

# The USA

- The United States of America are situated in North America. The area of the USA is more than 9 000 000 km<sup>2</sup>. The neighbours of the USA are: Canada in the north, Mexico in the south, Pacific Ocean in the west, Atlantic Ocean in the east and the Arctic Ocean in the north-west.
- The capital city is Washington, D.C.
- Largest cities are for example New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Houston, Detroit...
- The national flag (called the „Stars and Stripes“) is one of the world's oldest national flags. The flag has changed several times and finally has got 50 white stars and 13 red and white stripes. The stars represent the number of states in the USA and the number of stripes represents 13 original states that had declared their independence in 1776.
- There are several mountain ranges – for example the Rockies, the Sierra Nevada, the Cascade Range, Coastal plain and the Appalachian Mountains. The highest mountain is Mount Mc Kinley in Alaska, it is 6194 metres high. The lowest point is in Death Valley in California and it is 86 metres below sea level.
- There are 5 Great Lakes in North America and the USA share 4 of them with Canada (lake Erie, Huron, Superior, Ontario).
- Major rivers are: the Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Columbia River, Sacramento River, Colorado River, Rio Grande.
- Climate: The Pacific Ocean influences the temperatures on the West Coast – there are mild summers, cool winters. In the southwest there are some deserts and semideserts where there is very hot weather. The weather in southeast areas is quite warm, in the north areas it's usually colder. Alaska is arctic, Hawaii is tropical and there are also hurricanes, earthquakes, fires. The USA, especially the eastern coast suffers from hurricanes and tornadoes quite often.
- The USA is a federal republic, it consists of 50 states. The head of the state is the President.
- There are about 304 000 000 people living in the USA. The major ethnic groups are people of European and American origin, African people, Hispanic people, Asian people, native Americans (Indians). The USA are sometimes called a melting pot because of the number of ethnic groups living here.
- The US currency is one American dollar, one dollar is 100 cents.
- Animals - in the USA we can find horses, cattle, buffalos, bears, elks, fox, beaver, coyote...
- Flora - there are coniferous and deciduous trees, maple, birch, plane tree, magnolia, giant sequoias and also cacti and agave in the deserts and dry places
- Sports are important in the USA. The most popular sports are American football, baseball, basketball and ice hockey.

## Places of interest:

- New York – the biggest city in the USA, known for The Statue of Liberty which was given to Americans by French people. It's the symbol of freedom and democracy.
- Washington, D.C. – the capital city, named after the US first president George Washington
- Las Vegas – a city in Nevada, situated in the desert and surrounded by mountains. The major attractions are casinos and hotels.
- Boston – a cultural, educational, historical and commercial centre, the seat of Harvard University

- Seattle - famous for its cafés, music and The Space Needle, which was built for the 1962 World's Fair. It has an observation deck and rotating SkyCity restaurant.
- Houston – the largest city in Texas, the home of space programme NASA
- San Francisco – a city famous for cable cars and the Chinatown. Here we can find the Golden Gate Bridge (one of the longest and most famous bridges in the world) and the former prison called Alcatraz.
- Chicago – it is the third largest city in the country, here we can find the Sears Tower, now known as the Willis Tower. It was the tallest building in the USA until 2014, now it is the second tallest one. There is an observation deck called the Skydeck on the 103<sup>rd</sup> floor
- Los Angeles – it is the second largest city in the USA and is famous for film industry, it is well-known for its district called Hollywood.
- Dallas – city of petroleum and cattle production
- New Orleans – a big American port, famous for its Carnival season, French atmosphere, jazz and unfortunately it was hit by hurricane Katrina in 2005, which seriously damaged the city
- Philadelphia – it is a large city where we can find Independence Hall where the Declaration of Independence was signed in the 18th century. There is also the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site – a preserved home where the American writer lived
- Atlanta – the famous drink Coca-Cola was invented here
- Detroit – a town famous for car production, here we can find Henry Ford Museum.
- Florida - called the „winter holiday state“ as many people go here to spend their winter holidays sunbathing and swimming in the sea. Miami is a famous resort and a commercial centre. In Florida we can find the Kennedy Space Centre.
- Salt Lake City – winter Olympic games were held here in 2002, this city is also known for Mormons.
- Yellowstone National Park – it was established in 1872 and it is America's first national park. It is home to a variety of wild animals such as grizzly bears, wolves, elk. Here we can find geysers and hot springs.
- Yosemite National Park – it is best known for its waterfalls and ancient giant sequoias.
- The Grand Canyon – it is 30 km wide and 1.6 km deep and the canyon walls represent 2 billion years of the Earth's geological history.
- The Great Valley – it is one of the longest valleys in the world
- Great Smoky Mountain National Park – it is America's most visited national park, here we can see many plants and trees, people can go camping, hiking and fishing here.
- Niagara Falls – they are more than 50 metres high and more than a kilometre wide. They form the international border between Canada and the USA
- The Black Hills – they are in the western South Dakota and Northeastern Wyoming. The highest peak is Harney Peak (2207m). To the northeast of Harney Peak is Mount Rushmore (1745) which is the site of Mount Rushmore National Memorial.
- Mount Rushmore Memorial is the colossal sculpture in the Black Hills. It symbolizes the first 150 years of the USA, there are sculptures of the heads of these presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln.
- the Colorado Rockies – Vail and Aspen are the famous ski resorts

- Alaska – it is the largest state in the USA. It was bought from the Russians in 1867 and it became the 49th US state in 1959. The largest city in Alaska is Anchorage and here we can also find the Inuits (native people of Alaska).
- Hawaii – it is the US 50th state. Hawaii is made up of islands of volcanic origin. Its capital is Honolulu.

### **A short history**

- Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492.
- The English founded the first settlement in the New World in Jamestown in Virginia.
- After the war between France and England in 1763 England became the supreme power in America.
- The Boston Tea party in 1773 was the first conflict which led to the War of Independence with Britain.
- The Declaration of Independence was mainly created by Thomas Jefferson and it was signed in 1776.
- George Washington was the first American President.
- The historic Gold Rush started in 1849.
- In 1861 the Civil war started and 2 years later in 1863 slavery was abolished.
- There were great inventions in America in the 19th century– Alexander Graham Bell invented the phone, the first electrical light was invented by Thomas Alva Edison, Henry Ford's first car appeared, the Wright brothers tried their first successful airplane flight.
- In 1929 the stock market crashed and an era called the Great depression started.
- The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the USA entered the WWII. In August 1945 atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and a few days after that another atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.
- Since 1947 there was so called Cold war between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies
- In 1963 the US president J.F.Kennedy was assassinated (killed) in Dallas in Texas.
- In 2001 terrorists destroyed the World Trade Centre in New York
- In 2008 Barack Obama was elected the first Afro-American president. Four years later he was re-elected the president for the second time.
- In 2016 Donald Trump was elected the new president of the USA
- In 2021 Joe Biden was elected the new US president