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 19th 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> 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_republic" \o "Federal republic)consisting of 50 [states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._state" \o "U.S. state), 16 [territories](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_territory" \o "United States territory), a [federal district](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_district_(United_States)" \o "Federal district (United States)), and various overseas [extraterritorial jurisdictions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territories_of_the_United_States" \l "Extraterritorial_jurisdiction" \o "Territories of the United States). The [48 contiguous states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contiguous_United_States) and the federal district of [Washington, D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.), are in central [North America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_America) between [Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) and [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico). The state of [Alaska](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska) is the northwestern part of North America and the state of [Hawaii](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii) is an [archipelago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archipelago" \o "Archipelago) in the mid-[Pacific](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Ocean). The country also has five populated and nine unpopulated [territories](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territories_of_the_United_States" \o "Territories of the United States) in the Pacific and the [Caribbean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean). At 3.79 million square miles (9.83 million km2) in total and with around 316 million people, the United States is the [fourth-largest country by total area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_dependencies_by_area" \o "List of countries and dependencies by area) and third largest by [population](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population" \o "List of countries by population). It is one of the world's most [ethnically diverse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiethnic_society" \o "Multiethnic society) and [multicultural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multicultural" \o "Multicultural) nations, the product of large-scale [immigration from many countries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_the_United_States" \o "Immigration to the United States). The [geography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_the_United_States" \o "Geography of the United States) and [climate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_of_the_United_States" \o "Climate of the United States) of the United States is also extremely diverse, and it is home to a wide variety of wildlife.

[Paleo-indians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleo-indians) [migrated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Settlement_of_the_Americas" \o "Settlement of the Americas) from Asia to what is now the US mainland around 15,000 years ago, with [European colonization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_colonization_of_the_Americas" \o "European colonization of the Americas) beginning in the 16th century. The United States emerged from [13 British colonies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteen_Colonies) located along the Atlantic seaboard. Disputes between Great Britain and these colonies led to the [American Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution). On July 4, 1776, delegates from the 13 colonies unanimously issued the [Declaration of Independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Independence_(United_States)" \o "Declaration of Independence (United States)). The [ensuing war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War) ended in 1783 with the [recognition of independence of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_(1783)" \o "Treaty of Paris (1783)) from the [Kingdom of Great Britain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain), and was the first successful war of independence against a European [colonial empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_empire" \o "Colonial empire) The current [Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_(United_States)" \o "Constitution (United States)) was adopted on September 17, 1787. The first 10 amendments, collectively named the [Bill of Rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_of_Rights_(United_States)), were ratified in 1791 and guarantee many [fundamental civil rights and freedoms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_and_legal_rights" \o "Natural and legal rights).

Driven by the doctrine of [manifest destiny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifest_destiny" \o "Manifest destiny), the United States embarked on a vigorous expansion across North America throughout the 19th century. This involved [displacing native tribes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Indian_Wars" \o "American Indian Wars), [acquiring new territories](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_territorial_acquisitions" \o "United States territorial acquisitions), and gradually admitting new states. The [American Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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,[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States#cite_note-AmCentNYT-18) and its economy was the world's largest. The [Spanish–American War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish%E2%80%93American_War) and [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) confirmed the country's status as a global military power. The United States emerged from [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II) as a global [superpower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superpower" \o "Superpower), the [first country with nuclear weapons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapons_and_the_United_States), and a [permanent member](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_members_of_the_United_Nations_Security_Council" \o "Permanent members of the United Nations Security Council) of the [United Nations Security Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council" \o "United Nations Security Council). The end of the [Cold War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War" \o "Cold War) and the [dissolution of the Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union" \o "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 hey 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.