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**English-speaking countries:
The United States of America**

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Preface

The USA is one of the largest countries in the world. The USA is situated in the central part of the North American continent. The capital of the USA is Washington, in the District of Columbia. The USA Congress has its seat in the Capitol, and the White House is the residence of the President. Washington, is a beautiful administrative city without much industry. It has many famous monuments: the Library of the Congress of the USA, the Washington Monument, the Abraham Lincoln and others. New York is the largest city and port. It is the financial and business center. It is famous of its sky-serapes. Chicago is one of the biggest industrial cities in the USA. San Francisco on the pacific coast, is a big port and ship building center. The USA is one of the greatest industrial nations in the world. With only about 5 percent of the world's population and about 6 percent of its land area, the U.S. is the world produces around 25 percent of the world's industrial products, agricultural goods, and services. The USA is the world leader in many branches, for instance, biochemical and genetic engineering, aerospace research and development, communications, computer and information services, and similar high-technology fields. The USA is also the world's leading agricultural nation, which not only feeds her own people but many other people in the world as well. There are many reasons, which can explain why the USA has been able to become the leading industrial and agricultural resources. Another very important reason is America's vitality, its so-called spirit of enterprise and initiative. The rapid progress of American industry and agriculture is also the result of the constant willingness to experiment and to find new solutions to old problems. The USA is divided into regions that have different kinds of land and climate, different ways of living and working, and their own characteristics and problems. And each has its own groups of people whose origin and traditions make them different from any of the others. However, out of these differences the American people were able to create a political and social system in which all of these regions and groups were represented and which fogmed one nation out of many parts.

Territory

The federal entity created by the Constitution is the dominant feature of the American governmental system. There are fifty (50) states and Washington D.C. The last two states to join the Union were Alaska (49th) and Hawaii (50th). Both joined in 1959. Washington D.C. is a federal district under the authority of Congress. Puerto Rico is a commonwealth associated with the United States. Other dependent areas include American Samoa, Baker Island, Guam, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Islands, Navassa Island, Palmyra Atoll, Virgin Islands, Wake Island. From 18 July 1947 until 1 October 1994, the US administered the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, but recently entered into a new political relationship with all four political units: the Northern Mariana Islands is a commonwealth in political union with the US (effective 3 November 1986); Palau concluded a Compact of Free Association with the US (effective 1 October 1994); the Federated States of Micronesia signed a Compact of Free Association with the US (effective 3 November 1986); the Republic of the Marshall Islands signed a Compact of Free Association with the US (effective 21 October 1986). In general, matters that lie entirely within state borders are the exclusive concern of state governments. These include internal communications; regulations relating to property, industry, business, and public utilities; the state criminal code; and working conditions within the state. There are many areas of overlap between state and federal jurisdictions. In recent years, the federal government has assumed broader responsibility in such matters as health, education, welfare, transportation, and housing and urban development. The constitutions of the various states differ in some details but generally follow a pattern similar to that of the federal Constitution, including a statement of the rights of the people and a plan for organizing the government. On such matters as the operation of businesses, banks, public utilities, and charitable institutions, state constitutions are often more detailed and explicit than the federal constitution.

The States, Districts and Territories of the U.S.A.

L	States	KS	· <u>Kansas</u>	NY	· <u>New York</u>	WV	· <u>West</u>	Territories
AL	· <u>Alabama</u>	KY	· <u>Kentucky</u>	NC	· <u>North</u>	WI	<u>Virginia</u>	· <u>Navassa</u>
AK	· <u>Alaska</u>	LA	· <u>Louisiana</u>	ND	<u>Carolina</u>	WY	· <u>Wisconsin</u>	<u>Island</u>
AZ	· <u>Arizona</u>	ME	· <u>Maine</u>	OH	· <u>North</u>	L	· <u>Wyoming</u>	· <u>Northern</u>
AR	· <u>Arkansas</u>	MD	· <u>Maryland</u>	OK	<u>Dakota</u>	L		· <u>Mariana</u>
CA	· <u>California</u>	MA	·	OR	· <u>Ohio</u>	DC	District	<u>Islands</u>
CO	· <u>Colorado</u>	MI	<u>Massachusetts</u>	PA	· <u>Oklahoma</u>	·		· <u>Palmyra</u>
CT	·	MN	· <u>Michigan</u>	RI	· <u>Oregon</u>	<u>Washington,</u>	<u>Atoll</u>	
DE	<u>Connecticut</u>	MS	· <u>Minnesota</u>	SC	·	<u>DC</u>	· <u>Puerto Rico</u>	
FL	· <u>Delaware</u>	MO	· <u>Mississippi</u>	SD	<u>Pennsylvania</u>		· <u>Virgin</u>	
GA	· <u>Florida</u>	MT	· <u>Missouri</u>	TN	· <u>Rhode</u>	Territories	<u>Islands</u>	
HI	· <u>Georgia</u>	NE	· <u>Montana</u>	TX	<u>Island</u>	· <u>American</u>	· <u>Wake</u>	
ID	· <u>Hawaii</u>	NV	· <u>Nebraska</u>	UT	· <u>South</u>	<u>Samoa</u>	<u>Island</u>	
IL	· <u>Idaho</u>	NH	· <u>Nevada</u>	VT	<u>Carolina</u>	· <u>Baker</u>		
IN	· <u>Illinois</u>	NJ	· <u>New</u>	VA	· <u>South</u>	<u>Island</u>		
IA	· <u>Indiana</u>	NM	<u>Hampshire</u>	WA	<u>Dakota</u>	· <u>Guam</u>		
	· <u>Iowa</u>		· <u>New Jersey</u>		· <u>Tennessee</u>	· <u>Howland</u>		
			· <u>New Mexico</u>		· <u>Texas</u>	<u>Island</u>		
					· <u>Utah</u>	· <u>Jarvis</u>		
					· <u>Vermont</u>	<u>Island</u>		
					· <u>Virginia</u>	· <u>Johnston</u>		
					· <u>Washington</u>	<u>Atoll</u>		
						· <u>Kingman</u>		
						Reef		
						· <u>Midway</u>		
						<u>Islands</u>		

History of the United States

Introduction

History does not exist for us until and unless we dig it up, interpret it, and put it together. Then the past comes alive, or, more accurately, it is revealed for what it has always been - a part of the present. Frederick W. Turner III, 1971

History is the study of the human past. Historians study records of conditions or events of a particular time and place. The United States of America is at once a very new nation and a very old nation. The first settlers - Asian hunters and nomads - reached North America about 30,000 years ago. However, the United States of America did not come into being until 1776 with the Declaration of Independence. The history of the United States is the story of many different peoples who together compose the United States of America. Since the first Europeans arrived in 1492, millions of people from many different countries have entered the United States and made the country their new home.

Main topics: Early America. The Colonial Period. Revolutionary Period and New Nation. Slavery, Civil War and Westward Expansion Growth and Transformation. War and Prosperity. The Great Depression and the New Deal. World War II. Postwar America. Decades of Change. Towards the 21st Century. The 21st Century.

History of American Flag.

For more than 200 years, the American flag has been the symbol of our nation's strength and unity. It's been a source of pride and inspiration for millions of citizens. And the American Flag has been a prominent icon in our national history. Here are the highlights of its unique past.

On January 1, 1776, the Continental Army was reorganized in accordance with a Congressional resolution which placed American forces under George Washington's control. On that New Year's Day the Continental Army was laying

siege to Boston which had been taken over by the British Army. Washington ordered the Grand Union flag hoisted above his base at Prospect Hill. It had 13 alternate red and white stripes and the British Union Jack in the upper left-hand corner (the canton). In May of 1776, Betsy Ross reported that she sewed the first American flag. On June 14, 1777, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act: "Resolved, That the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation." Between 1777 and 1960, Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design and arrangement of the flag and allowed for additional stars and stripes to be added to reflect the admission of each new state.

- Act of January 13, 1794 - provided for 15 stripes and 15 stars after May 1795.
- Act of April 4, 1818 - provided for 13 stripes and one star for each state, to be added to the flag on the 4th of July following the admission of each new state, signed by President Monroe.
- Executive Order of President Taft dated June 24, 1912 - established proportions of the flag and provided for arrangement of the stars in six horizontal rows of eight each, a single point of each star to be upward.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated January 3, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated August 21, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and eleven rows of stars staggered vertically.

Today the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with 6 white. The stripes represent the original 13 colonies, the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well: Red symbolizes Hardiness and Valor, White symbolizes Purity and Innocence and Blue represents Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.

Political structure

The United States is a federal union of 50 states, with the District of Columbia as the seat of the federal government. The Constitution outlines the structure of the national government and specifies its powers and activities, and defines the relationship between the national government and individual state governments. Power is shared between the national and state (local) governments. Within each state are counties, townships, cities and villages, each of which has its own elective government.

Governmental power and functions in the United States rest in three branches of government: the legislative, judicial, and executive. Article 1 of the Constitution defines the legislative branch and vests power to legislate in the Congress of the United States. The executive powers of the President are defined in Article 2. Article 3 places judicial power in the hands of one Supreme Court and inferior courts as Congress sees necessary to establish. In this system of a "separation of powers" each branch operates independently of the others, however, there are built in "checks and balances" to prevent a concentration of power in any one branch and to protect the rights and liberties of citizens. For example, the President can veto bills approved by Congress and the President nominates individuals to serve in the Federal judiciary; the Supreme Court can declare a law enacted by Congress or an action by the President unconstitutional; and Congress can impeach the President and Federal court justices and judges. Today, there are two major political parties in the United States, the Democratic and the Republican. The Democratic Party evolved from the party of Thomas Jefferson, formed before 1800. The Republican Party was established in the 1850s by Abraham Lincoln and others who opposed the expansion of slavery. The Democratic Party is considered to be the more liberal party, and the Republican, the more conservative. Democrats generally believe that government has an obligation to provide social and economic programs for those who need them. Republicans are not necessarily opposed to such programs but believe they are too costly to taxpayers. Republicans

put more emphasis on encouraging private enterprise in the belief that a strong private sector makes citizens less dependent on government. Both major parties have supporters among a wide variety of Americans and embrace a wide range of political views. Americans do not have to join a political party to vote or to be a candidate for public office, but running for office without the money and campaign workers a party can provide is difficult. It is the two major parties that organize and dominate government at both the national and state levels.

The state governments follow the same pattern as the federal government, with power divided among the executive, legislative and judicial branches. In general, matters which lie entirely within state borders are the concern of state governments. These include internal communications; regulations relating to property, industry, business and public utilities; the state criminal code; and working conditions within the state. Within this context, the federal government requires that state governments not adopt laws which contradict or violate the Constitution or laws and treaties of the United States. There are many areas of overlap between state and federal jurisdictions. The federal government has assumed ever broadening responsibility in matters relating to health, education, welfare, transportation, and housing and urban development. Programs in these areas are now often developed on a cooperative basis between the two levels of government.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census (part of the Commerce Department) has identified for the year 2002 no less than 87,900 local governmental units in the United States, including municipalities, counties, townships, school districts and special districts. More than three-quarters of the citizens of the United States now live in towns, large cities or their suburbs. The city directly serves the needs of the people, providing everything from police and fire protection to sanitary codes, health regulations, education, public transportation and housing. Cooperation with both state and federal organizations is essential. The county is a subdivision of the state, usually -- but not always -- containing two or more townships and several villages. A board of commissioners levies taxes, borrows and appropriates money, fixes the salaries of

county employees, supervises elections, builds and maintains highways and bridges, and administers national, state and county welfare programs.

The American Constitution is the oldest written constitution in force in the world. The authors of the Constitution built in a provision for amending the document when political, social or economic conditions demanded it. Twenty-seven amendments have been passed since ratification. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution, called the Bill of Rights, assure individual rights and freedoms. The Constitution divides the powers of the government into three branches - the Executive, headed by the President; the Legislative, which includes both houses of Congress (the Senate and the House of Representatives); and the Judicial, which is headed by the Supreme Court. The Constitution limits the role of each branch, through a system of checks and balances, to prevent any one branch from gaining undue power.

The Media in the United States

The U.S. media today is frequently known as the Fourth Estate, an appellation that suggests the press shares equal stature with the other branches of government created by the Constitution. The press, or "Fourth Estate" plays a vital role as a guardian of U.S. democracy. That role is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1789, stipulating that Congress not enact any laws abridging freedom of the press. U.S. media have traveled a long road since the first newspaper was published in Boston, Massachusetts in 1690. Within 50 years, magazines also began appearing in several major American cities. The advent of commercial radio at the beginning of the 20th century ended print's monopoly of the media in America, giving nationwide and, later, global audiences unprecedented access to live audio programs. Television, an even more powerful medium, entered the scene shortly after World War II. Defying predictions of their decline, the other media have diversified to confront television's dominant appeal. Satellite technology has allowed U.S. TV networks, especially cable networks, to reach overseas audiences anywhere on the globe. Interactive media, fueled by the advance of digital technology and the growing convergence of the computer, telephone and cable television, represent the principal trend of the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. The print and electronic media in the United States, offering wide news and entertainment options, are a pervasive element in American society. According to a recent survey by Mediamark Research, 98% of Americans have a television; 82% of those watch "prime time" and 71% cable programming in an average week. 84% percent of Americans listen to radio regularly. 79% percent are newspaper readers. 45% percent of the whole American population has access to the Internet, while for certain demographic groups that percentage reaches a high of close to 70%.

Economics plays a major role in shaping the information served up to the U.S. public in newspapers, on radio and television, and now on the Internet. While nonprofit and advocacy organizations have significant voices, most of the public's

primary sources of information major urban newspapers, the weekly news magazines, and the broadcast and cable networks are in business to make money. Media and communications, with revenues of over \$242 billion, are one of America's largest business groups. In 2000, adult consumers of media information and amusement products spent over \$675 a person. Advertisers spent an additional \$215 billion to bring their products to the attention of the American public. The media are a great engine in American society, providing jobs for hundreds of thousands of technicians, writers, artists, performers and intellectuals and shaping attitudes and beliefs.

The public's right to know is one of the central principles of American society. The framers of the Constitution of the United States resented the strict control that the American colonies' British rulers had imposed over ideas and information they did not like. They determined that the power of knowledge should be placed in the hands of the people. To insure a healthy and uninhibited flow of information, they included freedom of the press among the basic human rights protected in the new nation's Bill of Rights. These first 10 Amendments to the Constitution of the United States became law in 1791. The First Amendment says, in part, that "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press..." That protection from control by the federal government meant that anyone rich or poor, and regardless of political or religious beliefs could generally publish whatever he or she wished.

Ever since, the First Amendment has served as the conscience and shield of all Americans. In those early days, the media, created by printing presses, were few and simple newspapers, pamphlets and books. Today the media also include television, radio, films and the Internet; and the term "the press" refers to any news operation in any media, not just print. Few press laws are in force in the U.S. because of this broad constitutional protection of press freedom and analogous provisions in the constitutions of the 50 states. Existing laws tend to provide additional protections in categories not covered by the Constitution. The Privacy Act of 1974, for example, regulates the collection and dissemination of personal information contained in the files of federal agencies; the Privacy Protection Act of 1980 establishes protection

from police searches of newsrooms. Additional examples include federal and state Freedom of Information and "sunshine" laws (such as the 1966 federal Freedom of Information Act) which opens up executive-branch records to public and press scrutiny.

The scope of U.S. press freedom has been determined principally by court decisions interpreting the nuances of the First Amendment. In general, the U.S. courts have held that the press has a "watchdog" role over government and is not subject to prior restraint or registration. On the other hand, defamation, obscenity and publication of national-security secrets have been generally determined not eligible for protection under the First Amendment. In 1934, Congress set up the current oversight agency of the broadcasting industry, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The law vested in the FCC not only "watchdog" functions, but licensing and rulemaking powers, subject to "public interest, convenience, and necessity." Acting on this mandate, the FCC has sought to promote diversity in content and ownership in the broadcasting industry.

The investigative journalism and the "watchdog" role developed by the American press in the 1960s and early 1970s gave way to increased attention to "journalism ethics." During the Vietnam War, the press played a major role in accelerating the U.S. exit from an unpopular war. During the Watergate investigation, two persistent reporters from the *Washington Post*, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, succeeded in uncovering facts that led to the resignation of President Nixon. There was, however, also a feeling that the press sometimes went too far, crossing the fine line between the public's right to know and both the right of individuals to privacy and the obligation of the government to protect national security. In many cases, the courts have decided when and if the press has overstepped its rights. In 1971, the government tried to stop the *New York Times* from publishing a secret study of the Vietnam War known as the Pentagon Papers, claiming that publication would damage national security. But the U.S. Supreme

Court ruled that since the government could not demonstrate the extent of the damage to national security, the newspapers should be free to publish the information.

Faced, however, with polls showing decreasing credibility in press reports, media organizations throughout the 1980s placed renewed emphasis on ethics, taking advantage of such vehicles as codes, news councils and ombudsmen. Journalistic codes of ethics have been in use in the United States since 1923. The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) approved the first such code; followed by the Society of Professional Journalists/Sigma Delta Chi and the Associated Press Managing Editors. These voluntary ethical codes of the three major newspaper professional organizations offer important guidelines, calling on journalists to perform with intelligence, objectivity, accuracy and fairness. One of the most important issues for American journalists, however, remains the conflict between two deeply held beliefs: the right to know and the right to privacy and fair treatment. It is not a conflict that can be resolved with a single formula, but only on a case-by-case basis. Although the First Amendment protects the press from government interference, the press does not have complete freedom. There are laws against libel and invasion of privacy, as well as limits on what reporters may do in order to get a story. Television news journalists operate under an additional restriction called the Fairness Doctrine. Under this rule, when a station presents one viewpoint on a controversial issue, the public interest requires the station to give representatives of opposing viewpoints a chance to broadcast a reply. The U.S. court system, state and federal legislatures, regulatory bodies, the public and the media will all continue to have a hand in shaping how such legal and ethical issues are handled.

Holidays

American Holidays is an introductory survey of the historical and social background of American holidays. People in every culture celebrate holidays. Although the word "holiday" literally means "holy day," most American holidays are not religious, but commemorative in nature and origin. Because the nation is blessed with rich ethnic heritage it is possible to trace some of the American holidays to diverse cultural sources and traditions, but all holidays have taken on a distinctively American flavor. In the United States, the word "holiday" is synonymous with "celebration!"

In the strict sense, there are no federal (national) holidays in the United States. Each of the 50 states has jurisdiction over its holidays. In practice, however, most states observe the federal ("legal or public ") holidays, even though the President and Congress can legally designate holidays only for federal government employees. The following ten holidays per year are proclaimed by the federal government.

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Day	third Monday in January
Washington's Birthday	third Monday in February
Memorial Day	last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	first Monday in September
Columbus Day	second Monday in October
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	fourth Thursday in November
Christmas Day	December 25

In 1971, the dates of many federal holidays were officially moved to the nearest Monday by then-President Richard Nixon. There are five holidays which are

not necessarily celebrated on Mondays: Thanksgiving Day, Veterans Day, New Year's Day, Independence Day and Christmas Day. When New Year's Day, Independence Day, or Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, the next day is also a holiday. When one of these holidays falls on a Saturday, the previous day is also a holiday. Federal government offices, including the post office, are always closed on all federal holidays. Schools and businesses close on major holidays like Independence Day and Christmas Day but may not always be closed, for example, on President's Day or Veterans Day.

Federal holidays are observed according to the legislation of individual states. The dates of these holidays, and others, are decided upon by each state government, not by the federal (national) government. Each state can agree on the same date that the President has proclaimed, such as Thanksgiving Day. State legislation can also change the date of a holiday for its own special commemoration. Cities and towns can decide not to celebrate a federal legal holiday at all. However, the majority of the states (and the cities and towns within them) usually choose the date or day celebrated by the rest of the nation. There are other "legal" or "public" holidays which are observed at the state or local level. The closing of local government offices and businesses will vary. Whether citizens have the day off from work or not depends on local decisions.

Sport

Sports play an important role in American society. They enjoy tremendous popularity but more important they are vehicles for transmitting such values as justice, fair play, and teamwork. Sports have contributed to racial and social integration and over history have been a "social glue" bonding the country together. Early Americans like Benjamin Franklin and President Thomas Jefferson stressed the need for exercise and fitness promoting for example running and swimming. In the 20th century, American presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy continued to encourage physical activity. President Dwight D. Eisenhower founded the President's Council on Youth Fitness in 1956 to encourage America's youth to make fitness a priority. The Council later became the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, including people of all ages and abilities and promoting fitness through sports and games. Today, the Council continues to play an important role in promoting fitness and healthy living in America. The United States offers limitless opportunities to engage in sports - either as a participant or as a spectator. Team sports were a part of life in colonial North America. Native American peoples played a variety of ball games including some that may be viewed as earlier forms of lacrosse. The typical American sports of baseball, basketball and football, however, arose from games that were brought to America by the first settlers that arrived from Europe in the 17th century. These games were re-fashioned and elaborated in the course of the 19th century and are now the most popular sports in the United States. Various social rituals have grown up around athletic contests. The local high school football or basketball game represents the biggest event of the week for residents in many communities across the United States. Fans of major university and professional football teams often gather in parking lots outside stadiums to eat a "tailgate" picnic lunch before kickoff, and for parties in front of television sets in each other's homes during the professional championship game, the Super Bowl. Thousands of baseball fans flee the snow and ice of the North for a week or two each winter by making a pilgrimage to training camps in the South and Southwest to watch

up close their favorite players prepare for the spring opening of the professional baseball season.

Individual competitions accompanied the growth of team sports. Shooting and fishing contests were part of the colonial experience, as were running, boxing, and horse racing. Golf and tennis emerged in the 1800s. Recent decades have given birth to a wide variety of challenging activities and contests such as sail boarding, mountain biking, and sport climbing, collectively referred to as "extreme sports".

Arts & Entertainment

There is no central ministry of culture that sets national policy for the arts in the United States government, thus reflecting the conviction that there are important areas of national life where government should have little or no role. The two national endowments the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) provide grant support for individual artists and scholars and for arts and humanities institutions. While the NEA budget \$115 million for fiscal year 2003 is quite modest when compared to other nations' public arts funding, private donations have always provided the major support for American culture. Private spending for the arts in the United States for the year 2002 has been calculated at roughly \$12.1 billion. During its nearly four decades of existence, the NEA, whose goals are to encourage excellence and to bring art to all Americans, has used its funds as a spark for private beneficence.

The 20th century has been one in which artists in the United States have broken free from Old World antecedents, taking the various cultural disciplines in new directions with impressive, innovative results. Music, film, theater, dance, architecture and other artistic expressions have been enhanced and transformed. A rejuvenation in music, new directions in modern dance, drama drawn from the U.S. heartland, independent filmmaking across the landscape, the globalization of the visual arts all of these are part of the contemporary scene in the United States. What is at the root of all the ongoing creative ferment? Dana Gioia, the poet who currently is chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, identifies one likely source: "The reason that America has had this diversely distinguished history of art, this unprecedented breadth of achievement ranging from movies to abstract expressionism to jazz to modern literature is because America was and is a society that recognizes the individual freedom of its citizens."

Moving pictures were not an American invention; however, they have nonetheless been the preeminent American contribution to world entertainment. In the early 1900s, when the medium was new, many immigrants, found employment in the U.S. film industry. They were able to make their mark in a brand-new business: the exhibition of short films in storefront theaters called nickelodeons, after their admission price of a nickel (five cents). Within a few years, ambitious men like Samuel Goldwyn, Carl Laemmle, Adolph Zukor, Louis B. Mayer, and the Warner Brothers had switched to the production side of the business. Soon they were the heads of a new kind of enterprise - the movie studio. The major studios were located in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles, California.

During the so-called Golden Age of Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s, the studios were cranking out a total of about 400 movies a year, seen by an audience of 90 million Americans per week. Movie-making was a business and motion picture companies made money by operating under the so-called studio system. The major studios kept thousands of people on salary and they owned hundreds of theaters in cities and towns across the nation - theaters that showed their films and that were always in need of fresh material. What is remarkable is how much quality entertainment emerged from such a regimented process. One reason this was possible is that, with so many movies being made, not every one had to be a big hit. The studio system succumbed to two forces in the late 1940s: (1) a federal antitrust action that separated the production of films from their exhibition; and (2) the advent of television. The number of movies being made dropped sharply, even as the average budget soared, because Hollywood wanted to offer audiences the kind of spectacle they couldn't see on television. This blockbuster syndrome has continued to affect Hollywood. Added to the skyrocketing salaries paid actors, studio heads, and deal-making agents, it means that movies released today tend to be either huge successes or huge failures, depending on how well their enormous costs match up with the public taste.

From the late 1960s until the end of the 1970s, American filmmaking underwent an extraordinary renaissance. In few other periods were American directors so influential or their movies so central in shaping the experience and values of audiences everywhere. One reason for this renaissance was that, with the advent of the counterculture, the major Hollywood studios were no longer certain about what sorts of movies would make money or about what the new, young audiences who came of age in the 1960s wanted. During the 1980s, much of this cinematic inventiveness seemed to vanish. Films of the past 15 years, although mostly financed by Hollywood, are exceedingly offbeat, a testament to the variety of American filmmaking. One important reason for this eclecticism is the impact of smaller, semi-independent studios -- like Sony Pictures Classics and DreamWorks -- that specialize in producing or distributing avant-garde movies. No studio head has been more influential or more successful in promoting innovative American as well as foreign-language films than Harvey Weinstein of Miramax.

So while American movies are undeniably commercial enterprises, there is no inherent contradiction between the desire to make a profit on a film and the yearning to create a work that is original and provocative. Indeed, it may well be that the market-driven impulse to establish an emotional connection with moviegoers has served as a stimulant for art. Hence, some of the most unforgettable American films of the past 40 years, from *The Godfather* to *The Hours*, have been both commercially successful and artistically compelling.

Economy

The United States Of America (USA) is the largest and most technologically powerful economy of the world. The per capita Gross National Income of the country has reached at US \$37,610 in the year 2003, which is much higher in contrast to the other developed economies of the world. The average annual growth rate of GDP of the country was 2.9% during 2003, while GDP per capita grew at 2% in the same year. The growth rate of output projected for year 2005 was 3.5% for the country. Among the various sectors of the economy, the service sector has the highest contribution to the US GDP, followed by Industry. Being an industrialized nation agriculture accounts for a very marginal share in the total national income. Presently the world's top most economy's failures are also more clear when we go through IMF's report on the economy which is observing a record-low household saving rate and a large federal fiscal deficit. Thus it is essential to support the adjustment by strong US national saving to avoid a burden falling on investment and growth, both in America and abroad. U.S. foreign trade and global economic policies have changed direction dramatically during the more than two centuries that the United States has been a country. In the early days of the nation's history, government and business mostly concentrated on developing the domestic economy irrespective of what went on abroad. But since the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II, the country generally has sought to reduce trade barriers and coordinate the world economic system. Americans are convinced that trade promotes economic growth, social stability, and democracy in individual countries and that it advances world prosperity, the rule of law, and peace in international relations. The first ingredient of a nation's economic system is its natural resources. The United States is rich in mineral resources and fertile farm soil, and it is blessed with a moderate climate. The second ingredient is labor, which converts natural resources into goods. The number of available workers and, more importantly, their productivity help determine the health of an economy. Labor-force quality continues to be an important issue. Today, Americans consider "human capital" a key to

success in numerous modern, high-technology industries. As a result, government leaders and business officials increasingly stress the importance of education and training to develop workers with the kind of nimble minds and adaptable skills needed in new industries such as computers and telecommunications. The United States is said to have a mixed economy because privately owned businesses and government both play important roles. The American free enterprise system emphasizes private ownership. Private businesses produce most goods and services, and almost two-thirds of the nation's total economic output goes to individuals for personal use (the remaining one-third is bought by government and business). The consumer role is so great, in fact, that the nation is sometimes characterized as having a "consumer economy." This emphasis on private ownership arises, in part, from American beliefs about personal freedom. From the time the nation was created, Americans have feared excessive government power, and they have sought to limit government's authority over individuals -- including its role in the economic realm. In addition, Americans generally believe that an economy characterized by private ownership is likely to operate more efficiently than one with substantial government ownership.

Over the past decade, U.S. exports accounted for about a quarter of the economic growth. The United States also maintains a trade surplus in services, \$79.7 billion in 2006. The biggest U.S. services export category was travel by foreigners to the United States, \$85.8 billion that year. In contrast, the United States runs a large and growing deficit in merchandise goods trade. While the United States exported more than \$1 trillion in goods in 2006, it imported more than \$1.8 trillion worth. By far the top imports that year were autos and auto parts, \$211.9 billion, and crude oil, \$225.2 billion. The top sources of U.S. imports were Canada, China, Mexico, Japan, and Germany. Among the top U.S. exports in 2006 were autos and auto parts, semiconductors, and civilian aircraft. The top U.S. export destinations were Canada, Mexico, Japan, China, and the United Kingdom. In 2000-2006, even though U.S. goods exports increased 33 percent, U.S. goods imports went up even faster, 52

percent. The United States supported trade liberalization and was instrumental in the creation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), an international code of tariff and trade rules. One other principle the United States traditionally has followed in the trade arena is multilateralism. Despite its commitment to multilateralism, the United States in recent years also has pursued regional and bilateral trade agreements. The emergence of electronic commerce also is opening a whole new set of trade issues. In 1998, ministers of the World Trade Organization issued a declaration that countries should not interfere with electronic commerce by imposing duties on electronic transmissions, but many issues remain unresolved. The United States would like to make the Internet a tariff-free zone, ensure competitive telecommunications markets around the world, and establish global protections for intellectual property in digital products. The role of government in the American economy extends far beyond its activities as a regulator of specific industries. The government also manages the overall pace of economic activity, seeking to maintain high levels of employment and stable prices. It has two main tools for achieving these objectives: fiscal policy, through which it determines the appropriate level of taxes and spending; and monetary policy, through which it manages the supply of money. The Federal Reserve, the independent U.S. central bank, manages the money supply and use of credit (monetary policy), while the president and Congress adjust federal spending and taxes (fiscal policy).

Since the inflation of the 1970s, Federal Reserve monetary policy has emphasized preventing rapid escalation of general price levels. When the general price level is rising too fast, the Federal Reserve acts to slow economic expansion by reducing the money supply, thus raising short-term interest rates. When the economy is slowing down too fast, or contracting, the Federal Reserve increases the money supply, thus lowering short-term interest rates. The most common way it effects these changes in interest rates, called open-market operations, is by buying and selling government securities among a small group of major banks and bond dealers. A

particularly tricky situation for monetary policy makers, called stagflation, occurs when the economy is slowing down and inflation is rising too fast.

In 2006 real wages rose 1.7 Percent. This means an extra \$1,030 for the typical family of four with two wage earners. Real median household income in the United States climbed between 2005 and 2006, reaching \$48,200. The wage growth translates into an extra \$585 for the average full-time worker and an extra \$1,030 in 2006 for a typical family of four with two workers. The President's Tax Relief enabled more than 5 Million taxpayers, including 4 Million taxpayers with children, to have their income tax liability completely eliminated in 2006. As a result of the President's tax relief, a family with two children now begins to pay income taxes when their income reaches \$41,867. Without tax relief, the same family would have begun to pay income taxes when their income reached \$33,070. The President's Tax Relief is helping Americans keep more of what they earn.

Companies turn to capital markets to raise funds needed to finance the building of factories, office buildings, and airplanes, to conduct research and development, and to support a host of other essential corporate activities. Much of the money comes from such major institutions as pension funds, insurance companies, banks, foundations, and colleges and universities. Today about 52% of households own stock, compared to 32% in 1989. Americans pride themselves on the efficiency of their stock market and other capital markets. These markets owe their success in part to computers, but they also depend on tradition and trust. There are thousands of stocks, but shares of the largest, best-known, and most actively traded corporations generally are listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). The largest number of different stocks and bonds traded are traded on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation system, or Nasdaq. This so-called over-the-counter exchange, which handles trading in about 5,240 stocks, is not located in any one place; rather, it is an electronic communications network of stock and bond dealers. An unprecedented boom in the stock market, combined with the ease of investing in stocks, led to a sharp increase in public participation in securities markets during the

1990s. The annual trading volume on the New York Stock Exchange, or "Big Board," soared from 11,400 million shares in 1980 to 169,000 million shares in 1998. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which was created in 1934, is the principal regulator of securities markets in the United States. Before 1929, individual states regulated securities activities. But the stock market crash of 1929, which triggered the Great Depression, showed that arrangement to be inadequate. The Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 consequently gave the federal government a preeminent role in protecting small investors from fraud and making it easier for them to understand companies' financial reports.

About 146 million people in the United States were working in paid jobs at the end of 2006, with another 7 million unemployed; the 153 million total makes up the world's third largest labor force, after China's and India's. Nearly two-thirds of U.S. working-age people participate in the labor force. Males and females each account for about half. About 15 percent of them are foreign born. Some 5 to 6 percent of them work more than one job. The private sector employs most U.S. workers, 85.5 percent, and governments employ the rest. A lot of people are self-employed, more than 10 million in 2005, although some of them split their time between working for other people and for themselves. Most working people work for someone else in nearly 6 million U.S. companies. Most of these companies have fewer than 20 employees.

U.S. workers are flexible, people changing jobs. "The data show that each month millions of Americans leave their jobs – most of them voluntarily – and millions more are hired," Robert Kimmitt, deputy secretary of the U.S. Treasury, wrote in 2006. "This is what we want: an economy in which people looking to move up have as many opportunities as possible from which to choose." U.S. workers do not typically endure long-term unemployment. In 2005 only 12 percent of unemployed U.S. workers could not find work within a year, compared to 46 percent in the European Union.

Although U.S. workers have long had the right to organize, only 12 percent of them were labor union members in 2006, down from about 35 percent half a century earlier. The biggest group of U.S. workers comprises nearly 23 million in office and administrative support jobs, such as telephone receptionists, secretaries, and hotel clerks. The groups of workers getting the highest average wages, more than \$80,000 a year, have jobs in management and law. The people getting the lowest average wages, less than \$20,000 a year, work in food preparation and service. From the nation's earliest days, farming has held a crucial place in the American economy and culture. Early in the nation's life, farmers were seen as exemplifying economic virtues such as hard work, initiative, and self-sufficiency. American farmers owe their ability to produce large yields to a number of factors. The American Midwest has some of the richest soil in the world. Rainfall is modest to abundant over most areas of the country; rivers and underground water permit extensive irrigation where it is not. Large capital investments and increasing use of highly trained labor also have contributed to the success of American agriculture. The first two decades of the 20th century turned out to be the golden age of American agriculture. Farm prices were high as demand for goods increased and land values rose. Technical advances continued to improve productivity. The good years of the early 20th century ended with falling prices following World War I. By the end of World War II, the farm economy faced the challenge of overproduction. Technological advances, such as the introduction of gasoline- and electric-powered machinery and the widespread use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, meant production per hectare was higher than ever. Today we see a highly diverse set of farms, responding with alacrity to apply unique technological possibilities to a new array of increasingly well articulated consumer demands in a globalized food system. The role of government will also continue to change, particularly as it relates to trade, farm policy, infrastructure demands, conservation and the environment, rural communities, and nutrition and food assistance. American agriculture increasingly has become an "agribusiness." Agribusiness includes a variety of farm businesses and structures, from small, one-family corporations to huge conglomerates or multinational firms that own large

tracts of land or that produce goods and materials used by farmers. Sometimes owned by absentee stockholders, these corporate farms use more machinery and far fewer farm hands. In 1940, there were 6 million farms averaging 67 hectares each. By the late 1990s, there were only about 2.2 million farms averaging 190 hectares in size. During roughly this same period, farm employment declined dramatically -- from 12.5 million in 1930 to 1.2 million in the 1990s. While production doubled over the last 50 years, farm numbers dropped by more than two-thirds. Today, about 150,000 American farmers produce most of our food and fiber. While among the world's most competitive farms, these operations make up just one segment of U.S. agriculture. USDA counts another 2 million farmers who meet the criterion of selling at least \$1,000 worth of product annually, many of whom have other occupations but enjoy rural lifestyles. The convergence of computer and telecommunications technologies has revolutionized how we get, store, retrieve, and share information. Consumers now routinely use computer networks to identify sellers, evaluate products and services, compare prices, and exert market leverage. Electronic commerce (e-commerce) are business processes which shift transactions to the Internet. E-commerce is growing at a rapid rate. The value of e-commerce transactions, while still small relative to the size of the U.S. economy, continues to show strong growth despite a recent economic downturn. More significant than the dollar amount of these transactions, however, are the new business processes. Many new Internet-based companies and traditional producers of goods and services are working to transform their business processes into e-commerce processes in an effort to lower costs, improve customer service, and increase productivity, with varying degrees of success. The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced in May 2008 that U.S. retail e-commerce sales for 2006 reached \$ 107 billion, up from \$ 87 billion in 2005 - an increase of 22 percent. From 2001 to 2006, retail e-sales increased at an average annual growth rate of of 25.4 percent, compared with 4.8 percent for total retail sales. In 2006 e-commerce sales were 2.7 percent of total sales. Over 90 percent of retail e-sales were concentrated in two industry groups: Nonstore retailers (73 percent, \$78 billion), and Motor Vehicles and Parts Dealer (19 percent, \$20 billion).

There are a range of policy issues which will certainly affect the future of e-commerce activities. Internet use erases national boundaries, and the growth of e-commerce on the Internet and the complexity of these issues mean that domestic and global e-commerce policies will become increasingly intertwined. Issues currently under discussion include Internet taxation, encryption and electronic authentication (i.e., digital signatures), intellectual property protection (i.e., patent or copyright infringement), computer network security, privacy safeguards for individuals and organizations, and telecommunications infrastructure development. In the United States, legislation enacted as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001(USA PATRIOT ACT of 2001, P.L. 107-56) gave U.S. lawmakers greater authority to gain access to electronic financial transactions (for example, to ferret out illegal money laundering).

Science & Technology

Computers figure so heavily in our daily lives that it is difficult to understand why early computer experts did not foresee much demand for these specialized machines. For example, in the 1940s, the chairman of IBM thought a total of five machines could be sold worldwide. Since then, a succession of breakthroughs has created a new economic sector: Information Technologies (IT) - the ever growing variety of ways in which we are able to gather, store, analyze, share, and display information.

Drawing on Max Planck's quantum theory and Albert Einstein's explanation of photoelectric phenomena, Bell Laboratories invented the transistor in 1948. This solid-state replacement for the vacuum tube, revolutionized electronics. With the invention of the integrated circuit in 1958, the pace of electronic and computer technology was greatly increased. Today, millions of integrated circuits can be placed on silicon chips no bigger than postage stamps. Book-sized computers of the 1990s can outperform room-sized computers of the 1960s. Miniaturization causes prices to spiral downward, making the technology affordable for larger numbers of small businesses, local governments, schools, libraries, families, and individuals.

The Internet. Much of the innovation that spawned today's information technologies resulted directly from Federal investment in science and technology. Starting in 1969, the Department of Defense opened its experimental nationwide computer network through the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). The National Science Foundation (NSF) extended ARPA's network to civilian academic users in 1987. The Internet emerged from the joint effort by Federal agencies and universities to advance networking technology.

More than half of the nation is now online. In 2000, 98% of U.S. schools had Internet access. The number of households with Internet access has increased to 50.5% in 2001. Use of broadband services such as cable, satellite, and DSL is rapidly

expanding. Wireless Internet access for notebooks via WLANs in airports, hotels and cafes is also becoming increasingly popular.

For the United States, the Information Technology Revolution quietly changed the way business and government operate. The nation shifted the control of essential processes in manufacturing, utilities, banking, and communications to networked computers. As a result, the cost of doing business dropped and productivity skyrocketed. Since 2002, the U.S. economy and national security are fully dependent upon information technology and the information infrastructure. A network of networks directly supports the operation of all sectors of U.S. economy - energy (electric power, oil and gas), transportation (rail, air, merchant marine), finance and banking, information and telecommunications, public health, emergency services, water, chemical, defense industrial base, food, agriculture, and postal and shipping. At the core of the information infrastructure upon which we depend is the Internet.

Cyber Security. While the Internet has grown enormously and globally, it has also grown increasingly insecure. Cyber attacks on U.S. information networks occur regularly and can have serious consequences such as disrupting critical operations, causing loss of revenue and intellectual property, or loss of life. To be able to counter such attack Biotechnology is an umbrella term describing the use of organisms or their cellular components to make products, or to modify the genetic structure of plants and animals to carry a desired trait. The biotechnology industry serves both medical and non-medical markets. The medical market includes human therapeutics and diagnostics as well as applications in veterinary medicine. The National Institute of Health's (NIH) Human Genome Project was an attempt to construct a genetic map of humans by analyzing the chemical composition of each of the 50,000 to 100,000 genes making up the human body. The International Human Genome Sequencing Consortium, led in the United States by the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) and the Department of Energy (DOE), successfully completed the Human Genome Project in April 2003, more than two years ahead of schedule.

Building on the successes of the Human Genome Project, the Dept. of Energy has initiated an ambitious program to achieve the most far-reaching of all biological goals: a fundamental, comprehensive, and systematic understanding of life. The Genomes to Life program will make important contributions in the quest to venture beyond characterizing such individual life components as genes and other DNA sequences toward a more comprehensive, integrated view of biology at a whole-systems level.

Non-medical markets encompass both agriculture and industrial applications. Agricultural applications include making plants and crops pest resistant, improving seed quality, modulating growth and ripening times, enhancing nutrient content of foods, and providing simple and inexpensive diagnostics for use in field testing for contaminants and toxic materials. Industrial uses of biotechnology involve many different sectors and include industrial enzymes, waste management, environmental cleanup, energy biomass, cosmetic formulations, and diagnostics for toxicity determinations. In the roughly 25 years since the development of recombinant DNA technologies in research laboratories, over 2,000 firms have been founded in the United States to explore and take advantage of this new field. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established in 1970 by President Nixon. It was created to permit coordinated and effective governmental action on behalf of the environment. Its mission is to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment - air, water, and land - under the laws enacted by Congress. EPA's purpose is to ensure that: all Americans are protected from significant risks to human health and the environment where they live, learn and work.

National efforts to reduce environmental risk are based on the best available scientific information. Environmental protection is an integral consideration in U.S. policies on natural resources, human health, economic growth, energy, transportation, agriculture, industry, and international trade, and these factors are similarly considered in establishing environmental policy. All parts of society have access to accurate information in order to effectively participate in managing human health and

environmental risks. Environmental protection contributes to making American communities and ecosystems diverse, sustainable and economically productive.

Environmental technology, one of the fastest growing industry sectors worldwide, has evolved in response to growing concerns about the risks and costs of pollution and the enactment of pollution control legislation in the United States and around the world. It advances sustainable development by reducing risk, enhancing cost-effectiveness, and creating products and processes that are not environmentally harmful. Environmental technology is comprised of four major categories: 1) monitoring and assessment, or technologies used to establish and monitor the condition of the environment; 2) pollution avoidance, or equipment and processes used to prevent or minimize the generation of pollutants; 3) pollution control, or technologies that render hazardous substances harmless before they enter the environment; and, 4) remediation and restoration, or technologies used to render hazardous substances harmless. As in physics and chemistry, Americans have dominated the Nobel Prize for physiology or medicine since World War II. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), the focal point for biomedical research in the United States, has played a key role in this achievement. Begun as a one-room Laboratory of Hygiene in 1887, the National Institutes of Health today is one of the world's foremost medical research centers, and the Federal focal point for medical research in the U.S. The goal of NIH research is to foster knowledge that helps prevent, detect, diagnose and treat disease and disability - from the rarest genetic disorder to the common cold. NIH works toward that mission by conducting research in its own laboratories, supporting the research of non-Federal scientists in universities, medical schools, hospitals, and research institutions throughout the country and abroad, helping in the training of research investigators; and fostering communication of medical information.

NIH research has helped make possible numerous medical achievements. Mortality from heart disease, the number-one killer in the United States, dropped 41

percent between 1971 and 1991. The death rate for strokes decreased by 59 percent in the same period. More than 70 percent of the children who get cancer are cured.

With the help of the NIH, molecular genetics and genomics research have revolutionized biomedical science. In the 1980s and 1990s, researchers performed the first trial of gene therapy in humans and are now able to locate, identify, and describe the function of many genes in the human genome. Perhaps the most exciting scientific development in the United States is the Human Genome Project. This was an attempt to construct a genetic map of humans by analyzing the chemical composition of each of the 50,000 to 100,000 genes making up the human body. The International Human Genome Sequencing Consortium, led in the United States by the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) and the Department of Energy (DOE), successfully completed the Human Genome Project in April 2003, more than two years ahead of schedule. Research conducted by universities, hospitals and corporations also contributes to improvement in diagnosis and treatment of disease. The NIH, for example, funds basic research on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), but many of the drugs used to treat the disease have emerged from the laboratories of the American pharmaceutical industry.

Nuclear medicine is a medical specialty used to image the body and treat disease. Nuclear medicine imaging is unique in that it documents organ function and structure, in contrast to diagnostic radiology which is based upon anatomy. Its origins stem from many scientific discoveries, most notably the discovery of x-rays in 1895 and the discovery of "artificial radioactivity" in 1934. Nuclear medicine uses very small amounts of radioactive materials or radiopharmaceuticals, substances that are attracted to specific organs, bones or tissues. The amount of radiation from a nuclear medicine procedure is comparable to that received during a diagnostic x-ray. The radiopharmaceuticals emit gamma rays that can be detected externally by special types of cameras. These cameras work in conjunction with computers used to form images that provide data and information about the area of body being imaged.

Avian Flu. As of April 2006, outbreaks of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza have been confirmed among birds in nearly 50 countries, 28 of which reported outbreaks since the beginning of 2006. Official figures from the World Health Organization put the number of human cases at around 200 and the number of deaths at over 100. Avian influenza has occasionally spread from bird to human, but there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission at this time. An effective vaccine for humans has not yet been approved. An International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza was announced during the UN General Assembly in September 2005.

One of the most spectacular and controversial achievements of world science in the second half of the 20th century has been the harnessing of nuclear energy. The concepts that led to the splitting of the atom were developed by the scientists of many countries, but the conversion of these ideas into the reality of nuclear fission was the achievement of U.S. scientists in the early 1940s. After German physicists split a uranium nucleus in 1938, Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi and Leo Szilard, all of whom had fled to the United States to escape persecution in National Socialist Germany and Italy, concluded that a nuclear chain reaction was feasible. In a letter to President Franklin Roosevelt, Einstein warned that the next step on the part of German scientists, would be the construction of "extremely powerful bombs." This warning led to the Manhattan Project - the United States' effort to build an atomic bomb before Germany. The development of the bomb and its use against Japan in August of 1945 initiated the Atomic Age.

After the war, the network of researchers, government and military officials, and physicians mobilized for the Manhattan Project began working on government programs to promote both peaceful uses of atomic energy and nuclear weapons development. Nuclear power and nuclear medicine are two examples of peaceful uses of atomic energy. Nuclear energy to produce electricity commercially began in the U.S. in 1957. Today, over 100 nuclear power plants produce about 21 percent of all the electricity generated in the United States. A 1979 accident at Three Mile Island in

Pennsylvania made many Americans uncertain about the safety of nuclear power. Utilities must follow a lengthy series of licensing procedures before a nuclear power plant can be built and operated in the United States. The Space Age has run almost in tandem with the Atomic Age. In 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first satellite, Sputnik I, and the United States followed with Explorer I in 1958. The first manned space flights were made in the spring of 1961, first by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin and then by American astronaut, Alan B. Shepard, Jr. In 1961, President Kennedy promised that Americans would walk on the moon before the decade was over and in July of 1969, Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon's surface.

On April 12, 1981, the Space Shuttle orbiter Columbia lifted off from its pad at the Kennedy Space Center, six years after the last American astronaut returned from space following the cooperative U.S./USSR Apollo-Soyuz Test Project. Since 1981, there have been nearly one hundred Shuttle missions into Earth orbit, where a variety of scientific and practical activities have been accomplished. President Ronald Reagan in 1984 committed the U.S. to developing a permanently occupied space station and with NASA invited other countries to join in the project. In 1991, President George Bush and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to joint Space Shuttle-Mir missions that later would lay the groundwork for cooperative space station efforts. President Bill Clinton in 1993 directed NASA to cut the program's cost and complexity while jump-starting the Station's research capabilities and bringing Russia into the fold. NASA carried out the President's directive, and in addition to the Russian hardware already built or under construction for the International Space Station, that nation's contributions to the program included the nine joint Shuttle-Mir missions conducted from 1994 through 1998.

The redesigned orbiting research center was named the "International Space Station." It provides more research opportunities, can carry more crew, requires less maintenance, generates higher power, and can handle contingencies more effectively than any spacecraft before it. Sixteen countries including 11 members of the European Space Agency today are members of the International Space Station Team.

In January 2004 President Bush announced a new vision for the Nation's space exploration program. The President committed the United States to a long-term human and robotic program to explore the solar system, starting with a return to the Moon that will ultimately enable future exploration of Mars and other destinations.

From the first tentative steps of the 1969 moon landing to today's reusable space shuttle, the space program has produced a range of secondary uses of aerospace technology. Communications satellites transmit computer data, telephone calls, and radio and television broadcasts. Weather satellites furnish the data necessary to provide early warnings of severe storms. Space technology has generated thousands of products and services ranging from the lightweight materials used in running shoes to respiratory monitors.

U.S. Society : A Nation of Immigrants

The Golden Door. The first European immigrants in American history came from England and the Netherlands. Attracted by reports of great economic opportunities and religious and political freedom, immigrants from many other countries flocked to the United States in increasing numbers, the flow reaching a peak in the years 1892-1924. During the late 19th century, the government operated a special port of entry on Ellis Island; it was in operation from 1892 until 1954 and is now preserved as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. The Statue of Liberty, which was a gift from the people of France to the people of America in 1886, stands on an island in New York Harbor, near Ellis Island. Between 1820 and 1979, the United States admitted more than 49 million immigrants.

Limits on Newcomers. In 1924, the first laws were passed that set limits on how many people from specific countries would be admitted to the United States. The limits were based on the number of people from that country already living in the country. In 1965, immigration quotas were established according to who applied first; and national quotas were replaced with hemispheric ones. Preference was given to relatives of U.S. citizens and immigrants with specific job skills. In 1978, Congress abandoned hemispheric quotas and established a worldwide ceiling. The United States accepts more immigrants than any other country; in 2007, its population included 38.1 million foreign-born persons (that is appr. 12.6 % of the total population.) The revised immigration law of 1990 created a flexible cap of 675,000 immigrants each year, with certain categories of people exempted from the limit. That law attempts to attract more skilled workers and professionals to the United States and to draw immigrants from countries that have supplied relatively few Americans in recent years.

Illegal Immigrants. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) estimates that some 5 million people are living in the United States without permission, and the number is growing by about 275,000 a year. Native-born

Americans and legal immigrants worry about the problem of illegal immigration. Many believe that illegal immigrants (also called "illegal aliens") take jobs from citizens, especially from young people and members of minority groups. Moreover, illegal aliens can place a heavy burden on tax-supported social services. In 1986 Congress revised immigration law to deal with illegal aliens. Many of those who had been in the country since 1982 became eligible to apply for legal residency that would eventually permit them to stay in the country permanently. In 1990, nearly 900,000 people took advantage of this law to obtain legal status. The law also provided strong measures to combat further illegal immigration and imposed penalties on businesses that knowingly employ illegal aliens.

The Legacy. The steady stream of people coming to America's shores has had a profound effect on the American character. It takes courage and flexibility to leave your homeland and come to a new country. The American people have been noted for their willingness to take risks and try new things, for their independence and optimism. If Americans whose families have been here longer tend to take their material comfort and political freedoms for granted, immigrants are at hand to remind them how important those privileges are.

The first American immigrants, beginning more than 20,000 years ago, were intercontinental wanderers: hunters and their families following animal herds from Asia to America, across a land bridge where the Bering Strait is today. When Spain's Christopher Columbus "discovered" the New World in 1492, about 1.5 million Native Americans lived in what is now the continental United States, although estimates of the number vary greatly. Mistaking the place where he landed San Salvador in the Bahamas for the Indies, Columbus called the Native Americans "Indians." During the next 200 years, people from several European countries followed Columbus across the Atlantic Ocean to explore America and set up trading posts and colonies. Native Americans suffered greatly from the influx of Europeans. The transfer of land from Indian to European and later American hands was accomplished through treaties, wars, and coercion, with Indians constantly giving

way as the newcomers moved west. In the 19th century, the government's preferred solution to the Indian "problem" was to force tribes to inhabit specific plots of land called reservations. Some tribes fought to keep from giving up land they had traditionally used. In many cases the reservation land was of poor quality, and Indians came to depend on government assistance. Poverty and joblessness among Native Americans still exist today.

The territorial wars, along with Old World diseases to which Indians had no built-up immunity, sent their population plummeting, to a low of 350,000 in 1920. Some tribes disappeared altogether; among them were the Mandans of North Dakota, who had helped Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in exploring America's unsettled northwestern wilderness in 1804-06. Other tribes lost their languages and most of their culture. Nonetheless, Native Americans have proved to be resilient. Today they number 4.5 million (about 1.5 percent of the total U.S. population), and only about one-third of Native Americans still live on reservations. Countless American place-names derive from Indian words, including the states of Massachusetts, Ohio, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, and Idaho. Indians taught Europeans how to cultivate crops that are now staples throughout the world: corn, tomatoes, potatoes, tobacco. Canoes, snowshoes, and moccasins are among the Indians' many inventions. Among the flood of immigrants to North America, one group came unwillingly. These were Africans, 500,000 of whom were brought over as slaves between 1619 and 1808, when importing slaves into the United States became illegal. The practice of owning slaves and their descendants continued, however, particularly in the agrarian South, where many laborers were needed to work the fields. The process of ending slavery began in April 1861 with the outbreak of the American Civil War between the free states of the North and the slave states of the South, 11 of which had left the Union. On January 1, 1863, midway through the war, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which abolished slavery in those states that had seceded. Slavery was abolished throughout the United States with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the country's

Constitution in 1865. Even after the end of slavery, however, American blacks were hampered by segregation and inferior education. In search of opportunity, African Americans formed an internal wave of immigration, moving from the rural South to the urban North. But many urban blacks were unable to find work; by law and custom they had to live apart from whites, in run-down neighborhoods called ghettos. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, African Americans, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., used boycotts, marches, and other forms of nonviolent protest to demand equal treatment under the law and an end to racial prejudice. A high point of this civil rights movement came on August 28, 1963, when more than 200,000 people of all races gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., to hear King say: "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-holders will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood....I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Not long afterwards the U.S. Congress passed laws prohibiting discrimination in voting, education, employment, housing, and public accommodations.

Today, African Americans constitute about 13.5 percent of the total U.S. population. In recent decades blacks have made great strides, and the black middle class has grown substantially. In 2002, 50.8 percent of employed blacks held "white-collar" jobs managerial, professional, and administrative positions rather than service jobs or those requiring manual labor. In 2003, 58.3 percent of all black high school graduates enrolled in college within one year (compared to 35.8. % in 1982). For whites, the college participation rate in 2003 was 66.1 percent. Thus, the racial gap was less than 8 percentage points. The average income of blacks is still lower than that of whites, however, and unemployment of blacks particularly of young men remains higher than that of whites. And many black Americans are still trapped by poverty in urban neighborhoods plagued by drug use and crime.

In recent years the focus of the civil rights debate has shifted. With antidiscrimination laws in effect and blacks moving steadily into the middle class, the question has become whether or not the effects of past discrimination require the government to take certain remedial steps. Called "affirmative action," these steps may include hiring a certain number of blacks (or members of other minorities) in the workplace, admitting a certain number of minority students to a school, or drawing the boundaries of a congressional district so as to make the election of a minority representative more likely. The public debate over the need, effectiveness, and fairness of such programs became more intense in the 1990s.

In any case, perhaps the greatest change in the past few decades has been in the attitudes of America's white citizens. More than a generation has come of age since King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Younger Americans in particular exhibit a new respect for all races, and there is an increasing acceptance of blacks by whites in all walks of life and social situations. The Statue of Liberty began lighting the way for new arrivals at a time when many native-born Americans began to worry that the country was admitting too many immigrants. Some citizens feared that their culture was being threatened or that they would lose jobs to newcomers willing to accept low wages. In 1924 Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act. For the first time, the United States set limits on how many people from each country it would admit. The number of people allowed to emigrate from a given country each year was based on the number of people from that country already living in the United States. As a result, immigration patterns over the next 40 years reflected the existing immigrant population, mostly Europeans and North Americans. Prior to 1924, U.S. laws specifically excluded Asian immigrants. People in the American West feared that the Chinese and other Asians would take away jobs, and racial prejudice against people with Asian features was widespread. The law that kept out Chinese immigrants was repealed in 1943, and legislation passed in 1952 allows people of all races to become U.S. citizens.

Today Asian Americans are one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in the country. About 15 million people of Asian descent live in the United States. Although most of them have arrived here recently, they are among the most successful of all immigrant groups. They have a higher income than many other ethnic groups, and large numbers of their children study at the best American universities.

Chinese Largest Asian Group in the United States. Chinese comprised more than 20 percent of the 11.9 million people who identified themselves as Asians in Census 2000, according to a report released March 4, 2002 by the U.S. Commerce Department's Census Bureau. That translates into 2.7 million reporting as Chinese the largest Asian group in the United States. "The Asian Population: 2000," one in a series of Census 2000 briefs, also showed that about 50 percent of the Asians resided in three states: California, New York and Hawaii. Two of these states had Asian populations exceeding 1 million: California (4.2 million) and New York (1.2 million).

It is not uncommon to walk down the streets of an American city today and hear Spanish spoken. In 1950 fewer than 4 million U.S. residents were from Spanish-speaking countries. Today that number is about 45 million. About 50 percent of Hispanics in the United States have origins in Mexico. The other 50 percent come from a variety of countries, including El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia. Thirty-six percent of the Hispanics in the United States live in California. Several other states have large Hispanic populations, including Texas, New York, Illinois, and Florida, where hundreds of thousands of Cubans fleeing the Castro regime have settled. There are so many Cuban Americans in Miami that the Miami Herald, the city's largest newspaper, publishes separate editions in English and Spanish. The term Hispanic was coined by the federal government in the 1970's to refer to the people who were born in any of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas or those who could trace their ancestry to Spain or former Spanish territories. Obviously, this represents a wide variety of countries and ethnic groups with different social, political and emotional experiences. Most Hispanics see

themselves in terms of their individual ethnic identity, as Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc. instead of members of the larger, more ambiguous term Hispanic or Latino.

The Newcomers Myth. People think of Hispanics as the latest, most recent group to enter the so called "melting pot". This erroneous perception is mostly due to the media attention given to Hispanic groups in the 1980's, after the Bureau of the Census published their 1980 results. Their report revealed that Hispanics were the fastest growing group in the U.S., soon to become the largest minority group. People associated the growth with immigration, ignoring the long history of Hispanics in the United States. Hispanic heritage in the U.S. goes back a long time. When Plymouth was founded in 1620, Santa Fe was celebrating its first decade and St. Augustine its 55th anniversary. Spanish settlements developed in the southwest of today's U.S. and also in the Gulf coast and the Florida peninsula. Some Latinos can trace their ancestors back to those days. Other Hispanic groups, like the Puerto Ricans, did not migrate into the U.S. but instead were absorbed into it during the American expansions of the late 19th century. Puerto Ricans were granted American citizenship in 1917. Economic depressions and two world wars forced many Puerto Ricans to migrate from the island in search for better opportunities. Their current political situation still confuses many who think of Puerto Rico as a foreign country.

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau makes a complete count, or census, of its people and industries. When the first census was taken in 1790, the new nation had fewer than 4 million people, almost all living along the East Coast. Today, the total resident population of 281.4 million, is a rich mosaic of national origins, spanning a broader age spectrum and exhibiting a more diverse range of living arrangements than ever before, as illustrated by Census Bureau demographic data.

Racial and Ethnic Composition. Of the 2000 population, an estimated 217 mil (77.1%) were White, 36.4 mil (12.9%) were Black or African American; Asians

and Pacific Islanders numbered 12.7 mil (4.5%); and the American Indian and Alaska Native population was about 4 mil (1.5%); 35.3 mil (13%) were of Hispanic origin. The Latino or Hispanic population rose nearly 13 million (or 57.9%) between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. In 2000 one half of Hispanics lived in California and Texas.

Age Structure. The United States has seen a rapid growth in its elderly population during the 20th century. The number of Americans aged 65 and older climbed to 35 million in 2000, compared with 3.1 million in 1900. For the same years, the ratio of elderly Americans to the total population jumped from one in 25 to one in eight. The trend is guaranteed to continue in the coming century as the baby-boom generation grows older. Between 1990 and 2020, the population aged 65 to 74 is projected to grow 74 percent. The elderly population explosion is a result of impressive increases in life expectancy. When the nation was founded, the average American could expect to live to the age of 35. Life expectancy at birth had increased to 47.3 by 1900 and the average American born in 2000 can expect to live to the age of 77. Because these older age groups are growing so quickly, the median age (with half of all Americans above and half below) reached 35.3 years in 2000, the highest it has ever been. West Virginia's population continued to be the nation's oldest, with a median age of 38.6 years; Utah was the youngest state, with a median age of 26.7 years.

Marriage and Families. About 52% of American adults in 2000 were married and living with their spouse. Another 24% had never married, 7% were widowed, and 10% were divorced. Of the 105.5 mil households in the United States, 71.8 % included or constituted a family -- that is, 2 or more people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. The remaining households consisted of a person living alone (25.8%) or 2 or more unrelated people (6.1%). About half (49%) of all families included parents and children under 18. All in all, 36% could be considered "traditional" families, that is, consisting of a married couple with children. Since 1970, these traditional families have declined significantly as a percentage of all families, dropping 14 percentage points. However, their percentage has dropped only

1 point since 1990. While the number of single mothers (9.8 mil) remained about the same from 1995 to 1998, the number of single fathers rose from 1.7 mil to 2.1 mil. About 28% of children under 18 years of age lived with just 1 parent in 1998 (around 23% with their mother only, 4% with their father only), while 68% lived with both parents and 4% with other relatives or people not related to them. Nearly 6% of all children under 18 lived in their grandparents' home. **Population Growth** Some parts of the nation are growing much faster than others. The fastest growth, as usual, was concentrated in the West, where the population rose 19.7 % between 1990 and 2000. Close behind was the South (17.3%). Growing more slowly were the Midwest (7.9%) and the Northeast (5.5%). Nevada remained the nation's fastest-growing state, with its population increasing 19.7% between 1990 and 2000. Nevada's population had climbed by a staggering 66.3.% since April 1, 1990. Arizona was 2d in population growth during the recent 10-year period, with a 40% increase, followed by Colorado (30.6%), Utah (29.6%) and Idaho (28.5%). California recorded the largest numeric increase of any state: 4.1 million people.

Education

Americans have shown a great concern for education since early colonial times. Within 30 years of the founding of the first settlement in Massachusetts (1620), all towns were required to hire a schoolmaster. In 1787 the Continental Congress asked every new township to reserve one plot of land for public schools.

Today, almost 90 percent of American students attend public elementary and secondary schools, which do not charge tuition but rely on local and state taxes for funding. The other ten percent attend private schools, for which their families pay tuition. Four out of five private schools are run by religious groups, where religious instruction is part of the curriculum. There is also a small but growing number of parents who educate their children themselves, a practice known as home schooling.

Traditionally, elementary school includes kindergarten through the eighth grade. In some places, however, elementary school ends after the sixth grade, and students attend middle school, or junior high school, from grades seven through nine. Similarly, secondary school, or high school, traditionally comprises grades nine through twelve, but in some places begins at the tenth grade. The United States does not have a national school system, but the government provides guidance and funding for federal educational programs in which both public and private schools take part. From Hawaii to Delaware, from Alaska to Louisiana, each of the 50 states has its own laws regulating education. From state to state, some laws are similar while others are not, but all states require young people to attend school. The age limit varies, however. Most states require attendance up to age 16, some up to 18. Thus, every child in America receives at least 11 years of education. In addition to the recent challenges of curriculum reform, American schools have been facing novel problems. They must cope with an influx of immigrant children, many of whom speak little or no English. They must respond to demands that the curriculum reflect the various cultures of all children. Schools must make sure that students develop

basic skills for the job market, and they must consider the needs of nontraditional students, such as teen-age mothers.

Schools are addressing these problems in ways that reflect the diversity of the U.S. educational system. They are hiring or training large numbers of teachers of English as a second language and, in some communities, setting up bilingual schools. They are opening up the traditional European-centered curriculum to embrace material from African, Asian, and other cultures. Schools are also teaching cognitive skills to the nearly 40 percent of American students who do not go on to higher education. The United States leads the industrial nations in the proportion of its young people who receive higher education. For some careers law, medicine, education, engineering a college education is a necessary first step. More than 60 percent of Americans now work in jobs that involve the handling of information, and a high school diploma is seldom adequate for such work. Other careers do not strictly require a college degree, but having one often can improve a person's chances of getting a job and can increase the salary he or she is paid. The widespread availability of a college education in America dates back to 1944, when Congress passed a law popularly known as the GI Bill. (GI meaning "government issue" was a nickname for an American soldier, and the law provided financial aid to members of the armed forces after World War II was over.) By 1955 more than 2 million veterans of World War II and the Korean War had used the GI Bill to go to college. Many of them came from poor families and would not have had the chance to go to college without the law. The program's success changed the American image of who should attend college. About the same time, the percentage of women in American colleges began to grow steadily; in 2000 women received 57 percent of all degrees awarded, compared to 24 percent in 1950. With the end of racial segregation in the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans also entered colleges in record numbers. Today, the percentage of African Americans who go on to college nearly equals the general population. In 2000, 56.2 percent of African-American high school graduates were enrolled in college, compared with 63.3 percent of all high school graduates.

Religion

Early in their history, Americans rejected the concept of the established or government-favored religion that had dominated and divided so many European countries. Separation of church and state was ordained by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which provides in part that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...."

One of the first permanent settlements in what became the North American colonies was founded by English Puritans, Calvinists who had been outsiders in their homeland, where the Church of England was established. So Protestants were the dominant religion in the early days. Today America is one of the most diverse religious societies in the world. In 2005 Protestants of all denominations numbered more than 100 million; Catholics, 67 million; and Jews, 6 million. The Islamic faith also has about 6 million U.S. adherents, many of whom are African-American converts. It is estimated that the number of mosques in the United States today, about 2,000 has more than doubled in the last 15 years. Buddhism and Hinduism are growing with the arrival of immigrants from countries where these are the majority religions. America has also been a fertile ground for new religions. The Mormon and Christian Science Churches are perhaps the best-known of the faiths that have sprung up on American soil. Because of its tradition of noninterference in religious matters, the United States has also provided a comfortable home for many small sects from overseas. The Amish, for example, descendants of German immigrants who reside mostly in Pennsylvania and neighboring states, have lived simple lives, wearing plain clothes and shunning modern technology, for generations. Some small groups are considered to be religious cults because they profess extremist beliefs and tend to glorify a founding figure. As long as cults and their members abide by the law, they are generally left alone. Religious prejudice is rare in America, and interfaith meetings and cooperation are commonplace.

American Federalism in 1990s.

While it would be an overstatement to suggest that the average American has a clear concept of meaning of federalism in 1994, there is some evidence than issues, involving locus of governmental power are important to many. For example, polling organizations frequently ask citizens - which level of government most enjoys their trust and confidence. The results consistently indicate, that people trust their local governments most and their national government least. The states drift along in the middle. So, most Americans view local government the most favorably.

However, as is the case in most areas of our political life, attitudes change significantly when citizens are faced with specific issues. Even though Americans appear to be committed to federalism in the abstract, they always seem to have lengthy list of problems which they want the federal government because state and local governments have failed to resolve them, or a list of services which are perceived as poorly provided or not provided at all. It is common for individuals and groups to respond to such perceptions by demanding that the national government create new standards or mandates or provide direct or indirect expenditures of money. Sometimes, they seek both.

While it is traditional to expect demands for increased national government activity from more liberal, so-called «big government», elements in American society, conservatives, who see themselves as a defenders of state's rights and local self-government also may jump on the bandwagon and demand national action. Thus it is quite unsurprising that recently liberal elements in American society have sought national legislation controlling access to firearms, as reflected in recently-adopted Brady Bill, which requires dealers to run checks on purchasers. On the other hand, it seems unusual, from a federalism perspective, that conservative elements have sought national government action to eliminate or restrict access to abortions or to permit the introduction of prayers in the public schools.

Perhaps the best recent example of such a demand for national action may be found in public safety area. There is a general perception, that high levels of criminal activity made the persons and property of the average citizen in this country unsafe. In general, however, the definition and control of criminal behavior has historically been a state and local responsibility. Our national officials sense that there is a demand for them to do something in response to state and local failures. The result is anti-crime legislation at the national level which has been proposed by the President and which is largely supported by members of Congress. While many of us doubt the effectiveness of the specific legislation, few people have seriously objected to this activity as destructive of basic fabric of our federal system.

The result is an inconsistent and often confusing approach to solving governmental problems in a federalist concept. In terms of practical politics, the system provides multiple forms of access. Various groups, no matter what ideological view of the federal system, take a pragmatic approach. That is, when their preferred level of government fails to produce policy results, that are satisfactory, they seek action at another level. None of the models of the federal systems seems to describe this state of affairs very well.

There is also confusion about federalism at another level in the US. We often observe this best when trying to teach about the system in our American Government classes. For some, federalism is equated with democracy. This is to say that they believe that unitary systems are by definition undemocratic. These patriotic souls are skeptical of evidence which demonstrates that some unitary systems are quite democratic, and that some federal systems are quite autocratic in nature.

Still, others confuse federalism with the concepts of separation of powers and checks and balances which are so important in understanding American government. While federalism does indeed divide governmental powers and involve some checking and balancing, separation of powers is a term, normally reserved to discussions of the relations between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of our governments. This distinction is troublesome for many of our students.

Due to my limited time I would like to state some most nuisance problems, that became a heavy burden for every American, involved in active politics in any way. First, we should mention the so-called «unfunded mandate», that became the biggest bone of contention in American intergovernmental rules. An unfunded mandate can be said to exist when the national government requires new or improved services or level of regulation, but leaves funding largely to state and local governments. This permits national level officials and institutions to establish their own policy without any considering costs. While that seems a poor way to operate, it fits in well with some traditional American political attitudes in which costs of government services are either ignored or assumed to be borne by someone else.

Some examples may illustrate the reasons for state complaints. In 1993, the Congress passed a law requiring the states to provide a system of voter's registration which was

The largest cities

There are large and interesting cities in the USA. Washington, D.C. (District of Columbia), the capital of the USA is located on the north bank of the Potomac River. It was founded in 1791 and named in honour of the first president of the USA, George Washington. It is one of the most unusual cities in the USA. And it is very beautiful, of course. There is an interesting fact - no building in the city may be more than 40 metres tall. The highest building in Washington is the Capitol, the seat of the American Congress. The White House is the residence of every president of the United States. There are two universities in Washington, the Museum for Aeronautics and Cosmonautics, the National Art Gallery, the Cultural Center in Memory of John Kennedy and various libraries and laboratories.

Some of other big cities of the USA are New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco and others. New York is not a very old city, it was founded some three hundred years ago. It is situated in the mouth of the Hudson River. The centre of New York is Manhattan Island. The famous Statue of Liberty is situated in New York. New York, one of the leading American manufacturing cities, is the home of great firms and banks. There are many sky-scrapers of fifty and more storeys.

Boston is located on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Founded in the beginning of 17th century it is one of the America's oldest cities. Boston is a big industrial traffic centre of the USA. Boston is a cultural centre too. The oldest university in the USA, Harvard University, was founded here in 1636. There are three other universities in this city, and the Museum for Fine Arts. Boston looks unusual for the SA because it managed to preserve the appearance of a European city of the 18-19th centuries. There many old houses there, and one can walk along old streets there and feel to be a contemporary to the American Revolution.

Now see the example of good report! :

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), 16th PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. Lincoln entered office at a critical period in U. S. history, just before the Civil War, and died from an assassin's bullet at the war's end, but before the greater implications of the conflict could be resolved. He brought to the office personal integrity, intelligence, and humanity, plus the wholesome characteristics of his frontier upbringing. He also had the liabilities of his upbringing--he was self-educated, culturally unsophisticated, and lacking in administrative and diplomatic skills. Sharp-witted, he was not especially sharp-tongued, but was noted for his warm good humor. Although relatively unknown and inexperienced politically when elected president, he proved to be a consummate politician. He was above all firm in his convictions and dedicated to the preservation of the Union.

Lincoln was perhaps the most esteemed and maligned of the American presidents. Generally admired and loved by the public, he was attacked on a partisan basis as the man responsible for and in the middle of every major issue facing the nation during his administration. Although his reputation has fluctuated with changing times, he was clearly a great man and a great president. He firmly and fairly guided the nation through its most perilous period and made a lasting impact in shaping the office of chief executive. Once regarded as the "Great Emancipator" for his forward strides in freeing the slaves, he was criticized a century later, when the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum, for his caution in moving toward equal rights. If he is judged in the historical context, however, it can be seen that he was far in advance of most liberal opinion. His claim to greatness endures.

Early Life

The future president was born in the most modest of circumstances in a log cabin near Hodgenville, Ky., on Feb. 12, 1809. His entire childhood and young manhood were spent on the brink of poverty as his pioneering family made repeated

fresh starts in the West. Opportunities for education, cultural activities, and even socializing were meager.

Ancestry

Lincoln's paternal ancestry has been traced, in an unbroken line, to Samuel Lincoln, a weaver's apprentice from Hingham, England, who settled in Hingham, Mass., in 1637. From him the line of descent came down through Mordecai Lincoln of Hingham and of Scituate, Mass.; Mordecai of Berks county, Pa.; John of Berks county and of Rockingham county, Va.; and Abraham, the grandfather of the president, who moved from Virginia to Kentucky about 1782, settled near Hughes Station, east of Louisville, and was killed in an Indian ambush in 1786.

Abraham's youngest son, Thomas, who became the father of the president, was born in Rockingham county, Va., on Jan. 6, 1778. After the death of his father, he roamed about, settling eventually in Hardin county, Ky., where he worked at carpentry, farming, and odd jobs. He was not the shiftless ne'er-do-well sometimes depicted, but an honest, conscientious man of modest means, well regarded by his neighbors. He had practically no education, however, and could barely scrawl his name.

Nancy Hanks, whom Thomas Lincoln married on June 12, 1806, and who became the mother of the president, remains a shadowy figure. Her birth date is uncertain, and descriptions of her are contradictory. Scholars despair of penetrating the tangled Hanks genealogy, and the legitimacy of Nancy's birth is a subject of argument. Lincoln, himself, apparently believed that his mother was born out of wedlock. In either case, Nancy came of lowly people. Reared by her aunt, Betsy Hanks, who married Thomas Sparrow, she was utterly uneducated.

Childhood

Thomas and Nancy Lincoln set up housekeeping in Elizabethtown, Ky., where their first child, Sarah, was born on Feb. 10, 1807. In December 1808, Thomas bought a hard-scrabble farm on the South Fork of Nolin Creek, where Abraham was born. Soon after Abe's second birthday the family moved to a more productive farm along Knob Creek, a branch of the Rolling Fork, in a region of fertile bottomland surrounded by crags and bluffs. The old Cumberland Trail from Louisville to

Nashville passed close by, and the boy could see a vigorous civilization on the march--settlers, peddlers, circuit-riding preachers, now and then a coffle of slaves. This was probably his first view of human bondage, for the small landholdings of the region were not suited to slaveowning, and local sentiment, especially among the Baptists, with whom the Lincolns had affiliated, was hostile to slavery. Like most frontier children, Abraham performed chores at an early age, but occasionally he and his sister Sarah attended classes in a log schoolhouse some two miles (3 km) from home. Nancy bore a third child, Thomas, but he died in infancy.

Faulty land titles, which were a constant problem to Kentucky settlers, were especially troublesome to Thomas Lincoln. Because of a flaw in title, he lost part of a farm he had bought before his marriage, and both his other Kentucky farms became involved in litigation. For this reason, and because of his roving disposition, he resolved to move to Indiana, where land could be bought directly from the government.

Abraham was seven years old when, in December 1816, the Lincolns struck out northwestward. They crossed the Ohio River on a ferry near the village of Troy, made their way 16 miles (26 km) farther north through thick woods and tangled underbrush, and settled near Pigeon Creek, in present Spencer county, Ind. Thomas hastily threw up a half-faced camp, a rude shelter of logs and boughs, closed on three sides and warmed only by a fire at the open front. Here the family lived while Thomas built a cabin. The region was gloomy, with few settlers, and wild animals prowled in the forest.

By spring Thomas had cleared a few acres for a crop. In an autobiography that Abraham Lincoln composed in 1860, he said of himself: "Abraham, though very young, was large of his age, and had an axe put into his hands at once; and from that till within his twenty-third year, he was almost constantly handling that most useful instrument--less, of course, in plowing and harvesting seasons." So, year by year the clearing grew, and the family's diet became more varied as farm products supplemented game and fowl. At first, Thomas was a mere squatter on the land, but on Oct. 15, 1817, he applied for 160 acres (65 hectares) at the government land office

in Vincennes. Unable to complete payment on so large a tract, he later gave up half, but paid for the rest.

The Lincolns had not been long in Indiana when they were joined by Thomas and Elizabeth Sparrow, the relatives by whom Nancy had been reared. They arrived from Kentucky with Dennis Hanks, the illegitimate son of another of Nancy's aunts. An energetic youth of 19, he became Abraham's companion. Within a year, however, the Sparrows became victims of the "milk-sick" (milk sickness), a disease dreaded by Indiana settlers, and soon afterward, on Oct. 5, 1818, Nancy Lincoln, too, died of this malady. Without a woman to keep the household functioning, the Lincolns lived almost in squalor.

To remedy this intolerable condition, Thomas Lincoln returned to Elizabethtown, where, on Dec. 2, 1819, he married Sarah Bush Johnston, a widow with three children. A kindly, hard-working woman, she brought order to the Lincolns' Indiana homestead. She also saw to it that at intervals over the next two years Abraham received enough additional schooling to be able, as he said later, "to read, write and cipher to the Rule of Three." All told, however, he attended school less than a year.

Young Manhood

During the 14 years the Lincolns lived in Indiana, the region became more thickly settled, mostly by people from the South. But conditions remained primitive, and farming was backbreaking work. Superstitions were prevalent; social functions consisted of such utilitarian amusements as corn shuckings, house raisings, and hog killings; and religion was dogmatic and emotional. Abe, growing tall and strong, won a reputation as the best local athlete and a rollicking storyteller. But his father kept him busy at hard labor, hiring him out to neighbors when work at home slackened. Abe's meager education had aroused his desire to learn, and he traveled over the countryside to borrow books. Among those he read were *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Aesop's Fables*, *William Grimshaw's History of the United States*, and *Mason Weems' Life of Washington*. The Bible was probably the only book his family

owned, and his abundant use of scriptural quotations in his later writings shows how earnestly he must have studied it.

Young Lincoln worked for a while as a ferryman on the Ohio River, and at 19 helped take a flatboat cargo to New Orleans. There he encountered a manner of living wholly unknown to him. Soon after he returned, his father decided to move to Illinois, where a relative, John Hanks, had preceded him. On March 1, 1830, the family set out with all their possessions loaded on three wagons. Their new home was located on the north bank of the Sangamon River, west of Decatur. When a cabin had been built and a crop had been planted and fenced, young Lincoln hired out to split fence rails for neighbors.

In the autumn all the Lincoln family came down with fever and ague. That winter the pioneers experienced the deepest snow they had ever known, accompanied by subzero temperatures. In the spring the family backtracked eastward to Coles county, Ill. But this time Abraham did not accompany them, for during the winter he, his stepbrother John D. Johnston, and his cousin John Hanks had agreed to take another cargo to New Orleans for a trader, Denton Offutt. A new life was opening for young Lincoln. Henceforth he could make his own way. Supposedly it was on this second trip to New Orleans that young Lincoln, watching a slave auction, declared: "If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard." But the story is almost certainly untrue. Lincoln at this period of his life could scarcely have believed himself to be a man of destiny, and John Hanks, who originated the story, was not with Lincoln, having left his fellow crewmen at St. Louis.

Near the outset of this voyage, at the little village of New Salem on the Sangamon River, Lincoln had impressed Offutt by his ingenuity in moving the flatboat over a milldam. Offutt, impressed likewise by the prospects of the village, arranged to open a store and rent the mill. On Lincoln's return from New Orleans, Offutt engaged him as clerk and handyman.

By late July 1831, when Lincoln came back, New Salem was enjoying what proved to be a short-lived boom based on a local conviction that the Sangamon River would be made navigable for steamboats. For a time the village served as a trading

center for the surrounding area and numbered among its enterprises three stores, a tavern, a carding machine for wool, a saloon, and a ferry. Among its residents were two physicians, a blacksmith, a cooper, a shoemaker, and other craftsmen common to a pioneer settlement. The people were mostly from the South, though a number of Yankees had also drifted in. Community pastimes were similar to those Lincoln had previously known, and life in general differed only in being somewhat more advanced.

Lincoln gained the admiration of the rougher element of the community, who were known as the Clary's Grove boys, when he threw their champion in a wrestling match. But his kindness, honesty, and efforts at self-betterment so impressed the more reputable people of the community that they, too, soon came to respect him. He became a member of the debating society, studied grammar with the aid of a local schoolmaster, and acquired a lasting fondness for the writings of Shakespeare and Robert Burns from the village philosopher and fisherman.

Offutt paid little attention to business, and his store was about to fail, when an Indian disturbance, known as the Black Hawk War, broke out in April 1832, in Illinois. Lincoln enlisted and was elected captain of his volunteer company. When his term expired, he reenlisted, serving about 80 days in all. He experienced some hardships, but no fighting.

Politics and Law

Returning to New Salem, Lincoln sought election to the state legislature. He won almost all the votes in his own community, but lost the election because he was not known throughout the county. In partnership with William F. Berry, he bought a store on credit, but it soon failed, leaving him deeply in debt. He then got a job as deputy surveyor, was appointed postmaster, and pieced out his income with odd jobs. The story of his romance with Ann Rutledge is rejected as a legend by most authorities, but he did have a short-lived love affair with Mary Owens.

Illinois Legislator

In 1834, Lincoln was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives, and he was reelected in 1836, 1838, and 1840. Political alignments were in a state of flux

during his first two candidacies, but as the WHIG and DEMOCRATIC parties began to take form, he followed his political idol, Henry Clay, and John T. Stuart, a Springfield lawyer and friend, into the Whig ranks. Twice Lincoln was his party's candidate for speaker, and when defeated, he served as its floor leader.

His greatest achievement in the legislature, where he was a consistent supporter of conservative business interests, was to bring about the removal of the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield, by means of adroit logrolling. When certain resolutions denouncing antislavery agitation were passed by the house, Lincoln and a colleague, Dan Stone, defined their position by a written declaration that slavery was "founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils." An internal improvement project that Lincoln promoted in the legislature turned out to be impractical and almost bankrupted the state. On national issues Lincoln favored the United States Bank and opposed the presidential policies of Andrew JACKSON and Martin VAN BUREN.

Law Practice

His friend Stuart had encouraged him to study law, and he obtained a license on Sept. 9, 1836. By this time New Salem was in decline and would soon be a ghost town. It has since been restored as a state park. On April 15, 1837, Lincoln moved to Springfield to become Stuart's partner. His conscientious efforts to pay off his debts had earned him the nickname "Honest Abe," but he was so poor that he arrived in Springfield on a borrowed horse with all his personal property in his saddlebags.

With the courts in Springfield in session only a few weeks during the year, lawyers were obliged to travel the circuit in order to make a living. Every year, in spring and autumn, Lincoln followed the judge from county to county over the 12,000 square miles (31,000 sq km) of the Eighth Circuit. In 1841 he and Stuart dissolved their firm, and Lincoln formed a new partnership with Stephen T. Logan, who taught him the value of careful preparation and clear, succinct reasoning as opposed to mere cleverness and oratory. This partnership was in turn dissolved in 1844, when Lincoln took young William H. Herndon, later to be his biographer, as a partner.

Marriage

Meanwhile, on Nov. 4, 1842, after a somewhat tumultuous courtship, Lincoln had married Mary Todd. Brought up in Lexington, Ky., she was a high-spirited, quick-tempered girl of excellent education and cultural background. Notwithstanding her vanity, ambition, and unstable temperament and Lincoln's careless ways and alternating moods of hilarity and dejection, the marriage turned out to be generally happy. Of their four children, only Robert Todd Lincoln, born on Aug. 1, 1843, lived to maturity. Edward Baker, who was born on March 10, 1846, died on Feb. 1, 1850; William Wallace, born Dec. 21, 1850, died on Feb. 20, 1862; and Thomas ("Tad"), born April 4, 1853, died on July 15, 1871. Though Mrs. Lincoln was by no means such a shrew as has been asserted, she was difficult to live with. Lincoln responded to her impulsive and imprudent behavior with tireless patience, forbearance, and forgiveness. Borne down by grief and illness after her husband's death, Mrs. Lincoln became so unbalanced at one time that her son Robert had her committed to an institution.

Congressman

Having attained a position of leadership in state politics and worked strenuously for the Whig ticket in the presidential election of 1840, Lincoln aspired to go to CONGRESS. But two other prominent young Whigs of his district, Edward D. Baker of Springfield and John J. Hardin of Jacksonville, also coveted this distinction. So Lincoln stepped aside temporarily, first for Hardin, then for Baker, under a sort of understanding that they would "take a turn about." When Lincoln's turn came in 1846, however, Hardin wished to serve again, and Lincoln was obliged to maneuver skillfully to obtain the nomination. His district was so predominantly Whig that this amounted to election, and he won handily over his Democratic opponent.

Lincoln worked conscientiously as a freshman congressman, but was unable to gain distinction. Both from conviction and party expediency, he went along with the Whig leaders in blaming the Polk administration for bringing on war with Mexico, though he always voted for appropriations to sustain it. His opposition to the war was unpopular in his district, however. When the annexations of territory from Mexico

brought up the question of the status of slavery in the new lands, Lincoln voted for the Wilmot Proviso and other measures designed to confine the institution to the states where it already existed.

Disillusionment with Politics

In the campaign of 1848, Lincoln labored strenuously for the nomination and election of Gen. Zachary TAYLOR. He served on the Whig National Committee, attended the national convention at Philadelphia, and made campaign speeches. With the Whig national ticket victorious, he hoped to share with Baker the control of federal patronage in his home state. The juiciest plum that had been promised to Illinois was the position of commissioner of the General Land Office in Washington. After trying vainly to reconcile two rival candidates for this office, Lincoln tried to obtain it for himself. But he had little influence with the new administration. The most that it would offer him was the governorship or secretaryship of the Oregon Territory. Neither job appealed to him, and he returned to Springfield thoroughly disheartened.

Never one to repine, however, Lincoln now devoted himself to becoming a better lawyer and a more enlightened man. Pitching into his law books with greater zest, he also resumed his study of Shakespeare and mastered the first six books of Euclid as a mental discipline. At the same time, he renewed acquaintances and won new friends around the circuit. Law practice was changing as the country developed, especially with the advent of railroads and the growth of corporations. Lincoln, conscientiously keeping pace, became one of the state's outstanding lawyers, with a steadily increasing practice, not only on the circuit but also in the state supreme court and the federal courts. Regular travel to Chicago to attend court sessions became part of his routine when Illinois was divided into two federal districts.

Outwardly, however, Lincoln remained unchanged in his simple, somewhat rustic ways. Six feet four inches (1.9 meters) tall, weighing about 180 pounds (82 kg), ungainly, slightly stooped, with a seamed and rugged countenance and unruly hair, he wore a shabby old top hat, an ill-fitting frock coat and pantaloons, and unblackened boots. His genial manner and fund of stories won him a host of friends.

Yet, notwithstanding his friendly ways, he had a certain natural dignity that discouraged familiarity and commanded respect.

Return to Politics

Lincoln took only a perfunctory part in the presidential campaign of 1852, and was rapidly losing interest in politics. Two years later, however, an event occurred that roused him, he declared, as never before. The status of slavery in the national territories, which had been virtually settled by the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850, now came to the fore. In 1854, Stephen A. Douglas, whom Lincoln had known as a young lawyer and legislator and who was now a Democratic leader in the U. S. SENATE, brought about the repeal of a crucial section of the Missouri Compromise that had prohibited slavery in the Louisiana Purchase north of the line of 36degrees 30&#. Douglas substituted for it a provision that the people in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska could admit or exclude slavery as they chose. The congressional campaign of 1854 found Lincoln back on the stump in behalf of the antislavery cause, speaking with a new authority gained from self-imposed intellectual discipline. Henceforth, he was a different Lincoln ambitious, as before, but purged of partisan pettiness and moved instead by moral earnestness.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act so disrupted old party lines that when the Illinois legislature met to elect a U.S. senator to succeed Douglas' colleague, James Shields, it was evident that the Anti-Nebraska group drawn from both parties had the votes to win, if the antislavery Whigs and antislavery Democrats could united on a candidate. However, the Whigs backed Lincoln, and the Democrats supported Lyman Trumbull. though Lincoln commanded far more strength than Trumbull, the latter's supporters were resolved never to desert him for a Whig. As their stubbornness threatened to result in the election of a proslavery Democrat, Lincoln instructed his own backers to vote for Trumbull, thus assuring the latter's election.

Campaigns of 1856 and 1858

With old party lines sundered, the antislavery factions in the North gradually coalesced to form a new party, which took the name REPUBLICAN. Lincoln stayed aloof at the beginning, fearing that it would be dominated by the radical rather than

the moderate antislavery element. Also, he hoped for a resurgence of the Whig party, in which he had attained a position of state leadership. But as the presidential campaign of 1856 approached, he cast his lot with the new party. In the national convention, which nominated John C. Frémont for president, Lincoln received 110 ballots for the VICE-PRESIDENTIAL nomination, which went eventually to William L. Dayton of New Jersey. Though Lincoln had favored Justice John McLean, he worked faithfully for Frémont, who showed surprising strength, notwithstanding his defeat by the Democratic candidate, James BUCHANAN.

With Senator Douglas running for reelection in 1858, Lincoln was recognized in Illinois as the strongest man to oppose him. Endorsed by Republican meetings all over the state and by the Republican State Convention, he opened his campaign with the famous declaration: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently *half slave and half free*." Lincoln challenged Douglas to a series of seven joint debates, and these became the most spectacular feature of the campaign. Douglas refused to take a position on the rightfulness or wrongfulness of slavery, and offered his "popular sovereignty" doctrine as the solution of the problem. Lincoln, on the other hand, insisted that slavery was primarily a moral issue and offered as his solution a return to the principles of the Founding Fathers, which tolerated slavery where it existed but looked to its ultimate extinction by preventing its spread. The Republicans polled the larger number of votes in the election, but an outdated apportionment of seats in the legislature permitted Douglas to win the senatorship.

Election of 1860

Friends began to urge Lincoln to run for president. He held back, but did extend his range of speechmaking beyond Illinois. on Feb. 27, 1860, at Cooper Union, in New York City, he delivered an address on the need for restricting slavery that put him in the forefront of Republican leadership. The enthusiasm evoked by this speech and others overcame Lincoln's reluctance. On May 9 and 10, the Illinois Republican convention, meeting in Decatur, instructed the state's delegates to the national convention to vote as a unit for him.

When that convention met in Chicago on May 16, Lincoln's chances were better than was generally supposed. William H. Seward, the acknowledged party leader, and other aspirants all had political liabilities of some sort. As Lincoln's managers maneuvered behind the scenes, more and more delegates lined up behind the "Illinois Rail Splitter." Seward led on the first ballot, but on the third ballot Lincoln obtained the required majority.

A split in the Democratic party, which resulted in the nomination of Douglas by one faction and of John C. Breckinridge by the other, made Lincoln's ELECTION a certainty. Lincoln polled 1,865,593 votes to Douglas' 1,382,713, and Breckinridge's 848,356. John Bell, candidate of the Constitutional Union party, polled 592,906. The ELECTORAL vote was Lincoln, 180; Breckinridge, 72; Bell, 39; and Douglas, 12.

Presidency

On Feb. 11, 1861, Lincoln left Springfield to take up his duties as president. Before him lay, as he recognized, "a task ... greater than that which rested upon [George] Washington." The seven states of the lower South had seceded from the Union, and Southern delegates meeting in Montgomery, Ala., had formed a new, separate government. Before Lincoln reached the national capital, Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as President of the Confederate States of America. The four states of the upper South teetered on the brink of secession, and disunion sentiment was rampant in the border states of Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri.

When Lincoln reached Washington on February 23, he found the national government incapable of meeting the crisis. President James Buchanan deplored secession but could not check it, and Congress fruitlessly debated compromise. The national treasury was near bankruptcy; the civil service was riddled with secessionists; and the miniscule armed forces were being weakened by defection of officers to the South.

It was not immediately evident that Lincoln could avert the dissolution of the United States. Few American presidents have assumed office under greater handicaps. Warned of an attempt on his life being planned in Baltimore, Lincoln had to enter the national capital surreptitiously, arriving after a secret midnight journey

from Harrisburg, Pa. Widely publicized, the episode did little to inspire public confidence in the government or to create an image of Lincoln as a dynamic leader. That so many citizens could believe their new president a coward was evidence of a more serious handicap under which Lincoln labored: he was virtually unknown to the American people. Lincoln's record as an Illinois state legislator, as a one-term member of the House of Representatives in the 1840's, and as an unsuccessful senatorial candidate against Douglas was not one to inspire confidence in his abilities. Even the leaders of the Republican party had little acquaintance with the new President.

Almost at the outset, Lincoln demonstrated that he was a poor administrator. Accustomed, as his law partner William H. Herndon said, to filing legal papers in his top hat, Lincoln conducted the administration of the national government in the same fashion. Selecting for his cabinet spokesmen of the diverse elements that constituted the Republican party, he surrounded himself with men of such conflicting views that he could not rely on them to work together. Cabinet sessions rarely dealt with serious issues. Usually, Lincoln permitted cabinet officers free rein in running their departments.

Nor was Lincoln an effective leader of his party in the Congress, where after secession the Republicans had overwhelming majorities. Long a Whig, vigilant against executive "usurpation," he earnestly felt that as president he ought not to exert even "indirect influence to affect the action of congress." In consequence there was poor rapport between Capitol Hill and the WHITE HOUSE. Even those measures that the President earnestly advocated were weakened or defeated by members of his own party. But on important issues relating to the conduct of the war and the restoration of the Union, Lincoln followed his own counsel, ignoring the opinions of Congress.

More than counterbalancing these deficiencies, however, were Lincoln's strengths. Foremost was his unflinching dedication to the preservation of the Union. Convinced that the United States was more than an ordinary nation, that it was a proving ground for the idea of democratic government, Lincoln felt that he was leading a struggle to preserve "the last, best hope of earth." Despite war-weariness

and repeated defeats, he never wavered in his "paramount object." To restore national unity he would do what was necessary, without regard to legalistic construction of the CONSTITUTION, political objections in Congress, or personal popularity.

Partly because of that single-minded dedication, the American people, in time, gave to Lincoln a loyalty that proved to be another of his great assets. Making himself accessible to all who went to the White House, Lincoln learned what ordinary citizens felt about their government. In turn, his availability helped create in the popular mind the stereotype of "Honest Abe," the people's president, straightforward, and sympathetic.

Lincoln's mastery of rhetoric further endeared him to the public. In an age of pretentious orators, he wrote clearly and succinctly. Purists might object when he said that the Confederates in one engagement "turned tail and ran," but the man in the street approved. Lincoln's 268-word address at the dedication of the national cemetery at Gettysburg meant more than the preceding two-hour oration by Edward Everett.

Another of Lincoln's assets was the fact that he was a genius at the game of politics. He astutely managed the patronage at his disposal, distributing favors so as to bind local politicians to his administration and to undermine potential rivals for the presidency. He understood the value of silence and secrecy in politics and refrained from creating divisive issues or causing needless confrontations. He was extraordinarily flexible and pragmatic in the means he employed to restore the Union. "My policy," he frequently said, "is to have no policy." That did not mean that his was a course of drift. Instead, it reflected his understanding that, as president, he could only handle problems as they arose, confident that popular support for his solutions would be forthcoming.

Lincoln believed that the ultimate decision in the Civil War was beyond his, or any other man's, control. "Now, at the end of three years struggle," he wrote, as the war reached its climax, "the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man, devised or expected. God alone can claim it."

Sumter Crisis

In 1861, Lincoln's weaknesses were more evident than his strengths. Immediately after his inauguration he faced a crisis over Fort Sumter in the Charleston (S. C.) harbor, one of the few remaining U.S. forts in the seceded states still under federal control. Informed that the troops would have to be supplied or withdrawn, the inexperienced President anxiously explored solutions. Withdrawal would appear a cowardly backdown, but reinforcing the fort might precipitate hostilities. Lincoln painfully concluded that he would send supplies to Sumter and let the Confederates decide whether to fire on the flag of the Union. Historians differ as to whether Lincoln anticipated that hostilities would follow his decision, but they agree that Lincoln was determined that he would not order the first shot fired. Informed of the approach of the federal supply fleet, Confederate authorities at Charleston during the early hours of April 12 decided to bombard the fort. Thus, the Civil War began.

Because Congress was not in session, Lincoln moved swiftly to mobilize the Union by executive order. His requisition to the states for 75,000 volunteers precipitated the secession of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Kentucky tried to adopt an official policy of "neutrality," while secession sentiment in Maryland was so strong that for a time Washington, D.C., was cut off from communication with the North. In order to restore order, Lincoln directed that the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus be suspended, at first along the line between Washington and Philadelphia and later throughout most of the North, so that known secessionists and persons suspected of disloyalty could be held without trial. At the same time the President, without congressional authorization--and thus in direct violation of the Constitution ordered an increase in the size of the regular Army and Navy. Doubting the loyalty of certain government officials, he also entrusted public funds to private agents in New York to purchase arms and supplies.

When the 37th Congress assembled in special session on July 4, 1861, it was thus confronted with a *fait accompli*. The President, acting in his capacity as commander in chief, had put himself at the head of the whole Union war effort,

arrogating to himself greater powers than those claimed by any previous American president. His enemies termed him a dictator and a tyrant. In fact, his power was limited, partly by his own instincts, partly by the knowledge that his actions would be judged in four years at the polls, and chiefly by the inadequacy of the federal bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, the role of Congress was sharply defined: it could appropriate money to support the war, it could initiate legislation on issues not related to the war, it could debate questions relating to the conflict. But direction of the Union war effort was to remain firmly in Lincoln's hands.

Military Policy

The first responsibility of the President was the successful prosecution of the war against the Confederate States. In this duty he was hampered by the lack of a strong military tradition in America and by the shortage of trained officers. During the early months of the conflict the War Department was headed by Simon Cameron, and corruption and inefficiency were rife. Not until January, 1862, when Lincoln replaced Cameron with the imperious but efficient Edwin M. Stanton, was some semblance of order brought to the procurement of supplies for the federal armies. Navy secretary Gideon Welles was above suspicion, but he was inexperienced in nautical affairs and cautious in accepting innovations, such as the ironclad monitors.

Even more difficult was the task of finding capable general officers. At first the President gave supreme command of the Union forces to the elderly Gen. Winfield Scott. After the Confederate victory at the first battle of Bull Run (July 21, 1861), Lincoln increasingly entrusted power to George B. McClellan, a brilliant organizer and administrator. But McClellan's caution, his secretiveness, and his willingness to strip the defenses of Washington the better to attack Richmond led Lincoln to look elsewhere for military advice. Borrowing "a large number of strategical works" from the Library of Congress, he attempted to direct the overall conduct of the war himself by issuing a series of presidential general war orders. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, whom Lincoln brought to Washington as a strategic planner, served more as a glorified

clerk, and the President repeatedly exercised personal supervision over the commanders in the field.

Not until the emergence of Ulysses S. GRANT, hero of Vicksburg and Chattanooga, did Lincoln find a general to whom he could entrust overall direction of the war. Even then, the President kept a close eye on military operations, advising and even occasionally overruling the general, but mostly supporting and encouraging him.

Emancipation

Strongly opposed to slavery, Lincoln made a sharp distinction between his personal views and his public responsibilities. He had been elected on a platform that pledged not to interfere with the "peculiar institution" in states where it already existed and had sworn to uphold a Constitution that protected Southern rights. From the first day of the war, however, he was under pressure from the more extreme antislavery men in his own party to strike at slavery as the mainspring of the rebellion. Counterbalancing this pressure was the need to conciliate opinion in the border states, which still recognized slavery but were loyal to the Union. Any move against slavery, Lincoln feared, would cause their secession.

Wartime pressure inescapably forced the president toward emancipation. Foreign powers could not be expected to sympathize with the North, when both the Union and the Confederate governments were pledged to uphold slavery. As the war dragged on, more and more northerners saw the absurdity of continuing to protect the "peculiar institution," which, by keeping a subservient labor force on the farms, permitted the Confederates to put proportionately more of their able-bodied white men into their armies. When Union casualties mounted, even racist northerners began to favor enlisting blacks in the Union armies.

As sentiment for emancipation mounted, Lincoln was careful to keep complete control of the problem in his own hands. He sharply overruled premature efforts by two of his military commanders, Frémont in Missouri and David Hunter in the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina, to declare slaves in their military theaters

free. At the same time, the President urged the border states to accept a program of gradual emancipation, with federal compensation.

By midsummer of 1862, however, it was evident that these efforts would not be successful. Still troubled by divided Union sentiment and still uncertain of his constitutional powers to act, Lincoln prepared to issue an emancipation proclamation. Secretary of State William H. Seward, however, persuaded him that such an order, issued at the low point of Union military fortunes, would be taken as evidence of weakness. The President postponed his move until after the Battle of Antietam. Then, on Sept. 22, 1862, he issued his preliminary proclamation, announcing that after 100 days all slaves in states still in rebellion would be forever free. This was followed, in due course, by the definitive Emancipation Proclamation of Jan. 1, 1863.

Because the proclamation exempted slavery in the border states and in all Confederate territory already under the control of Union armies and because Lincoln was not certain that his action would be sustained by the Supreme Court, he strongly urged Congress to adopt the 13th Amendment, forever abolishing slavery throughout the country. Congressional action on this measure was completed in January 1865. Lincoln considered the amendment "the complete consummation of his own work, the emancipation proclamation."

Foreign Relations

Never having traveled abroad and having few acquaintances in the courts of Europe, Lincoln, for the most part, left the conduct of foreign policy to Seward. Yet, at critical times he made his influence felt. Early in his administration, when Seward recklessly proposed to divert attention from domestic difficulties by threatening a war against Spain and perhaps other powers, the President quietly squelched the project. Again, in 1861, Lincoln intervened to tone down a dispatch Seward wrote to Charles Francis Adams, the U.S. minister in London, which probably would have led to a break in diplomatic relations with Britain. In the *Trent* affair, that same year, when Union Capt. Charles Wilkes endangered the peace by removing two Confederate emissaries from a British ship and taking them into custody, Lincoln took a courageous but unpopular stand by insisting that the prisoners be released.

Wartime Politics

Throughout the war Lincoln was the subject of frequent, and often vitriolic, attacks, both from the Democrats who thought he was proceeding too drastically against slavery and from the Radicals in his own party--men like Charles Sumner, Benjamin F. Wade, and Zachariah Chandler--who considered him slow and ineffective. Partisan newspapers abused the President as "a slangwhanging stump speaker," a "half-witted usurper," a "mole-eyed" monster with "soul ... of leather," "the present turtle at the head of the government." Men of his own party openly charged that he was "unfit," a "political coward," a "dictator," "timid and ignorant," "shattered, dazed, utterly foolish."

A minority president in 1861, Lincoln lost further support in the congressional elections of 1862, when Democrats took control of the crucial states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. As the 1864 election approached, it was clear that Lincoln would face formidable opposition for reelection, not merely from a Democratic candidate but from rivals within his own party. Republican anti-Lincoln sentiment centered on treasury secretary Salmon P. Chase, who was working with the Radical critics of Lincoln in Congress. The Chase boom failed, however, chiefly because Lincoln insisted upon keeping the ambitious secretary in his cabinet. At the same time, Lincoln's own agents were working quietly to sew up the state delegations to the Republican national convention. Even Chase's own state of Ohio pledged to vote for Lincoln. Facing certain defeat, Chase withdrew from the race, but Lincoln kept him in the cabinet until after the Republican national convention, which met in Baltimore in June 1864.

Lacking a prominent standard bearer, some disgruntled Republicans gathered in Cleveland in May 1864 to nominate Frémont, but the movement never made much headway. Radical pressure was powerful enough, however, to persuade Lincoln to drop the most outspokenly conservative member of his cabinet, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, and Frémont withdrew from the race. Lincoln's Republican critics continued to hope they could summon a new national convention, which would

replace the President with a more Radical candidate, but this scheme died with news of Union military victories.

For a time Democratic opposition in 1864 to Lincoln's reelection also appeared to be formidable, for people were tired of the endless war and disinclined to fight for the liberty of black men. But the Democrats found it impossible to bring together the two major groups of Lincoln's critics those who wanted the President to end the war, and those who wanted him to prosecute it more vigorously. Meeting at Chicago in August, the Democratic national convention nominated a candidate, Gen. George B. McClellan, pledged to the successful conclusion of the war on a platform that called the war a failure. McClellan's repudiation of this peace plank showed how fundamentally splits were the Democrats.

Whatever chance the Democrats had in 1864 was lost when the war at last began to favor the Union cause. By the late summer of 1864, Grant had forced Lee back into the defenses of Richmond and Petersburg. In the West, Sherman's advancing army captured Atlanta on September 2. At the same time, Admiral Farragut's naval forces closed the key Confederate port of Mobile.

When the ballots were cast in November, the results reflected both these Union triumphs and the rift among the opposition. Lincoln carried every state except Kentucky, Delaware, and New Jersey. He polled 2,206,938 popular votes to McClellan's 1,803,787 and won an electoral vote victory of 212 to 21. It must be remembered, however, that voters in the seceded states, the strongholds of the Democratic party, did not participate in the election.

Life in the White House

Beset by military, diplomatic, and political problems, the President tried to keep his family life as normal as possible. The two youngest Lincoln boys, Thomas (Tad) and William Wallace (Willie), were high spirited lads. Their older brother, the sober Robert Todd Lincoln, was less frequently in Washington, because he was first a student at Harvard and later an aide to General Grant. Despite the snobbishness of Washington society and criticisms from those who wanted all social affairs suspended because of the war, the Lincolns continued to hold receptions in the White

House. But the President found these affairs costly and tiring. He would slip away late at night after a White House party to visit the telegraph room of the War Department to read the latest dispatches from the front. He never took a vacation, but in summer he moved his family to the cooler and more secluded Soldier's Home in Washington.

Lincoln visibly aged during the war years, and by 1865 he appeared almost haggard. His life was made harder by personal trials. Early in 1862, Willie died of typhoid. His mother, always high-strung and hysterical, suffered a nervous breakdown, and Lincoln had to watch over her with careful solicitude. But Lincoln emerged from his public and private agonies with a new serenity of soul. Any trace of vanity or egotism was burned out by the fires of war. In his second inaugural address, his language reached a new level of eloquence. Urging his countrymen to act "with malice toward none; with charity for all," he looked beyond the end of the war toward binding up the nation's wounds, so as to "achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace."

Reconstruction

From the start of the Civil War, Lincoln was deeply concerned about the terms under which the Southern states, once subdued, should be restored to the Union. He had no fixed plan for reconstruction. At the outset, he would have welcomed a simple decision on the part of any Southern state government to rescind its ordinance of secession and return its delegation to Congress. By 1863, however, to this war aim of union he added that of liberty, for he now insisted that emancipation of the slaves was a necessary condition for restoration. By the end of the war he was beginning to add a third condition, equality, for he realized that minimal guarantees of civil rights for blacks were essential. Privately, he let it be known that he favored extending the franchise in the Southern states to some of the blacks--"as, for instance, the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks."

As to means by which to achieve these goals, Lincoln was also flexible. When Union armies advanced into the South, he appointed military governors for the states that were conquered. Most notable of these was the military governor of Tennessee,

Andrew JOHNSON, who became Lincoln's running mate in 1864. In December 1863, Lincoln enunciated a comprehensive reconstruction program, pledging pardon and amnesty to Confederates who were prepared to swear loyalty to the Union and promising to turn back control of local governments to the civil authorities in the South when as few as 10% of the 1860 voting population participated in the elections. Governments operating under this 10% plan were set up in Louisiana and Arkansas and soon were petitioning for readmission to Congress.

Inevitably Lincoln's program ran into opposition, both because it represented a gigantic expansion of presidential powers and because it appeared not to give adequate guarantees to the freedmen. Defeating an attempt to seat the senators from the new government in Arkansas, Radical Republicans in Congress in July 1864 set forth their own terms for restoration in the far harsher Wade-Davis Bill. When Lincoln pocket-vetoed this measure, declaring that he was "unprepared to be inflexibly committed to any single plan of reconstruction," Radicals accused him of "dictatorial usurpation."

The stage was set for further conflict over reconstruction when Congress reassembled in December 1864, just after Lincoln's reelection. Assisted by the Democrats, the Radicals forced Lincoln's supporters to drop the bill to readmit Louisiana. Lincoln was deeply saddened by the defeat. "Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl," he said, "shall we sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it?" On April 11, 1865, in his last public address, the President defended his reconstruction policy.

Death

Three days later, the President was shot by the actor John Wilkes Booth while attending a performance at Ford's Theater in Washington. He died at 7:22 the following morning, April 15, 1865. After lying in state in the Capitol, his body was taken to Springfield, Ill., where he was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery.

About the USA in Russian

Государство в Северной Америке, состоящее из 50 штатов и территорий Пуэрто-Рико, Американское Самоа, Гуам и Виргинские острова. На севере граничит с Канадой, на юге - с Мексикой. На востоке омывается Атлантическим океаном, на юге - Мексиканским заливом, на Западе - Тихим океаном. Площадь страны 9666861 км², из которых 1693438 км² приходится на Аляску и 16729 км² на Гавайи. Самая высокая точка страны (и всей Северной Америки) находится на Аляске - гора Мак-Кинли (6194 м), самое низкое место - Долина смерти (86 м ниже уровня моря) - находится в Калифорнии. Средняя высота территории Соединенных Штатов около 760 м над уровнем моря. Около половины территории страны занимают горные хребты, плоскогорья и плато Кордильер; восточную окраину пояса Кордильер образуют хребты Скалистых гор высотой более 4000 м. На востоке находятся Аппалачские горы (2037 м). Между Кордильерами и Аппалачами лежат обширные внутренние равнины - Центральные, Великие - и Примексиканская низменность. На западе страны многие реки образуют великолепной красоты каньоны, разбивая горные хребты. На севере страны находится цепь Великих озер - Верхнее, Мичиган, Гурон, Эри и Онтарио - занимающая площадь около 200000 км². В ледниковый период в стране возникло несколько десятков тысяч мелких озер, среди которых особенно выделяются Виннипесоки, Каюга и Шаплайн на северо-востоке страны и Виннибаго, Красное и Милл-Лэкс - в западной части. В Штате Юта расположено Большое Солёное озеро, также образованное ледниками. Реки востока Соединенных Штатов, главными среди которых являются Гудзон, Делавер, Саскеханна, Потомак и Саванна весьма полноводные и судоходны практически на всем протяжении. Реки центра страны, такие как Огайо, Теннесси, Иллинойс и Миссисипи весной часто разливаются, а жарким летом уровень воды в них заметно падает. Далее на запад расположены такие реки как Миссури, Арканзас, Рио-Гранде, Колорадо, Сакраменто, Снейк, Колумбия. Главной рекой Аляски является Юкон. Население Соединенных Штатов (по

оценке на 1998 год) составляет около 270312000 человек, средняя плотность населения около 28 человек на км². Этнические группы: Америка очень многонациональная страна с большим количеством национальностей, многие из которых сохранили свой язык и традиции; если же подразделить население на группы по расовым признакам, то белые составляют 83,4% населения (среди них особенно выделяются диаспоры ирландцев, итальянцев, евреев, русских, поляков, украинцев), африканцы (в основном потомки рабов, завезенных с Африканского континента в XVIII веке) - 12,4%, азиаты и жители тихоокеанских островов - 3,3%, американские индейцы (коренные жители Соединенных Штатов)- менее 1%. Язык: английский (государственный), около 32 миллионов жителей США пользуется также вторым языком, самыми популярными среди них являются - испанский, китайский, русский, польский, корейский, вьетнамский, португальский, японский, греческий, арабский, хинди, урду, идиш, тайский, армянский, навахо. Вероисповедание: христиане составляют большинство верующего населения США, 1,8%, епископальная церковь - 1,7%, большое количество жителей принадлежат православной церкви; среди самых среди них больше всего католиков - 26%, баптисты - 19,4%, методисты - 8%, пресвитерианцы - 2,8%, пятидесятники - больших нехристианских групп выделяются иудеи - 2%, мусульмане, буддисты, индуисты. Столица - Вашингтон. Крупнейшие города: Нью-Йорк (7333000 человек), Лос-Анджелес (3448000 человек), Чикаго (2731000 человек), Хьюстон (1702000 человек), Филадельфия (1524000 человек), Сан-Диего (1151000 человек). Феникс (1048000 человек), Даллас (1022000 человек), Сан-Антонио (988000 человек), Детройт (992000 человек), Сан-Франциско (734000 человек), Балтимор (702000 человек), Вашингтон (567000 человек), Бостон (547000 человек), Сизтл (520000 человек). Государственное устройство - федеративная республика. Глава государства - президент Обама Барак Хусейн (в должности с 20 января 2009 года). Денежная единица - доллар США. Средняя продолжительность жизни: 73 года - мужчины, 79 лет - женщины. Уровень рождаемости (на 1000 человек) - 14,4. Уровень смертности (на 1000 человек) -

8,8. Государственное образование на территории Соединенных Штатов появилось только в конце XVIII века, однако и до этого в Северной Америке происходили важные исторические события. В конце XV века континент Северной Америки был открыт Христофором Колумбом, и Испания заняла обширные территории Северной, Центральной и Южной Америки. Британский мореплаватель Кабот достиг берегов Северной Америки в 1497 году, после чего Великобритания предъявила претензии на весь континент. Континент населяло множество различных индейских племен общей численностью около 10 миллионов человек. Однако местные жители стали в основном жертвой многочисленных болезней, завезенных европейцами, против которых у них не было иммунитета. Грипп, тиф, корь, ветряная оспа уничтожили за первые 150 лет после прибытия европейцев около 95% местного населения. Первым европейским поселением на территории современных Соединенных Штатов был город Сан-Августин в 1666 году. Однако самых крупных успехов в колонизации континента добилась Англия, которая к началу XVII века имела обширные территории на восточном побережье континента. В конце XVIII века в Американских колониях Великобритании возникло мощное движение за независимость, вылившееся в войну за независимость в 1774-1776 годах. Второй Континентальный конгресс провозгласил независимость колоний 2 июля 1776 года, а через два дня было обнародовано официальное заявление об образовании нового государства. В период между 1776 и 1866 годами Американская конфедерация выросла с 13 первоначальных штатов до 36, присоединив обширные территории на западе и юге континента. Техас, Орегон и Нью-Мексико были самыми крупными приобретениями. В это же время страна пережила раскол на Юг и Север, различавшиеся, в основном, взглядами на отмену рабства в стране. В результате между двумя частями страны вспыхнула гражданская война, закончившаяся победой Севера и воссоединением страны. В начале XX века Соединенные Штаты объявили о нейтралитете, однако начавшаяся в 1914 году первая мировая война вынудила страну вступить в войну, хотя и на последнем ее этапе (6 апреля 1917 года).

После войны страна пережила несколько важных периодов своего экономического развития: сухой закон 1920-1932 годов, давший мощный толчок росту числа преступных группировок в стране и Великую депрессию 30-х годов, в результате которой более 10 миллионов американцев оказались без работы. Во вторую мировую войну Соединенные Штаты вступили 7 декабря 1941 года, когда военная база в Перл-Харборе была атакована японскими самолетами, в декабре войну Соединенным Штатам объявили Германия и Италия. Основные боевые действия американская армия вела в Тихоокеанском регионе и с 1944 года - в Европе после высадки во Франции союзнических войск. В августе 1945 года Соединенные Штаты, опасаясь больших потерь личного состава при возможной высадке на Японские острова, сбросили на Хиросиму и Нагасаки две атомные бомбы, унесшие жизни сотен тысяч мирных граждан. В конце 40-х - начале 50-х годов США пережили период охоты на коммунистов и "неблагонадежных" граждан, называемый еще "охота на ведьм". В 1964 году США фактически начали участие во вьетнамской войне, оказав помощь Республике Вьетнам на юге сначала посылкой своих военных советников, а позже и армейских подразделений, численность которых в конце 60-х годов превысила 500 тысяч человек. В самих Соединенных Штатах развернулось мощное антивоенное движение и в начале 70-х годов численность регулярных войск во Вьетнаме была сокращена на 350 тысяч человек. В 1975 году Соединенные Штаты окончательно вывели свои войска из Вьетнама. Среди последних событий в истории США необходимо выделить террористический акт в Оклахома-Сити, унесший жизни нескольких сотен человек и активную деятельность США на международной арене, выразившуюся в подписании мирного соглашения между Израилем и ООП в 1993 году, восстановлении демократии на Гаити в 1994 году, подписании Дейтонского мирного соглашения по Боснии и Герцеговине, фактически положившего конец гражданской войне на территории бывшей Югославии в 1995 году. Соединенные Штаты являются членом ООН, ГАТТ, ФАО, ЮНЕСКО, ВОЗ, МВФ, НАТО, Организации американских государств.

Организации экономического сотрудничества и развития. Климат страны довольно мягкий с теплым летом и прохладной зимой, хотя в северных и горных регионах (особенно на Аляске) зимы холодные и снежные. Наиболее теплыми регионами страны являются южные штаты и особенно их прибрежные районы (Калифорния, Флорида). В центре страны климат резко континентальный и сухой. Средняя температура января от -25°C на Аляске до 20°C во Флориде. Средняя температура июля на западном побережье составляет от 14°C до 22°C , на восточном побережье - от 16°C до 25°C . Среднегодовая норма осадков в прибрежных районах составляет более 2000 мм, в центральных районах страны - до 1000 мм, в пустынных и полупустынных районах юга США - до 100 мм. Леса покрывают около 30% территории страны, растительность Аляски преимущественно тундровая с мхами и лишайниками, однако на юге штата растут хвойные и смешанные леса. На севере "континентальной" части США растут густые смешанные леса: ель, сосна, дуб, ясень, береза, сикоморо. Далее на юг лесов становится меньше, однако появляются такие растения как магнолия и каучуконосы, а на побережье Мексиканского залива растут мангровые леса. На западе страны начинаются полусухие и засушливые регионы преимущественно с травяной и пустынной растительностью. В таких регионах наиболее распространены юкка, различные кустарники, а в пустыне Мохаве - "кактусовые леса". В более высоких местах произрастают сосна и пондероса. В Калифорнии весьма распространен чапарель, а также многочисленные фруктовые деревья (в основном цитрусовые). В Сьерра-Неваде растут леса гигантской секвойи. На севере восточного побережья находятся хвойные и смешанные леса: ель, кедр, сосна, лиственница. Фауна представлена также соответственно климатическим зонам: на севере это земная белка, медведь, олень и лось, в реках много форели, на побережье Аляски моржи и тюлени. В лесах востока Соединенных Штатов обитают медведь гризли, олень, лиса, волк, скунс, барсук, белка и большое количество мелких птиц. На побережье Мексиканского залива можно встретить таких экзотических птиц, как пеликан, фламинго, зеленый

зимородок. Здесь же водятся аллигаторы и несколько видов ядовитых змей. На Великих равнинах в свое время обитали десятки тысяч бизонов, однако теперь их осталось весьма немного и, в основном, в национальных парках. В горных районах запада США можно встретить таких крупных животных, как лось, олень, вилорог, горный козел, бурый медведь, волк, толсторог. В пустынных регионах обитают преимущественно рептилии (среди них гремучая змея) и мелкие млекопитающие, например, сумчатая крыса. Среди природных достопримечательностей США особенно выделяются Великий Каньон реки Колорадо на Среднем Западе страны; многочисленные национальные парки, одним из самых известных является Йеллоустонский с долиной гейзеров и большим количеством редких животных; пляжи и места развлечений во Флориде и Калифорнии; Великие озера; Ниагарский водопад. Туристов притягивают Лас-Вегас с многочисленными игорными домами, Диснейленд в штате Флорида (самый первый и самый крупный парк отдыха такого типа в мире), Голливуд - знаменитая "фабрика грез". Основные же достопримечательности истории расположены в Нью-Йорке и Вашингтоне. столице это: Капитолий - здание, в котором работает Конгресс США; Белый Дом - официальная резиденция президента страны; памятник Вашингтону-обелиск высотой около 152 м; памятник Линкольну - величественный храм в греческом стиле на 36 колоннах, символизирующих количество штатов США на день смерти Линкольна; Смитсоновский институт - огромный комплекс, объединяющий научно-исследовательские институты, художественные галереи и зоопарк; Арлингтонское мемориальное кладбище, на котором похоронены знаменитые государственные и военные деятели страны и все солдаты, погибшие в войнах, начиная с Гражданской; Национальная галерея искусств с собранием американской и европейской живописи; Национальный исторический музей восковых фигур. В Нью-Йорке: Эмпайр-Стейт-Билдинг, знаменитый небоскреб почти 500-метровой высоты, на 82 (из 102) этаже находится смотровая площадка с прекрасным видом на Манхэттен; здание ООН; Рокфеллеровский центр, объединяющий несколько ресторанов,

магазинов, театров; Бродвей - знаменитый "Великий белый путь", на котором находятся основные театры Нью-Йорка, а также знаменитые ночные клубы, рестораны, отели и магазины; Музей современного искусства с собранием современной живописи, скульптуры, архитектуры, промышленного дизайна, фотографии; Музей Фрика - собрание картин европейских мастеров XIV-XIX столетий; Музей Соломона Гуггенхайма с богатейшим собранием произведений абстракционизма, как американского, так и зарубежного; Музей естественной истории - одно из наиболее полных собраний окаменелостей доисторических животных, а также знаменитая экспозиция, рассказывающая об эволюции человека; Музей Метрополитен с обширной коллекцией предметов искусства, живописи и скульптуры, охватывающей пять тысячелетий и цивилизации Египта, Вавилона, Ассирии, Греции, Рима, Ближнего и Дальнего Востока

и

Европы.

Topics for credit

1. Territory of the USA: main features.
2. About American history in brief: main points.
3. Political structure and political parties.
4. The Media in the United States. Holidays. Traditions.
5. Sport organizations.
6. Arts & Entertainment. Theatres. Hollywood.
7. Economy. Main principles.
8. Science & Technology. Universities.
9. U.S. Society : A Nation of Immigrants. Native Americans.
10. Religion. Customs and traditions.

Final test

I. Choose the right answer.

1. The first state to pass a law about teaching children was:

- a) Kentucky
- b) Massachusetts
- c) Wisconsin

2. US newspapers are mainly funded:

- a) by local governments
- b) through subscription
- c) through advertising

3. There are about 9000 different newspapers in the US with a circulation figure of:

- a) 30 million copies
- b) 45 million copies
- c) 60 million copies
- d) 75 million copies

4. The main source of news for two thirds of all Americans is:

- a) radio
- b) press
- c) television

5. The USA's largest TV network is:

- a) CNN (Cable News Network)
- b) ABC (American Broadcasting Company)
- c) NBS (National Broadcasting Company)
- d) PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

6. The largest portrait art can be found in:

- a) Mount McKinley
- b) Mount Rushmore
- c) Mount Whitney
- d) Mount Vernon

7. The total area of the US is:

- a) 7.4 mln. sq.km.
- b) 9.4 mln. sq.km.
- c) 11.4 mln. sq.km.
- d) 13.4 mln. sq.km.

8. *The USA is a federal union of _____ independent states.*

- a) forty c) sixty
- b) fifty d) one hundred

9. *The most recent state to join the union was _____.*

- a) Hawaii c) Puerto Rico
- b) Alaska d) Canada

10. *_____ is not a US Citizen.*

- a) Keanu Reeves c) Gwyneth Paltrow
- b) Julia Roberts d) Leonardo Di Caprio

11. *The United States of America is _____.*

- a) bigger than Canada c) bigger than Russia
- b) bigger than Brazil d) smaller than Australia

12. *In the USA the laws are _____.*

- a) the same in all states c) different in richer states
- b) different in every state d) different for different races

13. *Most of the population of the mainland USA lives _____.*

- a) on the east coast c) in the centre
- b) on the west coast d) on the east and west coasts

14. *_____ was the first President of the USA.*

- a) Abraham Lincoln c) John Kennedy
- b) George Washington d) Walt Disney

15. *At the time of the American Civil War, _____ was president.*

- a) Robert E Lee
- b) George Washington
- c) Abraham Lincoln
- d) Nelson Rockefeller

16. *President John F Kennedy was assassinated in _____.*

- a) New York, New York
- b) Washington DC
- c) Los Angeles, California
- d) Dallas, Texas

17. *The President of the USA lives in _____.*

- a) White House Road
- b) Pennsylvania Avenue
- c) Texas Street
- d) Washington Square

18. *America was discovered by:*

- a) Christopher Columbus
- b) George Washington
- c) the pilgrims/9.

The capital of the USA is:

- a) Washington
- b) New York
- c) Los Angeles

20. *What is the favourite sport in the USA?*

- a) baseball
- b) cricket
- c) rugby

21. *What river is not in the USA?*

- a) the Mississippi
- b) the Missouri
- c) the Thames

22. *When did Alaska and Hawaii become States?*

- a) 1865
- b) 1912
- c) 1959

23. *How many amendments have been added to the US constitution since its adoption in 1789?*

- a) 27
- b) 115
- c) 75

24. *What was the 1st state to ratify the US constitution?*

- a) Virginia b) Delaware c) Massachusetts

25. *Who was called the "Father of the US constitution"?*

- a) George Washington b) James Madison c) Thomas Jefferson

26. *Which US harbor was called 'New Amsterdam'?*

- a) New York b) Boston c) Charleston

27. *What is the official symbol of the US?*

- a) the turkey b) the cowboy c) the bald eagle

28. *What do the red and white stripes on the American flag represent?*

- a) states b) the original 13 colonies c) just a design

29. *What are the national colours of the US?*

- a) blue and white b) red and white c) red, white and blue

30. *"Battle Hymn of the Republic" was written at the time of:*

- a) The Revolutionary War b) The Civil War c) The War of 1812

31. *The national Anthem of the US is:*

- a) "Stars and Stripes forever" b) "Yankee Doodle Dandy" c) "The Star-Spangled Banner"

II. Enter the grid on the first American colonies:

Name and date of foundation	Type of settlers	Leaders and governors	Main events	Achievements

III. Write a list of 10-15 key words or phrases you know associated with the following topic: *Political Life in the United States.*

IV. Write a numbered list of the names of the US capital cities.

V. Who was the second American president?

VI. Complete the sentences:

1. The tourist attracting region of the US with a system of big lakes is called

2. The eastern part of the USA is occupied by _____

3. Hawaii is situated in the _____

4. The two main tributaries of the Mississippi are the Missouri and the _____

5. The rivers west of the Rockies flow into the _____

6. In some parts of the US the difference of _____ degrees Centigrade between the summer and winter temperatures is possible.

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