

1. In whose honor did America get its name?

The continent America however was named for another Italian explorer – Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512) who completed many voyages to South America and was the first to understand that he had reached not India but a new continent – the New World.

2. Who were the first European settlers on American continents?

In 1528 five Spanish ships under the command of Panfilo Narvaez reached the west coast of Florida, staying on the continent in search of gold for several years.

In 1539 Spanish explorer Fray Marcos de Niza was sent to America and described a “very beautiful city” in South America as one of the “Seven cities”. His report stimulated further explorations into the area. In all areas of Spanish exploration, settlement and colonization soon followed and before long the Spanish Empire was spread from Florida to California to Central and South America. It was an Empire based on Spanish culture, the Catholic Church and exploration of the native tribes(племя), but eventually Spain found the task of mastering and controlling two continents too much for her resources. After the defeat(поражение) of the Spanish Armada by England in 1588, Spain’s power started declining(снижаться).

3. Why were the original tribes in North America called Indians?

When Christopher Columbus arrived in the “New World” and thought that he was in India, he called the native people as Indians.

4. Do you remember the history of New York?

In 1624 the Dutch(голландский) ship “New Netherlands” brought(доставил) thirty families to the mouth(устье) of the Hudson River. In 1626 the governor of the Dutch Colony bought from Indians Manhattan Island for the trinkets(безделушки) valued approximately \$24, built a trading(торговый) fort and a town, which he called New Amsterdam. The defenses(оборона) of New Amsterdam were poor and later when English warships appeared(появились) in the bay(в бухте) the Dutch had to surrender(сдать) the fort and the town to the English. In 1664 King Charles II gave a large area of Manhattan Island to his brother Duke of York(герцог йоркский) and New Amsterdam was turned into New York in honor of the duke.

5. What was the American capital before the War for Independence?

Philadelphia was the first American capital.

6. How did the movement for independence develop in American colonies?

After the French war Great Britain rose to the heights of national power and prestige. At the same time the costly seven-year struggle(борьба) severely strained(напрягла) Britain’s treasury(казна) and pointed up(указала) glaring(явные) differences of interests between England and Americans who felt much less dependent on the mother country. The colonies had become quite different and no longer wanted to be seen as extensions(расширение) of England. The controversy(противоречия) between England and the colonies after 1763 revolved around(вращались вокруг) the laws affecting(затрагивающие) the settlement(поселение) of the West, colonial trade, currency(валюта), taxes(налоги), courts of justice(суды) and legislative assembly(законодательное собрание).

7. What is Boston “tea party”?

When three ships loaded with tea came into the port of Boston in December 16, 1773 American colonists refused(отказались) to pay the tax(налог) and unload(разгрузить) the tea. Instead at night a group of 60 men disguised(переодетые) as Indians boarded the ships and dumped(выбросили) the cargo(груз) of three hundred forty two chests(ящики) into the water of the harbor(гавань). This event came into American history under the name “The Boston Tea Party”.

8. What are personalities of the period of “American Revolution”?

American commander-in-chief(главнокомандующий) was George Washington. American lawyers Thomas Jefferson and James Wilson worked out the rights of Americans and their own legislation. The British Prime Minister George Granville introduced a series of administrative and financial programs for America: the Quartering (расквартирование) Act (1765), the Currency (валюта) Act (1764), a New Sugar and Molasses(патока) Act (1764), the Stamp(печать) Act (1765). British King George was British commander-in-chief.

9. When and how long did the War for Independence last?

The war for Independence lasted for six years (1775—1781).

In April 1775 the British regulars at Lexington and Concord (near Boston) were met by armed American volunteers (so-called militia). Their first skirmish proclaimed the beginning of American War for Independence. After the decisive(решающая) victory of the colonial army at Yorktown in 1781 the British finally laid down their arms. In 1783 the ultimate peace treaty was signed in Paris.

10. What were the main reasons of the victory of “American Revolution”?

Americans were fighting at home and for freedom. It was their great advantage.

11. When was the American Constitution adopted?

In 1787 a nation-wide meeting (named Convention) in Philadelphia adopted a new Constitution.

12. When was the name “The United States of America” first used?

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. The name “The United States of America” was first used in this document.

13. Which variant of American constitution is used now?

Although the constitution has been amended 26 times it is still the “supreme law of the land” and provides three main branches of government: the executive branch (the president, the vice president, the cabinet), the legislative branch (the Congress) and the judicial branch (the Supreme Court).

Currently used version of the constitution, adopted in 1978.

14. Which were the only wars on the territory of the USA?

[American Revolutionary War](#) 1775-1780

[American Indian Wars](#) 1775-1918

[War of 1812](#) 1812-1815

[Thornton Affair](#) April 26, 1846

[Mexican American War](#) 1846-1848

[Black Tom explosion](#) July 30, 1916

[Battle of Columbus](#) 1916

[Bombardment of Orleans](#) 1918

[Battle of Ambos Nogales](#) 1918

[Attacks on North America during World War II](#) 1941-1945

[1993 shootings at CIA Headquarters](#) January 25, 1993

[1993 World Trade Center bombing](#) February 26, 1993

[September 11 attacks](#) by [al-Qaeda](#) on [New York City, New York](#); [Arlington, Virginia](#); and [Shanksville, Pennsylvania](#) September 11, 2001

15. What were the main causes of the Civil War in North America?

Although abolition of slavery was to be one of its problems, the war was fought not only to destroy slavery but first of all to preserve the union.

16. When and how long did the Civil War take place?

The war lasted four years from April 1861 to May 1865.

17. What were the results of the Civil War?

A more technically advanced and productive economic system resulted from the war. The war forced the Government to proclaim emancipation for slave-soldiers fighting for the Union. It was followed by the antislavery amendment to the Constitution making slavery illegal throughout the whole country.

18. Which personalities do you remember of the period of the Civil War?

Abraham Lincoln is one of chief founders of Republican Party, the sixteenth president of the USA. Among Southern leaders there were two men of great military talent - generals Jackson and Lee.

19. Which American writer devoted his stories to the period of so-called "Gold Fever"?

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 set off the famous "Gold Rush". "Gold Rush" or "Gold Fever", dramatically described by famous American writer Jack London, occupies a special place in the USA history.

20. When and how did the USA turn into the richest country of the world?

Theodore Roosevelt found the Progressive movement; he wanted to allow the businessmen enough freedom of action to make their firms efficient and prosperous. While the First World War started on the continent of Europe, the USA quickly became the main supplier of weapon and capital to the countries of the Anti-German allies. By 1919 USA had a primary world economy, with enormous productive capacity and extensive markets for manufactured goods. From 1920 to October 1929 America became the wealthiest country in the world with no obvious rival. Yet by 1930 she had hit a depression that was to have world-wide consequences

21. What were the main events in the USA between two World Wars?

After the First World War USA was a country with primary world economy. And business continued develop. At that time "business had become almost the national religion of America". But there were already a lot of troubles. Bank debts were mounting. Low wages of most workers led to underconsumption. And so stock prices dropped dramatically on October 29, 1929, known as Black Tuesday. It was a start of Great American Depression, which lasted until the late 1930s. Nearly eight million Americans were out of work, thousand of banks and over 100000 businesses had closed down. Industrial production had fallen down by half and wage payments by 60%. In 1933 Franklin D. Roosevelt became a president. His program, which he called The New Deal 15 major, consisted of a number of legislative measures to fight against the Depression. As a result of all his measures unemployment dropped from 13 million people to 9.

22. What were the main reasons of Great American Depression?

On the surface it seemed that prosperity would continue forever but below the surface there were already a lot of troubles. Bank debts were mounting. Low wages of most workers led to underconsumption. Excessive industrial profits and low industrial wages distributed one third of all personal income to only 5% of the population. The agricultural sector was also plagued with overproduction. In the United States, the Great Depression began soon after the stock market crash of October 1929, which sent Wall Street into a panic and wiped out millions of investors.

23. What do you remember of US president Franklin Roosevelt?

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (January 30, 1882 – April 12, 1945), commonly known by his initials FDR, was an American statesman and political leader who served as the 32nd President of the United States. A Democrat, he was elected four times and served from March 1933 to his death in April 1945. He was a central figure in world events during the mid-20th century, leading the United States during a time of worldwide economic depression and total war. A dominant leader of the Democratic Party, he built a New Deal Coalition that realigned American politics after 1932, as his New Deal domestic policies defined American liberalism for the middle third of the 20th century.

Roosevelt dominated the American political scene during the twelve years of his presidency, and his policies and ideas continued to have significant influence for decades afterward. He orchestrated the realignment of voters that created the Fifth Party System. Roosevelt's New Deal Coalition united labor unions, big city machines, white ethnics, African Americans, and rural white Southerners. His work also influenced the later creation of the United Nations and Bretton Woods. Roosevelt is

consistently rated by students as one of the top three U.S. Presidents, along with Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.

24. What happened after the end of the World War II?

After the end of the Second World War began The Cold War. The Cold War was an ideological struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States over control of the world. Americans were the only nation in the world that the Second World War had made better off. Their homes had not been bombed or their land fought over like the homes and land of the Russian people. Busy wartime factories had given them good wages. Americans became the most prosperous people in the world.

25. What is so-called McCarthyism?

Despite economic prosperity during the years under president Truman (1945-53) and then president Eisenhower (1953-61) there was a constant anxiety in America and fear of the Russian influence on the afterward world. After two unpleasant surprises – the Soviet Union's atomic bomb and the creation of communist China – a wave of panic swept across the USA. Due to the terrible propaganda some Americans started to see communist plots everywhere. An ambitious and unscrupulous politician McCarthy tried to use these fears to win fame and power for himself. He started the campaign that came into American history with the name a "Witch Hunt" – a search for people he could blame for supposed threats to the United States. For over five years, from early 1950s till the mid 1950s McCarthy launched the serial of "hearings", accusing a lot of people – government officials, scientists, and famous entertainers – of secretly working for the Soviet Union. He never gave proofs, but Americans were so much frightened by the threat of communism that many believed his accusations. They were afraid to give jobs or even to show friendship to anyone "suspected" in "Soviet sympathy". In 1957 McCarthy died, but so-called McCarthyism did serious damage to the relations between the countries.

26. What is the political structure of the USA?

The President chooses the fourteen cabinet members who head departments, such as Justice, Defense, or Education; chooses who will run as vice president; appoints federal judges; chooses heads of agencies such as the FBI and CIA; proposes laws, and approves federal laws after Congress has approved them; appoints US ambassadors to foreign countries; bears the responsibilities of relations with foreign countries and commander-in chief of armed forces. The Vice President leads the Senate and combined meetings of both houses of Congress, serves on special government committees and becomes president if the president must leave office.

The Cabinet together with the president, the cabinet members (13) form the government. They advise on issues related to their departments.

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

27. What is the Policy of Checks and Balances?

The system of checks and balances makes compromise and consensus necessary. Compromise is also a vital aspect of other levels of the US government.

The system of "check and balances" protects against extremes. It means for example, that new presidents cannot radically change governmental policies just as they wish.

28. What are the main political parties?

The US Constitution says nothing about political parties, but over time the US has developed a two-party system: the Democratic and Republican parties. The president-day Democratic Party was founded in 1828 representing Southern planters. The Republican Party, founded in 1854, united industrial and trade bourgeoisie from Northeast.

29. What are the stages of Presidential election in the USA?

The national presidential election consists of two separate campaigns: one is for the nomination of candidates at national party conventions. The other is to win the actual election. The nominating race is a competition between members of the same party. In November of the election year (years divisible by four, e.g. 1988, 1992, 1996, etc.), the voters across the nation go to the polls. If the majority of the popular votes in a state go to the Presidential (and Vice - Presidential) candidate of one party, then that person is supposed to get all of that state's "electoral votes". These electoral votes are equal to the number of senators and Representatives each state has in Congress. The candidate with the largest number of these electoral votes wins the election. In January of the following year, in a joint session of Congress, the new President and Vice – President are officially announced.

30. How are laws made in the USA?

The USA Congress has the power to make laws, but the President may veto any act of Congress. Congress, in its turn, can override a veto by a two-thirds vote in each house. Congress can also refuse to provide funds requested by the President. The President can appoint important officials of his administration, but they must be approved by the Senate. The courts have the power to determine the constitutionality of all acts of Congress and of presidential actions, and to strike down those they find unconstitutional.

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Each state has its own state police and its own criminal laws. The same is true with marriage and divorce laws, driving laws and licenses, alcohol laws, voting procedures.

31. What do you remember about John F. Kennedy?

In 1961 a new President John F. Kennedy (1961-3) was elected, the most progressive president since A. Lincoln and F. Roosevelt. He was young, had a good education, energy and keen, quick wit. He told American people that they were facing a "new frontier" with both opportunities and problems. He announced policy of fighting poverty and giving civil rights to black people. He streamlined and pushed through the space program and new laws for pollution treatment, but his main merit was his foreign policy. When J. Kennedy came to the office, foreign problems were numerous.

32. Who was the main reformer of the American English Language?

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson made the first attempts to renovate the English language. Jefferson was fascinated by words and liked to invent the new ones. Benjamin Franklin, who founded the first free public library in the USA, was also interested in the reform of the English language. In 1768, he published a paper entitled "A Scheme for a New Alphabet and a Reformed Mode of Spelling". His ideas were not adopted, but made a profound influence on further US linguists.

33. Which linguistic reforms did Noah Webster carry on?

Noah Webster is The most famous of all American dictionary-makers. His contribution in the creation of American language is hard to overestimate. His works on linguistics had an enormous influence on American standards of spelling and writing. By including thousands of technical and scientific terms, Webster laid the groundwork for modern lexicography and very many dictionaries published in the USA still bear his name.

34. Why did American English Language become the global language?

The American vocabulary during the 19th and especially 20th and 21 centuries began to be exported abroad due to its economic, political and technological prominence in the world. American movies, radio, television, pop culture have certainly hastened the process.

In recent years Americanisms have been introduced into international usage. Hundreds of new business buzz-words are used, reflecting the birth of global markets and the take-over boom. Americans invented a lot of new words connected with new technology, computers and internet: a notebook, a laptop computer, download, upload, online, offline, website, to hack, software, know-how, the dotcom economy, screensaver,

trackpad, thumbnail, footprint, gridlocked, cyber pet, a techno-wizard, a cybercafé and many others of computer-related terms are increasingly invading the daily life. A lot of politically correct terminology also appeared. A lot of abbreviations and acronyms appeared, especially often used in media and ads (advertisements): NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), IMF (International Monetary Fund), CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), ZIP code (for Zone Improvement Plan), etc.

35. What do you remember about American media?

American newspapers get much of their news from the two US largest news agencies AP (Associated Press) and UPI (United Press International). It is estimated that altogether, around 2 billion people get most of their news directly or indirectly through AP and UPI.

Quite a few have “daughter” editions in other countries. Among such internationals are Time, Newsweek, National Geographic, Reader’s Digest, Cosmopolitan, Vogue, Newsweek, and Psychology Today. The best known professional periodicals The Atlantic Monthly, Harvard Educational Review, Saturday Review, National Geographic, Smithsonian (published by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.), Scientific American have a huge readership both in the USA and abroad.

There are many different types and varieties of American radio and television: commercial, non-commercial, individual, etc. There is also a great variety among television stations. The majority of commercial television stations buy most of their programming, roughly 70 %, from the three commercial networks: ABC (American Broadcasting Company), CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System), and NBC (National Broadcasting Company).

36. Is there any national press in the USA?

It is often said that there is no “national press” in the United States as there is in Great Britain. In one sense this is true. Most daily newspapers are distributed locally or regionally. There have been attempts to publish truly national newspapers, e.g. The USA Today. But it still has only a circulation of 1.2 million, which is not enough in a country where state, city, and local news and political developments most deeply affect readers and are therefore especially interesting to them.

37. What groups are American higher institutions divided into?

(In the USA there is no clear definition of the term "institution of higher education". The institutions, which provide higher education, do not constitute any coordinate system and are not controlled by any centralized national authority. In principle, any educational institution offering further training after leaving high school, the so-called "post-secondary educational institution" may be referred to as Higher Educational Institution. The only criterion to determine the nature of any U.S. institution may be a qualitative level of it.)

Junior Colleges

Colleges of Liberal Arts

Specialized Institutions

A University

(+ Private universities?)

38. What are different student groups in the USA?

Students are classified as freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. A freshman is a first year student, a sophomore, a second year student, a junior, a third year student, and a senior, a fourth year student.

39. Tell about the American scientists you know.

John Forbes Nash, Jr. (born June 13, 1928) is an American mathematician whose works in game theory are used in market economics, computing, evolutionary biology, artificial intelligence, accounting, politics and military theory. He awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

Norbert Wiener (November 26, 1894 – March 18, 1964) was an American mathematician and philosopher. He was Professor of Mathematics at MIT. Wiener is considered the originator of cybernetics, a formalization

of the notion of feedback, with implications for engineering, systems control, computer science, biology, neuroscience, philosophy, and the organization of society.

Alan Curtis Kay (born May 17, 1940) is an American computer scientist. He is best known for his pioneering work on object-oriented programming and windowing graphical user interface design

40. Tell about your favorite American writer.

41. What is American character in comparison with the British one?

One of the most important features of the American character is emphasis on individual personality rather than collective identity or responsibility. Another distinctive American characteristic is pragmatism. This means that emphasis on achievement and success is understood first of all as material prosperity. Americans are fond of common sense; they are not particularly interested in theory, abstract reasoning, or philosophy. Generally speaking, Americans are open and friendly people. The public behavior of Americans is less reserved than that of English, e.g. It is normal for Americans to speak loudly, joke and laugh in public. Americans tend to be informal and unceremonious in both their public or private lives, although they are not absolutely uniform in their outward behavior. Like the British, Americans have love for the intricate practical joke, the pun, and the understated quip (clever remark).

42. Give examples of American pop culture?

For example, Michael Jackson and Elvis Presley are outstanding representatives of American pop culture.

Michael Joseph Jackson (August 29, 1958 – June 25, 2009) was an American singer, songwriter, dancer, and actor. Called the King of Pop, his contributions to music and dance made him a global figure in popular culture for over four decades.

Elvis Aaron Presley (January 8, 1935 – August 16, 1977) was an American singer and actor. Regarded as one of the most significant cultural icons of the 20th century, he is often referred to as "the King of Rock and Roll", or simply, "the King".

43. Do you know the history of American cinema industry?

Originally American cinema was born in the East, when in 1903 a cameraman Edwin S. Porter turned out a short film. The first "Patent Cinema Company" was formed in 1908 in Chicago. Soon the number of film companies, producers, actors, technical staff grew up there and the first film studio was founded in 1911 in Hollywood. By the middle of the 20s Hollywood had modern financial and technical basis of film production and the professional stuff.

The first "talking" movies appeared in the 30s.

The years before the Second World War and after it became "the golden age" of Hollywood. During that period 7500 full-length films were shot there.

At our time gradually Hollywood transformed beyond recognition. Generations have grown up watching American films. A lot of copies are made for VCR and sold all over the world. Film companies spent hundreds million dollars on the film production and almost the same money on their advertisements. The films by famous directors and producers Steven Spielberg, Kevin Kostner, Quentin Tarantino, Paul Verkhoven, Lucas receive the most attention. The most highly paid actors Sylvester Stallone, Jack Nicolson, Demy Moor, Julia Roberts, Sharon Stone and others receive a lot of prestigious prizes and awards at the leading international film festivals.