

# THE US GOVERNMENT

## **The Constitution and the Bill of Rights**

The Constitution of the United States is the central instrument of American government and the supreme law of the land. For almost 250 years it has guided the evolution of governmental growth and social progress. The American Constitution is the world's oldest written constitution in force, one that has served as the model for a number of other constitutions around the world.

The path of the American Constitution was neither straight nor easy.

You remember the fact that the 13 states together celebrated the Fourth of July, the day in 1776 when America declared its independence from Britain. Together, they fought British troops to make that declaration a political reality. And together they joined under the Latin phrase "e pluribus unum" -- one out of many. Yet they did not really consider themselves a national people. When the war ended, the soldiers returned to their home states. They still thought of themselves first as New Yorkers, or Virginians, or Marylanders. Because before that, they were separate colonies of Britain. Because the colonies were separate, they developed different ways of life, different economies, different traditions.

At first these former colonies, "the United States of America," operated under an agreement called the Articles of Confederation (1781). But soon it was clear that this agreement among the states didn't work well especially concerning powers for defense, trade, and taxation. Therefore in 1787 delegates from the states met in Philadelphia and wrote the Constitution, which after much argument, debate, and compromise was officially adopted on March 4, 1789. The 55 delegates who drafted the Constitution included most of the outstanding leaders, or Founding Fathers, of the new nation. They represented a wide range of interests and backgrounds. All agreed, however, on the central objectives expressed in the preamble to the Constitution:

*"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."*

Next, members of the Continental Congress had to decide when the states would choose a president. They agreed to March 4, 1789, the same day the Constitution would go into effect.

The states that ratified the Constitution chose electors to vote for a president. The result was not a surprise. They chose the hero of the Revolutionary War: George Washington. No one opposed the choice—except, perhaps, for George Washington himself.

Here is a conversation between James Madison and George Washington.

“Oh sir, it must be you who serves as president. It is your influence that unites the states.”

“I can tell you honestly I do not want the honor. I am very much aware of my deficient education and the ten thousand embarrassments it will cause me in office. I would hope they could find a younger man. I want nothing more but to return to Mount Vernon and tend to my farming.”

“But, sir, if your country should need you?”

"If called I will serve.”

**HE** was inaugurated on April 13.

The primary aim of the Constitution was **to create a strong elected government, directly responsive to the will of the people.**

**So the Constitution**

1) sets the basic form of government: **three separate branches** (we are going to speak about later), each one having powers ("checks and balances") over the others.

2) specifies the powers and duties of each federal branch of government, with all other powers and duties belonging to the states.

The ultimate power under the Constitution is not given to the President (the executive branch), or to the Congress (the legislative branch), or to the Supreme Court (the judicial branch). Nor does it rest, as in many other countries, with a political group or party. It belongs to "We the People," in fact and in spirit.

The authors of the Constitution were aware that changes would be needed from time to time if the Constitution was to keep pace with the growth of the nation. That's

why they included in the Constitution a provision for amending the document when social, economic or political conditions demanded it.

Since 1789 it has been amended 27 times. Within the first two years of its adoption, the first 10 amendments, known as *The Bill of Rights*, were added. To many Americans, the Bill of Rights represents the heart and soul of the Constitution.

What is this Bill of Rights and what does it say?

The "Bill of Rights" is the name for the first 10 amendments to the Constitution.

The First Amendment deals with freedom of expression (or freedom of religion). It guarantees that religion and government will be separate. Congress cannot establish an official religion or interfere in the people's right to worship as they choose. The First Amendment also protects other rights. "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*" In other words, people have a right to gather peacefully and to make demands of the government.

The Second Amendment deals with guns. Here is what it says: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

The Third Amendment says people may not be forced to let soldiers stay in their homes during peacetime.

The next five amendments protect peoples' rights in the justice system.

The Fourth Amendment protects people from unreasonable searches and seizures. It bars courts from approving warrants unless there is probable cause. And it says warrants should describe the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

The Fifth Amendment says people should not be tried for the most serious crimes unless a grand jury has first examined the evidence. It also bars people from being tried twice for the same offense. And it says people cannot be forced to give evidence against themselves. The Fifth Amendment also says no one can lose their

freedom, property or life "without due process of law." And it says the government cannot take people's property for public use without paying them a fair price.

The Sixth Amendment says people accused of crimes have the right to a fair and speedy public trial by a jury. The aim is to guarantee that people are not kept in prison for a long time unless a jury has found them guilty of a crime. The Sixth Amendment also guarantees the right of the accused to be defended by a lawyer. It says they must be informed of the nature and cause of the charges against them. And it says they have the right to face and question their accusers.

The Seventh Amendment guarantees the right to a jury trial in civil cases.

The Eighth Amendment bars "cruel and unusual punishments."

The Ninth Amendment provides protection for other rights not stated directly in the Constitution.

The Tenth Amendment says any powers not delegated to the national government belong to the states or to the people. The exceptions are any powers that the Constitution prohibits states from having.

So these first ten amendments make up the Bills of Rights, the fundamental rights of any American. IN SHORT, among these rights are the freedom of religion, speech, and press, the right of peaceful assembly, and the right to petition the government to correct wrongs, the against unreasonable searches, arrests, and seizures of property. The Bill of Rights established a system of justice guaranteeing orderly legal procedures.

The Bill of Rights and the other changes that came later helped decrease the power of the federal government.

The great pride Americans have in their Constitution comes from the belief and knowledge that these ideals, freedoms, and rights were not given to them by a small ruling class. They are seen as the rights which had been fought for and won. They cannot be taken away by any government, court, official, or law.

The federal and state governments formed under the Constitution, therefore, were designed to serve the people. Americans expect their governments to serve them and tend to think of politicians and governmental officials as their servants. This attitude remains very strong among Americans today.

## **Branches of government**

The Founding Fathers, the framers of the U.S. Constitution, wanted to form a government that did not allow one person to have too much control. With this in mind, they wrote the Constitution to provide for a separation of powers, or three separate branches of government.

Each branch has its own responsibilities and at the same time, the three branches (*Legislative, Executive and Judicial*) work together to make the country run smoothly and to assure that the rights of citizens are not ignored. This is done through checks and balances. A branch may use its powers to check the powers of the other two in order to maintain a balance of power among the three branches of government.

### **The Legislative Branch**

Congress, the legislative branch of the federal government, is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

There are 100 Senators, **two** from each state. One third of the Senators are elected every two years for six-year terms of office. The Senators represent all of the people in a state and their interests.

The House has 435 members. They are elected every two years for two-year terms. They represent the population of "congressional districts" into which each state is divided. The number of Representatives from each state is based upon its population. For instance, California, the state with the largest population, has 45 Representatives, while Delaware has only one. There is no limit to the number of terms a Senator or a Representative may serve. The Constitution requires that US senators must be at least 30 years of age, citizens of the United States for at least 9 years, and residents of the states from which they are elected. Members of the House of Representatives must be at least 25, citizens for 7 years, and residents of the states which send them to the Congress.

The *main duty* of the Congress is to *make laws*, and each house of Congress has the power to introduce legislation. A law begins as a proposal called a "bill" which is sent to the appropriate committee for study and recommendation. Each house of the Congress has committees which specialize in particular legislation, such

as foreign affairs, defense, banking, agriculture, etc. After the committee approval the proposed legislation goes to the Senate or the House where it was first introduced. After a debate, the bill is voted on. If it is passed, it goes to the other house where there is a similar procedure. The bill becomes a law if both houses agree, compromise between them is necessary. The Senate may reject a bill proposed in the House of Representatives or add amendments. If it happens, a “conference committee” made up of members from both houses tries to work out a compromise. If both sides agree on the new version, the bill is sent to the president for his signature. The president may sign the bill (in such case it becomes a law) or veto it. A bill vetoed by the president must be reapproved by two-thirds of both houses to become a law. The president may also refuse either to sign or veto a bill. In that case the bill becomes a law without his signature in 10 days.

### **The Executive Branch**

The executive branch of government is responsible for administering the laws passed by Congress.

**The president** of the United States presides over the executive branch of the federal government – a vast organization numbering several million people – and in addition has important legislative and judicial powers.

The Constitution lists only three qualifications for the Presidency — the President must be 35 years of age, be a natural born citizen, and must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years. And though millions of Americans vote in a presidential election every four years, the President is not, in fact, directly elected by the people. Instead, on the first Tuesday in November of every fourth year, the people elect the members of the Electoral College. Apportioned by population to the 50 states — one for each member of their congressional delegation (with the District of Columbia receiving 3 votes) — these Electors then cast the votes for President. There are currently 538 electors in the Electoral College.

The President of the United States is elected to a four-year term of office, with no more than two full terms allowed.

President Donald J. Trump is the 45th President of the United States. He is, however, only the 44th person ever to serve as President; President Grover Cleveland

served two nonconsecutive terms, and thus is recognized as both the 22nd and the 24th President. Today, the President is limited to two four-year terms, but until the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1951, a President could serve an unlimited number of terms. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President four times, serving from 1932 until his death in 1945; he is the only President ever to have served more than two terms.

By tradition, the President and the First Family live in the White House in Washington, D.C., also the location of the President's Oval Office and the offices of the his senior staff. When the President travels by plane, his aircraft is designated Air Force One; he may also use a Marine Corps helicopter, known as Marine One while the President is on board. For ground travel, the President uses an armored Presidential limousine.

### **The Vice President**

The primary responsibility of the Vice President of the United States is to be ready at a moment's notice to assume the Presidency if the President is unable to perform his duties. This can be because of the President's death, resignation, or temporary incapacitation, or if the Vice President and a majority of the Cabinet judge that the President is no longer able to discharge the duties of the presidency.

The Vice President is elected along with the President by the Electoral College — each elector casts one vote for President and another for Vice President. Before the ratification of the 12th Amendment in 1804, electors only voted for President, and the person who received the second greatest number of votes became Vice President.

The Vice President also serves as the President of the United States Senate, where he or she casts the deciding vote in the case of a tie. Except in the case of tiebreaking votes, the Vice President rarely actually presides over the Senate. Instead, the Senate selects one of their own members, usually junior members of the majority party, to preside over the Senate each day.

Michael R. Pence is the 48th Vice President of the United States. Of the 47 previous Vice Presidents, nine have succeeded to the Presidency, and four have been elected to the Presidency in their own right. The duties of the Vice President, outside of those enumerated in the Constitution, are at the discretion of the current President.

Each Vice President approaches the role differently — some take on a specific policy portfolio, others serve simply as a top adviser to the President.

The Vice President has an office in the West Wing of the White House, as well as in the nearby Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Like the President, he also maintains an official residence, at the United States Naval Observatory in Northwest Washington, D.C. This peaceful mansion, has been the official home of the Vice President since 1974 — previously, Vice Presidents had lived in their own private residences. The Vice President also has his own limousine, operated by the United States Secret Service, and flies on the same aircraft the President uses — but when the Vice President is aboard, the craft are referred to as Air Force Two and Marine Two.

The president, as the chief formulator of public policy, has a major legislative role. He can veto any bill passed by Congress and, unless two-thirds of each house vote to override the veto, the bill does not become law. In annual and special messages to the Congress, the president may propose legislation. However, the President's policies must be approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate before they can become law. In domestic as well as in foreign policy, the President can seldom count upon the automatic support of the Congress, even when his own party has a majority in both the Senate and the House. Therefore he must be able to convince Congressmen, the Representatives and Senators, of his point of view. He must bargain (*договориться*) and compromise. This is a major difference between the American system and those in which the nation's leader represents the majority party or parties, that is, parliamentary systems.

The Constitution gives the president many important powers. The president can issue rules, regulations and instructions, called executive orders, which have the binding force (*обязательная сила*) of law upon federal agencies. As head of state, the president represents the country abroad, meets foreign leaders and addresses the public. He appoints foreign ambassadors and makes treaties with other nations. The president also serves as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and as head of his political party. As chief executive, the president appoints secretaries/heads of the major departments that make up *the president's cabinet*.



Today there are **13** major departments in the executive branch. Currently these are the departments of State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Resources, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, and Education. Each department is established by law, and, as their names indicate, each is responsible for a specific area. President's appointments of department heads, however, must be approved by the Senate. None of these Secretaries, as the department heads are usually called, can also be serving in Congress or in another part of the government. Each is directly responsible to the President and only serves as long as the President wants him or her to. They can best be seen, therefore, as Presidential assistants and advisers. Some Presidents have relied quite a lot on their Cabinets for advice, and some very little. Each department has thousands of employees, with offices throughout the country as well as in Washington. The departments are divided into divisions, bureaus, offices and services, each with specific duties.

### **The Judicial Branch**

The third branch of government, in addition to the legislative (Congress) and executive (President) branches, is the federal judiciary. It consists of a system of courts spread throughout the country. Within the judicial branch, authority is divided between state and federal (national) courts. The judicial branch is headed by the Supreme Court, the final interpreter of the Constitution, which watches over the other two branches.

The Constitution recognizes that the states have certain rights and authorities beyond the power of the federal government. States have the power to establish their own systems of criminal and civil laws, with the result that each state has its own laws, prisons, police force, and state court. Within each state there are also county and city courts. Generally state laws are quite similar, but in some areas there is great diversity (e.g. the minimum age for marriage and the sentences for murder vary from state to state).

The separate system of federal courts, which operates alongside the state courts, handles cases which arise under the US Constitution or under any law or treaty, or any controversy to which the federal government is itself a party. Federal

courts also hear disputes involving governments or citizens of different states.

The Supreme Court determines whether or not the laws and acts are in accordance with the Constitution. The Congress has the power to fix the number of judges sitting on the Court, but it cannot change the powers given to the Supreme Court by the Constitution itself.

The Supreme Court *consists of a chief justice and eight associate justices*. They are nominated by the President but must be approved by the Senate. Once approved, they hold office as Supreme Court justices for life. A decision of the Supreme Court cannot be appealed to any other court. Neither the President nor Congress can change their decisions.

The Supreme Court has direct jurisdiction in only two kinds of cases: those involving foreign diplomats and those in which a state is a party. All other cases which reach the Court are appeals from lower courts. In such cases someone claims that a lower court ruling is unjust, or that Constitutional law has been violated. The Supreme Court chooses which cases it will hear. *Most of the cases involve the interpretation of the Constitution*. The Supreme Court also has the "power of judicial review," that is, it has the right to declare laws and actions of the federal, state, and local governments unconstitutional. While not stated in the Constitution, this power was established over time. It is in this function that the Supreme Court has the potential to influence decisively the political, social, and economic life of the country.

### **Checks and Balances**

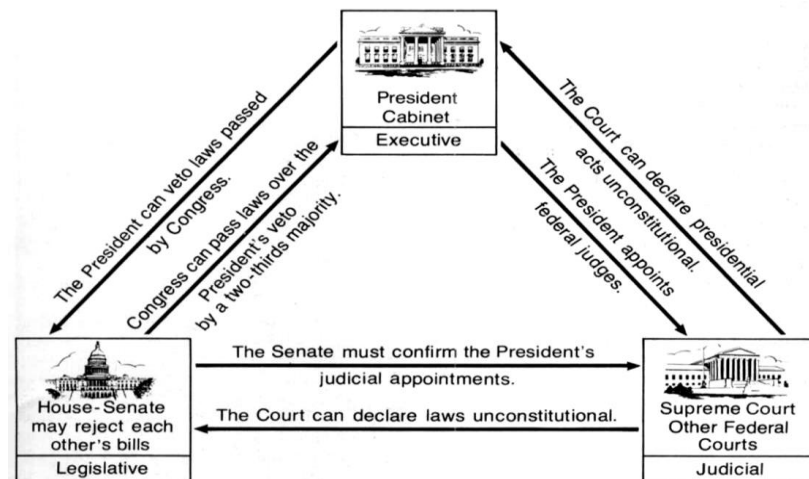
The Constitution provides for three main branches of government which are separate and distinct from one another. The powers given to each are carefully balanced by the powers of the other two.

Each branch serves as a check on the others. This is to keep any branch from gaining too much power or from misusing its powers. The chart below illustrates how the equal branches of government are connected and how each is dependent on the other two.

### **The Separation of Powers**

The Congress has the power to make laws, but the President may veto any act of the Congress. The Congress, in its turn, can override a veto by a two-thirds vote in

each house. The Congress can also refuse to provide funds requested by the President. The President can appoint important officials of his administration, but they must be approved by the Senate. The President also has the power to name all federal judges; they, too, must be approved by the Senate. The courts have the power to determine the constitutionality of all acts of the Congress and of presidential actions, and to strike down those they find unconstitutional.



The system of checks and balances makes compromise and consensus necessary. Compromise is also a vital aspect of other levels of government in the United States. This system protects against extremes. It means, for example, that new presidents cannot radically change governmental policies just as they wish.

In the U.S., therefore, when people think of "the government," they usually mean the entire system, that is, the Executive Branch and the President, the Congress, and the courts. In fact and in practice, therefore, the President (i.e. "the Administration") is not as powerful as many people outside the U.S. seem to think he is. In comparison with other leaders in systems where the majority party forms "the government," he is much less so.

### **Federalism: State and Local Governments**

The fifty states are quite diverse in size, population, climate, economy, history, and interests. The fifty state governments often differ from one another, too. Because they often approach political, social, or economic questions differently, the states have been called "laboratories of democracy." However, they do share certain basic

structures. The individual states all have republican forms of government with a senate and a house. (There is one exception, Nebraska, which has only one legislative body of "senators.") All have executive branches headed by state governors and independent court systems. Each state also has its own constitution. But all must respect the federal laws and not make laws that interfere with those of the other states (e.g., someone who is divorced under the laws of one state is legally divorced in all). Likewise, cities and local authorities must make their laws and regulations so that they fit their own state's constitution.

The states and local communities in the US have rights that in other countries generally belong to the central government.

All education at any level, for example, is the concern of the states. The local communities have the real control at the public school level. They control administration of the schools. They elect the school board officials, and their local community taxes largely support the schools. Each individual school system, therefore, hires and fires and pays its own teachers. It sets its own policies within broad state guidelines. Similarly, there is no national police force, the FBI being limited to a very few federal crimes, such as kidnapping. Each state has its own state police and its own criminal laws. The same is true with, for example, marriage and divorce laws, driving laws and licenses, drinking laws, and voting procedures. In turn, each city has its own police force that it hires, trains, controls, and organizes. Neither the President nor the governor of a state has direct power over it.

There are many other areas which are also the concern of cities, towns, and villages. Among these are the opening and closing hours for stores, street and road repair, or architectural laws and other regulations. Also, one local community might decide that a certain magazine is pornographic and forbid its sale, or a local school board might determine that a certain novel should not be in their school library. (A court, however, may later tell the community or school board that they have unfairly attempted to exercise censorship.) But another village, a few miles down the road, might accept both.

Most states and some cities have their own income taxes. Many cities and counties also have their own laws saying who may and may not own a gun. Many

airports, some of them international, are owned and controlled by cities or counties and have their own airport police. Finally, a great many of the most hotly debated questions, which in other countries are decided at the national level, are settled by the individual states and communities. Among these are, for example, laws about drug use, capital punishment, abortion, and homosexuality.

A connecting thread that runs all the way through governments in the U.S. is the "accountability" of politicians, officials, agencies, and governmental groups. This means that information on crimes, fires, marriages and divorces, court cases, property taxes, etc. is public information. It means, for example, that when a small town needs to build a school or buy a new police car, how much it will cost (and which company offered what at what cost) will be in the local newspaper. In some cities, meetings of the city council are carried live on radio or TV. As a rule, politicians in the U.S. at any level pay considerable attention to public opinion.

America has an enormous variety in its governmental bodies. Its system tries to satisfy the needs and wishes of people at the local level, while at the same time the Constitution guarantees basic rights to anyone, anywhere in America.

**Answer the questions.**

1. What document is the American government based on?
2. What were the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?
3. What was the primary aim of the Constitution?
4. How many times has the US Constitution been amended?
5. What kind of guarantees do the first 10 Amendments provide?
6. What is the structure of American Congress?
7. How does a bill become a law?
8. What are the powers of the US president?
9. What is the presidential term of office? How many terms can US presidents have?
10. What is the judicial branch of power headed by?
11. What are the functions of the Supreme Court?
12. What powers belong to the states?
13. What is the principle of the system of checks and balances?
14. How many governments are there in the US?
15. Why are American states sometimes referred to as “laboratories of democracy”?

## **POLITICAL SYSTEM. PARTIES. LEADERSHIP**

### **The US political system**

The US government consists of 3 branches: executive, legislative and judicial.

**The legislative branch** is made up of elected representatives from all of the states and is the only branch that can make federal laws, levy federal taxes, declare war or put foreign treaties into effect. It consists of a Congress that is divided into two groups called houses: The Senate and the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives is chosen by the direct vote of the electorate. The number of representatives allotted to each state is based on its population. Members must be at least 25 years old, residents of the states they are elected from, and citizens of the US for at least 7 years. Members serve two-year terms, and there is no limit on the number of terms they may serve. The presiding officer of the House of Representatives is the Speaker of the House, who is first, after the Vice President, in order of succession to the presidency. The Speaker is elected by the House. The Speaker appoints all select committees and may vote, but generally does so only to break a tie.

Each state elects two senators to the Senate. Senators must be at least 30 years old, residents of the state they are elected from, and citizens of the USA for at least 9 years. They serve six-year terms. Senate is elected every two years and senators are not subject to term limits.

Powers granted to Congress under the Constitution include the power to levy taxes, borrow money, regulate interstate commerce, impeach and convict the president, declare war, discipline its own membership, and determine its rules of procedure.

**The executive branch** is headed by the president, who must be a natural-born citizen of the United States, at least 35 years old, and a resident of the country for at least 14 years. A president is elected indirectly by the people to a four-year term and is limited to two elected terms of office. The president's official residence and office is the White House, located at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N. W. in Washington, D. C. The President is a commander-in-chief of the armed forces; negotiates treaties; appoints federal judges, ambassadors, and cabinet officials; and acts as head of state. In practice, he drafts legislation, formulates foreign policy, conducts personal diplomacy, and leads the president's political party.

The members of the president's Cabinet — the Attorney General and the Secretaries of State, Treasury, Defense, Homeland Security, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Education, Energy, and Veterans Affairs — are appointed by the president with the approval of the Senate.

**The judicial branch** is headed by the Supreme Court of the United States, which interprets the Constitution and federal legislation. The Supreme Court consists of nine justices (including a chief justice) appointed to life terms by the

president with the consent of the Senate. It has appellate jurisdiction over the lower federal courts and over state courts.

### **Checks and balances**

When Americans talk about their three-part national government, they often refer to what they call its system of 'checks and balances'. This system works in many ways to keep serious mistakes from being made by one branch or another.

Examples: If Congress proposes a law that the president thinks is unwise, the president can veto it. This means the proposal does not become the law. Congress can enact the law despite the president's views only if two-thirds of the members of both houses vote in favor of it.

If Congress passes a law, which is then challenged, in the courts as unconstitutional, the Supreme Court has the power to declare the law unconstitutional and therefore no longer in effect.

The President has the power to make treaties with other nations and to make all appointments to federal positions, including the position of Supreme Court justice. The Senate, however, must approve all treaties and confirm all appointments before they become official. In this way the Congress can prevent the president from making unwise appointments.

### **The American system of government**

The government systems in the USA – federal, state, county and local – are quite easy to understand if you grew up with them and studied them at school.

Americans are much more interested in local politics than in those at the federal level. Many of the most important decisions, such as those concerning education, housing, taxes, and so on, are made close to home, in the state or county.

All must respect the federal laws and not make laws that interfere with those of the other state.

Sheriffs are usually elected but state police officials are not. There are many other areas which are also the concern of cities, towns and villages. Among these are the opening and closing hours for stores, street and road repair, architectural laws and other regulations. Also, one local community might decide that a certain magazine is pornographic and forbid its sale, or a local school board might determine that a certain novel should not be in their library. The same is true of films. (a court, however, may later tell the community or school board that they have unfairly attempted to exercise censorship).

Most states and some cities have their own income taxes. Many cities and countries also have their own laws saying who may and may not own a gun. Many airports are owned and controlled by cities or counties and have their own airport police. Finally, a great many of the most debated questions, which in other countries are decided at the national level, are in America settled by the individual states and communities. Among these are laws about drug use, capital punishment, abortion and homosexuality.

### **Main political parties**

At the national level, the United States makes use of a two-party system. Today the United States has two major political parties. One is the Democratic



Party, whose origins go back to the nation's third president, Thomas Jefferson and was founded in 1828. The other is the Republican Party, which was formed in the 1854, by people in the states of the North and West, such as Abraham Lincoln, who wanted the government to prevent the expansion of slavery into new states then being admitted to the union. Each party has its own emblem — the Republican elephant and the Democratic donkey.

Party membership in any American party is formal. Members are not registered; they do not have cards and do not pay membership dues. The main representative of the Democratic party are Franklin D. Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, John Kennedy, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton. The main representatives of the Republican party are Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, John McCain.

Most Americans today consider the Democratic Party the more liberal party. As they understand it the Democrats believe that the federal government and the state governments should be active in providing social and economic programmes for those who need them, such as the poor, the unemployed or students who need money to go to college. Republicans are not opposed to such programmes but believe they are too costly to taxpayers. They put more emphasis on encouraging private enterprise in the belief that a strong private sector makes citizens less dependent on government.

There are other, smaller parties in the United States besides the two major parties. None of these smaller parties has enough popular support to win a presidential election. But some of them are very strong in certain cities and states. They can have their own state or city candidates elected, or can determine which major party wins by supporting one or the other.

The Green Party has been active as a third party since the 1980s. Greens emphasize environmentalism, non-hierarchical participatory democracy, social justice, respect for diversity, peace and non-violence.

The Libertarian Party is an American political party founded in 1971. The political platform of the Libertarian Party reflects that group's particular brand of libertarianism, favoring minimally regulated, laissez-faire markets, strong civil liberties, minimally regulated migration across borders, and non-interventionism in foreign policy that respects freedom of trade and travel to all foreign countries.

The Constitution Party is a conservative United States political party. It was founded in 1992. The Constitution Party advocates a platform that purports to reflect the Founding Fathers' original intent of the US Constitution, principles found in the US Declaration of Independence, and morals taken from the Bible.

### **Elections**

The United States has many election days because there are so many levels of government. Each state has its own elected officials such as a governor – the chief administrative official – and state legislators who make the state's laws. In addition, there are elections of mayors and other officials for all cities and smaller communities, and still other elections for county officials.

Presidential Election Day is held every four years – in all years divisible by four. That is the day Americans make their choice for president of the USA. On the

same day, voters in all states name their choice for the lower house of Congress, the house of Representatives, and voters in one-third of the states vote for one of two senators – members of the upper house – that represent each state. Government offices and businesses may vote several hours off to vote, but Election Day is not a national holiday.

That day is the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, that rule may seem complicated, but there was a reason for it. Most Americans at that time lived in small towns and rural areas. Elections had to be held at a time when the weather was still good in northern states and when the harvest was over so farmers wouldn't have to worry too much about their work. It also had to be on a day of the week that was not a religious Sabbath. The November Tuesday rule was the result.

## U.S. EDUCATION

*This lecture will describe the U.S. education system, and types of schools. It portrays:*

- *U.S. education history*
- *financing of education: role of the federal and state governments, and the local community*
- *organizational structure*
- *preschool education*
- *compulsory education: elementary school, middle school, high school*
- *basic curriculum structure, electives, additional options for gifted students, standardized testing,*
- *higher school education: colleges and universities*
- *public vs. private schools: primary, secondary and tertiary education, cost, the status ladder*

**Key Words and Proper Names:** *alumni, athletic prowess, civics, college-bound students, community college, compulsory education, [crèche](#), curriculum, elementary school, freshman, junior, grade, guidance counseling, middle school, high school, electives, postgraduate study, proficiency, senior, sophomore, standardized testing, state commissioner of education, superintendent of public instruction, tertiary, top tier, transcript, undergraduate study, vocational and technical education;*

*[Advanced Placement](#) or [International Baccalaureate](#) courses, the [Ivy League](#), the [No Child Left Behind Act](#); ACT (American College Testing Program), ETS (Educational Testing Service), [GRE](#) (graduate schools in general), the [LSAT](#) (test for law school), [SAT](#) (Scholastic Aptitude Test); the [GMAT](#) (test for business school), or the [MCAT](#) (test for medicine school).*

**Statistics:** Among the U.S. adult population, over 85% have completed high school, and 30% have received at least a bachelor's degree. The average salary for college graduates is \$51,000, exceeding the national average by more than \$23,000. Literacy is estimated at 99%. The 2011 [unemployment](#) rate for high school graduates was 7.6%; the rate for college graduates was 4.9% with weekly earnings more than \$400.

From the U.S. Census Bureau, the median salary of an individual who has only a high school diploma is \$27,967. The median salary of an individual who has a bachelor's degree is \$47,345. Certain degrees, such as in engineering, typically result in salaries far exceeding high school graduates, whereas degrees in teaching and social work fall below.<sup>1</sup>

The 2011 U.S. statistics: there were 74.1 million students, of them: 35 million - pre-kindergarten through Grade 8 students; 14.8million - Grades 9-12 students; 5.8 million - private school students; 18.5 million - college and university

students (10.5 million women, 8 million men). Of them engineers - 10% women, computer science - 18% women.

**U.S. education history:** When colonists from Europe first arrived in America, they had to decide upon a means which would preserve their cultural heritage. The answer was the *town school*. 30 years after founding the first settlement in Massachusetts in 1620, all towns were required to hire a schoolmaster to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as religion; larger towns were required to establish grammar schools to prepare children for the university. At the university level, Harvard (Massachusetts) was founded in 1636, and *William and Mary college* (Virginia) in 1693. In 1776, on the eve of the American Revolution, America had 14 colleges. The whole idea of schooling developed with the passing time, schooling meant not only preserving parts of classical education, but also teaching the skills necessary to build a new North American nation/statehood. Americans freely borrowed from English, French and German schools. The result was that by the mid-19th century the same school would offer its students Latin and animal husbandry, arithmetic and home economics.

As Americans moved west, their belief in schooling remained unchanged, but the new settings on the Midwestern prairies and the Southwestern deserts called for adaptation. Each state, with its own constitutional jurisdiction over schools, determined each school's own curricula, standards and purposes. Each community raised funds for school buildings and teachers. Although these factors led to a considerable diversity, the role of the school in America was similar in all parts of the country.

The Merrill Act of 1862 passed by Congress revolutionized American higher education. The Act granted public lands to states for the sites of institutions teaching agriculture and mechanics, to prepare students for "*the ordinary pursuits and professions of life.*" These colleges legitimized vocational and technical education and grew much more rapidly than liberal arts colleges created in imitation of the older private universities of the East Coast. Today's great state universities have grown from these pragmatic roots.

In 1834, Pennsylvania established a completely free, publicly supported, and publicly controlled state school system. By the end of the Civil War in 1865, education from primary school through university was becoming available to all, and had attracted to its service many of the best-trained members of society. The public school became *the vessel in which a distinctive American civilization was shaped*.

On the 19th-century frontier, *the school, along with the church and jail*, was a key public building in the community. It was the settlers' social center used outside school hours for community meetings, adult education, farmer training, youth recreation and social gatherings. School unified rural and village communities. Town pride was associated with the town school's athletic valor. Attendance at athletic contests brought the whole population into the school's life, helping to integrate a diverse population into one community.

Colleges and universities also served the purpose of social integration. State universities bear the name of their state, and their achievements were recognized as state achievements. The work of their technical and agricultural faculties was to facilitate the state's development.

In fact, schools became an **Americanizing agent** for the massive numbers of new immigrants who arrived in great waves during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The schools, which taught exclusively in English, required students to take courses in grammar and literature, American history, civics (government) and civilization. Indeed, 21st century America is the product of a well-schooled affection for technology.

American education today reflects national and social problems. Because it is principally supported by public monies, it reflects economic stresses. And because it is one of the vessels in which "America" is molded, it reflects contradictory theories of how to choose the right pattern for the future. *E.g.*, one of the most important issues in American education during the past decades has been the *curriculum reform*.

So, in the late 1960's, academic curricula were changed to suit student interests and tastes. On high school level, the “3 R's” — *reading, writing and arithmetic* — were badly neglected in favor of experimentation and more “relevant” elective courses. Resulting national test scores showed an alarming decline in student proficiency. Thus, during the mid-70's, there was a marked departure from experimentation and a return to the basics. Many states began to administer proficiency tests for graduating high school students.

This emphasis on the basics was supplemented in the 80's by a realization of the need for training (or at least orientation) in more technologically based fields like computer science and communications. Traditional courses in science and the humanities were also reemphasized. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most states increased the number of courses required for graduation.

#### **Financing of Education:**

**Authority over education:** The U.S. Constitution divided the powers between the federal government and the states and left the responsibility for education to the states by keeping silent on the subject. The 10th Amendment to the Constitution provides that “*the powers not delegated to the U.S. by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.*” So, the authority over education and the responsibility for organizing and administering it was placed in the hands of the states, agencies and institutions within the states.

**Role of the Federal Government:** In the past, the U.S. people were reluctant to have the federal government pay for, and thus possibly control, education. But when educational costs began to outrun the ability of state and local governments to pay for them the people began to turn to the federal government for assistance.

The responsibilities of the federal government toward education today are to provide encouragement, financial support and leadership. The U.S. Congress has constitutional powers to allocate funds for education, but it has no direct control over education. Several departments within the federal government (*e.g.*, the Department of

Defense and the Department of Agriculture) also make large expenditures on specific educational programs.

The agency which has primary federal responsibility for the U.S. education is called *the Department of Education*. It provides leadership and cooperates with institutions and professional associations in efforts to strengthen and improve public education.

**Role of the state government:** Since the states are responsible for their education systems, their practices and policies differ from one another. In each state, *the department of education and its controlling board of education and chief school officer* are responsible for the operation of the school system.

The *state board of education* determines educational policies in compliance with the state laws. Board members are elected by the people or appointed by the state governor and usually serve from 2 to 6 years. They are empowered to formulate policies relating to educational affairs such as allocation of school funds, certification of teachers, textbooks and library services, and provision of records and educational statistics. The key education official and chief executive officer of the state board of education is called *the superintendent of public instruction or state commissioner of education*. They may be elected by the people, or appointed by the governor of the state or by the board of education. Superintendents or commissioners usually serve from 1 to 6 years; their term of office usually is determined by the board. They are responsible for administering the state school system and implementing policies adopted by the board.

**Role of the local community:** There are approximately *13,900 school districts* in the U.S. The great majority are run by regularly elected boards of citizens, usually 5 to 7 in number. These boards collect taxes, construct buildings, determine instructional policies, employ teachers and administrators, and generally oversee the day-to-day operation of the schools.

*The superintendent of schools* is responsible for the execution of the policies set down by the local board of education. Together, the superintendent and the board prepare the school budget, determine the amount of local taxes (usually property

taxes) necessary to finance the school program, employ teachers and other school personnel, provide and maintain the school buildings, purchase equipment and supplies, and provide transportation for pupils who live beyond reasonable walking distance from school.

### **Organizational Structure**

The U.S. education comprises three basic levels: *elementary, secondary and higher education (tertiary)*. Vocational training, adult education, schools or classes for special types of children, and kindergartens also form part of the program in most states.

Parents may choose whether to send their children to their local free public schools, or to private schools which charge fees. The organization and curricula of private schools and colleges are similar to those of public schools although the administration differs.

The vast majority of students at the primary and secondary levels go to public schools. Most of those who attend private schools attend church-sponsored parochial schools.

The school year is usually 9 months, from early September to mid-June. The common pattern of organization, referred to as *the 6-3-3 plan*, includes elementary school in grades 1 through 6, junior high school in grades 7 through 9 and senior high school in grades 10 through 12. The older *8-4 plan*, in which grades 1 through 8 were the elementary school and 9 through 12 the high school, continues in many localities. There is also *a 6-6 plan*, grades 1 through 6 in elementary school and 7 through 12 in high school. Today, unified systems operating both elementary and high schools most commonly use a *6-3-3 plan* or a *6-2-4 variation*.

**Preschool education:** There are no *mandatory* public [preschool](#) or [crèche](#) programs in the [U.S.](#) A child's introduction to formal education is usually in kindergarten classes operated in most public school systems. Many systems also provide nursery schools; here the age group is between *3 and 5 years*. These preschool education programs aim to give children useful experiences which will prepare them for elementary school. The programs are flexible and are designed to



help the child grow in self-reliance, learn to get along with others, and form good work and play habits.

In the large cities, there are upper-class preschools catering to the children of the wealthy. As these schools are seen as the first step towards *the Ivy League*, there are even counselors who specialize in assisting parents and their toddlers through the preschool admissions process.

**Compulsory education:** In the U.S., all students must attend *mandatory schooling* starting with 1st grade and following through 12th grade (first grade is not the same as [kindergarten](#), which is often not compulsory). In practice, parents may educate their own children [at home](#) (although not widespread), or send their children to either a public or private institution, though almost all students enter the public schools because they are “free” (tax burdens by [school districts](#) vary from area to area).

Most children enter kindergarten at the age of 3, 4 or 5, then elementary school at the age of 6, and leave compulsory education at the age of 18 when their senior year (Grade 12) of high school ends. Students attend school for around 8 hours per day, 185 days per year. Most schools have a summer break period for about two and half months from mid-June through August. Originally, “summer vacation,” as it is called, allowed students to participate in the harvest period during the summer. School begins on the first Monday in September.

**Elementary school:** (*Kindergarten through Grade 4/5/6*): The main purpose of the elementary school is the general intellectual and social development of the child from 6 to 12 or 15 years of age. Education is mostly not standardized at this level. In general, a student learns through extremely rudimentary algebra in [mathematics](#), grammar and spelling in [English](#) (or language), and a year of state, [U.S.](#), and world history. Science varies widely from district to district and is one of the most under-taught subjects; most elementary teachers have a degree in English or education.

Promotion from one grade to the next is based on the pupil's achievement of specified skills in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, history, geography, music and art.

Students do not choose a course structure and remain in a single classroom throughout the school day, with the exceptions of [physical education](#) (more commonly known as P.E.) and [music](#), [art](#) or crafts classes.

**Middle school:** (*Grades 5/6/7 through 8*) or “junior high school” and “intermediate school” are all interchangeable names for schools. At this time, students begin to take classes from several teachers, unlike in elementary school where all classes are with the same teacher. The classes are usually a strict set of [science](#), [math](#), [English](#), [social science](#) courses, [reading](#) and/or [technology](#) class and a mandatory [physical education](#) or P.E. class. Student-chosen courses, known as [electives](#), are generally limited to only 1 or 2 classes.

**High school:** (*Grades 9 through 12*) runs from grades 9 through 12. In high school, students obtain much more control of their education, and may choose even their core classes.

Students mostly take a broad variety of classes. The **curriculum** varies widely in quality and rigidity; *e.g.* some states consider 70 (on a 100 point scale) to be a passing grade while others consider it to be 75.

The following are the typical *minimum* course sequences that one must take in order to obtain a high school diploma:

- Science (biology, chemistry, and physics)
- Mathematics (usually 3 years minimum, including algebra, geometry, and/or trigonometry)
- English (4 years)
- Social Science (various history, government, and economics courses, always including American history)
- Physical education (at least 1 year)

Many states require a “Health” course in which students learn [anatomy](#), [nutrition](#), and [first aid](#); the basic concepts of [sexuality](#) and [birth control](#); and why to avoid destructive substances like illegal [drugs](#), [cigarettes](#), and [alcohol](#).

A recent study by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (*A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*) recommended a program of 5 “new basics” for the final four years of secondary school. The minimum course of study for any student seeking a high school diploma would include: *4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, 3 years of science, 3 years of social studies and one-half year of computer science*. For the college-bound, the Commission strongly recommended 2 years of foreign language in high school.

*Interesting to know:* Education terminology in [American English](#) is somewhat different from British [English](#). In informal speech, Americans usually put the grade number first as an ordinal number (“12<sup>th</sup> grade”) as opposed to the Commonwealth usage of putting the grade number after the word grade as a cardinal number (“Grade 12”). It is used in the U.S. only in formal contexts.

**Electives:** In general, basic subjects are required in the 10th through 12th grades, but in some high schools students may elect an increasing proportion of their work according to their interests. Larger schools may offer a selection of courses aimed at three or more levels—*academic, vocational and general*.

1. The *academic program* is designed to prepare students for college. Among the subjects added to the core are more advanced mathematics and science courses and foreign languages.

2. The *vocational program* may give training in 4 fields: [agricultural education](#), which prepares the students for farm management and operation; [business education](#), which trains students for the commercial field; [home economics](#), which trains students for home management, child care and care of the sick; and [industrial education](#), which provides training for jobs in mechanical, manufacturing, building and other trades. This program prepares students either for employment or further training.

3. The *general or comprehensive program* provides features of the academic and vocational types. Its introductory courses give an appreciation of the various trades and industrial arts rather than train students for specific jobs. Those who do

not expect to go to college or enter a particular trade immediately, but who want the benefits of schooling and a high school diploma, often follow the general course.

In fact, the availability of such courses depends upon each particular school's financial situation.

Common types of electives include:

- [Visual arts](#) ([drawing](#), [sculpture](#), [painting](#), [photography](#), [film](#))
- [Performing Arts](#) ([drama](#), [band](#), [orchestra](#), [dance](#))
- Shop ([woodworking](#), [metalworking](#), [automobile](#) repair)
- [Computers](#) ([word processing](#), [programming](#), [graphic design](#))
- [Athletics](#) ([football](#), [baseball](#), [basketball](#), [track and field](#), [swimming](#), [gymnastics](#), [water polo](#), [soccer](#))
- [Publishing](#) ([journalism](#))
- [Foreign languages](#) ([French](#), [German](#), and [Spanish](#); [Chinese](#), [Latin](#), [Greek](#) and [Japanese](#) are less common)

**Additional options for gifted students:** Not all high schools contain the same rigorous [coursework](#) as others. Most high and middle schools have classes known as “honors” classes for motivated and gifted students, where the quality of education is usually higher and much tougher.

If funds are available, a high school may provide [Advanced Placement](#) or [International Baccalaureate](#) courses, which are special forms of honors classes. *AP* or *IB* courses are usually taken during the 3d or 4th years of high school, either 1) as a replacement for a typical 3d-year course (*e.g.*, taking *AP* U.S. History as a replacement for standard U.S. History), 2) a refresher of an earlier course (*e.g.*, taking *AP* Biology in the 4th year even though one already took Biology as a freshman), or 3) simply as a way to study something interesting during one’s senior year (*e.g.*, *AP* Economics).

Most postsecondary institutions take *AP* or *IB* exam results into consideration in the admissions process. Because *AP* and *IB* courses are supposed to be the equivalent of freshman year college courses, postsecondary institutions may grant unit credit which enables students to graduate early. Both public schools

and private schools in wealthy neighborhoods are able to provide many more *AP* and *IB* course options than impoverished inner-city high schools, and this difference is seen as a major cause of the differing outcomes for their graduates.

Also, in states with well-developed community college systems, there are often mechanisms by which gifted students may seek permission from their school district to attend community college courses full-time during the summer and weekends and evenings during the school year. The units earned this way can often be transferred to one's university, and can facilitate early graduation.

**Standardized testing:** Under the [\*No Child Left Behind Act\*](#), all American states must test their students statewide to ensure that they are achieving the desired level of minimum education. *The Act* also requires that students and schools show “*adequate yearly progress*.” This means they must show some improvement each year.

Most young Americans graduate from schools with high school diplomas upon a satisfactory completion of a specified number of courses. Students are usually graded from A (*excellent*) to F (*fail*) in each course, which they take, on the basis of *a*) performance in tests given at intervals throughout the year, *b*) participation in class discussions and *c*) completion of written and oral assignments. Locally developed end-of-the-year examinations are given in many schools.

In some schools, most course credit is earned through mid-term and final examinations/tests (in the middle and at the end of the semester).

During the 7th, 8th and 9th grades, *guidance counseling* is important as the pupils begin to plan their careers and select subjects that will be useful in their chosen work. Guidance counseling continues throughout the senior high school years and into college, particularly in the junior college or first two years of the four-year college.

Students receive “*report cards*” at least twice a year (in some school districts, up to 6 times) which indicate the grades they have received in each of the subjects they are studying. High schools maintain a school “*transcript*” which summarizes

the courses taken and the grades obtained for each student. A copy of the transcript is normally submitted to colleges when a student applies for admission. During high school, students, usually in their junior year (11<sup>th</sup> grade), may take one or more standardized tests depending on their postsecondary education preferences and their local graduation requirements (some students choose not to take the tests at all).

College-bound students generally take college admission tests during their last two years of high school. These tests are administered by the privately operated *Educational Testing Service (ETS)* and *American College Testing Program (ACT)*, and are mostly multiple-choice. The [SAT](#) (*Scholastic Aptitude Test*) and [ACT](#) are the most common standardized tests that students take when applying to [college](#).

A student may take *the SAT, ACT*, or both depending upon the college the student plans to apply to for admission. They are designed primarily to measure aptitude and verbal and mathematical skills rather than substantive knowledge. *Test scores, added to high school transcripts and recommendations from teachers, form the basis for college acceptance.*

*Admission decisions* are based on a number of academic criteria, including high school coursework, grade point average and class rank, recommendations from high school teachers; the impression applicants make during interviews at the university and admissions test score, as well as a more flexible set of nonacademic characteristics, such as demonstrated leadership ability, creativity, athletic abilities and achievements and community service.

Many students apply to more than one college or university and enroll in one from among those that offer them admission.

One innovation in the American high school organization includes programs to keep the school buildings in use year round. “*Keep the school doors open*” became a popular slogan among American educators in the mid-70’s, because closing most school buildings from June to September was a waste of time and talent and, more often than not, an unnecessary break in the learning process. Many schools now offer summer courses — some of which are *remedial* (corrective) in

nature — which students may not have time to pursue during the regular school curriculum. More often, the schools allow students to take additional courses, some at the advanced level, for which they receive college-level credit.

**University Education:** *Postsecondary education* in the U.S. is known as [college](#) or [university](#) and usually consists of 4 years of study at an institution of higher learning.

According to UNESCO, the U.S. has the highest number of higher education students in the world. Out of more than three million students who graduate from high school and compete for admission each year, about one million go on for “higher education”.

There are 4,495 colleges, universities, and junior colleges in the country. In 2008, 36% of enrolled students graduated from college in four years. 57% completed their undergraduate requirements in six years, at the same college they first enrolled in. The U.S. ranks 10th among industrial countries for percentage of adults with college degrees.

American higher education includes institutions ranging from open-access two- and four-year institutions that admit all students to highly selective research universities and liberal arts colleges that admit only a small fraction of those who apply.

*Degree-granting institutions* are typically divided into 4 major groups:

1) *Two-year colleges* (often but not always community colleges) usually offer the associate's degree such as an Associate of Arts (A.A.); Associate in Science (A.S.).

Community colleges are often open admissions, with low tuition. America's 1,100 public two-year institutions enroll the largest share of undergraduates. They are run by the local municipality, usually the [county](#). These institutions award associate's degrees in vocational fields, prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions, and provide a wide array of educational services. These services range from specialized training for large employers, to English language instruction for recent immigrants and recreational courses.

Some community colleges have automatic enrollment agreements with a local four-year college, where the community college provides the first 2 years of study and the four-year university provides the 3rd and 4th year of study, all on one campus. *E.g.*, the [University of Houston](#) has partnered with community colleges in neighboring cities to provide bachelor's and master's degrees in cities that are only served by community colleges.

We should remember that the community college awards the associate's degree while colleges and universities award the bachelor's and master's degrees.

2) *Four-year colleges* (which usually have a larger number of students and offer a greater range of studies than two-year colleges) offer the bachelor's degree, such as the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) or sometimes (but very rarely) another bachelor's degree such as Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.). The bachelor's degree is by far the most common type of undergraduate degree awarded.

Like in high school, the 4 undergraduate grades are also called *freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years*. In contrast to secondary education, such grades are not assigned or described by numerical designations.

Four-year institutions in the U.S. which emphasize the liberal arts are liberal arts colleges. They are known for being residential and for having smaller enrollment and class size. Most are private. In addition, some offer experimental curricula.

***Interesting to know:*** Americans capitalize the full name of a postsecondary degree when written out in full with reference to a specific field — for example, one always writes “Bachelor of Arts” — but not when referring to generic classes of degrees. Thus, *bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate* are usually written without capitalization.

3) *Universities* are research-oriented institutions which provide both undergraduate and graduate education. For historical reasons, some universities—such as Boston College, Dartmouth College, and the College of William & Mary—have retained the term “college,” while some institutions use the term “university.” A common practice is also to refer to different units within universities as colleges or schools (what is referred to in other countries as faculties).



Graduate programs grant a variety of master's degrees—such as the Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.S.), Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), or Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.). The master's degree is either itself a terminal degree or prepares graduates for future advanced study at the doctoral level.

The doctoral degree is the highest academic award and recognizes the graduate's ability to conduct independent research. The most common degree of this type is the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.). Entrance into postgraduate programs usually depends upon a student's undergraduate academic performance as well as their score on a standardized entrance exam like the [\*GRE\*](#) (*graduate schools in general*), the [\*LSAT\*](#) (*law*), the [\*GMAT\*](#) (*business*), or the [\*MCAT\*](#) (*medicine*).

Some universities have professional schools, which are attended primarily by those who plan to be practitioners instead of academics (scholars/researchers). Examples include journalism school, business school, medical school, law school, veterinary school, and dental school. Some programs, such as medicine, have formal apprenticeship-like procedures like residency and internship which must be completed after graduation, before one is considered to be fully trained. Other professional programs like law and business have no formal apprenticeship requirements after graduation (although law school graduates must take the [\*bar exam\*](#)). Business schools often wish to see several years of real-world work experience.

4) *Technical institutions* offer courses of from 6 months to 4 years duration and provide a wide variety of technical skills, from hair styling to business accounting or computer programming; but don't award a degree. Many technical institutions work with local companies and offer apprenticeship, internship, which allow students to get real practical experience in their industry (and sometimes a sizeable paycheck) before they graduate.

In U.S. education, *a course is a unit of teaching* that typically lasts one academic term, which is led by one or more instructors (teachers or professors), has a fixed roster of students, and gives each student a grade and academic credit.

There are different formats of course in universities:

- the lecture course, where the instructor gives lectures with minimal interaction;
- the seminar, where students prepare and present their original written work for discussion and critique;
- the colloquium or reading course, where the instructor assigns readings for each session which are then discussed by the members;
- the tutorial course, where one or a small number of students work on a topic and meet with the instructor weekly for discussion and guidance;
- the laboratory course, where most work takes place in a laboratory.

Unlike most European university courses, grades are generally determined by all of these kinds of work, not only the final examination.

**Public vs. private schools:** In the U.S., students in most areas have a choice between *free taxpayer-funded* [public schools](#) and [private schools](#). Private schools charge varying rates depending on geographic location and religious status. *E.g.*, some churches will partially subsidize a private school for its members.

Although free to all students, most public schools are moderately underfunded by their state or city governments, and can only afford to employ teachers with bachelor's and associate's degrees. Class sizes vary widely; some states achieve average sizes of less than 20 students, but class sizes can run as high as 40 or 45. It is clear that large class sizes contribute to discipline problems and a poor learning environment. Meanwhile, students in public schools in wealthier districts are often more advanced and better prepared than students in private schools. In poorer districts, teachers often must buy materials for their students out of their own salaries.

In contrast, private schools usually maintain high quality facilities and a sufficient number of teachers to keep class sizes lower than in public schools, generally around 15 and usually capped at 20. This is possible partly because private schools pay their teachers less (often about 80% of the public school pay scale) and partly because private schools are at liberty to refuse any more students

after they have reached their full capacity, whereas public schools are required by law to give education to anyone who signs up. As a result, admission is competitive, often based on university entrance exams like *the SAT*.

Some private schools charge high tuition, aggressively recruit teachers with advanced degrees, provide a challenging and varied curriculum, and promote themselves as *the route* to the most prestigious universities. Discipline also tends to be stricter in private schools than in public schools, as persistently unruly students may be expelled and forced to return to the public school system.

**Colleges and universities:** Each state in the U.S. maintains its own [public university](#) system, which is always nonprofit. A few states (like [California](#) and [Arizona](#)) have two separate state university systems. The more prestigious one is usually known as “University of [state name]” and its faculty are expected to conduct advanced cutting-edge research in addition to teaching, while the less prestigious is usually known as “[state name] State University” and is focused on quality of teaching and producing the next generation of teachers. Some states have experimented with the two-tier framework and then returned to a single, unified public university system.

**Cost:** The vast majority of students lack the financial resources to pay tuition up-front and must rely on [student loans](#) and [scholarships](#) from their university, the federal government, or a private lender. All universities, but a few charity institutions, charge *tuition* to all students, although scholarships (both merit-based and need-based) are widely available.

Students often use scholarships, student loans, or grants, rather than paying all tuition out-of-pocket. Student loans usually carry a lower interest rate than other loans and are usually issued by the government. Often they are supplemented by student grants which do not have to be repaid.

A *scholarship* is an award of access to an institution. Scholarships are awarded on various criteria. The most common scholarships may be classified as:

- *Merit-based:* These awards are based on a student's athletic, academic, artistic or other abilities, scores on the ACT and SAT standardized tests;

- *Need-based:* These awards are based on the student and family's financial record;
- *Student-specific:* These are scholarships where applicants must initially qualify by race, gender, religion, family and medical history, or many other student-specific factors;
- *Career-specific:* These are scholarships awarded by a college or university to students planning to pursue a specific field of study. Often the most generous awards are given to students pursuing careers in high-need areas such as education or nursing.

Generally, private universities charge much higher tuition than their public counterparts, which rely on state funds to make up the difference. Because each state supports its own university system with state taxes, most public universities charge much higher rates for out-of-state students. Private universities are generally considered to be of higher quality than public universities, because the absence of state funds tends to drive private universities to offer better services to students.

Annual undergraduate tuition varies widely from state to state. In 2009, average annual tuition at a public university (for residents of the state) was \$7,020. Private schools are typically much higher, although prices vary widely from "no-frills" private schools to highly specialized technical institutes. Depending upon the type of school and program, annual graduate program tuition can vary from \$15,000 to as high as \$50,000. Tuition does not include living expenses (rent, room/board, etc.) or additional fees that schools add on such as "activities fees" or [health insurance](#).

The mean annual *Total Cost* (including all costs associated with a full-time post-secondary schooling, such as tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board), as reported by *collegeboard.com* for 2010, was:

- Public University (4 years): \$27,967 (per year)
- Private University (4 years): \$40,476 (per year)

Total, four year schooling:

- Public University: \$81,356
- Private University: \$161,904

College costs are rising at the same time that state appropriations for aid are shrinking. This has led to debate over funding at both the state and local levels. Between 1982 and 2007, college tuition and fees rose three times as fast as median family income, in constant dollars.

The debt of the average college graduate for student loans in 2010 was \$23,200.

**The status ladder:** American colleges and universities are notorious for being somewhat status-conscious. Their faculty, staff, alumni, students, and applicants all monitor unofficial “[rankings](#)” produced by magazines like [U.S. News and World Report](#) and test preparation services like [The Princeton Review](#).

These rankings are generally sorted by prestige, which in turn is often based on factors like [brand recognition](#), selectivity in admissions, the generosity of alumni donors, and the volume of faculty research.

In terms of brand recognition, the most well-known university in the U.S. is [Harvard University](#). Harvard alumni are prominent in American business, education, science, law, government, and media; but more than this, Harvard has become a “top” school in the public mind. It is featured in numerous [movies](#) as the ultimate example of the academic “[ivory tower](#).”

It is almost universally acknowledged that the most prestigious universities are other members of the [Ivy League](#) athletic conference on the East Coast, but it is not necessarily true that they offer a better education.

Beneath these in status are a small group of elite private universities scattered around the country. After these come the top land-grant public universities, and then the vast majority of universities and colleges (public and private). At the bottom are community colleges, which by law are usually required to accept all local residents who seek to attend and rarely offer anything beyond an [associate degree](#).

This “ladder” is not absolute, however. Some *non-Ivy League* private universities, such as [M.I.T.](#) and [Stanford University](#), can rival *Ivy League* schools in prestige, especially in newer or more specialized fields of study. Likewise, some elite public universities, such as [UC Berkeley](#), are comparable to their private counterparts (usually in terms of graduate education and research, but not necessarily in terms of undergraduate education). There are several dozen small private [liberal arts colleges](#) (like [Amherst](#) and the [Claremont Colleges](#)) known by their small class sizes and high-quality teaching; they can often offer an educational experience superior to that at larger universities.

There is no absolute correlation between prestige and quality of education, and most schools are better in some areas than in others. As with many issues concerning education in the U.S., the status ladder is controversial.

## AMERICAN CULTURE

As a nation formed by immigrants, the United States is a melting pot of different races, religions and values. The country is so diverse, that one might argue that the people of the United States do not share a common cultural landscape. Despite their differences, the American people have much in common from a cultural perspective, including their patriotism and their desire to live in a country where freedom is prized above all, and where people are given the opportunity to express themselves freely according to their own set of values. So we will take a closer look at the American culture.

The United States is sometimes described as a "melting pot". Different cultures have contributed their own distinct "flavors" to American culture.

**Multiculturalism** is one of the most significant parts of American culture. Multiculturalism is not established as a policy from the government, but it is certainly observed in modern society. The reason why multiculturalism appeared is without question because of mass immigration into the United States that began in the 19th century and didn't stop for hundreds of years. With a constant stream of new people moving to the United States to find a new life and enjoy the freedoms, the country soon became a melting pot in terms of ethnicity, religion and culture.

### Language

Although the United States has no official language at the federal level, 28 states have passed legislation making English the official language. More than 97% of Americans can speak English well, and for 81% it is the only language spoken at home.

The Census Bureau estimates that more than 300 languages are spoken in the United States. The bureau divides those languages into four categories:

- Spanish;
- other Indo-European languages, which includes German, Yiddish, Swedish, French, Italian, Russian, Polish, Hindi, Punjabi, Greek and several others;

- Asian and Pacific Island languages, including Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Thai, Tamil and more;
- and "all other languages," which is a category for languages that didn't fit into the first three categories, such as Hungarian, Arabic, Hebrew, languages of Africa and languages of native people of North, Central and South America.

Spanish has an official status in the commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the state of New Mexico. There are nearly 30 million native speakers of Spanish in the United States. Bilingual speakers may use both English and Spanish reasonably well but code-switch according to their dialog partner or context. Some refer to this phenomenon as Spanglish.

Indigenous languages of the United States include the Native American languages, which are spoken on the country's numerous Indian reservations and Native American cultural events.

The national dialect is known as American English.

Despite there being no official **religion**, America has still been influenced by religion. This has been the case since the very early days of the nation, when German and English settlers began living on the land. Religion played a huge part in politics, life and general culture, and a number of the first colonies were actually established by people who wanted to practice a religion within their own community.

The United States later became the first country in the world to have no official religion. The founding fathers and influential people behind the Constitution rejected any form of official religion and designed the First Amendment to ensure that the government could not force any particular religion on anybody living under its rule.

So religion in the United States is defined by a diverse range of beliefs. Nearly every known religion is practiced in the United States. About 71 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christians in 2017. 25% of American adults class themselves as Catholics. 51% of the same group class themselves as a Christian from one of more than 30 different denominations. A wide range of other



religions are practiced in the United States, including Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Mormonism, etc.

### **American style**

Clothing styles vary by social status, region, occupation and climate. Jeans, sneakers, baseball caps, cowboy hats and boots are some items of clothing that are closely associated with Americans. Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Michael Kors and Victoria Secret are some well-known American brands. American fashion is widely influenced by celebrities and the media.

### **American food**

American cuisine was influenced by Europeans and Native Americans in its early history. Today, there are a number of foods that are commonly identified as American, such as hamburgers, hot dogs, potato chips, macaroni and cheese, and meat loaf. "As American as apple pie" has come to mean something that is authentically American.

There are also styles of cooking and types of foods that are specific to a region. Southern-style cooking is often called "American comfort food" and includes dishes such as fried chicken, collard greens [*листовая капуста*], black-eyed peas [*вигна китайская*] and corn bread [*кукурузный хлеб*]. Тех-Мех, popular in Texas and the Southwest, is a blend of Spanish and Mexican cooking styles and includes items such as chili and burritos [*буррито (кукурузная лепешка тортилья, свернутая пирожком, с начинкой из жареных бобов; подается с острым соусом; входит в меню многих ресторанов быстрого питания в США)*], and relies heavily on shredded *нашинкованный* cheese and beans.

Jerky [*вяленое мясо*], dried meats that are served as snacks, is also a food that was created in the United States.

### **Sport**

Sport is one of the most unifying and significant parts of the culture of the United States, but the sports favored by the Americans are generally quite different to what is preferred in Western Europe. Some of the most popular individual sports

include motor sports and tennis, while the most popular team sports in the country include American football, baseball and basketball.

Americans love their sports, whether they're playing or watching. Each and every year, millions of people fill the various stadiums and arenas around the country to root for their favorite teams.

American football which is referred to as soccer is characterized by its non-stop excitement, thrilling runs and passes, and crushing hits among large men wearing pads and helmets. Football is played at high school, college and professional levels. In the last few years, football has dominated baseball as the most-watched sport in America. Beginning each September, the National Football League in the United States begins its season of 16 games (held once a week on Sundays), culminating with the championship game in February known as the Super Bowl – the single most-watched television program in the world.

Baseball was developed in colonial America and organized into a sport in the middle 1800s. It has long been one of America's favorite pastimes. Like football, baseball is played at every level, including the top professional level known as Major League Baseball (MLB). Each October, Americans gather around their televisions to watch the culmination of the Major League Baseball season, a best of 7 championship series known as the World Series. Its popularity has now spread throughout the world.

Basketball is also very popular in the U.S. and is played at every level by boys and girls, men and women. The sport has produced many stars that are now recognized and even idolized the world around, including names like Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, LeBron James and Dwayne Wade.

Although football, baseball and basketball are the three most popular sports in the United States, Americans are also big fans and players of many other sports, including hockey, swimming, tennis, auto racing, boxing and golf.

### **Literature**

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, American art and literature took most of its cues from Europe. During its early history, America was a series

of British colonies on the eastern coast of the present-day United States. Therefore, its literary tradition was linked to the broader tradition of English literature.

America's first internationally popular writers were James Fenimore Cooper [(September 15, 1789 – September 14, 1851) was an American writer of the first half of the 19th century. His historical romances draw a picture of frontier and American Indian life in the early American days which created a unique form of American literature. His novels *Precaution* (1820), *The Spy* (1821). The most famous novel *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) became one of the most widely read American novels of the 19th century] and Washington Irving [(April 3, 1783– November 28, 1859) was an American short story writer, essayist, biographer, historian, and diplomat of the early 19th century. He is best known for his short stories "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820)], in the early nineteenth century. They painted an American literary landscape full of humor and adventure. These were followed by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, and others who established a distinctive American literary voice in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Mark Twain, Henry James, and poet Walt Whitman were major figures in the century's second half; Emily Dickinson, virtually unknown during her lifetime, would be recognized as America's other essential poet. Eleven U.S. citizens have won the Nobel Prize in Literature, including John Steinbeck, William Faulkner, Eugene O'Neill, Pearl S. Buck, T. S. Eliot and Sinclair Lewis. Ernest Hemingway, the 1954 Nobel laureate, is often named as one of the most influential writers of the twentieth century.

A work seen as capturing fundamental aspects of the national experience and character – such as Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) – may be called the "Great American Novel". Popular literary genres such as the Western and hardboiled crime fiction were developed in the United States.

## **Art**

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, American artists primarily painted landscapes and portraits in a realistic style. For example, **John Singleton Copley** was born in Boston, but most of his portraiture for which he is famous, follows the trends of British painters like Thomas Gainsborough and the transitional period between Rococo and Neoclassicism. Later developments of the 19th century brought America one of its earliest native home grown movements, like the **Hudson River School**.

A parallel development taking shape in rural America was the **American craft movement**, which began as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution. As the nation grew wealthier, it had patrons able to buy the works of European painters and attract foreign talent willing to teach methods and techniques from Europe to willing students as well as artists themselves; photography became a very popular medium for both journalism and in time as a medium in its own right with America having a great deal of open spaces of natural beauty and growing cities in the East teeming with new arrivals and new buildings.

Museums in Chicago, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. began to have a booming business in acquisitions, competing for works as diverse as the then more recent work of the Impressionists to pieces from Ancient Egypt, all of which captured the public imaginations and further influenced fashion and architecture. Developments in modern art in Europe came to America from exhibitions in New York City such as the Armory Show in 1913. After World War II, New York emerged as a center of the art world. Painting in the United States today covers a vast range of styles. American painting includes works by Jackson Pollock, John Singer Sargent, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Norman Rockwell, among many others.

## **Architecture**

Architecture in the United States is regionally diverse and has been shaped by many external forces, not only English. U.S. architecture can therefore be said to be eclectic, something unsurprising in such a multicultural society. In the

absence of a single large-scale architectural influence from indigenous peoples such as those in Mexico or Peru, generations of designers have incorporated influences from around the world. Currently, the overriding theme of American Architecture is modernity, as manifest in the skyscrapers of the 20th century, with domestic and residential architecture greatly varying according to local tastes and climate.

Early Neoclassicism accompanied the Founding Father's idealization of European Enlightenment, making it the predominant architectural style for public buildings and large manors. However, in recent years, suburbanization and mass migration to the Sun Belt as allowed architecture to reflect a Mediterranean style as well.

### **Theater**

Theater of the United States is based in the Western tradition and did not take on a unique dramatic identity until the emergence of Eugene O'Neill in the early twentieth century, now considered by many to be the father of American drama. O'Neill is a four-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for drama and the only American playwright to win the Nobel Prize for **literature**. After O'Neill, American drama came of age and flourished with the likes of Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Lillian Hellman, William Inge, and Clifford Odets during the first half of the twentieth century. After this fertile period, American theater broke new ground, artistically, with the absurdist forms of Edward Albee in the 1960s.

The United States is also the home and largest exporter of modern musical theater, producing such musical talents as Rodgers and Hammerstein, Lerner and Loewe, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, George and Ira Gershwin, Kander and Ebb, and Stephen Sondheim. Broadway is one of the largest theater communities in the world and is the epicenter of American commercial theater.

### **Music**

American music styles and influences (such as rock and roll, jazz, rock, techno, soul, country, hip-hop, blues) and music based on them can be heard all over the world. Music in the U.S. is diverse.

By the mid- 1800s European romantic melodies were the favorite music. Into this "sea" of romanticism sailed American first great songwriter, **Stephen Foster**, who became famous in the 1850s for "My Old Kentucky Home" and other "plantation songs", as he called them. America, at last, was beginning to find a voice of its own, and Foster's melodies were sung in the minstrel shows popular in his day.

With the wave of German immigration in the mid-19th century came many trained musicians who — as performers, composers, and teachers — spread an enthusiasm for romanticism and for that romantic instrument, the piano. The already growing piano business increased tremendously. One of the chief manufacturers was Henry Steinweg, a German immigrant, who changed his name to Steinway. By 1860 there were 22000 pianos in America.

The Civil War brought martial music, and this music, in its turn, accelerated the development of the bright sound of the brass band, which — with Sunday concerts in the park — became one of America's most popular musical institutions for the next half century. Enthusiasm for martial ensembles spread so rapidly that by the turn of the century more than 20000 amateur and professional brass bands were giving regular concerts in towns and villages throughout the country.

At the turn of the 20th century another new kind of music, played mostly by blacks, was gradually taking shape. Jazz became so popular that it became established in the public mind that the decade of the 1920s was known as the Jazz Age. **Louis Armstrong** and Edward Kennedy "**Duke**" **Ellington** have become jazz classics.

**Rock and roll** is a genre of popular music that originated in the United States during the late 1940s and early 1950s from musical styles such as gospel, jazz, boogie woogie, and rhythm and blues, along with country music. In July 1954, Elvis Presley recorded the regional hit "That's All Right". Three months earlier, on April 12, 1954, Bill Haley & His Comets recorded "Rock Around the Clock".

Presley's performing style stirred so much anger in the adult world that teenagers made him a symbol of their beliefs, and rock'n'roll became a musical expression of rebellion.

### **Dance**

The United States is represented by various genres of dance, from ballet to hip-hop and folk.

By and large, the USA was settled repeatedly by people who had no connection to royalty and were either very poor or bound for slavery. The folkways of the British Isles in the earliest years were predominant, as it was with music, and on the plantations black slaves handed down a form of dance that was rhythmic, flat footed, and had greater movement of the upper body where control was decidedly not emphasized. Here is where the square dance and cakewalk were born in their earliest incarnations.

Later groups also brought new ideas that were completely unknown in aristocratic courts of Europe, Irish immigrants brought with them their Irish step dancing which required lots of hopping and tapping of the feet, Eastern Europeans brought the polka, and Spanish speakers from the Caribbean brought dances that required much closer contact and twirling of the female with shaking of the hips. In time, this would give birth to dances like the jitterbug, tap dance, the Charleston, and rumba.

### **Cinema**

The cinema of the United States, often generally referred to as Hollywood, has had a profound effect on cinema across the world since the early twentieth century. While the Lumiere Brothers are generally credited with the birth of modern cinema, it is American cinema that has emerged as the most dominant force in the industry. Its history can be separated into four main periods:

- the silent film era,
- classical Hollywood cinema,
- New Hollywood,
- and the contemporary period.

Hollywood is considered the oldest film industry where earliest film studios and production companies emerged, it is also the birthplace of various genres of cinema—among them comedy, drama, action, the musical, romance, horror, science fiction, and the war epic—having set an example for other national film industries. The most commercially successful and most ticket selling movies in the world, such as *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *The Sound of Music* (1965), *The Godfather* (1972), *Jaws* (1975), *Star Wars* (1977), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Titanic* (1997), and *Avatar* (2009) were shot here.

Today, American film studios collectively generate several hundred movies every year, making the United States one of the most prolific producers of films in the world and a leading pioneer in motion picture engineering and technology.

### **Broadcasting**

Television is a major mass media of the United States. Household ownership of television sets in the country is 96.7%, and the majority of households have more than one set. As a whole, the television networks of the United States are the largest and most syndicated in the world.

Due to a recent surge in the number and popularity of critically acclaimed television series, many critics have said that American television is currently enjoying a golden age.

Television in the United States has long been dominated by the Big Three television networks, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), CBS (formerly the Columbia Broadcasting System) and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC); however the Fox Broadcasting Company (Fox), which launched in October 1986, has gained prominence and is now considered part of the "Big Four." They provide a significant amount of programs including newscasts, prime time, daytime and sports programming.

### **Education**

Education in the United States is and has historically been provided mainly by government. Control and funding come from three levels: federal, state, and



local. School attendance is mandatory and nearly universal at the elementary and high school levels (often known outside the United States as the primary and secondary levels).

Students have the options of having their education held in public schools, private schools, or home school. In most public and private schools, education is divided into three levels: elementary school, junior high school (also often called middle school), and high school. In almost all schools at these levels, children are divided by age groups into grades. Post-secondary education, better known as "college" in the United States, is generally governed separately from the elementary and high school system.

Among the country's adult population, over 85 percent have completed high school and 27 percent have received a bachelor's degree or higher.

General level (or category)		Level	Age
Preschool		Pre-kindergarten	3–5
<b>Compulsory education</b>			
Elementary school		Kindergarten	5-6
		1st grade	6-7
		2nd grade	7-8
		3rd grade	8-9
		4th grade	9-10
		5th grade	10-11
Middle school	Junior high school	6th grade	11-12
		7th grade	12-13
		8th grade	13-14
High school	Senior high school	Freshman/9th grade	14-15
		Sophomore/10th grade	15-16
		Junior/11th grade	16-17
		Senior/12th grade	17-18
<b>Higher education</b>			
College (University)	Undergraduate school	First year: "freshman year"	18-19
		Second year: "sophomore year"	19-20

		Third year: "junior year"	20-21
		Fourth year: "senior year"	21-22
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Graduate school</u> (with various degrees and curricular partitions thereof)</p>			Ages vary
<b>Continuing education</b>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Vocational school</u></p>			Ages vary
<p style="text-align: center;">Adult education</p>			

## **Holidays and Celebrations**

Federal holidays in the United States include New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Inauguration Day, Washington’s Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

Many holidays and celebrations are observed in the United States, beginning on January 1, when the country rings in the New Year with a bang. Each year, tens of thousands of people gather in New York’s Times Square to watch the iconic “ball” drop, counting down to the stroke of midnight, while people around the country offer a toast for a healthy and prosperous new year. Americans celebrate their independence from the British each year on July the 4 – celebrations that are marked by fireworks, backyard barbecues and plenty of good will. Memorial Day, celebrated on the last Monday in May, honors those who have died in military service; and Labor Day, observed on the first Monday in September, celebrates the country’s workforce. Thanksgiving is another emblematic and distinctively American holiday. It falls on the fourth Thursday in November and dates back to colonial times, when the first Pilgrims and the Native Americans celebrated the harvest. Presidents’ Day in the United States, marking the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, among others, is a federal holiday that occurs on the third Monday in February. The sacrifices of America’s veterans are honored on Veterans’ Day, observed on November 11, and the contributions of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. are remembered on the third Monday in January.

## AMERICAN CULTURAL TRAITS

Survival experiences explain why Americans **idealize whatever is practical**. Most pioneers who went west had not been trained in prairie farming or house construction, but they trusted they would be able to find solutions to the daily problems and dangers they faced. **Inventiveness** was necessary for survival.

American practicality is usually the most important consideration when decisions are to be made. As a result, Americans place less emphasis on the subjective, aesthetic, emotional decisions. Material goods are seen as the just rewards for hard-work. Americans are seen as caring more for things than people or relationships.

The “*can-do*”**spirit** is something that Americans are proud of today. They like to think they are natural-born *do-it-yourselfers*. There are do-it-yourself books on everything from how to build and repair your own engine to how to be your own best friend. Americans prefer whatever is quick and practical.

**Volunteerism** means people helping people through privately-initiated, rather than government-sponsored, agencies. Volunteers, usually unpaid, are highly motivated workers who organize themselves and others to solve a particular community problem or meet an immediate social need, rather than waiting for someone else – usually the government – to do it. Volunteerism reflects Americans’ optimistic pride in their ability to work out practical solutions themselves.

**Mobility:** As a nation of immigrants, Americans have always shared the assumption that the practical solution to a problem is to move elsewhere and make a fresh start. Change is seen as positive and good. This means progress, improvement and growth.

Mobility in America is a sign of optimism. Americans move from place to place, hoping to secure a better job or enjoy a warmer climate.

Moving from place to place is such a common practice that most Americans take it for granted. They may live in four or five cities during their lifetime, perhaps buying a house and then reselling it each time they move.

**Future Outlook:** Americans are profoundly future-oriented. It's the belief in a brighter future that gives them optimism. Americans trust that they have the power to affect the course of events. Even these days, when not all progress seems positive (nuclear weapons, air pollution, unemployment, loss of world power, etc.), the belief remains that for every problem there is *a rational solution*.

**Choice in education:** Americans take a pragmatic approach to learning, so what one learns outside the classroom through internships, extracurricular activities and the like is often considered as important as what is learned in the classroom. Lifelong learning is valued and the result is many adult and continuing education programs. Americans have many choices. In school they decide their major field of study, perhaps with or without their parents' influence, and students select some of their courses. These "elective" courses often confuse foreign students who may expect a more rigid curriculum.

**Privacy:** *Privacy* is associated with the value of freedom. It includes freedom from outer world interference in private or family matters. On the other hand, the notion of individual privacy makes it difficult for Americans to make friends and adapt to other cultures' customs and habits.

In the U.S., it is inappropriate to visit even close friends without calling ahead. Even though Americans often tell guests to make themselves at home, this invitation should not be interpreted literally.

Some Americans have difficulty understanding those who always want to be with others or who dislike being alone. Because U.S. culture is rather informal, it is sometimes difficult to know where privacy boundaries lie. Three questions that you should not ask Americans are: *How old are you?*; *How much money do you make?*; and *How much do you weigh?* Generally, Americans will only ask these questions of close friends and in private, and even then, they might be considered too forward.

Americans are what is known as a "**non-contact people.**" Outside of hugs given while greeting and parting, touching – among adults – is generally limited. In conversation, Americans usually stand at least an arm's length apart and are made

uncomfortable by people who press closer. They are careful not to breathe into people's faces.

**Directness and openness:** Americans value their privacy, but they are also taught to be open and direct. If they think you aren't being open and honest with them, then they may believe you are hiding something. They may be quite uncomfortable dealing with individuals who are reserved and less direct. Americans will often speak openly about things they dislike. However, they will try to do so in a respectful manner.

**Criticism** should be delivered constructively – in a manner the other person will not find offensive or unacceptable. If Americans do not speak openly about what is on their minds, they will often convey their reactions in nonverbal ways, like facial expressions, body position, and gestures. Americans are generally direct and open. Americans are not taught, as in some other countries, to mask their emotional responses. It is considered proper to display their feelings, at least within limits. If they are tired or unhappy, you will hear it in their voice, or see it in their face. You can see this in the face of television newscasters when they deliver unpleasant news.

**Friendliness:** One distinguishing characteristic of Americans is openness to strangers. Practically everyone agrees that Americans are friendly. The President of the U.S.A. permanently emphasizes what a regular guy he is. A college professor who goes fishing with plumbers will boast about it; he too is one of the boys, not an intellectual in an ivory tower.

Foreigners find it striking that in city streets, people will nod and smile to them. Not to say hello to a neighbor is a breach of etiquette.

**Friendly - Not Friends:** Saying hello doesn't commit you to anything. Friendliness should not be confused with friendship. Most of the people Americans refer to as "friends" are really acquaintances.

**Emotions:** Americans do not consider it necessary to hide their emotions. On the contrary, they often seem to be exaggerating them. ("It's *great* to see you- You *look fabulous*. Let's have lunch soon.")

Happiness can be loudly proclaimed in big smiles, gestures, and statements: "*This is marvelous, best news I've ever heard.*" But Americans smile only around good news or happy feelings.

**Talking:** Americans can be very exuberant, warm people. They often speak fairly loudly compared to speakers from other cultures. Americans are taught to look into the eyes of the person with whom they are speaking. Looking down or elsewhere is considered a sign of dishonesty or untrustworthiness. But when they are being reprimanded by a superior such as a parent, boss or teacher, they learn to look down or away from the speaker. To do otherwise is considered disrespectful.

Americans are not comfortable with pauses in conversation. Research has shown that they are uncomfortable with silences that last longer than three seconds. As a newcomer, if you have difficulty responding to a question right away, you should feel free to say *Hmmmm* or *let me think* in order to hold your place in the conversation. You could also rephrase the question.

When Americans first encounter another person, they often engage in *small talk*. They may discuss the weather or their physical surroundings such as the room or building they are in. The conversation often proceeds to common experiences such as television programs, travel to other places, or eating in local restaurants. Personal finances, religion, and politics are topics that are generally avoided in polite conversation. It is important to understand that, in America, small talk is often used to break the ice.

**Politeness:** Visitors usually find Americans very polite. Americans are shocked to see the authoritative manner in which servants are treated in other countries. A person who doesn't say *please* or *thank you* appears rude to an American. *You're welcome*, is an expected response to *Thank you*, even when the action you are being thanked for doesn't seem worthy of thanks.

English is a polite language. Words such as *would*, *could*, *can*, *may*, and *might* are used to soften requests and ask for permission. *Open the door*, or even *Open the door, please*, which may be perfectly polite in other languages, sounds harsh in English. Americans will soften requests with *would*, as in, *Would you*

*open the door, please?* When asking for permission, it is better to soften it by asking, *May I have one of these?* rather than using a direct form such as, *I want one of these.*

**The Casual Life:** Informality penetrates American culture. The forms of the language do not change when Americans address a superior, as they do in many languages. People dress casually as much as possible. Americans use slang in nearly all circumstances. Americans slouch in chairs, lean against walls, and put their feet on desks.

**The Well Planned Life:** Many people plan their whole lives with care – career, children; retirement. Their date books are full of rigid plans, and the plans for self-improvement often take precedence over the social ones.

Americans generally keep very busy schedules. As the saying goes, work is a virtue, and idleness is a sin.

**Efficiency - Time is Money:** If there is anything that warms the American heart, it is efficiency. Americans become impatient with slow-moving lines in supermarkets and banks, especially if the teller or checkout person is slowing down the line by chatting with the customers. Americans believe that it is immoral to waste time.

To Americans, time is money and it should be valued, saved, and used wisely. Americans also place considerable value on punctuality. You should arrive at the exact time for meals or appointments with teachers, doctors, and other professionals. You should plan to arrive a few minutes before the specified time for public meetings, plays, concerts, movies, sports events, classes, church services, and weddings. If you are unable to keep an appointment, you should call the person to tell him or her that you will be late or unable to arrive.

Nothing is more American and efficient as the supermarket. Food is packed, and shopping is impersonal, the efficiency of the operation produces lower prices and less shopping time.

America is the society where the **Puritan values** still dominate.

**Work Ethic:** Protestantism stressed the responsibility of the individual for his own success or failure in life. Although not a rural society any longer, many American values remain the traditional ones established by the European settlers in the 17th century.

The Puritan values were well-suited to survival in a strange new world: self-reliance, hard work, and the guidance of the individual conscience.

**The family:** Nearly all Americans have a family somewhere, but the lack of strong family ties is one thing that strikes nearly all visitors to America.

When an American speaks of "my family," he probably means his immediate, nuclear family: the group that lives together in one household – father, mother, and children. The larger (or extended) family – the grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins – are often far away. Or even if nearby, they can be a small presence in each other's lives, visiting back and forth very little.

If you make American friends, you may know them for a long time before meeting their families. Various members of the family with different interests expect to have different friends. Perhaps two couples socialize together, but instead the wives may lunch together or the husbands play golf, and the children never meet.



## Visual Art of the United States

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, artists primarily painted landscapes and portraits in a realistic style based mainly on European arts. Developments in modern art in Europe came to America from exhibitions in New York City such as the Armory Show in 1913. After World War II, New York replaced Paris as the center of the art world. Since then many American movements have shaped Modern and Postmodern art. Art in the United States today covers a huge range of styles.

### Beginnings

One of the first painters to visit British America was John White (1540–1606), who made important watercolor records of Native American. White first visited America as the artist and map-maker for an expedition of exploration, and in the early years of the Colonial period most other artists trained in Western styles were officers in the army and navy, whose training included sketching landscapes. Eventually the English settlements grew large enough to support professional artists, mostly portrait-painters, often largely self-taught. Among the earliest was John Smybert (1688–1751), a trained artist from London who emigrated in 1728 intending to be a professor of fine art, but instead became a portrait painter and printseller in Boston. His friend Peter Pelham was a painter and printmaker. Both needed other sources of income and had shops. Meanwhile, the Spanish territories later to be American could see mostly religious art in the late Baroque style, mostly by native artists, and Native American cultures continued to produce art in their various traditions.

### Eighteenth century

After the Declaration of Independence in 1776, which marked the official beginning of the American national identity, the new nation needed a history, and part of that history would be expressed visually. Most of early American art (from the late 18th century through the early 19th century) consists of history painting and especially portraits. As in Colonial America, many of the painters who specialized in portraits were essentially self-taught; notable among them are Joseph Badger, John Brewster, Jr., and William Jennys. The young nation's artists generally emulated the style of British art, which they knew through prints and the paintings of English-trained immigrants such as John Smibert (1688–1751) and John Wollaston (1742–75).

Robert Feke (1707–52), an untrained painter of the colonial period, achieved a sophisticated style based on Smibert's example. Charles Willson Peale, who gained much of his earliest art training by studying Smibert's copies of European paintings, painted portraits of many of the important figures of the American Revolution. Peale's younger brother James Peale and four of Peale's sons – Raphaele Peale, Rembrandt Peale, Rubens Peale and Titian Peale – were also artists. Painters such as Gilbert Stuart made portraits of the newly elected government officials, which became iconic after being reproduced on various U.S. Postage stamps of the 19th century and early 20th century.

John Singleton Copley painted emblematic portraits for the increasingly prosperous merchant class. The original version of his most famous painting, *Watson and the Shark* (1778), is in the collection of The National Gallery of Art. Benjamin West painted portraits as well as history paintings of the French and Indian War. West also worked in London where many American artists studied under him, including Washington Allston, Ralph Earl, James Earl, Samuel Morse, Charles Willson Peale, Rembrandt Peale, Gilbert Stuart, John Trumbull, Mather Brown, Edward Savage and Thomas Sully. John Trumbull painted large battle scenes of the Revolutionary War. When landscape was painted it was most often done to show how much property a subject owned, or as a picturesque background for a portrait.

### Nineteenth century

America's first well-known school of painting – the Hudson River School – appeared in 1820. Thomas Cole pioneered the movement which included Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Edwin Church, Thomas Doughty and several others. As with music and literature, this development was

delayed until artists perceived that the New World offered subjects unique to itself; in this case the westward expansion of settlement brought the transcendent beauty of frontier landscapes to painters' attention.

The Hudson River painters' directness and simplicity of vision influenced and inspired such later artists as John Kensett as well as George Inness, Albert Pinkham Ryder and Winslow Homer (1836–1910), who depicted rural America –the sea, the mountains, and the people who lived near them.

The Hudson River School landscape painter Robert S. Duncanson was one of the first important African American painters. John James Audubon, an ornithologist whose paintings documented birds, was one of the most important naturalist artists in America. His major work, a set of colored prints entitled *The Birds of America* (1827–1839), is considered one of the finest ornithological works ever completed. Edward Hicks was an American folk painter and distinguished minister of the Society of Friends.

Paintings of the Great West, many of which emphasized the sheer size of the land and the cultures of the native people living on it, became a distinct genre as well. George Catlin depicted the West and its people as honestly as possible. George Caleb Bingham, and later Frederick Remington, Charles M. Russell, the photographer Edward S. Curtis, and others recorded the American Western heritage and the Old American West through their art.

History painting was a less popular genre in American art during the 19th century, although *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, painted by the German-born Emanuel Leutze, is among the best-known American paintings. The historical and military paintings of William B. T. Trego were widely published after his death.

Portrait painters in America in the 19th century included Ammi Phillips, and painters schooled in the European tradition, such as Thomas Sully and G.P.A. Healy. Middle-class city life found its painter in Thomas Eakins (1844–1916). As a result, he was not notably successful in his lifetime, although he has been recognized as one of America's most significant artists. One of his students was Henry Ossawa Tanner, the first African-American painter to achieve international acclaim.

The most successful American sculptor of his era, Hiram Powers, left America in his early thirties to spend the rest of his life in Europe, where he adopted a conventional style for his idealized female nudes such as *Eve Tempted*. Several important painters who are considered American spent much of their lives in Europe, notably Mary Cassatt, James McNeill Whistler, and John Singer Sargent, all of whom were influenced by French Impressionism. Theodore Robinson visited France in 1887, befriended Monet, and became one of the first American painters to adopt the new technique. In the last decades of the century American Impressionism, as practiced by artists such as Childe Hassam and Frank W. Benson, became a popular style.

### **Twentieth century**

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Controversy soon became a way of life for American artists. In fact, much of American painting and sculpture since 1900 has been a series of revolts against tradition. Robert Henri (1865–1929) was the leader of what critics called the Ashcan school of painting, after the group's portrayals of the squalid aspects of city life.

American realism became the new direction for American visual artists at the turn of the 20th century. The Ashcan painters George Bellows, Everett Shinn, George Benjamin Luks, William Glackens, and John Sloan were among those who developed socially conscious imagery in their works. The photographer Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946) led the Photo-Secession movement, which created pathways for photography as an emerging art form.

Soon the Ashcan school artists gave way to modernists arriving from Europe – the cubists and abstract painters promoted by Stieglitz at his Gallery in New York City. John Marin, Marsden Hartley, Alfred Henry Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, Arthur Dove, Henrietta Shore, Stuart Davis, Wilhelmina Weber, Stanton MacDonald-Wright, Morgan Russell, Patrick Henry Bruce, Andrew Dasburg, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Gerald Murphy were some important early American

modernist painters. Early modernist sculptors in America include William Zorach, Elie Nadelman, and Paul Manship.

After World War I many American artists rejected the modern trends and chose to adopt various styles of realism in depicting American urban and rural scenes. Grant Wood, Reginald Marsh, Guy Pène du Bois, and Charles Sheeler exemplify the realist tendency in different ways. Sheeler and the modernists Charles Demuth and Ralston Crawford were referred to as Precisionists for their sharply defined renderings of machines and architectural forms. Edward Hopper developed an individual style of realism by concentrating on light and form, and avoiding social content.

### **New Deal art (1930s)**

When the Great Depression hit, president Roosevelt's New Deal created several public arts programs. The purpose of the programs was to give work to artists and decorate public buildings, usually with a national theme. The first of these projects, the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) was created. The PWAP lasted less than one year, and produced nearly 15,000 works of art. It was followed by the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (FAP/WPA) in 1935, which funded some of the most well-known American artists.

The style of much of the public art commissioned by the WPA was influenced by the work of Diego Rivera and other artists of the contemporary Mexican muralism movement. Several separate and related movements began and developed during the Great Depression including American scene painting, Regionalism, and Social Realism. Thomas Hart Benton, John Steuart Curry, Grant Wood, Maxine Albro, Ben Shahn, Joseph Stella, Reginald Marsh, Isaac Soyer, Raphael Soyer, and Jack Levine were some of the best-known artists.

### **Abstract expressionism**

In the years after World War II, a group of New York artists formed the first American movement to exert major influence internationally: abstract expressionism. This term, which had first been used in 1919 in Berlin, was used again in 1946 by Robert Coates in *The New York Times*, and was taken up by the two major art critics of that time, Harold Rosenberg and Clement Greenberg. It has always been criticized as too large and paradoxical, yet the common definition implies the use of abstract art to express feelings, emotions, what is within the artist, and not what stands without.

The first generation of abstract expressionists included Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, Franz Kline, Arshile Gorky, Robert Motherwell, Clyfford Still, Barnett Newman, Adolph Gottlieb, Phillip Guston, Ad Reinhardt, James Brooks, Richard Pousette-Dart, William Baziotis, Mark Tobey, Bradley Walker Tomlin, Theodoros Stamos, Jack Tworikov, Wilhelmina Weber Furlong, David Smith, and Hans Hofmann, among others. Milton Avery, Lee Krasner, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Tony Smith, Morris Graves and others were also related, important and influential artists during that period.

Though the numerous artists of this style had widely different styles, contemporary critics found several common points between them. Gorky, Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, Hofmann, Motherwell, Gottlieb, Rothko, Still, Guston, and others were American painters associated with the abstract expressionist movement.

Many first generation abstract expressionists were influenced both by the Cubists' works, by the European Surrealists, and by Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró and Henri Matisse as well as the Americans Milton Avery, John D. Graham, and Hans Hofmann. Most of them abandoned formal composition and representation of real objects. Often the abstract expressionists decided to try instinctual, intuitive, spontaneous arrangements of space, line, shape and color. Abstract Expressionism can be characterized by two major elements: the large size of the canvases used and the strong and unusual use of brushstrokes and experimental paint application with a new understanding of process.

### **After abstract expressionism**

During the 1950s abstract painting in America evolved into movements such as Neo-Dada, Op Art, hard-edge painting, Minimal art, Shaped canvas painting, Lyrical Abstraction, and the continuation of Abstract expressionism, later in the . 1970s – Pop Art and Neo-expressionism emerged.

Lyrical Abstraction along with Postminimalism sought to expand the boundaries of abstract painting and Minimalism by focusing on process, new materials and new ways of expression. Postminimalism often incorporating industrial materials, raw materials, fabrications, found objects, installation, serial repetition, and often with references to Dada and Surrealism is best exemplified in the sculptures of Eva Hesse.

Lyrical Abstraction, Conceptual Art, Postminimalism, Earth Art, Video, Performance art, Installation art, along with Abstract Expressionism, Minimal Art, Op art, Pop Art, Photorealism and New Realism extended the boundaries of Contemporary Art in the mid-1960s through the 1970s.

### **Contemporary art into the 21st century**

At the beginning of the 21st century Contemporary art in the United States in general continues in several contiguous modes, characterized by the idea of pluralism. The "crisis" in painting and current art and current art criticism today is brought about by pluralism. There is no consensus, nor need there be, as to a representative style of the age. There is an *anything goes* attitude that prevails; an "everything going on" syndrome; with no firm and clear direction and yet with every lane on the artistic superhighway filled to capacity. Consequently, magnificent and important works of art continue to be made in the United States albeit in a wide variety of styles and aesthetic temperaments, the marketplace being left to judge merit.

Hard-edge painting, Geometric abstraction, Hyperrealism, Photorealism, Expressionism, Minimalism, Lyrical Abstraction, Pop art, Op art, Abstract Expressionism, Color Field painting, Monochrome painting, Neo-expressionism, Collage, Intermedia painting, Assemblage painting, Digital painting, Postmodern painting, Neo-Dada painting, Shaped canvas painting, environmental mural painting, Graffiti, traditional figure painting, Landscape painting, Portrait painting, are a few continuing and current directions in painting at the beginning of the 21st century.

## TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

*This lecture tells us about tourist attractions of the U.S.A. focusing primarily on Washington, D.C. as the home of numerous national landmarks and one of the most popular tourist destinations. We will go on an outdoor excursion around the Mall and then visit the most notable museums located on the Mall.*

**Key Words and Proper Names:** *under the auspices of, lucrative, to promote tourism, tourist destinations, natural wonders, gambling venues, historic landmarks, pursue a noble mission, a reflecting pool, the promotion and dissemination of knowledge, by a bequest of, out of wedlock, mammal, curvilinear;*

*Pierre L'Enfant, James Smithson, Duke of Northumberland, Degas, Renoir, Sisley, Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Claude Monet, E. Manet, Toulouse Lautrec, Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Rodin, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, Henri Daumier, Modigliani, Perugino, El Greco, Leonardo Da Vinci, Chagall, Picasso, Matisse, Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, and Alexander Calder, Charles Lindbergh;*

*The U.S. Capitol, the Mall, Supreme Court Building, Union Station, National Archives Building, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Tidal Basin (with the Japanese cherry trees), Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Institution, and FDR Memorial., the Ulysses Grant Memorial, the Pentagon, the Iwo Jima memorial (or Marine Corps War memorial), Arlington National Cemetery, the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns, the National Archives, the Hirshhorn Museum, National Air and Space Museum, National Museum of American History, National Museum of the American Indian, National Museum of Natural History, National Gallery of Art, National Portrait Gallery, Yosemite National Park, Newburyport, Massachusetts, the Wailing Wall, "The Star-Spangled Banner", Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Washington National Cathedral.*

The U.S.A. has a large and lucrative tourism industry serving millions of international and domestic tourists. Tourism in the U.S. is mostly promoted at the state and local level. The federal government in addition to promoting tourism sets visa entry requirements.

As one of the largest and most diverse countries in the world, the U.S. boasts of having an amazing amount of tourist destinations ranging from the skyscrapers of New York and Chicago, the natural wonders of Yellowstone and Alaska to the sunny beaches of California, Florida and Hawaii.

Tourists visit the U.S. to see natural wonders, gambling venues, historic landmarks, and its cities. Among the most famous are:

#### **Natural Wonders**

- Death Valley
- Grand Canyon
- Yellowstone National Park
- Yosemite National Park
- Great Smoky Mountains

National Park

#### **Historic Landmarks**

- Liberty Bell
- Washington Monument
- Statue of Liberty
- The Alamo

#### **Gambling Venues**

- Atlantic City, New Jersey
- Detroit, Michigan
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- Reno, Nevada

#### **Cities**

- Boston, Massachusetts - history and universities
- Chicago, Illinois - skyscrapers
- Honolulu, Hawaii - beaches and exotic culture and cuisine
- Los Angeles, California - beaches and the movie industry
- Miami, Florida - beaches and the Everglades
- Newburyport, Massachusetts - birthplace of the US Coast Guard
- New York City, New York - the Big Apple, skyscrapers
- Orlando, Florida - beaches and Walt Disney World
- San Diego, California - tourism connected with Tijuana, Mexico
- San Francisco, California - home of the Golden Gate
- Washington, District of Columbia - the nation's capital city

With so many tourist attractions it's tempting to discuss all of them, but I will try to focus on Washington, D.C.

It is the home of numerous national landmarks and is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the U.S.

It is a very beautiful place, especially in the spring when Japanese cherry trees are in full blossom.

The functional and aesthetic beauty of Washington D.C. remains true to the dreams of its name-sake and the designs of its architect Pierre L'Enfant.

Atop Jenkins Hill, the highest point in the city stands proudly a domed Capitol, overlooking the entire city. And the city springs from it in all directions, with its broad avenues, emanating (arising) like spokes (спицы) from the focal point.

The U.S. Capitol is the seat of the Legislative Branch of the U.S. Federal Government. It is an American icon, a symbol of democracy and the most prominent landmark in Washington, D.C. Its both wings belong to the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The dominant feature of the Capitol is its Dome. Crowned by the 19-foot tall statue of "Freedom", a spectacular roof for the Great Rotunda rises from the middle of the Capitol. The statue of Freedom is often mistaken for Pocahontas. The U.S. Capitol is the tallest building in the city.

The Rotunda serves as the Capitol's chief ceremonial room, best known as a place where presidents have lain in state prior to burial.

There is simply *an incredible number* of famous buildings and monuments to visit in Washington, D.C. The Capitol, Supreme Court Building, Union Station, National Archives Building, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Tidal Basin (with the Japanese cherry trees), Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Institution, and FDR Memorial. They are all located downtown on or within a walking distance from the National Mall.

The National Mall is a large, open area in the center of Washington that features many of the monuments to American leaders and connects the Washington Monument, the White House and the U.S. Capitol buildings.

The Washington Monument (the most important monument in Washington, D.C.) is at the western end of the Mall and in the heart of the cross formed by two imaginary lines, one line going through the Mall from the West to the East between the Lincoln Memorial and the U.S. Capitol Building, and the other crossing the Mall and going from the North to the South between the White House and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

**The Washington Monument** is a large white-colored obelisk surrounded by 50 American flags at the start of the National Mall in Washington, D.C., built as a memorial to George Washington, the first U.S. President and the leader of the revolutionary Continental Army.

The monument is made of marble, 'granite, and sandstone. It was designed by Robert Mills, a prominent American architect of the 1840's. It was planned to be of such magnitude and beauty as to be an object of pride to the American people, and of admiration to all who see it. Its material was intended to be wholly American, and brought from each state, so each state participated in the glory of contributing materials and funds to its construction. American Indian tribes, professional organizations, societies, businesses, and foreign nations donated stones that were 1.2 by 0.6 by 0.3 to 0.5 m.

It officially opened to the public on October 9, 1888. Upon completion, it became the world's tallest structure, a title it held until 1889, when the Eiffel Tower was finished in Paris, France.

The Washington Monument reflection can be seen in the aptly (suitably) named Reflecting Pool, an edged rectangular pool extending westward in the direction of the Lincoln Memorial. The fireworks over the reflecting pool between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial are typical of the 4th of July celebrations.



The Washington Monument drew enormous crowds even before it officially opened. During the six months that followed its dedication, 10,041 people climbed the 893 steps to the top. After the elevator that had been used to raise building materials was altered so that it could carry passengers, the number of visitors grew rapidly. As early as 1888, an average of 55,000 people a month went to the top, and today the Washington Monument has more than 800,000 visitors each year.

To the north of the Washington Monument, there is the **White House**, the official residence and principal workplace of the U.S. President. The White House is a white-painted, neoclassical sandstone mansion located at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. As the office of the U.S. President, the term "White House" is often used as a metonym for the president's administration.

President George Washington himself helped select the site, along with city planner Pierre L'Enfant but never lived in it. John Adams became the first president to take residence in the building on November 1, 1800.

The building was first referred to as the **Presidential Palace** or **Presidential Mansion**. Dolley Madison called it the "*President's Castle*." However, by 1811 the first evidence of the public calling it the "*White House*" had emerged, because of its white-painted stone exterior. The name *Executive Mansion* was often used in official context until President Theodore Roosevelt established the formal name by having "*The White House*" engraved on his stationery in 1901.

The White House was open to the public until the early part of the 20th century. Now organized and supervised by the President's body guards excursions are held in the early hours from 6.30 to 8 a.m. on week days.

Very few people realize the size of the White House, since much of it is below the ground level or otherwise minimized by landscaping. In fact, the White House has:

- 6 stories and 5,100 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space
- 132 rooms and 35 bathrooms
- 412 doors
- 147 windows
- 28 fireplaces
- 5 full-time chefs
- 5,000 visitors a day
- a tennis court
- a bowling lane
- a movie theater

- 8 staircases
- 3 elevators
- a jogging track
- a swimming pool

Every presidential family made changes to the decor of the White House, some subtle, others more profound and controversial.

In the early 20th century, new buildings were added to the wings at either side of the main White House to accommodate the President's growing staff, which had previously used an office located in **the U.S. Capitol**. Both new wings were largely concealed from view by being built to a lower height than the main house. The West Wing houses the President's office and offices of his political staff. It currently holds about 50 employees.

The East Wing, which contains additional office space, was added to the White House in 1942. The East Wing was built during WWII in order to hide the construction of an underground bunker to be used in emergency situations. The bunker is known as the Presidential Emergency Operations Center. Among its uses, the East Wing houses the offices and staff of the First Lady.

The **Jefferson Memorial** is to the south of the Washington Memorial, opposite the White House, it combines a low neo-classical saucer dome with a portico and reflects characteristics of buildings designed by Jefferson such as Monticello and the Rotunda, which were a result of his fascination with Roman architecture. It bears some resemblance to the Pantheon of Rome. The monument was officially dedicated on April 13, 1943, on the 200th anniversary of Jefferson's birth. This memorial is not as prominent in popular culture as other Washington, DC buildings and monuments, possibly due to its location well removed from the National Mall and the Washington Metro. In an episode of *The Simpsons*, Lisa Simpson visits the Memorial and Jefferson la'ments "*No one ever comes to see me. I don't blame them. I never did anything important. Just the Declaration of Independence, the Louisiana Purchase, the dumbwaiter...Wait! Please don't go. I get so lonely...*"

The interior of the memorial has a 5.8 m tall, 4.5 t bronze statue of Jefferson, and the interior walls are engraved with passages from his writings. Most

prominent are the words inscribed around the monument near the roof: "*I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.*"

**The Lincoln Memorial** is to the west of the Washington Memorial, it is a memorial to U.S. President Abraham Lincoln. The building is in the form of a Greek Doric temple, and contains a large seated sculpture of Lincoln.

The focus of the memorial is the sculpture of Lincoln, seated, looking worn and pensive, gazing eastwards down the Reflecting Pool at the capital's starkest (perfect) emblem of the Union, the Washington Monument. On the back of Lincoln's head is supposed to be the faint outline of the face of his enemy during the war: Robert E. Lee. One hand is clenched, the other open. It is said that carved Lincoln's hands were carved to sign the letters "A" and "L" in American Sign Language. Beneath his hands, the Roman fasces [faesi:z] фации (kind of weapon), symbols of the authority of the Republic, are sculpted in relief on the seat. The statue stands 19 feet tall and 19 feet wide, and was carved from 28 blocks of white Georgia marble.

The memorial has been the site of many speeches, including Martin Luther King's "*I Have a Dream*", delivered on August 28, 1963, during the peace rally on Washington.

Located along the famous Cherry Tree Walk on the Tidal Basin near the National Mall, there is the **Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial**, it is a memorial not only to President of the U.S. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, but also to the era he represents. The monument traces 12 years of the U.S. history through a sequence of four outdoor rooms, each one devoted to one of FDR's terms of office. Sculptures, inspired by photographs, depict the 32nd President. Some examples include a 10-foot statue showing him in a wheeled chair and a bas-relief (барельеф) depicting him riding in a car during his first inaugural. At the very beginning of the memorial is a statue with FDR seated in a wheelchair with his dog Fala. Other sculptures depict scenes from the Great Depression, such as people listening to his fireside chat on the radio and waiting in a bread line. Each idea,

each phrase pronounced during his *fireside chats* was full of courage and optimism that inspired the people he served. For many Americans who lived through the Roosevelt years, the words inscribed on the walls recall personal struggles and triumphs during the 12 years that seemed like a lifetime.

**The National World War II Memorial** is a newly built national memorial to Americans who served and died in World War II. It is located on the National Mall at the eastern end of the Reflecting Pool, between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. It was opened to the public on April 29, 2004, by President George W. Bush, two days before the Memorial Day. Many citizens liked the park-like atmosphere of the memorial. Others remarked that the plaza was symbolic of the nation's commitment to the war because it re-created the sense of community that the war stimulated within the nation. Critics such as *the National Coalition to Save Our Mall* opposed the design and the location of the memorial. The main critique of the location is that it interrupts the vista (perspective) between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. It was also criticized for taking up open space that has historically been used for major demonstrations and protests.

**The Vietnam Veterans Memorial** honors members of the U.S. armed forces who served in the Vietnam War (65,000 troops dead). The Memorial consists of three separate parts — *the Three Soldiers statue*, *the Vietnam Women's Memorial*, and *the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall*, which is the most recognized part of the memorial.

*The Memorial Wall* was completed in 1982 and is located in the Constitution Gardens on the National Mall, just northeast of the Lincoln Memorial. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial receives around 3 million visitors each year. This is the world's most visited monument.

The Memorial Wall also called *the Wailing Wall* is made up of two black granite walls 75 m long. The walls are sunk into the ground, with the top flush with the earth behind them. On the walls in chronological order are inscribed some 65,000 names of American soldiers that were killed or went missing in Vietnam.

Information about rank, unit, and decorations is not given. Approximately 1,200 of these are listed as missing (MIAs, POWs, and others), they are denoted with a cross; the confirmed dead are marked with a diamond. If the missing returns alive, the cross is replaced by a circle, (although this has never occurred as of August 2005); if the death is confirmed, a diamond is superimposed over the cross. There is a pathway along the base of the Wall, where visitors may walk, read the names, make a pencil rubbing of a particular name, or pray.

The first inscription on the wall reads, *"In honor of the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War. The names of those who gave their lives and of those who remain missing are inscribed in the order they were taken from us."*

Next to the Wall is **the Korean War memorial**. It commemorates the Korean War of 1950 -1953. Dedicated on July 26, 1995, this memorial depicts 19 soldiers in full battle dress marching toward an American flag, a reflecting pool and a granite wall inscribed with war scenes. Sadly, this 3-year war was a bloody passage. It left 45,000 troops dead and 103,000 injured.

**The Ulysses Grant Memorial** is located in front of the Capitol Building.

**The Pentagon** is actually located in Virginia, but it is unquestionably a part of the military history of the U.S. **The Iwo Jima memorial** (or Marine Corps War memorial) stands next to Arlington National Cemetery. It is dedicated to all personnel of the Marine Corps, who have died in the defense of their country since 1775. The concept of the statue is based on a photo, taken during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

**Arlington National Cemetery** is also located in Virginia. This military cemetery was established during the civil war, on the lands of Arlington House, which previously belonged to the family of General Robert E. Lee.

An eternal flame marks the location of the single most visited grave in America – the burial place of President John F. Kennedy. Buried with the 35<sup>th</sup> president are former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and two of their

children who died in infancy. In a grassy plot nearby there is a grave of his brother Robert F. Kennedy marked by a simple white cross.

A most remarkable ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery is **the Changing of the Guard** at the Tomb of the Unknowns which holds the remains of four U.S. servicemen, one each from WWI, WWII, the Korean and the Vietnam Wars.

**The Library of Congress** and **the National Archives** also house thousands of documents, covering every period in American history. Some of the more notable documents in the National Archives include the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

Other points of interest in the District include *the Supreme Court Building, Union Station, Washington Metro, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Washington National Cathedral, Ford's Theatre, Blair House, Old Post Office Building, and Frederick Douglass National Historic Site.*

*Now we return to **the Mall.*** At the beginning of the Mall on the right, you will see the colorful red sandstone building known as the Castle, it is the world famous Smithsonian Institution. Created to serve the American people through “the increase and diffusion of knowledge”, it conducts research in a multitude of disciplines and has collected more than 142 million objects – historic artifacts, scientific specimens, and works of art. It consists of 19 museums and seven research centers.

The Smithsonian Institution was founded for the promotion and dissemination of knowledge by a bequest to the United States by the British scientist named James Smithson (1765–1829). He was born out of wedlock to Duke of Northumberland Hugh Percy and Elizabeth Keate Macie and was educated in Oxford. James Smithson made a number of discoveries in chemistry and published many scholarly papers. But despite all his scientific reputation and the fortune he has inherited from his father, his illegitimacy precluded (prevented) him from assuming noble status in England. His deeply felt resentment over this exclusion was responsible for his decision to leave his estate to the U.S.

government to found in Washington under the name of the Smithsonian Institution an "*Establishment for the increase and diffusion of Knowledge among men*". In 1835, President Andrew Jackson informed Congress of the bequest, which amounted to 100,000 gold sovereigns, or \$500,000 U.S. dollars (\$9,235,277 in 2005 U.S. dollars after inflation).

Today the Smithsonian Institution pursues its noble mission to increase and diffuse knowledge and has become deeply involved in mounting traveling exhibitions, fostering research, conducting educational outreach programs, preserving archives, maintaining music and lecture programs, etc.

The Smithsonian Institution is a collection of museums including the Anacostia Museum, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Hirshhorn Museum, National Air and Space Museum, National Museum of American History, National Museum of the American Indian, National Museum of Natural History, National Gallery of Art, National Portrait Gallery, National Postal Museum, Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the National Zoo. Most of them do not charge any entrance fee and operate free of charge. Most prominent of them are located on the Mall.

On the left side of the Mall opposite the Castle, there is **the National Museum of American History**. It opened in 1964 as the Museum of History and Technology and adopted its current name in 1980. The museum has three exhibition floors, two floors for offices, and one floor (the ground floor) for retail and dining.

On the first floor, major exhibitions include "*America on the Move*," detailing the history of transportation in the U.S. from the Oregon wagon of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present, including this 1950 Buick Super sedan, it houses Southern Railway steam locomotive 1401 as well as many famous automobiles. Also on the first floor is "*TV Objects*," which has various props (реквизит - property) from famous television shows. Julia Child's kitchen is also located on this floor.

The second floor has the inaugural gowns of First Ladies from Martha Washington to Laura Bush and to Michel Obama.

The gigantic 15-star and 15-stripe American flag which flew over Fort McHenry during the War of 1812 and inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner" (the American national anthem) is located in a conservation lab on the second floor. It used to hang in the main hall, but was removed due to its deteriorating condition. In its place is a modern 50-star flag which draped the Pentagon after the September 11, 2001 attacks. "*Communities in a Changing Nation*" exhibits explore the ever-changing world of 19th-century America, revealing the everyday experiences of workers in new factories, of Jewish immigrants, and of enslaved and free African Americans. It also exhibits the 20<sup>th</sup> century detention camp with barracks where deported Japanese American citizens were held during WWII (no photos published anywhere).

The main highlight of the third floor is "*A Glorious Burden*," an exhibit on Presidents of the U.S. The portable desk Thomas Jefferson used to write the Declaration of Independence and the top hat Abraham Lincoln was wearing the night he was assassinated are highlights of this exhibition featuring 900 objects from the presidential office.

Another major highlight is "*American Popular Culture*" which shows popular culture artifacts. It is a changing exhibition, but Dorothy's ruby slippers are a permanent part of the exhibit.

The "*History of Money and Medals*," the museum's oldest exhibit, was on this floor but was recently closed. An exhibit entitled "*The Price of Freedom*" on U.S. military history opened on November 11, 2004. This gallery explores the nation's military history, from the French and Indian War in the 1750's to recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. The exhibition features a restored Vietnam-era Huey [hju:] helicopter, and a World War II jeep.

Next to the National Museum of American History you will visit the **National Museum of Natural History**. Established in 1910, the museum's collections total over 125 million specimens of plants, animals, fossils, minerals, rocks, meteorites, and human cultural artifacts. The museum is the second most popular of all of the Smithsonian museums.



Notable exhibits on the first floor (mall entrance) include *the Hall of Mammals*, which displays preserved pelts of mammals throughout the world, some of which were collected by former president Th. Roosevelt. Also located on the first floor is *the Hall of Dinosaurs*. Adjacent to the dinosaur collection are exhibits which detail the evolution of life on Earth, going as far back as the Pre-Cambrian. The first floor also has many artifacts from non-western cultures.

The second floor contains the National Gem Collection, in the *Hall of Geology, Gems, and Minerals* which includes the Hope Diamond. Also on the second floor there is *the Orkin Insect Zoo (used to be the collection from the Indian culture)*.

The only notable exhibit on the ground floor is a collection of over 100 bird species which inhabit the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The museum is also home to about 185 professional natural history scientists, the largest group of scientists dedicated to the study of the natural and cultural history in the world.

**The National Gallery of Art** is located further eastwards. It is comprised of two buildings, the East Building and the West Building, linked by an underground passage. The NGA was created by Congress in 1937. The original museum building, now known as the West Building, opened on March 17, 1941. Its design is neo-classical, with a gigantic columned portico and a massive dome reminiscent of the Pantheon, except for the West Building's symmetrically attached, extended wings. The design of the East Building is also geometrical, but fragmented or 'faceted (grinded) by comparison to the West Building's cool classicism; from above, it appears as if made of interlocking diamonds. The East Building opened in 1978. The NGA also opened an adjacent sculpture garden in 1999. As a federally-owned museum, entry to both buildings of the National Gallery is free of charge, though the museum displays thousands of exhibits from privately owned collections.

The West Building has an extensive collection of paintings and sculptures by European masters from the medieval period through the late 19th century, as well as pre-20th century works by American artists. Highlights of the collection include

paintings and portraits by American artists, many paintings by Degas, Renoir, Sisley, Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Claude Monet, E. Manet, the richest collection of Toulouse Lautrec's paintings, Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Modigliani, some paintings of Perugino, El Greco and the only painting by Leonardo Da Vinci within the Western Hemisphere. On the ground floor there are most famous sculptures of Rodin, Degas, Gauguin, Picasso, etc.

The East Building focuses on modern and contemporary art, with a collection including works by Chagall, Picasso, Matisse, Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, and Alexander Calder. The East Building also contains the main offices of the NGA and a large research facility. It is a place of various temporary exhibitions from most popular world museums.

In the passage between the Buildings there hangs the highlight of the present Museum's collection and my favorite picture "*Last Supper*" by Salvador Dali.

**The National Air and Space Museum** maintains the largest collection of aircraft and spacecraft in the world and is the most popular museum in Washington, D.C. and in the U.S.A. It is a vital center for research into the history, science, and technology of aviation, space flight, planetary science and terrestrial geology and geophysics. The Museum has a research department, archives, and library.

Originally called the **National Air Museum**, it was formed on August 12, 1946. The beginning of the conquest of space in the 1950's and 1960's helped to turn a small museum into the National Air and Space Museum, which opened on July 1, 1976 and became one of the most popular tourist destinations of the city. In addition to the rooms crowded with historic aircraft and state-of-the-art artifacts, there is an IMAX theater and the Albert Einstein Planetarium. Some of its notable exhibits include:

- One of the very few lunar rock samples accessible to the public (visitors can even touch it).
- The original *Wright Flyer* that made the first controlled, powered flight in 1903.

- The *Spirit of St. Louis*, in which Charles Lindbergh made the first solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean.
- The B-29 Super fortress bomber *Enola Gay*, the first plane from which a nuclear weapon was dropped on Hiroshima.
- the Mercury 7 re-entry vehicle, the capsule that took the first American in space, John Glenn, safely to space and back.
- The command module of Apollo 11, the first mission to land astronauts on the moon.
- Soyuz-Apollo module for the Joint Soviet-American space flight.
- The astronaut's suit/
- Space Ship One, the world's first privately built and piloted vehicle to reach space.
- The prototype atmospheric test only space shuttle *Enterprise*.

The museum's total collection numbers over 30,000 aviation-related and 9,000 space-related artifacts, and is thus larger than will fit in the main hall. Many of the aircraft are at the *Garber Restoration Facility* in Suitland, Maryland.

In addition, the museum has an annex, the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, located near Dulles Airport, opened on December 15, 2003. It has 200 aircraft and 135 spacecraft on display, some of these aircraft were too large for NASM's main hall. Its notable exhibits already include:

- The prototype for the Boeing 707 airliner, known as the Boeing 367-80 or "*Dash 80*".
- A Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird high-altitude, high-speed stealth spy plane.
- An Air France Concorde, the famous model of supersonic airline.

The **Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian** is dedicated to the life, languages, literature, history and arts of the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere; the museum was established in 1989, through an Act of Congress. Operated under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum of the American Indian has three facilities: the National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., which opened on Sept.

21, 2004; the George Gustav Heye Center, a permanent museum in lower Manhattan; and the Cultural Resources Center, a research and collections facility in Suitland, Maryland.

**National Museum of the American Indian** on the National Mall is the first national museum in the country dedicated exclusively to Native Americans. The five-story, 250,000-square-foot, curvilinear (криволинейный) building is clad in a golden-colored Kasota limestone that evokes (resembles) natural rock formations shaped by wind and water for thousands of years. The museum is surrounded by an eastern lowland landscape and a scenic water feature. The museum's east-facing entrance, prism window and the 120-foot-high Potomac space devoted to contemporary Native performances are a direct result of extensive consultations with Native peoples. Donna House, the Navajo and Oneida botanist, who supervised the landscaping, said, "The landscape flows into the building, and the environment is who we are. We are the trees, we are the rocks, and we are the water. And that had to be part of the museum."

The National Museum of the American Indian offers a range of exhibitions, film and video screenings, school group programs, public programs and living culture presentations throughout the year. Its collection includes more than 800,000 objects, as well as a photographic archive of 125,000 images.

**The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** stands alone in Washington, a museum of the horrors inflicted by man on his fellow men. Opened in an emotional ceremony in 1993, the Holocaust Memorial Museum is a haunting multi-media tribute to the millions of the victims of Adolph Hitler and the Nazis of WWII, and a somber (мрачный - dark) warning to the world that to forget the Holocaust is to condemn humanity to repeat a most terrible chapter of history. The Museum has a permanent 3-floor exhibition depicting the story of Holocaust with artifacts, photographs, films and oral histories.

**The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden** is an art museum located in on the National Mall to the west of the National Air and Space Museum. Its collection focuses on contemporary and modern art. Outside the museum is a

sculpture garden, featuring works by artists including Auguste Rodin, Alexander Calder and Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, Henri Daumier.

There are also many art museums in town, in addition to those in the Smithsonian, including the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the Corcoran Museum of Art, International Spy Museum, National Building Museum, the News museum, etc.

## AMERICAN ENGLISH

The story of our words is also the story  
of our century and our people.  
*Stuart Berg Flexner, Listening to America*

The American language is "an important part of American history,  
of social history, and of the biography of us all"  
*Stuart Berg Flexner*

"America is built of words", say David K. Barnhart and Allan A. Metcalf.  
"Words are neither coined nor used in a vacuum: we are what we say. If we sum  
up the development of the American language in each century, we can say:  
"Nature" in the seventeenth century, "Independence" in the eighteenth,  
"Expansion" in the nineteenth, and "Science" in the twentieth."

The first great American contribution to the English language, in the 1600s,  
came from the need to name North American animals and plants. Some of the new  
names came from English words like *corn* (*маис* 1608) and *catfish* (1) *сом* 2)  
*зубатка* 1612), others like *raccoon* (1) *енот* 1609) and *moose* (*американский*  
*лось* 1613) were borrowed from the languages spoken by the Indians.

As the colonies developed, they influenced the English language: *Thanksgiving*  
(1621), *public school* (1636), *alumnus* (*бывший студент, выпускник (школы или*  
*университета; преим. в США)* 1696); the colonists changed the *frontier* (1676).  
The eighteenth century reflected the religious *awakening* (1736) and *immigrant*  
(1789). In the nineteenth century appeared *know-how* (1838) and the first  
*skyscrapers* (1883). In the twentieth century the Americans tested *IQ* (1916) and  
educated *rocket scientists* (1985).

The American Revolution marked the turning point in the making of this new,  
American kind of English. For the leaders of the American Revolution, American  
English was the proud badge of independence, a language with a future.

The pioneers of the English language in the New World were the Scots and the  
Irish (many examples of Scots—Irish usage prevail to his day, e.g. *cabin*, *хижина*,  
*лачуга*, *хибара*; *нищий дом*, *убогое жилище*). The first use of the word  
"Americanism" is associated with a Scottish academic, signer of the Declaration of  
Independence, John Witherspoon, who came to America towards the end of the  
18<sup>th</sup> century to become president of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton  
University). He was so struck by the "Americanisms" he heard all around him that  
he presented a series of articles on the subject. He was bothered about educated  
persons displaying "errors in grammar, improprieties and vulgarisms". He noted  
the use of *mad* for "angry", the use of contractions like *ain't*, *can't* and *don't*,  
mistakes like *lay* for "lie" and *knowed* for "knew". But at the same time he  
declared, "It does not follow in every case that the terms or phrases used are worse  
in themselves, but merely that they are of American and not of English growth."

Until the 18th century, British and American English were remarkably similar  
with almost no variation. Then the cosmopolitan nature of American life had its  
effect on the language and especially on its vocabulary.

Although American and British English are generally mutually intelligible (*understandable*), there are enough differences to occasionally cause misunderstandings or failures to communicate. "*The British and Americans are divided by a common language*", remarked George Bernard Shaw.

The variation between American and British English is considerable: *the differences concern the vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and stress*. (N. Moss. *British/American Language Dictionary*. Lincolnwood, Illinois, Passport Books, 1991)

### 1. Spelling

Noah Webster, author of the first authoritative American English dictionary, created many changes, e.g. the *'-re'* endings became *'-er'* and the *'-our'* endings became *'-or'*. Here are some general differences between British and American spellings:

<b>American</b>	<b>British</b>	<b>American</b>	<b>British</b>
aluminum	aluminium	<i>color</i>	<i>colour</i>
<i>analog</i>	<i>analogue</i>	<i>check</i>	<i>cheque</i>
annex	annexe	<i>defense</i>	<i>defence</i>
<i>archeology</i>	<i>archaeology</i>	<i>dialog</i>	<i>dialogue</i>
artifact	artefact	<i>disk</i>	<i>disc</i>
catalog	catalogue	donut	doughnut
<i>center</i>	<i>centre</i>	draft	draught
<i>encyclopedia</i>	<i>encyclopaedia</i>	<i>jewelry</i>	<i>jewellery</i>
<i>favorite</i>	<i>favourite</i>	license	licence
jail	gaol	maneuver	manoeuvre
<i>gray</i>	<i>grey</i>	marvelous	marvellous
gynecology	gynaecology	mold	mould
hosteler	hosteller	<i>mustache</i>	<i>moustache</i>
<i>honor</i>	<i>honour</i>	edema	oedema
humor	humour	<i>omelet</i>	<i>omelette</i>
<i>pajamas</i>	<i>pyjamas</i>	<i>story</i>	<i>storey</i>
<i>practice</i>	<i>practise</i>	sulfur	sulphur
<i>program</i>	<i>programme</i>	<i>thru</i>	<i>through</i>
<i>recognize</i>	<i>recognise</i>	tire	tyre
<i>specialty</i>	<i>speciality</i>	vise	vice (tool)

Generally American English *-or* as a word ending is equivalent to *-our* in British English, American *-er* as a word ending is sometimes equivalent to *-re* in British English. American English tends to prefer *-ize* and *-ization* whereas British English prefers *-ise* and *-isation*. British English generally doubles final *-l* when adding suffixes that begin with a vowel, where American English doubles it only on stressed syllables. British English often keeps silent *e* when adding suffixes where American English doesn't. American English retains the noun/ verb distinction in *advice/advise* and *device/devise* (pronouncing them differently), but has lost the same distinction with *licence/license* and *practice/practise* that British

English retains. Also, British *defence, offence, pretence*; American *defense, offense, pretense*.

In some cases, the American versions have become common international usage, for example *program* (in the computing sense).

There are, of course, exceptions to the above rules. American usage is *glamour* not *glamor* and *advertising* not *advertizing*. Oddly enough, the adjectival form is usually spelled *glamorous* in both systems. The same goes for *vigorous, humorous, and laborious*. Shorter words such as *hour, our, flour, and sour* are the same in both varieties.

## 2. Pronunciation

There are several regular differences between Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA), such as the pronunciation of final */-r/* in the latter.

Most vowels are pronounced a little differently in British and American English. RP has many words in */a:/* which are pronounced with */ə/* in General American, e.g.: *bath, class, example, half, pass, staff*, etc. In British English the sound */o/* corresponds to the American */краткий а /*, e.g. *hot*.

There are many differences in the position of the stress, e.g. words ending in — *ary/-ory* or *-et* attract stress on the final syllable: *secretary, preparatory, laboratory, ballet, valet*. This is one of the areas where American influence on British English has been particularly strong.

## 3. Punctuation

Almost all the set of punctuation marks are shared by the two varieties, but there have been a few exceptions that stem from different conventions in the UK and USA.

**Periods (.)**: A period is used after initials or abbreviations. Americans tend to write "U.S.", "U.N.", "Mr.", "Mrs.", "Dr." etc., while most British will write "US", "UN", "Mr", "Mrs", "Dr"(or even "D'r"), etc., following the rule that a period is used only when *the last letter of the abbreviation is not the last letter of the complete word*. However, many British writers would tend to write without a full stop other abbreviations, such as "Prof", "etc", "eg", and so on (recommended by some Oxford dictionaries).

**Letter-writing**: When starting a formal letter, Americans usually write a *colon* after the greeting (" Dear Sir:") while Britons usually write a *comma* (" Dear Sir,").

## 4. Numbers

When saying or writing out numbers, the British will put an *"and"* before the last part, as in *"one hundred and fifty-six"* and *"two thousand and seven "*, whereas Americans go with *"one hundred, fifty-six"* and *"two thousand, seven"*.

Americans also have a tendency to read numbers like 1123 as *"eleven twenty-three "*, which would be *" one thousand, one hundred and twenty-three"* in Britain unless discussing **the year 1123, when "eleven twenty-three "**would be the norm.

When spelling out words and phone numbers it is British practice to say things such as *"double e"* for *"ee"* and *"treble 3"* for *"333"*.



# (often called a hash) is used for 'number' in American English, but not in British English (*No*).

There is also a historical difference between *billions*, *trillions*. Historically, in the United States, *one billion* meant *one thousand million* (1,000,000,000) whereas in British English, it meant *one million million* (1,000,000,000,000), with *one thousand million* sometimes described as a *milliard*. However, the American English (both systems were actually invented by the French) version is now also used in the United Kingdom, particularly in business and government. The word *milliard* is disappearing from use.

When referring to the number 0, Americans use the term "*zero*" almost exclusively, whereas Britons would use "*nought*" or "*oh*" or "*nil*" in instances such as sports scores and voting results. (The digit 0, e.g. when reading a phone or account number aloud, is nearly always pronounced "*oh*" in both languages for the sake of convenience.)

## 5. Grammar

### *Use of the Present Perfect*

In British English the present perfect is used to express an action that has occurred in the recent past that has an effect on the present moment. For example: *I've lost my key. Can you help me look for it?* In American English the following is also possible: *I lost my key. Can you help me look for it?* In British English the above would be considered incorrect. However, both forms are generally accepted in standard American English.

Other differences involving the use of the present perfect in British English and simple past in American English include *already*, *just* and *yet*.

**British English:** *I've just had lunch.*

*I've already seen that film.*

*Have you finished your homework yet ?*

**American English:** *I just had lunch or I've just had lunch.*

*I've already seen that film or I already saw that film.*

*Have your finished your homework yet?*

*Or Did you finish your homework yet?*

The present perfect tense is more common in British English than in American, where the simple past tense is usually used instead. Similarly, the past perfect tense is seldom heard in the USA, also replaced by the past simple tense.

### *Possession*

There are two forms to express possession in English: *Have* or *Have got*:

*Do you have a car?*

*Have you got a car?*

*He hasn't got any friends.*

*He doesn 't have any friends.*

*She has a beautiful new home.*

*She's got a beautiful new home.*

While both forms are correct (and accepted in both British and American English), *have got* (*have you got*, *he hasn't got*, etc.) is generally the preferred

form in British English while most speakers of American English employ the *have* (*do you have, he doesn't have*, etc.). On informal occasions, the British would use "*have got*", whereas Americans would say "*have*". "*Have*" is the only form to be used in formal writing.

American English **allows do** as a substitute **for have** (the full verb, in the sense of possess); in the past, British English did not allow this, but it is becoming increasingly common.

**American:** "*Have you any food? Yes, I do*"

**British:** "*Have you any food? Yes, I have.*"

Note that such substitution is not possible for the auxiliary verb *have*. "*Have you eaten? Yes, I have.*" for both American and British English.

Similarly, in informal usage, American English often uses the form "*did*" + *infinitive* where British English would use "*have/has*" + *past participle*. "*Did you clean your teeth yet.*" would be usual American English where most British speakers would say "*Have you cleaned your teeth yet?*" The "*have*" form is regarded as correct in both countries and is required in all formal contexts.

### **The Verb Get**

The past participle of the verb *get* is ***gotten*** in American English. For example: *He's gotten much better at playing tennis.* British English — *He's got much better at playing tennis.* Also, the participle *gotten* is never used in modern British English, which uses *got* (as do some Americans), except in an entire archaic expression such as *ill-gotten gains*. British usage retains the ***forgotten*** form, though.

### **Past Simple/Past Participles**

The following verbs have two acceptable forms of the past simple/past participle in both American and British English, however, **the irregular form** is generally more common in British English (the first form of the two) and the **regular form** is more common to American English.

<i>burn</i>	<i>burnt or burned</i>	<i>dream</i>	<i>dreamt or dreamed</i>
<i>lean</i>	<i>leant or leaned</i>	<i>learn</i>	<i>learnt or learned</i>
<i>smell</i>	<i>smelt or smelted</i>	<i>spell</i>	<i>spelt or spelled</i>
<i>spill</i>	<i>spilt or spilled</i>	<i>spoil</i>	<i>spoilt or spoiled</i>

Verb past tenses with **-t**: British *dreamt, leapt, learnt, spelt*; American *dreamed, leaped, learned, spelled*. The forms with **-ed** are also common in British English. (The two-syllable form *learned* is still used to mean "educated" in both British English and American English.) Other verb past tense forms: British *fitted, forecasted, knitted, lighted, wedded*; American *fit, forecast, knit, lit, wed*. But the former forms are also found in American English. However, *lit* and *forecast* are also the usual forms in British English.

### ***Other Differences***

Nouns of direction with **-wards**: British *forwards, upwards, afterwards*, etc.; American *forward, upward, afterward*. However, there is no real distinction here, as both forms are used in both varieties, except that ***afterward* is rare in British English.**

Collective nouns like *team* and *company* that describe multiple people are often used with the plural form of a verb in British English, and with the singular form in American. **British "*the team are concerned*"; American "*the team is concerned*".**

Singular attributives in one country may be plural in the other, and vice versa. For example, Britain has a ***drugs problem*** while the United States has a ***drug problem***.

Americans sometimes use *his* where the British say *one's*. In American English, if *one* has been used at the beginning of a sentence, *he, him, his* and *himself* are often used to refer back to this *one*: *One cannot succeed unless he tries hard* (British English: *unless one tries hard*).

The subjunctive mode is more common in American English in expressions like *"They suggested he apply for the job"*. British English would have *"They suggested he should apply for the job"*

### ***Prepositions***

There are also a few differences in preposition use including the following:

#### ***American English***

*on* the weekend  
Monday *through* Friday  
please write me soon  
check something *out*  
do something *over*  
fill *out* a form  
visit *with* somebody  
stay home  
*in* behalf of  
*aside* from  
different *than*

#### ***British English***

*at* the weekend  
Monday *to* Friday  
please write *to* me soon  
check something  
do something *again*  
fill *in* a form  
visit somebody  
stay *at* home  
*on* behalf of  
*apart* from  
different *from*

### ***Vocabulary***

Probably the major differences between British and American English lie in the choice of vocabulary. Some words mean different things in the two varieties, for example, *mean*: American English — *angry, bad humored*, British English — *not generous, tight fisted*.

Most of the differences are connected with ***concepts originating from the nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century***, where new words were coined

independently; for example, *almost the entire vocabularies of the car and railway industries are different in British and American English.*

Other sources of difference are **slang or vulgar terms**, where frequent new coinage occurs, and idiomatic phrases, including phrasal verbs. *The differences most likely to create confusion are those where the same word or phrase is used for two different concepts.* For example: in Southern Britain the word **whilst** is used almost interchangeably with **while**. *Whilst* is more often used in instruction manuals, legal documents, etc. The word *while* means *until* in some Northern English dialects.

Both British and American English use the expression "*I couldn't care less*" (*I am completely indifferent*) to mean the speaker does not care at all. In American English, the ironic "*I could care less*" (without the "n't") is synonymous with this, while in British English, "*I could care less*" is most certainly not synonymous with this, and might be interpreted as anything from nonsense to the speaker's expressing that he or she **does** care.

There are significant differences between British and American word choices in Modern English, e.g. different words are used to describe the same meaning:

#### One Meaning — Two Words

Definition	UK Word	USA Word
11 <sup>th</sup> September 1999	<i>11/09/99</i>	<i>09/11/99</i>
1) the dot and the end of a sentence	<i>full stop</i>	<i>period</i>
2) unit of paper currency	<i>note</i>	<i>bill</i>
3) mathematics	<i>maths</i>	<i>math</i>
4) the season after summer	<i>autumn</i>	<i>fall</i>
5) day when offices are closed	bank holiday	legal holiday
6) the name of the final letter of the alphabet	<i>zed</i>	<i>zee</i>
7) large bag carried by females	hand bag	purse
8) place where the goods are bought	shop	store
9) place where medicines are bought	chemist	drug store
10) payment in a restaurant	bill	check
11) the business part of a city	town centre	downtown
12) code used when sorting mail	postcode	zip code
13) company on the WWW	<a href="http://.co.uk">.co.uk</a>	.com
14) front of a car	bonnet	hood
15) fuel for vehicles	petrol	gasoline
16) ticket for one trip	<i>single</i>	one way
17) device for obtaining water	tap	Faucet

- 18) portable battery-operated torch flashlight  
light source
- 19) contest between two teams match game
- 20) a collection of playing cards pack deck
- 21) a group of people waiting queue line  
for their turn

### One Word — Two Meanings

Word	UK Usage	USA Usage
bathroom	a room containing a bath or shower	a room containing a toilet
chips	what Americans call "french fries"	what the British call "crisps"
homely	pleasant	ugly
public school	fee-paying school	state school
smart	well dressed	clever
wash up	wash dishes after a meal	wash face and hands

Speakers of British English are generally aware of the American English term, but would not generally use it. It should also be noted that most American words can be freely interchanged with their British versions within the United Kingdom without leading to confusion. The most noticeable difference between the two varieties is in the areas of pronunciation and vocabulary.

#### American

appetizer  
area code  
ATM  
baby carriage  
backpack  
baked potato  
braid  
brown bag lunch  
bus  
semester  
candy  
cell phone  
checkers  
coach  
cookie  
condominium  
creek  
dead end  
cuffs  
district attorney  
editorial

#### British

starter, hors d'oeuvre  
dialling code  
cashpoint  
pram  
rucksack  
jacket potato  
plait (hair style)  
packed lunch  
coach  
term  
sweet  
mobile phone  
draughts  
economy  
biscuit  
block of flats  
stream, brook  
cul-de-sac  
turn-ups  
public prosecutor  
leader

driver's license	driving licence
exit	junction
elementary school	primary school
highway	main road
eyeglasses	spectacles
high school	secondary school
jack	socket
Kleenex	tissues
last name	surname
mall	shopping centre
locker room	changing room
nickel	no equivalent
mutual fund	unit trust
lead	cable
meat grinder	mincer
oatmeal	porridge
parking lot	car park
proctor	invigilator
offense player	forward
penny	cent
professor	lecturer
realty	estate agency
round trip	return
recess	break
run for office	stand for election
rent	hire
resume	curriculum vitae (CV)
sales tax	VAT
schedule	timetable
silverware	cutlery
stove	cooker, oven
SUV	pick up
tie	draw (sport)
vacation	holiday
welfare	benefit
wire	telegram
wall to wall	fitted carpet
yard	garden
wheat bread	brown bread

The 1980s, for example, contributed generous amounts of new vocabulary to the English language. **New concepts** such as *ethical investment* and *internal markets* appeared. **Payment increasingly meant plastic** (credit cards, debit cards, etc.). The quintessential figure was the *yuppie* (a hybrid word coined by grafting an

acronym based on *Young Urban Professionals* on to a model suggested by *hippie*), the high-earning 25—30-year-old business executive with the *smart* car, the *mobile* phone (or *cellphone*) and the *laptop* (or *palmtop*). The media was transformed: *DBS* (direct broadcasting by satellite) and *dishes* appeared.

There are words which are found only in American English (**FOB** — an acronym formed from the initial letters of *Friend of Bill*, **Clintonomics**— the economic policies of US President Bill Clinton), some words are found only in British English (*TESSA* — tax-exempt special saving account, **Blairism** — the political and economic policies of Tony Blair, *tax-and-spend* — adjective designating a politician or policy committed to high taxation in order to maintain high public expenditure), and *some have become part of Standard English which is used throughout the world* (**web site** — a document or set of linked documents, usually associated with a particular person, organization, or topic; **homepage** — a document created in a hypertext system which serves as a point of introduction to a person, institution, or company; **nettie** — a regular user of Usenet, a system of online discussion groups; **netiquette** — acceptable e-mail behavior; **bad hair day** — a day on which everything seems to go wrong; **Euroland** — a name for a political unit consisting of the countries within the European Union.)

Many new words and usages in American English reflect cultural changes in the society. For example: **soccer mom** — *a typical, professional woman with school age children*; **to homeschool** — *to teach school subjects to one's children at home rather than send them to school*; **to veg (out)** — *to do nothing, to relax passively*; **spam** — *to send junk e-mails*; **high-maintenance** — *somebody who is unreasonably needy and requires special care*; **touchy-feely** — *marked by emotional openness and enthusiastic physicality*.

Every year and every decade enriches the English language. Some words were deliberately coined, others spontaneously created in response to new situations. Words in American usage have found their way into the British vocabulary, partly as a result of advanced communications, commerce, and American technology. British English and American English have undergone and continue to undergo tremendous changes in the denotative and the connotative values of English words.

**African American Vernacular** (*народный; национальный; родной (о языке) б) местный (о диалекте) в) разговорный, просторечный (в отличие от литературного, научного, письменного языка)* **English (AAVE)**

**AAVE** or **Black English** (a term made common among educators by Joey Lee Dillard's 1972 book which analyzes and explains it) is called today **Ebonics** (*ebony* "black" + *phonics* "the scientific study of speech sounds"). The name Ebonics had been invented in 1973 by Robert R. Williams, professor of psychology. He used Ebonics to identify *the variety of English spoken by many black Americans*. The origins of AAVE are still a topic of debate among linguists.

Despite all these debates on AAVE as a variety of American English, some distinctive characteristics (pronunciation, grammatical features and rhetorical patterns) of AAVE are agreed upon. Some of the characteristics of AAVE, particularly where phonology is concerned, are shared with other dialects of

American English, and it is difficult to point features as characteristic of AAVE only. However, some of the phonological features of AAVE are: consonant cluster reduction word-finally (e.g. *test* —\* tes, *desk* —\*■ des); deletion of postvocalic liquids {*help* —\* [hep]};

The morphosyntactic features of AAVE are: the -s morph marking the possessive, the third-person singular present, and the plural may be absent (*she sing, he talk, Bob car, two cat*).

AAVE shares with some other varieties of English the possibility for multiple negation (*He don' know nothin'*).

AAVE has a much richer aspectual system than Standard English: *She bin married. I bin known him*. The stressed *bin* denotes a state, condition, or activity begun in the remote past and continued to the present.

In AAVE, habitual *be* is used to mark a repeated state, condition, or frequent actions (*the coffee be cold* (= always); *they songs be havin 'a cause*), and use *done* for completed actions (*you done missed it*). and *be done* for future perfect or hypothetical events (*Lightning be done struck my house*). Copula deletion is used for a temporary action: *He in the kitchen*. They frequently delete *is* and *are* in sentences where Standard English requires it (We\_\_confrontational). *Come* is used in AAVE to express the speaker's annoyance or indignation, for example, *She come goin' into my room without knockin'*.

Some of these features are also found in white vernacular usage. Where these features came from is still a matter of academic debate. Ebonics in one way or another has been used by writers, actors, singers, preachers and everyday folks for ages. Black writers (James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker) have been among the defenders of Black English. Speakers of AAVE differ according to their specific geographical origin, level of education, and socioeconomic status.

There was misconception that Ebonics would replace Standard English. "The very idea that African-American language is <...> separate and apart is very threatening, because it can encourage young men and women not to learn Standard English." (Maya Angelou on Ebonics, 1996) John R. Richard and Russel J. Rickford, the authors of *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English*, write that "it is not necessary to abandon Spoken Soul to master Standard English, any more than it is necessary to abandon English to learn French, or to deprecate jazz to appreciate classical music. Moreover, suggesting, as some do, that we abandon Spoken Soul and cleave only to Standard English is like proposing that we play only the white keys of a piano. The fact is that for many of our most beautiful melodies, we need both the white keys and the black. What really strikes us about the <...> writers, singers and preachers is their ability to command and switch seamlessly between Spoken Soul and Standard English." (*The Ubiquity of Ebonics*. American Language Review, March/April 2001. P.23) It must be remembered that speakers of any variety of English may be bidialectal and will accommodate to the setting in which they find themselves.



## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND EXERCISES

1. History of American English.
2. English Usage in the UK and USA.
3. Give examples of the major differences between British and American English in the following areas:

- (a) Spelling
- (b) Grammar
- (c) Vocabulary
- (d) Pronunciation

4. Match the American English terms (in the right column) with their British counterparts (in the left column):

_____ <i>molasses</i>	a. <i>grade</i>
_____ <i>return</i>	b. <i>candy</i>
_____ <i>garden</i>	c. <i>schedule</i>
_____ <i>place</i>	d. <i>corn</i>
_____ <i>ill</i>	e. <i>fall</i>
_____ <i>flat</i>	f. <i>sidewalk</i>
_____ <i>holiday</i>	g. <i>mean</i>
_____ <i>sweets</i>	h. <i>treacle</i>
_____ <i>maize</i>	i. <i>round trip</i>
_____ <i>pavement</i>	j. <i>sick</i>
_____ <i>timetable</i>	k. <i>location</i>
_____ <i>autumn</i>	l. <i>movie</i>
_____ <i>nasty</i>	m. <i>yard</i>
_____ <i>film</i>	n. <i>drugstore</i>
_____ <i>class</i>	o. <i>vacation</i>
_____ <i>chemist ('s)</i>	p. <i>apartment</i>
_____ <i>boot (of a car)</i>	q. <i>trunk</i>

5. Translate the following into British English:

- 1) *I had a blow-out,*
- 2) *Pass me the cookies.*
- 3) *We 've run out of gas.*
- 4) *One way or round trip ?*
- 5) *We left the faucet on.*
- 6) *We 're leaving in the fall.*
- 7) *I hate waiting in line.*

6. Define the meaning of the following words and word combinations:

*Administration, the State Department, the White House, primaries, impeachment, electoral college, runoff, rain check, pink slip, Thanksgiving Day, toll, perks, guidelines, Ivy League, the Watergate, the Smithsonian Institution, Broadway, catch-22, yellow pages, the green berets, alumnus, nifty, cover girl, community center.*

1. The characteristics of AAVE. Look up the origin and meaning of the following words:

*Sambo, TVbonics, yam, tote, soul, gumbo, jive talk, rip off, stoned, sit-in, to rap, backlash.*

### **Suggestions for Further Reading**

*Леонтович О.А.* Россия и США: Введение в межкультурную коммуникацию. Учебное пособие. Волгоград: Перемена, 2003.

*Mencken H.L.* The American Language, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, New York, 1979.

*Flexner S.B.* Listening to America. New York, 1982.

*Dillard J.L.* American Talk. New York, 1976.