

The United States of America

advanced version

1 Geography

The USA lies in the northern Hemisphere, it borders with Canada in the north and with Mexico in the south. Interesting is that the US-Mexico border is the longest guarded border in the world. The Atlantic Ocean is on the eastern coast of the USA and the Pacific Ocean is on the west. The USA is the 4th biggest country in the world after Russia, Canada and China.

The longest rivers are Mississippi, Missouri and Colorado. There are several great lakes in the northern border with Canada and their names are Lake Superior, Ontario, Michigan, Huron and Erie. Niagara falls are between lakes Ontario and Erie. The highest mountain is Mt. Mac Kinley with its 6194 meters. One of the hottest places in the world and the lowest in the USA is Death Valley which lies in Nevada desert. Thanks to its vast area the USA is a country with many climates, from arctic climate in Alaska to subtropical climate in southern states of USA (eg. California, New Mexico, Nevada, Texas).

2 History

The new continent was discovered in 1492 by Christopher Columbus who sailed from Spain to find a new way how to get to India. At first he thought he is in India, so he called the natives “Indians”. These native tribes were not developed as European nations and they were living mostly from agriculture, hunting and fishing. Since the discovery of the new continent Europeans colonized the whole area of the USA which belonged later to the British Empire.

In 1773 a group of patriots dressed like Indians threw British tea into the sea in the harbour as a protest of new taxation on sugar, coffee and textile in the British colony. In 1776 the USA declared independence and the war between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and American colonists started. The Americans won the war of independence in 1783.

Another important war in the USA history was the Civil War. The northern states wanted to abolish the slavery. However southern states used slaves on plantations, so they declared war to northern states. Industrial north calling itself as Union had significant advantage over the southern agriculture southern states calling itself as Confederacy. North has won the war and Abraham Lincoln became the president. However Abraham Lincoln was soon assassinated.

The USA participated in both world wars. In the First World War the USA joined France and the United Kingdom to help win the war against Germany. The USA was neutral in the first two years of Second World War. The Japanese navy however attacked Pearl Harbour and the USA joined Allies in the war against Germany, Japan and Italy. The USA and its allies won the Second World War in 1945 and the USA became the world biggest economic power.

In the 20th century there were many events like defending South Korea against North Korea, loss of war against Communist Vietnam, the first astronaut on the Moon on Apollo 11 mission in 1969, victory of the Cold War against Soviet Union, two victory wars against Saddam Husein's Iraq, terrorist attack on 11 September 2001 on World Trade Centre and the war against Taliban in Afghanistan and war against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The USA is a

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member of many international organizations such as World Bank, International Monetary Bank, World Health Organization and leading member of NATO.

3 Political system

The USA is a federal constitutional republic. The President of the USA is head of state and head of government. President is elected for four years and can be one time reelected. Current president is Donald Trump. Congress has legislative power and Judiciary has the judicial power. There are two political parties called the Republicans and Democrats. The Congress is divided into two chambers The House of Representatives with 435 lawmakers and the Senate with 100 members (2 members from each state).

4 Economy

The USA as a world largest economy has all branches of industry like energy, automotive, steel making, manufacturing, textile, petrochemical, electronics and pharmaceutical. Agriculture is very effective and main crops are corn, wheat and cotton. Country is rich in coal, gold, iron, crude oil and gas deposits. Services are one of the main drivers of the US economy. The USA has very much developed hi-tech industry.

5 National Symbols

The US flag has 13 red and white stripes representing the original 13 colonies of the new nation. The blue rectangle in the upper left corner contains 50 white stars for 50 states. The official national symbol is brown eagle with white head.

6 Interesting places

Washington D.C. is the capital of the USA. The seat of the president is the White House and the seat of Congress is the Capitol, both buildings are in the Washington D.C.

New York is largest city in the USA and one of the most famous cities of the USA with interesting places like Statue of Liberty, Stocks Exchange on Wall Street, skyscrapers like Empire State Building or Chrysler Building, Central Park and Brooklyn Bridge.

Yellowstone National Park is the largest and oldest natural park in the USA. There are many beautiful geysers with hot springs in the area thanks to underground volcanic activity.

Niagara Falls is beautiful water falls on US-Canadian border.

Las Vegas is world famous gambling city in Nevada desert and you can find many casinos there.

San Francisco is a beautiful city with nearby famous Alcatraz Prison on the island in the bay and Golden Gate Bridge.

Everglade Swamps are tourist attraction in Florida with beautiful water flora and fauna like alligators.

Hollywood which is part of Los Angeles is world famous centre of film production.

7 Holidays and Customs

One of the most important holidays is Independence Day on 4th July, celebrated since 1776. Very popular holiday is Thanksgiving Day (the fourth Thursday in November). Christmas Day is celebrated on 25th December. Other holidays are Easter holidays, Halloween and Veterans Day.

8 Doplňující otázky

Podle webu <http://www.vysokeskoly.cz/maturitniotazky/anglictina/the-united-states-of-america>, buďte připraveni na následující otázky. Anglickyzarok Vám připravilo navíc odpovědi na tyto otázky:

1. *Where in the world do you find the USA?*

The USA is in the northern hemisphere in the continent called America between Canada and Mexico.

2. *Is the USA a bigger or a smaller country?*

The USA is a very big country 4th largest in the world.

3. *How many states are part of the USA?*

There are fifty states altogether.

4. *Who are the neighbouring countries of the USA?*

Neighbouring countries are Canada in the north and Mexico in the south.

5. *What is the largest city in the USA and which one is the capital city?*

The largest city is New York with 8.5 million inhabitants.

6. *Who are the people of the USA and what is their origin?*

They are European colonists.

7. *Is the countryside the same in the USA?*

There is big difference between large crowded cities full of skyscrapers and low-inhabited countryside.

8. *Who is the head of the USA now?*

The head of the USA is President Donald Trump.

9. *What is the traditional food in the USA?*

Traditional food is roasted Turkey, but modern common food are hamburgers.

10. *Is the American English the same as the British English?*

No the Americans have slightly different pronunciation and vocabulary.

11. *What are the symbols of the USA?*

An official symbol is flag with red and white stripes with blue rectangular with white stars. Another official symbol is brown eagle with white head.

12. *Which historical event do you consider the most important for the USA? Is there anything special about the US movie making?*

Victory in war of independence / Victory in World War 2 / vyberte si sami :-).

13. *Is the USA a world superpower? Why? / Why not?*

Yes, the USA is a military superpower, because it is the only state that can carry on military operations in the air, on the sea and on the ground anywhere in the whole world and has very strong all branches of military (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines). The

USA has thousands of nuclear missiles. There is no reason not to consider the USA as a superpower.

14. Do you know any world famous Americans?

Vyberte si sami, koho dobře znáte :-)

15. Which natural monument do you think is the most famous in the world? Why?

The Statue of Liberty in New York, because I think it is large monument showing American independence. / anebo vyberte sami :-)

16. What do you think of the American patriotism?

Patriotism can be good because people support their country, know the customs and traditions and tend to have good knowledge of their national history. However, strong patriotism supports intolerance for other beliefs, religion and nations, so it can be very dangerous for society.

17. Which sports are the most popular in the USA?

The most popular is American football, Soccer (normal football), ice hockey (NHL league), basketball (NBA league), NASCAR (car racing) and baseball.

18. What do you know about the American space programme?

The USA with its state agency NASA is the leader in space programme from all countries in the world. In the past Americans achieved many successes like several landings on the moon including the very first one. The space shuttle era ended sadly with two disasters and deaths of astronauts. Nowadays space shuttles are no longer used and not only state agency NASA launches rockets to space, but also private companies like Blue Origin (company of Jeff Bezos founder of Amazon) and alliance of Boeing and Lockheed send rockets to space.

19. Otázky na Vaše názory:

Would you like to take a road trip around the USA? Which state of the USA do you like the most? Would you like to go surfing to California one day? Would you like to try living like a typical American?

9 Důležitá slovíčka (fonetická výslovnost neuvedena pro lepší porozumění)

border with	(bórdr wit)	mít hranici s
vast	(vást)	značný
native	(nejtiv trajb)	původní kmeny / rodilí
discovered	(diskavrd)	objeven
independence	(independnc)	nezávislost
abolish	(eboliš)	zrušit
slavery	(slej-v-ry)	otroctví
plantations	(plántejšns)	plantáže
allies	(élájs)	spojenci
power	(pau-wr)	mocnost
legislative power	(ledžislitiv pau-wr)	zákonodárná moc
Judiciary	(džudisi-j-ry)	soudnictví
judicial power	(džudisijl pau-wr)	soudní moc
disaster	(dizástr)	katastrofa
space shuttle	(spejs-šatl)	raketoplán
navy	(nejvy)	námořnictvo