spirit.



## The Liberty Bell

One of the most iconic national symbols of the United States is the **Liberty Bell**. Commissioned by the Pennsylvania colony in 1752, it was originally intended to hang in the State House (now known as Independence Hall) in Philadelphia. The bell's purpose was to summon lawmakers and announce important events to the people. One of its most memorable features is an inscription that reads: "Proclaim LIBERTY throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."



Over time, the Liberty Bell became more than just a piece of public equipment; it came to symbolize the nation's fight for independence and the pursuit of liberty. While it is often associated with the Declaration of Independence, there is no definitive evidence that the bell rang on July 8, 1776, to mark the reading of the Declaration. However, its crack and sound resonated with a generation that was fighting for freedom.

In the 19th century, the bell took on additional significance when it was adopted by abolitionists as a symbol in their efforts to end slavery. Its association with liberty and justice made it a fitting emblem for their cause, and it became a powerful symbol in the broader struggle for civil rights in America.

Today, the Liberty Bell continues to stand as a symbol of freedom, democracy, and the enduring spirit of the United States.

### **Uncle Sam**

The image of Uncle Sam has become an enduring symbol of the United States, often embodying the nation's spirit and its role in the world. As the story goes, the name "Uncle Sam" traces back to a New York merchant, Sam Wilson, who supplied beef to American soldiers during the War of 1812. The barrels of meat were stamped with the initials "U.S.," which many came to associate with "Uncle Sam" rather than simply the United States. Over time, this character came to personify the nation itself.



Illustrations of Uncle Sam evolved throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, with one of the most iconic versions being the famous image created by artist James Montgomery Flagg for a U.S. Army recruiting poster during World War I. With his tall frame, white beard, top hat, and striped pants, Uncle Sam became an instantly recognizable representation of the United States, often calling on citizens to serve their country.

National symbols of the United States serve as more than decorations or emblems. They represent ideas, principles, and moments that define the nation's character. From the bald eagle soaring in the sky to the Statue of Liberty welcoming newcomers, these symbols continue to inspire unity, pride, and a sense of belonging among Americans—and recognition and respect around the world.

### **Questions for Self-Assessment**

1. What does the bald eagle symbolize in American culture?
2. What is the significance of the olive branch and arrows in the Great Seal?
3. Why is the U.S. flag called the “Stars and Stripes”?
4. What is inscribed on the tablet held by the Statue of Liberty?
5. What event inspired Francis Scott Key to write “The Star-Spangled Banner”?
6. What message does the Liberty Bell’s inscription convey?
7. How did Uncle Sam become a national personification of the United States?
8. Why is the flag not allowed to touch the ground according to the Flag Code?
9. What do the seven rays on the crown of the Statue of Liberty represent?
10. In what ways do national symbols unite Americans?

**Task I. Read the statements and mark them as True (T) or False (F).**

### **Correct the false statements.**

1. The bald eagle was chosen as the national bird in 1931.
2. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from France to the United States.
3. The Liberty Bell is located in Washington, D.C.
4. The blue field on the U.S. flag contains 50 stars, each symbolizing one of the 50 states.
5. The Great Seal shows a bald eagle holding a sword and a scroll.
6. The national anthem was inspired by a battle during the Revolutionary War.
7. The U.S. Flag Code is a set of laws that governs how citizens should behave.
8. Uncle Sam was originally a real person named Samuel Wilson.
9. The phrase "E Pluribus Unum" means “From freedom to unity.”
10. The Statue of Liberty holds a torch in her left hand and a book in her right.



## Task II. Vocabulary Matching

### A. Match the national symbol with its corresponding description.

A. The Liberty Bell	1. U.S. national personification with a white beard and top hat
B. Uncle Sam	2. Poem turned anthem about the flag still flying in battle
C. The Great Seal	3. Cracked but powerful icon of American independence
D. The Star-Spangled Banner	4. A bald eagle holding an olive branch and arrows
E. The Statue of Liberty	5. Gift from France representing liberty and enlightenment

### B. Match the national symbol with the place where it is located or commonly associated with.

1. The Liberty Bell	A. Liberty Island, New York
2. The Statue of Liberty	B. Independence Hall, Philadelphia
3. The Great Seal	C. U.S. passports and dollar bills
4. The American Flag	D. Government buildings and schools nationwide
5. Uncle Sam	E. War recruitment posters and civic imagery

## Task III. Choose the correct answer.

- What year was "The Star-Spangled Banner" adopted as the national anthem?
  - 1776
  - 1812
  - 1931
  - 1960
- What does the Latin Phrase E Pluribus Unum mean?
  - Freedom above all
  - Out of many, one
  - Power to the people
  - Land of the brave
- Which object does the bald eagle NOT hold in the Great Seal?
  - Olive branch
  - Arrows
  - Flag
  - Shield

4. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from:
- a) Italy
  - b) Canada
  - c) France
  - d) Great Britain
5. The Liberty Bell was used to:
- a) Welcome tourists
  - b) Call lawmakers and announce events
  - c) Start church services
  - d) Signal war victory
6. How many stars are on the current U.S. flag?
- a) 13
  - b) 48
  - c) 50
  - d) 52
7. What do the 13 stripes on the American flag represent?
- a) 13 presidents
  - b) 13 founding fathers
  - c) 13 original colonies
  - d) 13 wars for independence
8. What does the torch held by the Statue of Liberty represent?
- a) Victory in battle
  - b) Fire of the Revolution
  - c) Enlightenment and liberty
  - d) Power of government
9. Which of these colors on the U.S. flag symbolizes valor and bravery?
- a) Blue
  - b) White
  - c) Gold
  - d) Red
10. Who is the historical figure behind the name “Uncle Sam”?
- a) A Civil War general
  - b) A Revolutionary War spy
  - c) A meat supplier named Samuel Wilson
  - d) A fictional character invented in Hollywood

**Task IV. Write a short paragraph (100-150 words)**

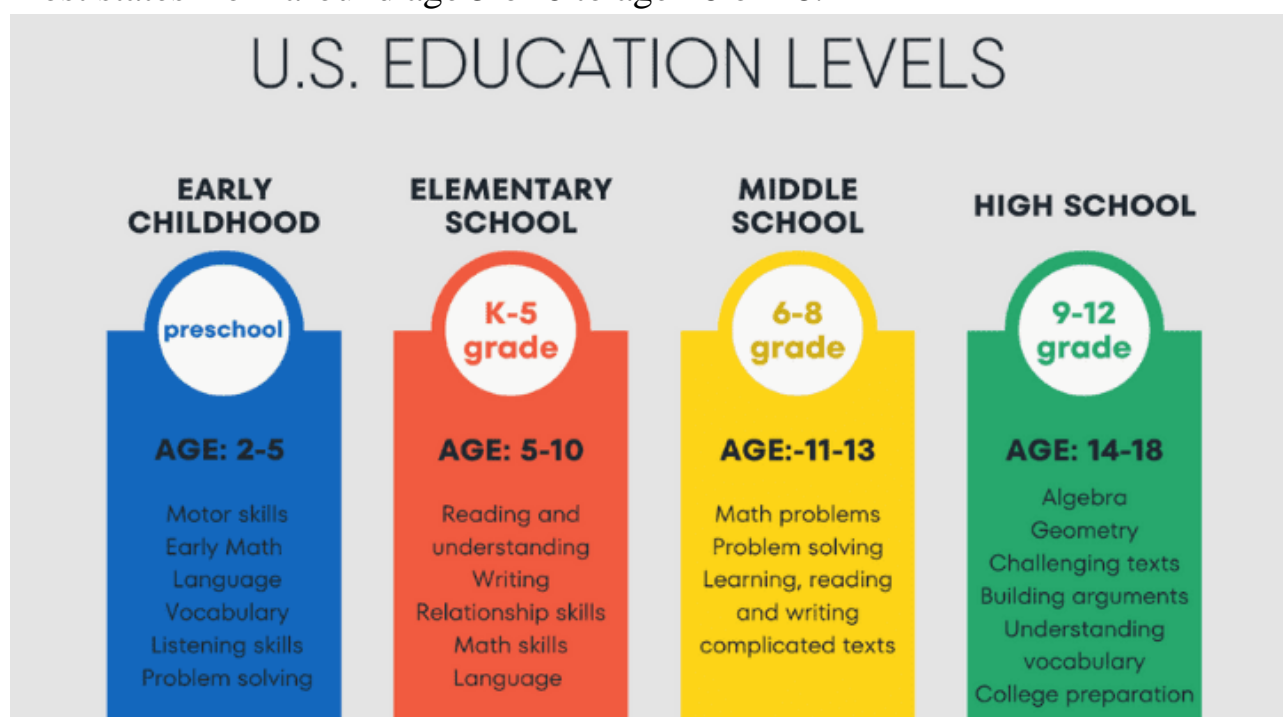
If you could design a new national symbol, what would it be and why?

## CHAPTER 5. Education in the USA

Education plays a vital role in American society. It is not only a foundation for personal and professional growth, but also a key component of democratic participation, cultural development, and national innovation. The U.S. education system is highly decentralized, meaning that each state has authority over its own educational policies, curricula, and school systems, although certain federal standards apply.

The American educational system is known for its diversity, flexibility, and emphasis on equal opportunity. While there are broad national patterns, significant differences may be observed between states, cities, and school districts.

The education system in the United States is generally structured into three main levels: elementary school, middle school (or junior high), and high school. Together, these stages cover K–12 education (Kindergarten through 12th Grade) and represent the standard path of compulsory schooling, which is mandatory in most states from around age 5 or 6 to age 16 or 18.



Each level is designed to support the student's academic, social, and emotional development, with increasing depth, subject specialization, and personal responsibility as students progress.





## 1. Elementary School

- Grades: Kindergarten through Grade 5
- Ages: Approximately 5 to 11 years old
- Typical Duration: 6 years



Elementary school lays the foundation for future learning. The curriculum emphasizes the development of basic academic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics. It also includes science, social studies, art, music, and physical education.

Students usually remain in one classroom with the same teacher throughout the day, fostering a stable and nurturing learning environment. Early education often

incorporates hands-on learning, games, songs, and interactive projects to engage young learners.

Key Features:

- Introduction to core subjects
- Emphasis on literacy and numeracy
- Development of classroom routines and social interaction
- Positive behavioral expectations and early assessment

## ***2. Middle School***

- Grades: 6–8 (sometimes 7–8)
- Ages: Approximately 11 to 14 years old
- Typical Duration: 2 to 3 years



Middle school serves as a transitional phase between elementary and high school. At this stage, students begin to change classrooms for different subjects and are often taught by subject-specific teachers. The curriculum becomes more advanced and includes English (language arts), mathematics, science, history or social studies, and health.

Students are also introduced to elective courses (non-core subjects), which may include foreign languages, technology, visual arts, music, theater, and career exploration.

Key Features:

- Increased academic expectations and independence
- Critical thinking and problem-solving development
- Diverse electives and exploratory subjects
- Greater social-emotional learning and peer interaction





### **3. High School (Secondary Education)**

- Grades: 9–12
- Ages: Approximately 14 to 18 years old
- Typical Duration: 4 years

High school prepares students for life beyond compulsory education whether that path leads to college, vocational training, the military, or direct entry into the workforce. The curriculum is more academically rigorous, with required coursework in:

- English (4 years)
- Mathematics (e.g., Algebra, Geometry, Statistics)
- Science (e.g., Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
- History and Government (e.g., U.S. History, World History, Civics)
- Physical Education and Health

In addition to these core requirements, students select electives aligned with their interests or career goals. High schools may also offer Advanced Placement (AP) or Honors courses, which provide college-level instruction and can earn students college credit.

Students are often involved in extracurricular activities such as sports, music, theater, clubs, or student government.

Upon successful completion of all course and state graduation requirements, students are awarded a high school diploma – the essential qualification for applying to colleges and many jobs.

Key Features:



- Emphasis on academic achievement and career readiness
- Choice and flexibility through elective courses
- Preparation for standardized testing (e.g., SAT, ACT)
- Personal growth through social, civic, and athletic participation

## **Higher Education in the USA**

After completing high school and earning a diploma, American students may choose to pursue higher education. The U.S. higher education system is diverse, flexible, and globally respected, offering students multiple pathways toward academic, professional, and personal development.

Higher education is not mandatory, but it is often required for careers in fields such as medicine, law, engineering, education, and research. Institutions vary in terms of cost, admission requirements, academic programs, and student experiences, giving students many options depending on their goals and financial situations.

### ***1. Community Colleges***

Community colleges (also known as junior colleges or two-year colleges) offer a more affordable and accessible option for post-secondary education.

- Programs Offered:

Associate Degrees – e.g., Associate of Arts (A.A.), Associate of Science (A.S.)

Certificates and diplomas in vocational and technical fields

English language programs for international students

Adult education and continuing education

- Duration: Typically 2 years
- Main Advantages:

Lower tuition compared to universities

Open admissions policies (accept most applicants)

Opportunity to transfer to a four-year college to complete a bachelor's degree

Smaller class sizes and local campuses

Many students begin their studies at a community college and later transfer to a four-year institution to complete their undergraduate degree, making it a cost-effective route to higher education.

### ***2. Colleges and Universities***

Colleges and universities are the primary institutions for obtaining bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.

- Bachelor's Degree Programs:

Usually take four years of full-time study

Degrees include Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

Students “major” in a specific field (e.g., biology, economics, literature) and may also choose a “minor”

- Graduate Degrees:

Master’s Degrees (M.A., M.S., M.Ed., MBA): Typically 1–2 years beyond the bachelor’s

Doctoral Degrees (Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., M.D.): Advanced academic or professional qualifications

- Universities typically have larger campuses, multiple departments, and graduate schools (law, medicine, business, etc.).
- Colleges may be smaller institutions focusing on undergraduate education, though some offer graduate programs as well.

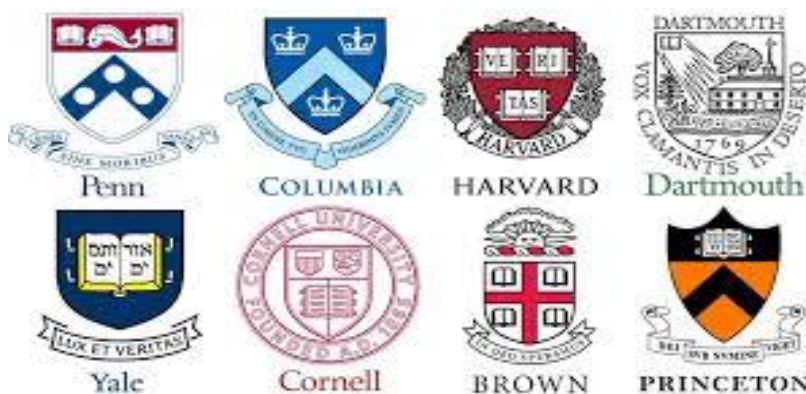
### ***3. Ivy League Universities***

The Ivy League is a group of eight elite private universities located in the northeastern United States. Originally a collegiate athletic conference, the term now refers to institutions known for:

- Academic excellence
- Historical prestige
- Selective admissions
- Strong alumni networks
- High tuition and generous financial aid programs

Members of the Ivy League:

1. Harvard University (Massachusetts)
2. Yale University (Connecticut)
3. Princeton University (New Jersey)
4. Columbia University (New York)
5. Brown University (Rhode Island)
6. Dartmouth College (New Hampshire)
7. University of Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania)
8. Cornell University (New York)



Although the Ivy League is well-known, there are many other high-quality universities and liberal arts colleges across the U.S. that offer outstanding academic programs and student support.

### **Famous Ivy League Graduates**

The Ivy League is not only known for academic excellence and tradition but also for producing many of the most influential figures in American and global history. Its alumni include U.S. presidents, Nobel Prize winners, authors, scientists, business leaders, and cultural icons. Below are just a few notable individuals who graduated from Ivy League universities:

#### ***Harvard University***

John F. Kennedy – 35th President of the United States

Barack Obama – 44th President of the United States; also a Harvard Law School graduate

Mark Zuckerberg – Founder of Facebook (attended Harvard, though he left before graduating)

Natalie Portman – Academy Award-winning actress and psychology graduate



#### ***Yale University***

George H. W. Bush – 41st U.S. President

George W. Bush – 43rd U.S. President

Hillary Clinton – Former U.S. Secretary of State and presidential candidate (Yale Law School)

Jodie Foster – Actress and two-time Academy Award winner





### ***Princeton University***

Michelle Obama – Former First Lady of the United States

Woodrow Wilson – 28th U.S. President and former Princeton president

Jeff Bezos – Founder of Amazon and one of the richest individuals in the world

F. Scott Fitzgerald – Author of *The Great Gatsby* (attended Princeton, did not graduate)





## ***Columbia University***

Theodore Roosevelt – 26th U.S. President (attended Columbia Law School)

Ruth Bader Ginsburg – U.S. Supreme Court Justice and legal pioneer

Warren Buffett – Legendary investor and philanthropist (attended Columbia Business School)

Barack Obama – Earned his undergraduate degree at Columbia

Jake Gyllenhaal – Acclaimed actor and producer



## ***Brown University***

John Krasinski – Actor and filmmaker known for *The Office*

Emma Watson – Actress and women's rights activist (known for *Harry Potter*)

Janet Yellen – U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and former Federal Reserve Chair





### ***Dartmouth College***

Mindy Kaling – Actress, writer, and producer

Robert Frost – Pulitzer Prize-winning poet

Nelson Rockefeller – 41st Vice President of the United States



### ***University of Pennsylvania***

Elon Musk – CEO of Tesla and SpaceX

Donald Trump – 45th U.S. President





## ***Cornell University***

Ruth Bader Ginsburg – Also earned her undergraduate degree from Cornell

Bill Nye – “The Science Guy,” educator and TV personality

Toni Morrison – Nobel Prize-winning author

Christopher Reeve – Actor known for playing Superman



## **Questions for Self-Assessment**

1. What are the main stages of education in the United States?
2. How does a community college differ from a university?
3. What subjects are emphasized in elementary school?
4. Why is a high school diploma important?
5. What are elective courses, and why are they offered?
6. Name at least three Ivy League universities.
7. What type of degree can you earn after completing a four-year college program?
8. What are some benefits of attending a community college?
9. What role does higher education play in career development?
10. How does the American education system reflect values like flexibility and equal opportunity?

**Task 1. Read the following statements and write T (True) or F (False).**

1. Education in the U.S. is highly centralized and controlled by the federal government.
2. Elementary school in the U.S. typically includes Kindergarten through Grade 5.
3. Students in middle school usually stay in one classroom all day with one teacher.
4. High school in the U.S. includes Grades 9–12.
5. All American students must attend college after high school.
6. Community colleges offer four-year bachelor's degrees.
7. A high school diploma is required to enter most colleges and universities.
8. Ivy League schools are known for their open admissions and low tuition.
9. Universities typically offer graduate degrees such as Master's and Doctorates.
10. The U.S. education system encourages flexibility and student choice.

**Task 2. Choose the correct answer for each question.**

1. Which grade level marks the start of high school in the U.S.?
  - a) Grade 5
  - b) Grade 7
  - c) Grade 9
  - d) Grade 12
2. What degree is typically earned after two years at a community college?
  - a) Ph.D.
  - b) B.A.
  - c) M.A.
  - d) A.A.
3. Which of the following is a core subject taught in elementary schools?
  - a) Law
  - b) Calculus
  - c) Reading
  - d) Engineering
4. What is the main goal of high school education?
  - a) Preparing for kindergarten
  - b) Preparing for retirement
  - c) Preparing for higher education or employment
  - d) None of the above
5. Which of these is NOT a member of the Ivy League?
  - a) Harvard
  - b) Stanfor

- c) Yale
  - d) Princeton
6. A four-year undergraduate degree is called a:
- a) Diploma
  - b) Certificate
  - c) Bachelor's Degree
  - d) Associate Degree
7. What are elective subjects?
- a) Subjects students must take
  - b) Optional subjects based on interest
  - c) Sports only
  - d) Exams
8. What is a major?
- a) A school grade
  - b) A military rank
  - c) A student's main field of study in college
  - d) A sports coach
9. What type of schools are known for lower tuition and easier transfer to universities?
- a) Ivy League schools
  - b) Community colleges
  - c) Private academies
  - d) Boarding schools
10. Who was a famous graduate of Princeton University?
- a) Elon Musk
  - b) Jeff Bezos
  - c) Barack Obama
  - d) Ruth Bader Ginsburg

**Task 3. Match the educational term on the left with the correct definition on the right.**

- A. Community College
  - B. High School Diploma
  - C. Ivy League
  - D. Elective Course
  - E. Bachelor's Degree
1. \_\_\_\_ A group of eight prestigious universities in the northeastern U.S.



2. \_\_\_\_ Optional subject chosen by a student based on interest.
3. \_\_\_\_ Qualification earned after four years of undergraduate study.
4. \_\_\_\_ Certificate awarded after completing Grades 9–12.
5. \_\_\_\_ Two-year institution offering associate degrees and certificates.

## CHAPTER 6. Political System of the USA

The political system of the United States is a federal constitutional republic, rooted in the principles of democracy, popular sovereignty, and the rule of law. Its foundation is the U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1787, which serves as the supreme law of the land and provides the legal framework for the organization, powers, and functions of government. The Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances and a separation of powers among three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

What makes the U.S. system unique is its federal structure, where authority is shared between two levels of government: the national (federal) government and the individual state governments. Each level has its own constitution, powers, and responsibilities. This structure allows for local self-governance while maintaining national unity, and it reflects the American belief in limited government and individual rights.

### The Constitution

The Constitution says:

*“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”*



The U.S. Constitution outlines the structure of the federal government and guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to citizens. It consists of a preamble,

seven articles, and 27 amendments, including the Bill of Rights. The Constitution establishes three branches of government: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.

The Constitution also includes a system of amendments, allowing the document to evolve over time in response to changing social, political, and economic conditions. Amendments can be proposed either by a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress or by a national convention, and must be ratified by three-fourths of the states. This process has enabled the Constitution to be updated and refined while preserving the foundational principles on which the United States was established. The Bill of Rights refers to the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. When the Constitution was originally drafted, the primary focus of the Founding Fathers was on establishing the framework and functions of government rather than on explicitly outlining individual liberties.

However, many Americans believed that the new Constitution should clearly safeguard the fundamental rights of the people. Concerned that a powerful central government might infringe upon the freedoms fought for during the Revolutionary War, citizens demanded a written guarantee of civil liberties. In response to these concerns, James Madison, one of the key architects of the Constitution, drafted a set of amendments specifying individual rights and restrictions on government power.

These amendments, ratified in 1791 and collectively known as the Bill of Rights, enumerate essential protections such as:

- Freedom of speech, religion, and the press
- The right to keep and bear arms
- Protection from unreasonable searches and seizures
- Protection from double jeopardy (being tried twice for the same crime)
- The right against self-incrimination
- The right to a fair trial by an impartial jury
- The right to legal counsel
- Protection from excessive fines and cruel or unusual punishment

The Bill of Rights continues to serve as a cornerstone of American democracy, ensuring that individual freedoms are protected from government overreach.

The Constitution is interpreted and applied by the judiciary, especially the U.S. Supreme Court, whose decisions shape the practical understanding of constitutional rights and limitations. Because of this capacity for interpretation and amendment, the Constitution is often described as a “living document” – one



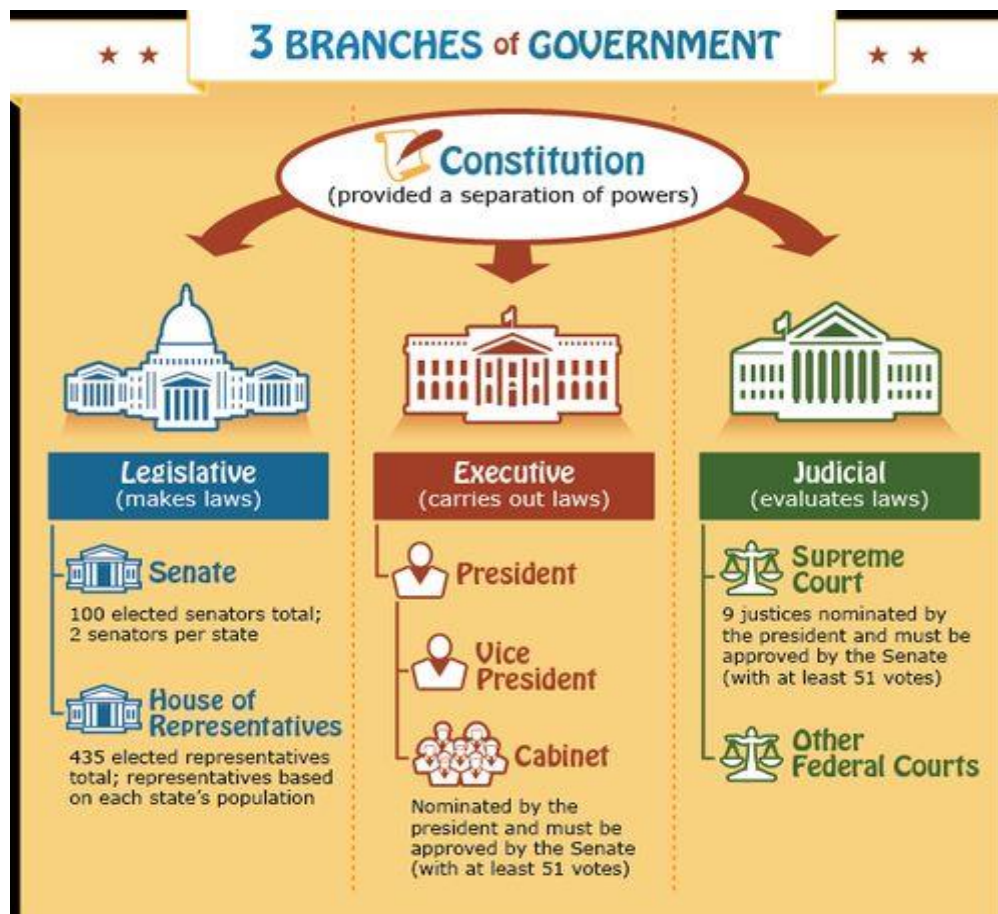
that maintains its core values while adapting to new challenges and historical realities.

### **The Fundamental Principles of the U.S. Constitution**

When drafting the U.S. Constitution, the Founding Fathers discussed and ultimately agreed upon six essential principles that would guide the structure and function of the American government. These principles continue to shape the nation's legal and political system:

1. **Equality of States:** All states, regardless of size or population, are equal under the Constitution. The federal government may not grant special privileges to any one state over another.
2. **Separation of Powers:** Government authority is divided among three distinct branches – legislative, executive, and judicial. Each branch has its own specific powers and responsibilities to prevent the concentration of power and to maintain a system of checks and balances.
3. **Rule of Law:** The government operates according to established laws, not based on the decisions of individual leaders. No person, including government officials, is above the law. Government powers must be exercised strictly within the limits set by the Constitution and public legislation.
4. **Legal Equality:** All individuals are equal before the law. Regardless of wealth or status, every person has the right to legal protection and fair treatment under the legal system.
5. **Amendability:** The Constitution provides a mechanism for change. Through the amendment process, citizens and lawmakers can modify the structure or powers of government. For example, one amendment allowed the direct election of U.S. Senators by the public instead of by state legislatures.
6. **Supremacy of the Constitution:** The Constitution, along with federal laws and treaties made in accordance with it, is recognized as the "supreme law of the land." This means it takes precedence over any conflicting laws passed by state governments.

These foundational ideas ensure that the U.S. system of government remains both stable and adaptable, upholding democratic values and protecting individual rights.



The U.S. Constitution organizes the federal government into three distinct branches: the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. This structure is designed to ensure a balanced distribution of power and prevent any one individual or institution from becoming too dominant. The principles of separation of powers and checks and balances are fundamental to the American system of governance.

### **Legislative Branch**

The legislative branch, which is responsible for creating laws, is represented by the U.S. Congress, a bicameral body consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Senators serve six-year terms and represent states equally (two per state), while members of the House serve two-year terms and represent districts based on population. Congress not only drafts and passes legislation but also holds the authority to approve budgets, declare war, and confirm key appointments made by the president.

### **Executive Branch**

The executive branch is charged with implementing and enforcing the laws passed by Congress. The President of the United States serves as the head of the executive branch, fulfilling the roles of both head of state and head of government. The executive branch also includes the Vice President and the

President's Cabinet, which is composed of the heads of federal departments and key advisors.

Among the president's key responsibilities are:

- Enforcing federal laws and overseeing the administration of government agencies.
- Conducting foreign policy and negotiating international treaties (which require Senate approval).
- Appointing ambassadors, federal judges, and cabinet members.
- Proposing legislation and setting national policy priorities.
- Nominating Supreme Court justices (subject to Senate confirmation).

### **Judicial Branch**

The judicial branch, which is responsible for interpreting laws and ensuring their alignment with the Constitution. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the nation, with ultimate authority in constitutional matters. It, along with lower federal courts, has the power to review laws and executive actions to determine their constitutionality. This power of judicial review ensures that both legislative and executive decisions adhere to the principles set forth in the Constitution.

### **Checks and Balances**

To prevent the concentration of power in one branch, the Constitution introduces a system of checks and balances. This system allows each branch to limit or influence the actions of the others. For example:

- The Senate may reject treaties or presidential appointments, thereby limiting executive power.
- The President may veto legislation passed by Congress.
- The Supreme Court may declare laws or executive actions unconstitutional.





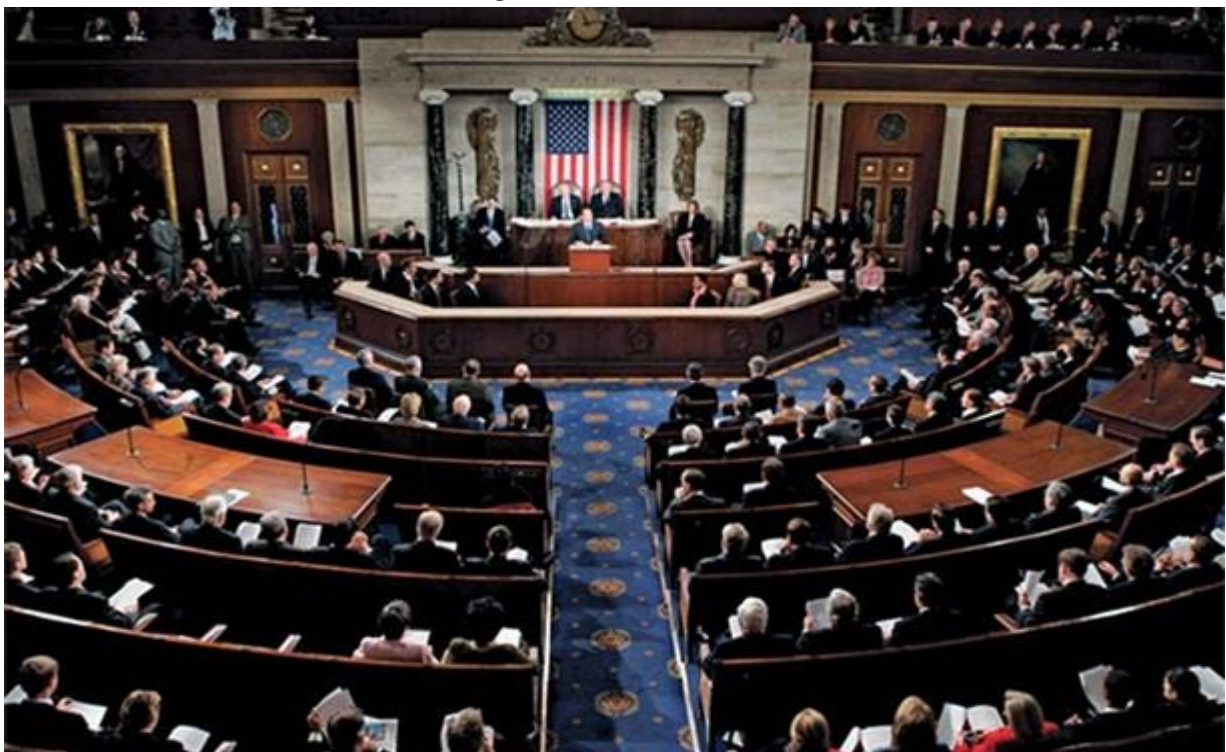
In the United States, Congress is responsible for creating federal laws, which are applicable throughout the country – in all states and to all residents. Legislation can be introduced in either chamber of Congress: the Senate or the House of Representatives.

When a bill is introduced in the Senate, it is first assigned to a Senate committee for review. The committee examines the issue in detail, evaluates the bill, and may suggest amendments. Similarly, if the bill originates in the House of Representatives, it is referred to a House committee for study and possible revision.

After the committee stage, the bill is debated and voted on by the full chamber. Once both the Senate and the House have passed their respective versions of the bill, a joint “conference committee” composed of members from both chambers is usually formed. This committee works to reconcile any differences between the two versions and prepares a final, unified version of the bill.

The finalized bill is then sent back to both the Senate and the House for a final vote. If approved by both chambers, the bill is referred to as “enrolled” and is sent to the President of the United States.

The President then decides whether to sign or veto the bill. If the President signs it, the bill becomes an official federal law. If vetoed, Congress may still enact the law by overriding the veto with a two-thirds majority in both chambers. This process ensures that proposed legislation is thoroughly examined, debated, and refined before it becomes binding law across the nation.



The Senate is one of the two chambers of the U.S. Congress and represents the states equally, with each state electing two senators regardless of population size. Senators serve six-year terms, and elections are staggered so that approximately one-third of the Senate is elected every two years. The Senate is often considered the more deliberative body of Congress, providing stability and long-term perspectives in legislative processes.

The Senate has several key powers and responsibilities:

- Approving or rejecting treaties negotiated by the President
- Confirming presidential nominations for federal judges, ambassadors, and top executive officials
- Holding impeachment trials for federal officials impeached by the House of Representatives
- Introducing and voting on legislation

Senators serve on various committees that oversee specific areas of national policy, such as foreign relations, defense, health, and education. Debates in the Senate tend to be more open-ended than in the House, allowing for extended discussion and amendments. This reflects the Senate's role as a check on rapid legislative change and as a guardian of minority interests within the legislative process.

### **Political Parties**

The political landscape of the United States is characterized by a two-party system, in which two major parties:

- the **Democratic Party**
- the **Republican Party**

Although there are several smaller parties, these two have historically held the vast majority of elected offices and shaped most major policy debates in the country.

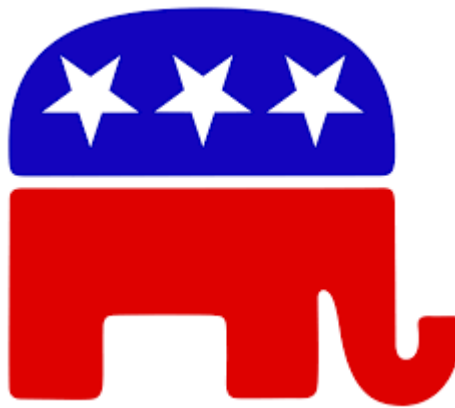
### ***Democratic Party***

Founded in the early 19th century, the Democratic Party is traditionally associated with liberal and progressive ideals. It emphasizes the role of government in promoting social and economic equality, civil rights, environmental protection, and access to healthcare and education. The party tends to support higher taxes on the wealthy, stronger regulations on businesses, and expanded social welfare programs. Its support base includes urban populations, younger voters, ethnic minorities, and labor unions.



### ***Republican Party***

Established in the mid-19th century, the Republican Party is generally aligned with conservative principles, advocating for limited government, lower taxes, free-market capitalism, and a strong national defense. Republicans often emphasize personal responsibility, traditional values, and state-level governance over federal control. The party is typically supported by rural communities, business owners, religious conservatives, and older voters.



### ***Other Political Parties***

While the two-party system dominates, third parties and independent candidates occasionally influence national discussions or win local elections. Notable minor parties include:

- **The Libertarian Party**, which promotes individual liberty, minimal government intervention, and free-market economics.
- **The Green Party**, which focuses on environmental sustainability, social justice, and grassroots democracy.

Although these parties rarely win seats in Congress or the presidency, they can draw attention to specific issues and influence the platforms of the major parties.

### ***The Role of Political Parties***

Political parties are essential to the functioning of American democracy. They perform several critical functions:



- **Organizing elections** by nominating candidates and conducting campaigns
- **Connecting citizens to government** by informing voters and encouraging political participation
- **Structuring political debate** by offering contrasting platforms and solutions to national issues
- **Shaping public policy** by influencing legislation and executive decisions when in power
- **Mobilizing voters** through grassroots efforts, advertisements, and get-out-the-vote campaigns

Despite occasional criticisms of polarization and partisanship, political parties remain a vital mechanism for representing diverse opinions and channeling public input into the democratic process.



### ***Why is the donkey a symbol of the Democratic Party, and the elephant a symbol of the Republican Party?***

The use of animals to represent political parties began in the 19th century through political cartoons.

**The Donkey** first became associated with the **Democratic Party** during Andrew Jackson’s presidential campaign in 1828. His opponents called him a "jackass" (a stubborn donkey), and Jackson embraced the image, using it in his campaign materials. Later, the cartoonist **Thomas Nast** popularized the donkey as a symbol of the Democrats in his political cartoons in the 1870s.

**The Elephant** was also introduced by **Thomas Nast** to represent the **Republican Party**. In an 1874 cartoon in *Harper’s Weekly*, Nast depicted a Democratic donkey scaring away animals in a zoo, including a large, dignified elephant labeled “The Republican Vote.” The elephant stuck as a symbol of Republican strength and stability.

Today, both animals remain widely recognized emblems of the two major U.S. political parties – appearing in campaign materials, cartoons, and public discourse.

## **Elections and Voting**

Elections are a core component of democratic governance in the United States, offering citizens a direct way to influence public policy and leadership at all levels of government. The U.S. holds regular, scheduled elections that are open, competitive, and governed by a combination of federal and state laws.

### ***Types of Elections***

#### **1. Federal Elections**

**Presidential Elections** are held every four years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. U.S. citizens vote indirectly for President and Vice President through the Electoral College.

**Congressional Elections** occur every two years. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives are up for election, while one-third of the 100-member Senate is elected in staggered terms.

#### **2. State and Local Elections**

State elections include votes for governors, state legislators, and other officials. Local elections select mayors, city council members, school board officials, and judges.

Election dates and procedures vary by state, reflecting the decentralized nature of the American system.

### ***Eligibility to Vote***

1. All U.S. citizens aged 18 and older are eligible to vote, though individuals must be registered in their state of residence.
2. Voter registration procedures vary by state. Some states offer same-day registration, while others require registration well in advance.
3. Voter ID laws also differ by state, with some requiring government-issued identification at polling places.

### ***Voting Methods***

***In-person voting*** remains the most common method and is available during early voting periods and on Election Day.

***Mail-in and absentee voting*** are options in many states, particularly for those unable to vote in person.

***Electronic voting systems*** are widely used to count ballots, though paper ballots remain common in many jurisdictions.



The President of the United States is elected in the month of November. More specifically, Presidential elections are held every four years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. This date was chosen in the 19th century to accommodate farmers' schedules and remains the standard for federal elections today.

### **Questions for Self-Assessment**

1. What is the purpose of the separation of powers in the U.S. government?
2. Why is the U.S. Constitution considered the "supreme law of the land"?
3. What rights are protected by the First Amendment?
4. How can the U.S. Constitution be amended?
5. What is the main function of the legislative branch?
6. What are some of the key responsibilities of the President?
7. How does the system of checks and balances limit the powers of each branch?
8. Why is the Senate considered a more stable institution than the House of Representatives?
9. What roles do political parties play in American elections?
10. How does the Electoral College system work in presidential elections?

### ***Task 1: Indicate whether the following statements are True or False.***

1. The U.S. Constitution was adopted in 1789.
2. The federal government has more power than the state governments in all matters.
3. The Bill of Rights consists of the first ten amendments to the Constitution.
4. Senators are elected for two-year terms.
5. The executive branch is responsible for interpreting the laws.
6. The President can propose laws to Congress.
7. The Supreme Court justices serve lifetime appointments.
8. The House of Representatives has 100 members.
9. Political parties help organize elections and shape public policy.
10. Presidential elections are held every two years.



**Task II. Choose the correct answer.**

1. What is the highest law of the United States?
  - a) The Declaration of Independence
  - b) The Bill of Rights
  - c) The Constitution
  - d) The Federal Register
2. How many branches of government does the U.S. Constitution establish?
  - a) One
  - b) Two
  - c) Three
  - d) Four
3. Which branch of government has the power to make laws?
  - a) Executive
  - b) Judicial
  - c) Legislative
  - d) Military
4. Who is the head of the executive branch?
  - a) The Speaker of the House
  - b) The President
  - c) The Chief Justice
  - d) The Senate Majority Leader
5. Which amendment guarantees freedom of speech?
  - a) First
  - b) Fifth
  - c) Second
  - d) Tenth
6. What is the role of the Supreme Court?
  - a) To propose laws
  - b) To command the military
  - c) To interpret the Constitution
  - d) To run elections
7. What is a major role of political parties in the U.S.?
  - a) Passing laws
  - b) Enforcing the Constitution
  - c) Organizing elections and recruiting candidates
  - d) Writing amendments

8. Which of the following is a third party in the U.S.?
- a) Green Party
  - b) Democratic Party
  - c) Republican Party
  - d) Senate Party
9. How many Senators are there in the U.S. Senate?
- a) 50
  - b) 100
  - c) 435
  - d) 535
10. In what month is the U.S. presidential election held?
- a) January
  - b) October
  - c) November
  - d) December

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**Сліпачук Н.М.**

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