



the USA



Facts



- Official name:** United States of America
- Abbreviations:** U.S. / U.S.A.
- Capital:** [Washington, D.C.](#)
- Size:** 9,529,063 km² (plus approximately 10,360 km² for outlying territories and other politically associated areas)
- Population:** 281.4 million
- Borders:** Canada (north), Atlantic Ocean (east), Mexico and Gulf of Mexico (south), Pacific Ocean (west)
- Currency:** US Dollar
- Official language:** English
- Nationality / People** A person of *American* nationality is an *American*.
- Local time:** New York: 04:54 EST (Monday, 26th April 2010)
Los Angeles: 01:54 PST (Monday, 26th April 2010)



Other interesting facts:

The United States is the fourth largest country in the world (after Russia, [Canada](#), and China). It consists of 50 states plus Washington D.C. (a federal district) and four outlying territories (Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa).

Tour around the USA



New York



Statue of Liberty

The Statue of Liberty stands on Liberty Island, at the mouth of the Hudson River in New York Harbor.

The statue represents the goddess of liberty with a torch in her right hand and a tablet in her left hand. On the tablet you can see the date of the Declaration of Independence “JULY IV MDCCLXXVI” (July 4, 1776).





The copper statue is 46 meters high and was made by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi and Gustave Eiffel (who also built the Eiffel Tower). It was given to the United States by France on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.





Empire State Building

The Empire State Building was opened on May 1, 1931. It is an office building, but the platform at the top of the building is also a popular tourist attraction.

Its height from bottom to the 102nd floor is 381 meters.

Including the broadcasting tower, which was added in the 1950s, the total height is 443.5 meters.

Before the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the Empire State building was the second highest building in New York. The Freedom Tower, which is planned to be constructed on Ground Zero, will again be higher than the Empire State Building.





Central Park

Central Park lies in Manhattan and covers an area of 3.4 km² (4 km × 800 m).

It is one of the most famous city parks and not only a popular oasis for New Yorkers, but also for migrating birds.





Exercise

Read the text again and answer the following questions with a short answer. (The first sentence is given as an example.)

1. Is the Statue of Liberty made of copper? Yes, it is.
2. Does the Statue of Liberty stand on Liberty Island? _____
3. Is the Empire State Building more than 500 meters high? _____
4. Can tourists go to the platform of the Empire State Building? _____
5. Are there any birds in Central Park? _____

Philadelphia



Philadelphia is one of the oldest cities in the United States. It has played an important role in American history.





Liberty Bell

Philadelphia's most popular tourist attraction is the Liberty Bell. Between 1753 and 1828 the bell hung in Philadelphia's State House (now Independence Hall) and was rung on special occasions, for example on the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8, 1776.

For a long time, the bell was only known as the State House Bell. In 1839, however, it was mentioned in a pamphlet called "The Liberty Bell" and thus became a symbol of freedom and is now known as the Liberty Bell.



Washington, DC.



Washington, DC is the capital of the United States. DC stands for District of Columbia and means that Washington is not part of any federal state, but a unique district. The citizens of Washington, DC have no voting representation in Congress and are not at all represented in the Senate.





White House

The White House is the working place and residence of the United States President. It was built between 1792 and 1800 and has 132 rooms. There is also a swimming pool, movie theater, tennis court and bowling lane.





United States Capitol

A long mall connects the White House and the Capitol (home of the Congress). The House of Representatives is in the south wing and the Senate in the north wing. On Inauguration Day (January 20), the President holds his inaugural address on the steps of the Capitol and then usually parades from the Capitol to the White House.





Exercise

Rewrite the active sentences in passive voice and the passive sentences in active voice.

- Active: Many people visit Washington.

Passive: _____

- Active: _____

Passive: The White House was built by James Hoban.

- Active: _____

Passive: The White House and the Capitol are connected by Pennsylvania Avenue.

- Active: In the Capitol, workers are building a visitors center.

Passive: _____

- Active: They will probably finish it in 2006.

Passive: _____

Orlando, Florida



Disney World

Disney World opened in 1971. Disneyland in California already existed at that time, but it had hardly any visitors from the eastern parts of the United States where 75 percent of the country's population live. So Walt Disney decided to build another park in Orlando, Florida with four theme parks:

- The Magic Kingdom
- EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow)
- Disney-MGM Studios
- Disney's Animal Kingdom





Exercise

Put the verbs into the correct form (simple past or past perfect).

1. I (go) _____ to Disney World in 2002.
2. Before 2002 I (be / never) _____ to any of the Disney resorts.
3. Most of all I (like) _____ the wonderful castle that I (see) _____ so many times in my favorite animated movie »Cinderella«.
4. I also (enjoy) _____ the other attractions of the park.

Niagara Falls



Niagara Falls is a group of waterfalls on the border between the United States and Canada. The Falls are a favorite tourist attraction. The Niagara River drops here and although the Falls are not deep, they are very wide and the amount of water is enormous. So it is very noisy near the Falls. That's why the Iroquois tribe, who used to live here, called the falls Niagara (meaning “thunder of waters”).



Chicago



The third largest city in the United States (after New York and Los Angeles) lies on the shores of Lake Michigan. The Potawatomi once lived in this area and the city's name derives from the Potawatomi word Checagou (meaning "wild onions"). The name was used because the place used to smell like onions.

The Sears Tower (on the left) was built between 1970 and 1973 and is the highest building in the United States. It is 442 meters from bottom to the top floor, and reaches a total height of 527 meters (including its television antennas).





Write the verbs in simple past.

1. The first settlers (be) _____ the Potawatomi.
2. They (call) _____ this place Checagou (wild onion) because it (smell) _____ like onions.
3. Constructions on the Sears Tower (begin) _____ in 1970.
4. Until 1997, the Sears Tower (be) _____ the highest building in the world.

New Orleans



New Orleans was founded by the French. It first had a French name, Nouvelle-Orléans, in honor of the Duke of Orleans, King of France. The city lies on the river Mississippi and a riverboat cruise on the Mississippi is an unforgettable experience. New Orleans is also an important center for music, especially for jazz and rhythm and blues.





Conditional Clauses Type I, II, III

- Type I expresses something that is likely.
- Type II expresses something that is unlikely.
- Type III expresses something that is impossible.

For further information, check out our grammar section: → [Conditional Clauses Type I, II and III](#)

Exercise

Put the verbs into the most suitable form to make correct conditional sentences (type I, II or III).

1. Do you like jazz music? Because if you (like) _____ jazz, you (love) _____ New Orleans.
2. Vanessa hates boat trips. But if she (hate / not) _____ boat trips, she (enjoy) _____ a riverboat cruise on the Mississippi.
3. I (do) _____ a course in jazz dancing if I (have) _____ more time. But unfortunately I don't have time.
4. If the founders of the city (hate) _____ the King of France, they (call / not) _____ the place Nouvelle-Orléans in honor of him.

Los Angeles



Los Angeles, also known as L.A., is the second largest city in the United States (after New York). Most immigrants to the United States arrive in Los Angeles and many of them stay here. The city is also famous for its two Olympic Games (1932 and 1984).





Hollywood

Hollywood is a district of Los Angeles and for a long time it was nothing more but the name of a ranch. In the early 1900s, however, movie companies decided to move from New York and New Jersey to California where they had more space and better weather. Nestor Studios were the first to settle in the area. But more and more followed and now Hollywood is famous all over the world for its movie studios and stars.

On the Walk of Fame (along Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street) more than 2,000 celebrities are honored with a star.





Disneyland (Anaheim, California)

Disneyland is situated in Anaheim, just a little south of the City of Los Angeles. The park opened on July 17, 1955 and was the first Disney Park in the world. It has been visited by more than 500,000,000 people and has several theme parks:

- Adventureland
- Critter Country
- Fantasyland
- Frontierland
- Main Street U.S.A.
- Mickey's Toontown
- New Orleans Square
- Tomorrowland





Put the adjectives into the correct form.

1. Los Angeles is (large) _____ than Chicago.
2. But New York is the (large) _____ city of the United States.
3. The weather in Hollywood is (good) _____ than in New York or New Jersey.
4. Nestor Studios is the (old) _____ movie company in Hollywood.
5. Disneyland is (interesting) _____ than any other amusement park.

Grand Canyon National Park



The Grand Canyon is one of the most spectacular natural features on earth. It is listed as one of the Seven Natural Wonders and became a United States national park in 1919. The park covers an area of nearly 5,000 km².

Carved by the Colorado River, the Grand Canyon slices deep into the Colorado Plateau and forms one of the most scenic landscapes in the world. Up to 1963, when the Glen Canyon Dam was built, the Colorado river moved 143 million tons of stones each year.





Exercise

Put the verbs into the correct form (simple past or present perfect).

1. My friends (visit) _____ the Grand Canyon National Park last year.
2. I (be / never) _____ to the Grand Canyon National Park.
3. But I (see) _____ lots of wonderful pictures.
4. And yesterday I (buy) _____ a book about the Grand Canyon.
5. I (read) _____ 30 pages already. It's really interesting.

Las Vegas



Las Vegas was founded in May 1905. In 1941 the first large hotels with gambling casinos were built. Since then Las Vegas has grown to become the largest city in Nevada and a major tourist attraction.

Staying in Las Vegas can be quite cheap as the rooms are usually not expensive. It's hard, however, to resist the temptation of spending lots of money in one of the gambling casinos.





Exercise

Put the verbs into the correct form (simple past or past progressive).

1. While me and my friends (drive) _____ from Los Angeles to Las Vegas, we (pass) _____ the Mojave Desert.
2. When we (arrive) _____ in Las Vegas, we (look) _____ for a nice hotel.
3. While I (relax) _____ by the pool, my friends (gamble) _____ in the casino.
4. When I (enter) _____ the casino, my friends (play) _____ Black Jack.

San Francisco



The area had long been inhabited by native Americans, the Ohlone (meaning “people of the west”) before the first Spanish immigrants came to settle in this part of the country. After the Mexican-American War, the small town became American.

territory, and when the California gold rush started in 1848, the population increased enormously. Nowadays San Francisco is famous especially for its cable car and the Golden Gate Bridge





Golden Gate Bridge

The Golden Gate Bridge connects the city of San Francisco and San Francisco Peninsula. It spans the Golden Gate, a strait between the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay—that's where the name Golden Gate Bridge comes from.



Constructions on the bridge began in 1933 and were completed in 1937. The bridge rises 230 m above the water. With its total length of 1970 meters it was the longest suspension bridge in the world until 1964. The bridge is part of the United States Highway 101, has six lanes and a footpath on each side.

Keystone, South Dakota



Mount Rushmore

Mount Rushmore National Memorial Park in Keystone, South Dakota covers an area of 5 km². The rock formation was a sacred Indian site once and became a national memorial on March 3, 1925.

Most visitors come to this place to see the famous busts of the presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln (from left to right). The busts are about 18 meters high and were carved by 400 workers between 1927 and 1941.





Exercise

Put a question tag on the end of each sentence. (The first sentence is given as an example.)

1. The Mount Rushmore National Memorial Park is in Keystone, isn't it _____ ?
2. The rock was a sacred Indian site once, _____ ?
3. It has been a national memorial since 1925, _____ ?
4. The monument doesn't show the bust of President Clinton, _____ ?
5. George Washington was the first President of the United States, _____ ?