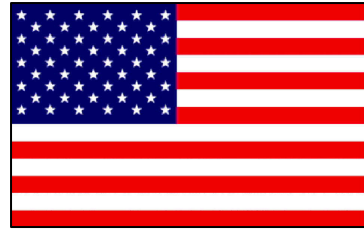


United States of America

Capital: Washington, DC

Population: 285,000,000

GDP/capita: 43,000 USD (2006)



In less than 400 years the USA has grown from wild countryside to the world's most powerful industrial nation. The country is made up of 50 states, including Alaska in the far north and Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean. Vast supplies of *coal*, *oil* and *minerals*, together with *mass immigration* in the 19th and early 20th centuries helped business and industry to grow fast.

Relief: the Rockies (W), the Appalachians (E), the Great Plains (central part), deserts, e.g.

Largest cities: NYC (1st), Boston, Chicago (3rd), Detroit, Miami, Houston, New Orleans, Dallas, Phoenix, Los Angeles (2nd), San Francisco

Rivers: Mississippi, Missouri, Colorado, St. Lawrence, Ohio, Tennessee, Columbia

The Great Lakes: Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario

Seismic zones

California = constant threat of earthquakes ⇔ fault lines (San Andreas fault long 1,200 kms). Hard prediction of an earthquake result in people living with their *survival kits*. The most vulnerable areas = *San Francisco and Los Angeles*.

Can you think of other natural hazards influencing the life of the Americans? Where do they occur?

Native Americans

Today, they make up less than 1% of the total population. Europeans => Indians were decimated by diseases and forced over time to live on *reservations* (land given them by the government). Despite these hardships, many tribal traditions and languages still survive.

Settling westwards – historical and economic approach

The population of the US has always been mobile due to large distance compared to Europe. They have searched new work or better lifestyle also due to the Great Depression.

1600-1820:

- 1.3 million immigrants arrived from Europe creating towns along the East Coast.
- 1.5 million slaves were brought here from Africa

1850-1920: the prospect of finding *gold* and the spread of *railroads* lured people west. Later, it was *aircraft and film industries* in Seattle and Los Angeles.

1970: *high oil prices* boosted the Texan economy. The warm climate and better quality of life also attempted people to move to other cities in the West and Southwest.

Give other reasons of the colonization of American West.

Cities

Urbanisation rate: 75%. People live in cities and, especially, in *city suburbs*. Different origin results in their own neighbourhoods, e.g. Chinatown or Little Italy in NYC

Big business in NYC = financial capital of the US (the greatest stock exchange)

Why are there in cities so many skyscrapers?



People

Wide range of different groups and races ⇔ *descendants of European immigrants* mostly.

African-Americans are offspring of African slaves brought there by force.

Hispanics = Spanish-speaking people.

Asian race = especially in the West Coast.

Agriculture

Cotton – mid-1880s, the *southern states* produced about 80% of the world's cotton ⇔ huge plantations handpicked by black slaves. Nowadays = *soy*.

The Great Plains – between the Rockies and Mississippi river = *cereals* (wheat, corn, soy)

Rocky mts. – timber and conservation

Industries

Pittsburgh + Cleveland: metallurgy

Detroit: car-manufacturing industry

Seattle: aircraft industry

Houston: space exploration (rocketry) + oil

LA: film industry

National parks

More than 350 NPs in the US, e.g. Yellowstone (Wyoming and Montana) was the first park to open in 1872.

Other examples of NPs? Which animal species are protected there?

Other issues

tornadoes, deserts (Arizona), culture, (dis)advantages of living there, American nation(?)

Keywords

reservations, immigrants, soy, Hispanics, oil, cotton, slaves, skyscrapers, business