

THE USA

The United States of America is the fourth largest country in the world. It is located in North America, and borders with Canada in the north and Mexico in the south. In the west it is bordered by the Pacific Ocean and in the east by the Atlantic Ocean.

When the USA became an independent country, there were only 13 states. Nowadays, there are 50 states and they make one nation. Alaska and Hawaii are the only states not connected to the mainland.

Alaska was bought from Russia in 1744, and it is the largest US state with a lot of natural resources: gold, coal, natural gas and oil. Hawaii is a popular holiday destination.

Look at the map below and find the names of the US states in the grid. How many can you find?

The word 'America' comes from the name of an Italian explorer, Amerigo Vespucci.



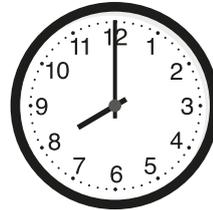
Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

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TIME ZONES

The USA is a very big country and it has 6 time zones. As the Earth turns around, the sun shines on only one side of the planet at a time. That's why we have days and nights, and different time zones. The time difference between New York and Warsaw is +6 hours, and between Los Angeles (LA) and Warsaw it is +9 hours.

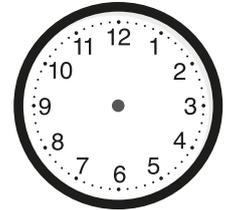
**What's the time in Warsaw when it is 8 AM in LA and 11 AM in New York?
Draw the missing hands of the Warsaw clock.**



Los Angeles 8 AM



New York 11 AM



Warsaw?



When people travel to a far-off time zone, they suffer from jet lag. It is a kind of sickness caused by the time difference. It usually takes a few days for our body to adapt to the new time zone.

NATURAL WONDERS

The United States has many famous national parks, for example, Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona, Yosemite National Park in California or Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. There are tall mountains, great lakes and volcanoes. You can also see giant sequoia trees and geysers.

There is a variety of landscapes across the country – from the tropical beaches of Florida, where you can bump into an alligator, to the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains. There are grassy prairie lands where you can spot buffalo herds, huge forests, famous waterfalls, like the world-famous Niagara, deserts and rivers. The USA is a very big country and it has many different climates too, from tropical in Florida and Hawaii to the cold tundra in Alaska.



Look at the map of the USA and think of the best places to live. Is it better to live in a big city or in the country, close to nature? Are hot or cold regions better? What kind of place would you prefer and why?

The buffalo is the biggest animal in North America. It can weigh around 900 kg. Before white settlers arrived in America, there were 60 million buffalo in the centre of North America, and they lived in huge herds. By the beginning of the 20th century, there were fewer than 30 buffalo alive and they almost became extinct. Today, there are over 30,000 buffalo in America, and they live in protected areas.



THE STARS AND STRIPES

Click and watch!



The American flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes (7 red and 6 white) representing the first 13 colonies which became the first American states. There are also 50 white stars which represent the present 50 American states. The colours of the flag have a special meaning. Red is a symbol of courage, white is a symbol of freedom, and blue is a symbol of justice.

The flag is called 'The Star-Spangled Banner'. Another popular name for the flag is the 'Stars and Stripes.' Americans are very proud of their flag.

NEW YORK

New York is the largest city in the USA and its history started in Manhattan around 400 years ago. The first people who lived there were Native Americans. In the 17th century, settlers from Holland arrived in America and they bought the island from the native people. They build a settlement and called it New Amsterdam. Later, the British took it over, and changed the name to New York. The city grew very fast and from 1785 till 1790 it was the capital of the USA.



New York is one of the most exciting cities in the world and it is a very busy place. People say it never goes to sleep. It has a lot of skyscrapers and it is home to many world-famous landmarks: the Statue of Liberty, Central Park, Wall Street, Times Square, Broadway, the Empire State Building, and many more! The city is sometimes called The Big Apple.



THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

The statue was a gift from France for the American people, and it was presented to America on July 4th, 1884 as a sign of friendship between the two nations. Lady Liberty is a symbol of freedom, and it was built by Gustave Eiffel, the man who designed the famous tower in Paris! It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the USA, with around 4 million visitors every year. If you want to visit the Statue, you need to take a ferry from Manhattan to Liberty Island.

The statue is 93 meters tall and it is green now, but when it was new, it was a different colour – light brown. That's because it is made of copper, which turns green over time.

CENTRAL PARK

Central Park is located in the center of Manhattan and it is one of the largest and most famous parks in the world. It is sometimes called 'the green lungs of New York' because there are a lot of trees, which produce oxygen and make the city air better to breathe. There is also a lake, a castle, a skating rink and a zoo. Central Park is a place where people walk, jog, play games, picnic and relax. When you plan a trip to New York, you must visit Central Park!



BROOKLYN BRIDGE



The Brooklyn Bridge, which connects Manhattan and Brooklyn, is one of the most famous bridges in the world and one of the most popular tourist attractions in the USA. It is over a mile long (1,834 m) and it takes about 30 minutes to cross it on foot. The bridge was a wonder of modern engineering and when it was built it was the longest suspension bridge in the world. When it was completed people were afraid to walk on it so twenty-one elephants were walked across the bridge to prove that it was safe. Trucks and heavy cars are not allowed to cross the bridge today as they could damage the structure.

*Americans measure distances in miles. A mile is 1,609 meters.
When they talk about how tall a person is, they use feet and inches.
A foot is 30.48 cm and an inch is 2.54 cm.
One foot is 12 inches.*



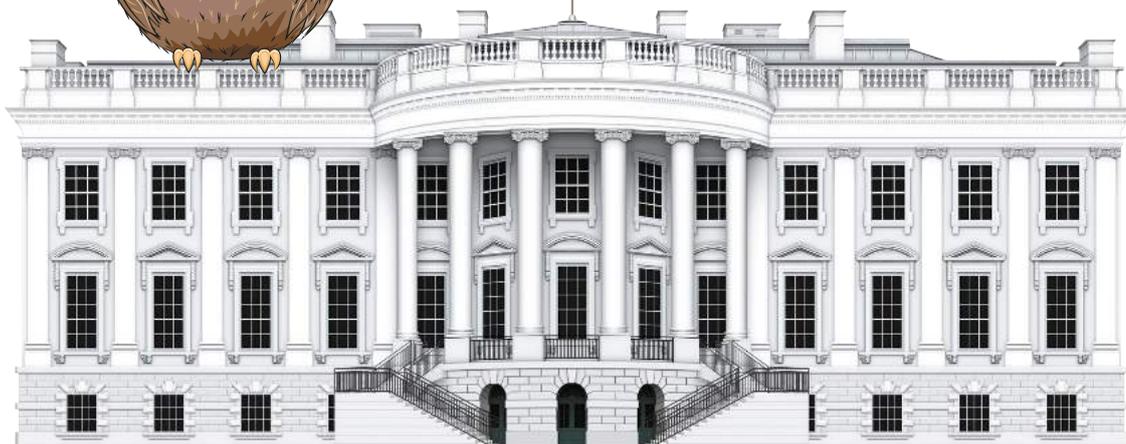
WASHINGTON

Washington, D.C., is the capital of the USA. The city is located in the District of Columbia which is not part of any US State. The city was named after George Washington, the first president of the USA who also chose the location and hired a French architect to design it. There are many famous buildings in Washington, including the White House, where the US President lives.

When it was built, the White House was light brown. It was called the 'White House' because its walls were painted white. The President's office is oval in shape and it is called the Oval Office.



Americans sometimes call the President 'Potus' – it stands for President of the United States. Presidents are elected every four years.



AMERICAN PEOPLE

The USA has a population of over 330 million people and American society is a mixture of all races – white, black, Latino and Asian. The USA is often called a country of immigrants because most people came here from other countries.

The first people who lived in America were Native Americans. In 1492, Christopher Columbus wanted to find a new way to India, and he reached an island near America. He thought he was in India, and he called the local people 'Indians'. It was a mistake, but the name stuck for a long time!

After Columbus, settlers from Holland, England, France and other countries arrived. Also, a lot of black people were brought from Africa as slaves. Black Americans are called Afro-Americans.

There are also many people of Polish origin. About 1.9 million people of Polish origin live in Chicago and it is sometimes said that Chicago is the largest Polish city outside Poland! In total, there are about 9.15 million people with Polish roots in the USA.



Many US states have names of Native American origin. Manhattan is also a Native American name. When Columbus reached America, there were about 2,000 different tribes of Native American people. Each of them had their own language and customs, and they communicated with one another using sign language.

Most people believe that Christopher Columbus discovered America, but the Vikings had probably arrived there five hundred years before Columbus, in the 10th century AD.

Black Americans are called Afro-Americans. A lot of black people were brought from Africa as slaves and they had to work very hard without getting paid. Slavery was abolished in 1865, after a long and bloody Civil War. Black people were discriminated against and had to fight for their rights. Barack Obama was the first black President of the USA.



Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language in the USA. It is very common in the south of the USA and many of its speakers emigrated to the USA from Mexico and other countries in Central and South America.

A lot of Chinese people went to the USA in the 1850s, during the California Gold Rush, hoping for a better life because China was very poor at that time. Nowadays, a lot of Chinese students go to the USA to study at university.



THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY – FROM RAGS TO RICHES

Do you think that if you are determined and work hard, you can achieve anything in the world and become a millionaire? Many people went to the USA looking for a better life, and some of them managed to make a fortune. Is hard work enough or do you also need a bit of luck?

AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

Match the pictures, the descriptions and the names of the holidays.



HALLOWEEN



ST. PATRICK'S DAY



HANUKKAH



CHRISTMAS



VALENTINE'S DAY



INDEPENDENCE DAY



THANKSGIVING

Click and match!

Irish-Americans celebrate it on March 17th. People wear green clothes because green is the colour of Ireland.

Christian families celebrate the holiday on December 25-26th and remember the birth of Jesus Christ. They decorate Christmas trees and exchange presents.

On October 31st children put on funny outfits and go trick-or-treating.

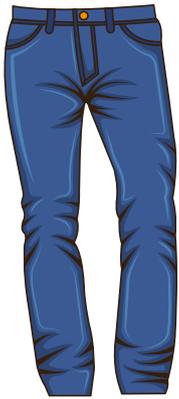
It is celebrated on July 4th - the birthday of the USA. Americans remember the day when the USA became an independent country.

In December Jewish people in the USA celebrate the Festival of Lights. They light the menorah, eat traditional foods, play games and exchange gifts.

On the fourth Thursday in November families get together and have a dinner of turkey and pumpkin pie. People give thanks for all the good things in their life.

It is celebrated on February 14th. People send cards, give flowers and chocolates to their loved ones.

AMERICAN INVENTIONS



Do you know that blue **jeans** were invented in the USA by a man called Levi Strauss? He was a young immigrant from Germany, and he went to America during the Gold Rush, when a lot of people were looking for gold. One day he heard a miner complain that he could not find clothes that would last for a long time. Levi Strauss took some gray canvas he was going to use to make tents and he made trousers. The miners loved the trousers because they were very practical, and they loved them even more when Levi dyed them blue. Jeans trousers became fashionable and Levi Strauss started a company that is now famous all over the world.

Cola-Cola, the most popular drink in the world, was invented in 1886 by Dr John Pemberton who was a pharmacist and sold Coca-Cola as a medicine for all kinds of health problems. The exact ingredients of the drink are not known – the Coca-Cola Company keeps the recipe secret!



Basketball was invented in the USA in 1891 by a Canadian teacher, James Naismith, who wanted his students to play an indoor game during the cold winter months. In the beginning, the players used real baskets, which they put on the gym wall. When one of the players managed to throw the ball into the basket, somebody had to use a ladder to take it out. Nowadays, the ball passes through the hoop and it falls down, so no ladders are needed!



Teddy bears come from Theodore Roosevelt, president of the USA whose nickname was 'Teddy'. Once, he went hunting and he saw a small bear. He did not shoot the animal saying it was too small and should go free. The story was published in newspapers and the little bear was called Teddy after the president. The story became very popular and soon people all over the world started calling toy bears 'teddy bears'.



The **telephone** was invented in the USA by Alexander Graham Bell from Edinburgh, Scotland. Queen Victoria was the first monarch to make a phone call.



The **lightbulb** was invented by Thomas Alva Edison, one of the greatest inventors in the world. It was one of his 1,300 inventions!

The first man on the moon was American. His name was Neil Armstrong and he set foot on the moon in 1969.



The **Internet** was developed in the USA. It had no single inventor and many people worked on the project that was started by the US army. Can you imagine the world without the Internet? How do you think people learned, worked and communicated without it?

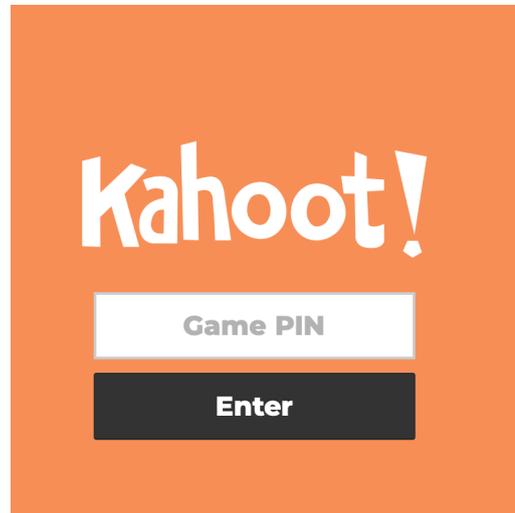
What do you think is the greatest invention in the world? Why is it so important?



QUIZ TIME

Click the pictures and play!

Game PIN: 08836620



What city is this?



A London

B New York

C Hollywood

D Washington