

# The U.S.A.

Task 1: Read the questions below and answer them. If you do not know the answer, make a guess.

1. How many states are there in the U.S.A.?
2. What's Washington D.C.?
3. How big is the country?
4. What's the population of the U.S.A.?
5. What is the climate in the U.S.A. like?
6. When did the European colonization begin?
7. What was Declaration of Independence and when was it issued?
8. What is the Bill of Rights?
9. What happened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
10. When did the U.S.A. become the world's superpower?

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Task 2: Read the [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) text below and answer the questions. You do not need to worry about the words you don't know. Just find the information you need.

The United States of America (USA), commonly referred to as the United States (US), America, or simply the States, is a federal republic consisting of 50 states, 16 territories, a federal district, and various overseas extraterritorial jurisdictions. The 48 contiguous states and the federal district of Washington, D.C., are in central North America between Canada and Mexico. The state of Alaska is the northwestern part of North America and the state of Hawaii is an archipelago in the mid-Pacific. The country also has five populated and nine unpopulated territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean. At 3.79 million square miles (9.83 million km<sup>2</sup>) in total and with around 316 million people, the United States is the fourth-largest country by total area and third largest by population. It is one of the world's most ethnically diverse and multicultural nations, the product of large-scale immigration from many countries. The geography and climate of the United States is also extremely diverse, and it is home to a wide variety of wildlife.

Paleo-indians migrated from Asia to what is now the US mainland around 15,000 years ago, with European colonization beginning in the 16th century. The United States emerged from 13 British colonies located along the Atlantic seaboard. Disputes between Great Britain and these colonies led to the American Revolution. On July 4, 1776, delegates from the 13 colonies unanimously issued the Declaration of Independence. The ensuing war ended in 1783 with the recognition of independence of the United States from the Kingdom of Great Britain, and was the first successful war of independence against a European colonial empire. The current Constitution was adopted on September 17, 1787. The first 10 amendments, collectively named the Bill of Rights, were ratified in 1791 and guarantee many fundamental civil rights and freedoms.

Driven by the doctrine of manifest destiny, the United States embarked on a vigorous expansion across North America throughout the 19th century. This involved displacing native tribes, acquiring new territories, and gradually admitting new states. The American Civil War ended legalized slavery in the United States. By the end of the 19th century, the United States extended into the Pacific Ocean,<sup>[18]</sup> and its economy was the world's largest. The Spanish–American War and World War I confirmed the country's status as a global military power. The United States emerged from World War II as a global superpower, the first country with nuclear weapons, and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union left the United States as the sole superpower.

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## NOTES FOR TEACHERS

1. Ask the students to get into pairs and brainstorm possible answers to the questions.
2. Depending on the level you may want to preteach some of the key vocabulary.
3. It's important that students do not worry about the words they don't know, just learn how to find the information they need.
4. If you work with more advanced groups you may ask the students to get into two groups, read the text again and write 5 additional questions. Then they can quiz the other group.
5. You may follow up with a speaking activity and ask the students to compare the U.S.A. with their own country.