U.S.A. HISTORY IN BRIEF

LEARNER ENGLISH SERIES
The text of this book was adapted from *USA History in Brief*, (GPS Catalog No. V0441-E; also available in Arabic, No. V0441-A; French, No. V-0441-F; and Spanish, No. V-0441-S) by Susan Wallach. Ms. Wallach is the author of six young adult books and has been an editor for thirty years. She is currently working on another young adult novel.

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By 12,000 years ago, humans lived throughout much of what is now the Americas.

By 1690, 250,000 people lived in the New World. By 1790, there were 2.5 million people.

The ideas of liberalism and democracy are the basis of the U.S. political system.

The American Revolution and the war for independence from Britain began with a small fight between British troops and colonists on April 19, 1775.

In 1783, the 13 colonies became the United States.

George Washington became the first president of the United States on April 30, 1789.

In 1850, the United States was a large country, full of contrasts.

The American Civil War started in April 1861.

The United States changed after the Civil War.

By 1900, the United States had seen growth, civil war, economic prosperity, and economic hard times.

In 1914, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey fought Britain, France, Italy, and Russia.

President Roosevelt believed that democracy had failed in other countries because of unemployment and insecurity.

After World War II, the United States and Great Britain had long-term disagreements with the Soviet Union over the future of Europe, most of which had been freed from Nazi rule by their joint effort.

At home, some Americans began to have easier lives.

The United States always has been a place where different ideas and views compete to influence law and social change.

The United States has dramatically changed from its beginnings as 13 little-known colonies.
This book is the learner’s edition of our *U.S.A. History in Brief.* It will teach you about important events in the history of the United States. You also will find many beautiful pictures of the events and people who shaped that history.

This is the first in a series of books to help people learn the English language. Each of our Learner English books will have a different topic that teaches readers about the United States and helps them understand new words.

Some words will appear in **boldface** type. You will find their meanings, or definitions, in a brightly colored box on the same page, along with examples of how to use the word.

As in other languages, English has many words that may have two, three, or more meanings. In this book, only the meaning of a word as it is used on that page is listed.

If you want to learn other meanings or ways the words in this book can be used, and if you have access to the Internet, free dictionaries are available. All the definitions in this book come from *Merriam-Webster’s Learner’s English Dictionary,* at
their website www.learnersdictionary.com. There you will find every form and meaning of each word and many examples in sentences.

Also, along with this book you may have received a CD. On it is a person reading the entire book. If you listen while you read, you can hear exactly how each word is pronounced when you see it. In addition, the International Phonetic Alphabet spelling is provided to help you say the words.

If you are an English teacher, you can use this book as another tool to help your students learn new words and the different ways they are used. If you use the Internet, you can play the entire recording online and pause it wherever you like. You also can find a portable document file (PDF) of the book.

We hope you enjoy the features of this book. We plan to provide many more. You can find more information about this book at www.america.gov/publications/books/learner_english.html. We want your feedback about this book and your suggestions for future titles. Write us at learnerenglish@state.gov.
Use the following link (for Merriam-Webster’s English Learner’s Online Dictionary website) http://www.learnersdictionary.com/help/faq_pron_ipa.htm to hear audio files of the pronunciations of these words using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols.

### Vowels

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<td>ask, bat, glad</td>
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### Consonants

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### Other Symbols

- ˈ: high stress: penmanship
- ˌ: low stress: penmanship
Introduction
The United States of America has been a democracy for more than 200 years. Issues that were important in its early years remain so today: big government versus small government, individual rights versus group rights, free markets versus controlled trade, and connection with the world versus focusing on internal affairs.

The U.S. tries to be a fair and just society, and much of the time it succeeds. Through compromise and change, the country has grown, prospered, and made progress toward its ideals.
Early America
The most recent Ice Age was about 35,000 years ago. Much of the world’s water was frozen into big sheets of ice. A land bridge—as wide as 1,500 kilometers—joined Asia and North America. By 12,000 years ago, humans lived throughout much of what now are the Americas.

The first “Americans” crossed the land bridge from Asia. Historians believe that they lived in what now is Alaska for thousands of years. They moved south into today’s mainland United States. They lived by the Pacific Ocean in the Northwest, in the mountains and deserts of the Southwest, and along the Mississippi River in the Midwest.
These early groups are known as Hohokam, Adenans, Hopewellians, and Anasazi. They built villages and grew crops. Their lives were connected to the land. Family and community were important to them. History shows they told stories and shared information mostly by talking, not writing. Some used a form of picture writing called hieroglyphics. Nature was important to their spiritual beliefs. Some groups built big piles of earth in the shapes of snakes, birds, or pyramids. The different groups traded with each other, but they also fought.

No one knows why, but these groups disappeared. Other groups, Hopi and Zuni, later came to this land and prospered. By the time the first Europeans arrived, about two million native people lived in what now is the United States.
Historians believe that the Norse may have been the first Europeans to arrive. They came from Greenland, where Erik the Red had started a settlement around 985. In 1001, Erik’s son, Leif, explored the northeast coast of what now is Canada. Remaining pieces of Norse houses were found in northern Newfoundland.

It took almost 500 years for other Europeans to reach North America, and another 100 for them to build permanent settlements. The first explorers did not know about America. They were looking for a way to go to Asia from Europe by sea. Other Europeans who arrived later—mostly Spanish and Portuguese, but also Dutch, French, and British—came for land and the riches of the “New World.”

The most famous explorer was Christopher Columbus. He was Italian, but Queen Isabella of Spain paid for his trips. Columbus landed on islands in the Caribbean Sea in 1492. He never reached what is now the United States.
In 1497, John Cabot, an explorer sailing for England, landed in eastern Canada. His arrival established a British claim to land in North America.

During the 1500s, Spain explored and claimed more land in the Americas than did any other country. In 1513, Juan Ponce de Léon landed in Florida. Hernando De Soto landed in Florida in 1539 and then explored all the way to the Mississippi River.

Spain conquered Mexico in 1522. In 1540, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado wanted to find the **mythical** Seven Cities of Cibola. He started looking in Mexico and then traveled north to the Grand Canyon in Arizona and into the Great Plains.

Other Europeans, such as Giovanni da Verrazano, Jacques Cartier, and Amerigo Vespucci, explored further north. The two American continents were named after Amerigo Vespucci.

The first permanent European settlement in North America was Spanish. It was built in St. Augustine in Florida. Thirteen British colonies to the north
would later form the United States. Virginia and Massachusetts were the two earliest.

It wasn’t just explorers who settled in the New World. People started to come to the New World to live. These people were immigrants from Europe.

Quiz

1. How did the first people reach the Americas?
   A. Sailing from Asia  
   B. Walking across a frozen bridge of ice  
   C. Sailing from Spain

2. Who are believed to be the first Europeans to arrive in the New World?
   A. Spanish  
   B. English  
   C. Norse

3. What was Christopher Columbus looking for when he sailed to the New World?
   A. Gold  
   B. Asia  
   C. Spanish settlements

Colonial Period
Most people who came to the British colonies in the 1600s were English. Others came from The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, France, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. By 1690, 250,000 people lived in the New World. By 1790, there were 2.5 million people.

People came for different reasons. Some left their homes to escape war. Others sought political or religious freedom. Some had to work as servants to pay back the cost of their trip before gaining their freedom. Some, like black Africans, arrived as slaves.

In time, the 13 colonies developed within three distinct regions.
The first settlements were along the Atlantic coast and on rivers that flowed into the ocean. In the Northeast, trees covered the hills and stones filled the soil, but water power was available. The Northeast was called New England, and it included Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The economy was based on timber, fishing, shipbuilding, and trade.

The middle colonies included New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. The weather was milder and the countryside was more varied. People worked in industry and agriculture. The society was more diverse and sophisticated. People living in New York came from all over Europe.

The Southern colonies included Virginia, Georgia, and North Carolina and South Carolina. The growing season was long and the soil was fertile. Most people were farmers. Some owned small farms that they worked themselves. The wealthy farmers owned large plantations and used African slaves as workers.

The relationships between settlers and Native Americans (also called Indians) were good and bad. In some areas, the two groups traded and were...
friendly. In most cases, as the settlements grew bigger, the settlers forced the Indians to move.

As time went on, all the colonies developed governments based on the British tradition of citizen participation. In Britain, the Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689 limited the power of the king and gave more power to the people. The American colonists closely observed these changes. Colonial assemblies claimed the right to act as local parliaments. They passed laws that limited the power of the royal governor and increased their own authority.

Disagreements between the royal governors and the assemblies continued. The colonists realized that their interests often were different from Britain’s interests. At first, the colonists wanted self-government within a British commonwealth. Only later did they want independence.

Quiz

1. How many original colonies were there?
   A. 50  
   B. 13  
   C. 17

2. Which European country owned the colonies?
   A. Spain  
   B. The Netherlands  
   C. Britain

Answers: 1. B; 2. C
The Road to Independence
The ideas of liberalism and democracy are the basis of the U.S. political system. As the colonists built their new society, they believed more strongly in these ideas. Britain’s 13 colonies grew in population and economic strength during the 1700s. Although ruled by a distant government, the colonists governed many local affairs.

After Britain won a costly war with France in the 1750s, the colonists were asked to help pay for the war, and for Britain’s large empire. These policies restricted the colonists’ way of life.

For example, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 restricted the colonists from settling new land. The Currency Act of 1764 made it illegal to print paper money in the colonies. The Quartering Act
of 1765 forced the colonists to provide food and housing for the royal soldiers. The Stamp Act of 1765 taxed all legal papers, licenses, newspapers, and leases.

The Stamp Act united the colonists in an organized resistance. The main problem was that they weren’t allowed to participate in the government that taxed them.

In October 1765, 27 delegates from nine colonies met in New York. They passed resolutions saying that the individual colonies should have the right to impose their own taxes. This satisfied most of the delegates, but a small number of radicals wanted independence from Britain.

One of those people was Samuel Adams of Massachusetts. He wrote newspaper articles and made speeches. The groups he helped to organize became a big part of the revolutionary movement.

By 1773, colonial traders, who were angry with British regulation of the tea trade, were interested in Sam Adams’s ideas. In December 1773, a group of men sneaked on three British ships in Boston harbor and threw the cargo of tea overboard. This event became known as the Boston Tea Party.
The British Parliament punished Massachusetts by closing Boston’s port and by restricting local authority. Colonists called these new laws the Intolerable Acts and united to oppose them. All the colonies except Georgia sent representatives to Philadelphia in September 1774 to talk about their “present unhappy state.” It was the First Continental Congress.

Colonists were angry with the British for taking away their rights, but not everyone agreed on the solution. Loyalists wanted to stay subjects under the king. Moderates wanted to compromise and build a better relationship with the British government. The revolutionaries wanted complete independence. They began collecting weapons and getting men ready—waiting for the fight for independence.

**Quiz**

1. Which act caused the greatest reaction from the colonists?
   A. The Currency Act
   B. The Stamp Act
   C. The Quartering Act

2. What did the colonists throw into Boston Harbor?
   A. Stamps
   B. British paper money
   C. Tea

3. What did moderates in the colonies wish for in their relationship to Britain?
   A. For everything to stay the way it was
   B. To move to Britain and leave the colonies
   C. A compromise and a better relationship with the British government

**Answers:** 1. B; 2. C; 3. C
Revolution
The American Revolution and the war for independence from Britain began with a small fight between British troops and colonists on April 19, 1775. The British troops left Boston, Massachusetts, planning to take weapons and ammunition from revolutionary colonists.

At Lexington, they met armed colonists who were called Minutemen because they could be ready to fight in a minute. The Minutemen planned to protest silently and not shoot unless the British shot first.

The British ordered the Minutemen to leave. The colonists obeyed, but as they left, someone fired a
shot. The British troops attacked the Minutemen with guns and bayonets.

Fighting broke out in other places along the way as the British soldiers in their bright red uniforms returned to Boston. More than 250 “redcoats” were killed or wounded. The Americans lost 93 men.

Colonial representatives hurried to Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress. More than half voted to go to war against Britain. They decided to form one army from the colonial forces. George Washington of Virginia became the commander-in-chief.

At the same time, they sent King George III a peace resolution to try to avoid a war. The king rejected it. On August 23, 1775, the king said the American colonies were in rebellion.

The desire for independence increased in the next few months. Thomas Paine, a radical political thinker, argued for independence and against hereditary monarchy in his pamphlet Common
Sense. He described two possible conditions for America. The people could remain unequal citizens under a king, or they could live in an independent country with hopes of liberty and happiness.

The Second Continental Congress created a committee to write a document that outlined the colonies’ complaints against the king and explained their decision to separate from Britain. The reasons were based on French and British ideas. Thomas Jefferson was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration of Independence told the world of a new nation and its beliefs about human freedom. It argued that political rights are basic human rights and are universal.

The Second Continental Congress accepted this document on July 4, 1776. The Fourth of July became Independence Day in the United States.
The colonies and Britain went to war. British soldiers defeated General Washington’s forces in New York and took control of Philadelphia, forcing the Second Continental Congress to flee. The Continental Army won at Saratoga in New York and at Princeton and Trenton in New Jersey. George Washington had problems getting the men and materials he needed to fight the war.

In 1778, France recognized the United States as an independent country and signed a treaty of alliance. France helped the United States as a way to weaken Britain, its long-time enemy.

There were battles from Montreal, Canada, to Savannah, Georgia. A huge British army surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781. The war ended when a peace treaty was signed in Paris on April 15, 1783. In this treaty, Britain and other nations recognized the United States as an independent nation.
The Revolution affected more than North America. The idea of natural rights became stronger throughout the Western world. Famous men, such as Thaddeus Kosciusko (Poland), Friedrich von Steuben (Prussia), and the Marquis de Lafayette (France) took the ideas of freedom to their own countries.

The Treaty of Paris turned the 13 colonies into states, but the job of becoming one nation remained.

Quiz

1. The British soldiers were also called what?
   A. Redcoats
   B. Minutemen
   C. Roundheads

2. Who was the commander-in-chief of the colonial army?
   A. Thomas Paine
   B. Thomas Jefferson
   C. George Washington

3. What American holiday celebrates the colonists' victory?
   A. Veteran's Day
   B. Declaration Day
   C. Fourth of July

Answers: 1. A; 2. C; 3. C
FORMING A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
In 1783, the 13 colonies became the United States. Before the war ended, the colonies had developed the Articles of Confederation, a plan to work together as one nation, but the connections among the 13 states were loose.

Each state had its own money, army, and navy. Each state traded and worked directly with other countries. Each state collected taxes in its own way. Each state believed its way was the right way.

It was a nation of 13 countries.
Alexander Hamilton from New York believed that the 13 states needed to rethink the Confederation. He and others suggested a large meeting to do this.

In May 1787, 55 delegates met in Philadelphia. They knew about history, law, and political theory. They understood colonial and state government. Most did not think the Articles of Confederation worked very well. They proposed a constitution describing a new form of government based on separate legislative, executive, and judicial authorities.

The delegates did not agree on all the details. Many delegates wanted a strong national government that would limit a state’s rights. Others believed that a weak national government was better. They wanted the states to have more power.

Some delegates wanted fewer people to have the right to vote; they believed that most people lacked the education to make good decisions. Delegates from small states wanted each state to
have equal representation in the new Congress. Delegates from big states demanded that their states have more influence.

Some delegates from states where slavery was illegal or not widely used wanted slavery to be unlawful throughout the nation. Delegates from states where slave labor was important refused. Some delegates wanted the newly settled lands to the West to be states. Others disagreed. The delegates debated four months before reaching a compromise.

The Constitution provided the framework for the new government. The national government could create money, impose taxes, deal with foreign countries, keep an army, create a postal system, and wage war. To keep the government from becoming too strong, the U.S. Constitution divided it into three equal parts—a legislature (Congress), an executive (president), and a judicial system (Supreme Court). Each part worked to make sure the other parts did not take power that belonged to the others.

On September 17, 1787, most of the delegates signed the new Constitution. They agreed the Constitution would become the law of the United States when nine of the 13 states ratified, or accepted, it.

It took about a year to ratify the Constitution. The country was divided into two groups. The Federalists wanted a strong central government. They supported the Constitution. The anti-Federalists wanted a loose group of states. They feared that a strong central government would become tyrannical. They were against the Constitution.

After it was accepted, some Americans said the Constitution did not list the rights of individuals. When the first U.S. Congress met in New York
City in September 1789, the delegates proposed a number of amendments to the Constitution to list these rights. They added 10 amendments, known as the Bill of Rights.

The First Amendment promises freedom of speech, press, and religion, and the right to protest, meet peacefully, and demand changes. The Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable
searches and arrest. The Fifth Amendment promises due process of law in criminal cases. Since the Bill of Rights, only 17 amendments have been added to the Constitution in more than 200 years.

**Quiz**

1. Where did the delegates meet to discuss the new national government?
   A. New York  
   B. Philadelphia  
   C. Boston

2. What is the document that contains the system of government of the United States?
   A. Declaration of Independence  
   B. Common Sense  
   C. The Constitution

3. What are the three branches of government?
   A. Congress, president, and a court system  
   B. Military, a court system, and president  
   C. Tax office, Congress, and president

**Answers:** 1. B; 2. C; 3. A
Early Years, Westward Expansion, and Regional Differences
George Washington became the first president of the United States on April 30, 1789. He had been in charge of the army. As president, his job was to create a working government.

With Congress, he created the Treasury, Justice, and War departments. Together, the leaders of these departments and the others that were founded in later years are called the cabinet.

One chief justice and five (today eight) associate justices made up the Supreme Court. Three circuit courts and 13 district courts were created. Policies were developed for governing the western territories and bringing them into the Union as new states.

George Washington served two four-year terms as president before leaving office. (Only one U.S. president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, has served more than two terms. Today, the Constitution says that no one may be elected president more than twice.) The next two presidents—John Adams and Thomas Jefferson—had different ideas about the role of government. This led to the creation of political parties.

John Adams and Alexander Hamilton led the Federalists. Their supporters included people in trade and manufacturing. They believed in a strong central government. Most of their support was in the North.

Jefferson led the Republicans. Their supporters included many farmers. They did not want a strong central government. They believed in states having more power. They had strong support in the South.
For about 20 years, the United States was friendly to other countries and neutral toward their disputes, but France and Britain again were at war. The British navy *seized* American ships going to France. The French navy seized American ships going to Britain.

After years of unsuccessful *diplomacy*, the United States went to war with Britain in 1812. The battles took place mostly in the Northeastern states and along the East Coast. One part of the British army reached Washington, D.C., the new U.S. capital. Soldiers set fire to the president’s mansion. President James Madison fled as the White House burned.

The Americans won important battles on land and sea. Weakened and in *debt* from its recent war with France, Britain signed a peace treaty with the U.S. in 1815. The U.S. victory made sure that Britain wouldn’t establish colonies south of the Canadian border.
By 1815, many of the new nation’s problems had eased. Under the Constitution, the United States had a balance between liberty and order. The country had a low national debt. Much of the continent was left to explore. The country had peace, prosperity, and social progress.

An important addition to foreign policy was the Monroe Doctrine. President James Monroe’s announcement of solidarity with newly independent nations in Central and South America was a warning to Europe not to seek colonies in Latin America.

The U.S. doubled in size when it bought the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803 and Florida from Spain in 1819. From 1816 to 1821, six new states were created. Between 1812 and 1852, the population tripled.

As the country grew, differences among the states became more obvious. The United States was a country of civilized cities and lawless frontiers. The United States loved freedom but also tolerated slavery. The differences began to create problems.

Quiz

1. Who was the third president of the United States?
   A. John Adams
   B. Alexander Hamilton
   C. Thomas Jefferson

2. What did the British set on fire during the War of 1812?
   A. Executive mansion
   B. American ships
   C. Supreme Court

3. What territories did the United States buy in the 1800s?
   A. Louisiana
   B. Florida
   C. All of the above

CONFLICT WITHIN THE UNITED STATES
In 1850, the United States was a large country, full of **contrasts**. New England and the Middle Atlantic states were the centers of finance, trade, shipping, and manufacturing. Their products included lumber, machinery, and textiles. Southern states had many farms that used slave labor to grow tobacco, sugar, and cotton. The Middle Western states also had farms, but they were worked by free men.

In 1819, Missouri asked to become a state. Northerners were against this because 10,000 slaves lived there. Because the Constitution allowed each new state to elect two senators, new states could change the political balance between “free” and “slave” states. Congressman Henry Clay...
suggested a way to make the North and South happy. Missouri would become a state with slaves. Maine would become a state without slaves. The Missouri Compromise was accepted.

In the following years, each side held its beliefs more strongly. Many Northerners thought slavery was wrong. Others saw it as a threat to free workers. Most white Southerners considered slavery part of their way of life.

Thousands of slaves escaped to the North with help from people along secret routes called the Underground Railroad. In 1860, however, one-third of the total population of slave states was not free.

Most Northerners did not care about slavery in the South, but they did not want slavery in the new territories. The Southerners believed that these territories had the right to decide for themselves whether slavery would be allowed.

A young politician from Illinois believed that this was not a local issue, but a national one. His name was Abraham Lincoln. He agreed that the South could keep its slaves, but he fought to keep slavery out of the territories. Lincoln thought that over time...
slavery would end. “A house divided against itself cannot stand,” he said. “This government cannot **endure** permanently half-slave and half-free.”

The South **threatened** to leave the Union if Lincoln became president. After Lincoln won the election, some Southern states began leaving the Union before he started working as president.

Could Lincoln hold the country together?

### Quiz

1. Who proposed the Missouri Compromise and which states did it include?
   - A. Henry Clay and it included Missouri and Maine
   - B. Henry Clay and it included Missouri and Kentucky
   - C. Abraham Lincoln and it included Missouri and Maine

2. What was the Underground Railroad?
   - A. Trains that ran under the ground
   - B. Secret routes for runaway slaves
   - C. A road system that connected mines

3. What did the Southern states threaten to do if Lincoln became president?
   - A. Separate from the United States
   - B. Return to British rule
   - C. Impeach Lincoln

**Answers:** 1. A; 2. B; 3. A
Civil War and Post-War Reconstruction
The American Civil War started in April 1861. The South claimed the right to leave the United States, also called the Union, and form its own Confederacy. President Lincoln led the Northern states. He was determined to stop the rebellion and keep the country united.

The North had more people, more raw materials for producing war supplies, and a better railway system. The South had more experienced military leaders and better knowledge of the battlefields because most of the war was fought in the South.

The war lasted four years. Tens of thousands of soldiers fought on land and sea.

September 17, 1862, was the bloodiest day of the war. The two armies met at Antietam Creek in Maryland. It was the bloodiest day of the war, with thousands of casualties on both sides. The battle ended in a stalemate, with neither side gaining a decisive victory.
Maryland. Gen. Robert E. Lee and his Confederate Army failed to force back the Union troops led by Gen. George McClellan. Lee escaped with his army. The battle was not **decisive**, but it was politically important. Britain and France had planned to recognize the Confederacy, but they **delayed**. The South never received the help it desperately needed.

Later in 1862, President Lincoln issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation that freed all slaves in the Confederate states. It also allowed African Americans into the Union Army. The North fought to keep the Union together and to end slavery.
The North began winning important battles. Gen. William T. Sherman left a path of destruction (known as the scorched-earth policy) as his army marched across Georgia and South Carolina in 1864. In Virginia in April 1865, Gen. Lee surrendered to Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. The Civil War was over. More Americans died in the Civil War than in any other U.S. conflict.

Less than a week after the South surrendered, a Confederate sympathizer killed President Lincoln. Vice President Andrew Johnson became president with the job of uniting the country. Johnson was a Southerner. He gave pardons to many Southerners, giving them back their political rights.

By the end of 1865, most of the former Confederate states canceled the acts of secession but refused to abolish slavery. All the Confederate states except Tennessee refused to give full citizenship to African American men.

In response, the Republicans in Congress would not let rebel leaders hold office. The Union generals who governed the South blocked anyone who

**destruction** /dɪˈstrʌkʃən/ noun: the act or process of damaging something so badly that it no longer exists or cannot be repaired: the act or process of destroying something. War results in death and widespread destruction.

**scorched-earth** /ˈskoɚtʃtɚθ/ adjective—used to describe a military policy in which all the houses, crops, factories, etc., in an area are destroyed so that an enemy cannot use them.

**conflict** /ˈkɑːnflikt/ noun plural conflicts: a struggle for power, property, etc. • an armed conflict.

**sympathize** /ˈsɪmpəˌθaɪz/ verb sympathizes; sympathized; sympathizing: to feel or show support for or approval of something. • She sympathized with their cause.

**pardon** /ˈpɑɚdn̩/ noun plural pardons: an act of officially saying that someone who was judged to be guilty of a crime will be allowed to go free and will not be punished. • She received a presidential/royal pardon. [= a pardon from a president or a king or queen]

**secession** /sɪˈsɛʃən/ noun plural secessions: the act of separating from a nation or state and becoming independent. • the secession of the Southern states.

**abolish** /əˈbɑːlɪʃ/ verb Inflected forms: abolishes; abolished; abolishing: to officially end or stop (something, such as a law) • to completely do away with (something). • abolish slavery/ apartheid.

**criminal** /ˈkrɪmənl̟/ adjective: relating to laws that describe crimes rather than to laws about a person’s rights. • the criminal justice system. • a criminal court/case/trial.

*Above: Gen. William T. Sherman is best known for his "March to the Sea," on which he burned Atlanta, Georgia, and laid waste to vast areas of farmland during the American Civil War.*
would not take an oath of loyalty to the Union from voting. Congress strongly supported the rights of African Americans.

President Johnson tried to stop many of these policies. The House of Representatives impeached Johnson, but the Senate was one vote short of the two-thirds majority required to remove Johnson from office. He remained president but began to give in more often to the Republican Congress. The Southern states were not allowed to send representatives to Congress until they passed constitutional amendments barring slavery, granting all citizens “equal protection of the laws,” and allowing all male citizens the right to vote regardless of race.
For a time, these reforms led to real advances for African Americans in the South. When the North withdrew its army from the Southern states, especially during the late 1870s, white Southerners regained political power and began to deprive Southern blacks of their new rights. Southern blacks were free, but the local laws denied them their rights. They had the right to vote, but the threat of violence made them afraid to use it. Southern states introduced “segregation,” a system that required blacks and whites to use separate public facilities, from schools to drinking fountains. Not surprisingly, the “black” facilities were not as good as the “white” facilities. The races lived separately in the South for the next 100 years. In the 20th century, this would become a national issue.

Quiz

1. When did the American Civil War start?
   A. April 1860
   B. April 1861
   C. April 1862

2. Who led the Confederate Army?
   A. George McClellan
   B. William T. Sherman
   C. Robert E. Lee

3. What did not happen after the Civil War?
   A. President Lincoln was assassinated
   B. Southern blacks had the right to vote
   C. All states except Tennessee granted full citizenship to African American men

The United States changed after the Civil War. The frontier became less wild. Cities grew in size and number. More factories, steel mills, and railroads were built. Immigrants arrived in the United States with dreams of better lives.

This was the age of inventions. Alexander Graham Bell developed the telephone. Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. George Eastman made the moving picture, later called a movie. Before 1860, the government issued 36,000 patents. From 1860 to 1890, the government issued 440,000.

Separate companies merged to become larger companies, sometimes called trusts. This happened especially in the steel, rail, oil, and communications industries. With fewer companies, buyers had fewer
choices and businesses had more power. An anti-trust law was passed in 1890 to stop monopolies, but it was not very effective.

Farming was still America’s main occupation. Scientists improved seeds. New machines did some of the work that men had done. American farmers produced enough grain, meat, cotton, and wool to ship the surplus overseas.

The Western regions still had room for exploration and for new settlements. Miners found ore and gold in mountains. Sheep farmers settled in river valleys. Food farmers settled on the Great
Plains. Ranchers let their cattle graze on the vast grasslands. **Cowboys** drove great herds of cattle to the railroad to ship to the East. The “Wild West” pictured in many cowboy books and movies lasted only about 30 years.

When Europeans first arrived on the East Coast, they pushed the native people west. Each time, the government promised new land for the native people so they would have a home. Each time, the promises were broken while white settlers took the land. In the late 1800s, Sioux tribes in the Northern plains and Apaches in the Southwest fought back. Although they were strong, the U.S. government forces defeated them. Many tribes would live on reservations, which are federal lands administered by Indian tribes. Today there are more than 300 reservations.

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**cow·boy /ˈkaʊˌboɪ/ noun plural cow·boys**

: a man who rides a horse and whose job is to take care of cows or horses especially in the western U.S.

* a movie about cowboys in the old West  
* He worked for several years as a cowboy on a ranch in Texas.

**Right:** Sitting Bull was the Sioux chief who led the last great Native American battle against the U.S. Army. He defeated Gen. George Custer at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876.
im·pe·ri·al·ism  / ɪmˈpirɪəˌlɪzəm /  noun  :  a policy or practice by which a country increases its power by gaining control over other areas of the world  •  British imperialism created the enormous British Empire.

Toward the end of the 1800s, European powers colonized Africa and fought for rights to trade in Asia. Many Americans believed that the United States should do the same. Many other Americans did not like any action that seemed imperialistic.

After a brief war with Spain in 1898, the U.S. controlled several Spanish colonies—Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. Officially, the
United States encouraged them to become self-governing. In reality, the United States kept control.

**Idealism** in foreign policy co-existed with the desire to prevent European powers from acquiring territories that might enable them to project military power toward the United States. Americans also sought new markets in which they could sell their goods. By the end of the 19th century, the U.S. was beginning to emerge as a growing world power.

**Quiz**

1. Who invented the telephone?
   A. George Eastman
   B. Alexander Graham Bell
   C. Thomas Edison

2. What Native American tribes fought to save their way of life?
   A. Leni Lenape and the Sioux
   B. Apache and the Cherokee
   C. The Sioux and Apache

3. The true Wild West **era** lasted how many years?
   A. 40 years
   B. It’s still going on today
   C. 30 years

DISCONTENT AND REFORM
By 1900, the United States had seen growth, civil war, economic prosperity, and economic hard times. Americans still believed in religious freedom. Free public education was mostly accessible. The free press continued.

On the negative side, it often seemed that political power belonged to a few corrupt officials and their friends in business. In response, the idea of Progressivism was born. Progressives wanted greater democracy and justice. They wanted an honest government to reduce the power of business.

Books by Upton Sinclair, Ida M. Tarbell, and Theodore Dreiser described unfair, unhealthy, and dangerous situations. These writers hoped their books would force the government to make the United States safer and better for its citizens.
President Theodore Roosevelt (1901–1909) believed in Progressivism. He worked with Congress to regulate businesses that had established monopolies. He also worked hard to protect the country’s natural resources.

Changes continued under the next presidents, especially Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921). The Federal Reserve banking system set interest rates and controlled the money supply. The Federal Trade Commission dealt with unfair business practices. New laws improved working conditions for sailors and railway workers. Farmers got better information and easier credit. Taxes on imported goods were lowered or eliminated.
During the Progressive Era, more immigrants settled in the United States. Almost 19 million people arrived between 1890 and 1921 from Russia, Poland, Greece, Canada, Italy, Mexico, and Japan.

By the 1920s, citizens worried that the immigrants might take their jobs and change the culture of the United States. Although the government created quotas to restrict immigration, it relaxed those restrictions in the 1960s, assuring that the United States would remain a nation in which many different people and cultures could forge an identity as Americans.

Quiz

1. How many immigrants arrived between 1890 and 1921?
   A. 3 million  
   B. 14 million  
   C. 19 million

2. What is the U.S. government office that regulates money and banking?
   A. The Commerce Department  
   B. The Federal Reserve  
   C. The Federal Trade Commission

3. What did Progressive Era President Theodore Roosevelt not do?
   A. He wrote a book about the unhealthy situations for children in the workplace.  
   B. He worked with Congress to end the practice of monopolies.  
   C. He advocated laws to protect the country’s natural resources.

Answers: 1. C; 2. B; 3. A
World War I, 1920s Prosperity, and the Great Depression
n 1914, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey fought Britain, France, Italy, and Russia. Other nations joined the conflict, and the war reached across the Atlantic Ocean to affect the United States. The British and German navies blocked American shipping. In 1915, almost 130 Americans died when a German submarine sank the British ocean liner Lusitania. President Woodrow Wilson demanded an end to the German attacks. They stopped but started again in 1917. The United States declared war.

More than 1,750,000 U.S. soldiers helped to defeat Germany and Austria-Hungary. The war officially ended on November 11, 1918, when a truce was signed at Versailles in France.
President Wilson had a 14-point peace plan, including the creation of a League of Nations. He hoped the League would **guarantee** the peace, but in the final Treaty of Versailles, the **victors** of the war insisted on harsh punishment. Even the United States did not support the League of Nations. Today, most Americans accept the United States taking an active role in the world, but at that time they believed otherwise.

After the war, the United States had problems with racial **tension**, struggling farms, and labor **unrest**. After Russia’s revolution in 1917, Americans feared the spread of communism. This period is often known as the Red Scare.
Yet, the United States enjoyed a period of prosperity. Many families purchased their first automobile, radio, and refrigerator. They went to the movies. Women finally won the right to vote in 1920.

In October 1929 the good times ended with the collapse of the stock market and an economic depression. Businesses and factories shut down. Banks failed. Farms suffered. By November 1932, 20 percent of Americans did not have jobs.

That year the candidates for president debated over how to reverse the Great Depression. Herbert Hoover, the president during the collapse, lost to Franklin Roosevelt.

Quiz

1. What did most Americans desire after World War I?
   A. The creation of the League of Nations
   B. Allowing more immigrants into the country
   C. Isolationism

2. What event signaled the Great Depression?
   A. Women getting the right to vote
   B. The stock market collapse of 1929
   C. Herbert Hoover losing the presidency to Franklin Roosevelt

Answers: 1. C; 2. B
The New Deal

AND

World War II
President Roosevelt believed that democracy had failed in other countries because of unemployment and insecurity. In the early 1930s, he proposed a “New Deal” to end the Great Depression.

The New Deal included many programs. Bank accounts were insured. New rules applied to the stock market. Workers could form unions to protect their rights. Farmers received financial aid for certain crops. The government hired people to plant trees, clean up waterways, and fix national parks. Skilled workers helped build dams and bridges. The government provided flood control and electric power for poor areas. The Social Security system helped the poor, disabled, and elderly.
Many Americans were **uneasy** with big government, but they also wanted the government to help ordinary people. These programs helped, but they didn’t solve the economic problems. The next world war would do that.

The United States remained neutral while Germany, Italy, and Japan attacked other countries. Although many people wished to stay out of these conflicts, Congress voted to **draft** soldiers and began to strengthen the military.

As Japan conquered territories in China and elsewhere in Asia, it threatened to seize raw materials used by Western industries. In response, the United States refused to sell oil to Japan. Japan received 80
percent of its oil from the United States. When the United States demanded that Japan withdraw from its conquered territories, Japan refused. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the American fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States declared war on Japan. Because Germany and Italy were allies of Japan, they declared war on America.

American industry focused on the war effort. Women built many of the 300,000 aircraft, 5,000 cargo ships, and 86,000 tanks while the men became soldiers.
The United States fought with Britain and the Soviet Union against the German Nazi threat in Europe. From the time that Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland in 1939 (Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941) until the German surrender in 1945, millions of people died. Millions more were killed in the Holocaust, the Nazi regime’s mass murder of Jews and other groups.

Fighting continued in Asia and the Pacific Ocean even after the war ended in Europe. These battles were among the bloodiest for American forces.
Japan refused to surrender even as U.S. forces approached the Japanese home islands. Some Americans thought invading Japan would cause larger numbers of U.S. and Japanese deaths. When the atomic bomb was ready, President Harry S. Truman decided to use it on two Japanese cities—Hiroshima and Nagasaki—to bring the war to an end without an invasion.

World War II was finally over in August 1945. Soon the world would fear nuclear weapons far more powerful than the bombs used against Japan.

**Quiz**

1. What was Roosevelt’s plan called to help the country recover from the Great Depression?
   A. New Way
   B. Real Deal
   C. New Deal

2. Why did the United States enter War World II?
   A. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor
   B. The sinking of the *Lusitania*
   C. The attack on isolationism

3. What did Harry Truman do to end the war against Japan?
   A. Organized the building of fighter planes
   B. Dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
   C. Accepted the League of Nations

The Cold War, Korean Conflict, and Vietnam
After World War II, the United States and Great Britain had long-term disagreements with the Soviet Union over the future of Europe, most of which had been freed from Nazi rule by their joint effort. Each wanted to establish governments friendly to its own interests there.

Russia had been invaded twice in the past 40 years, and the United States twice had been dragged into European wars not of its making. Each believed that its system could best ensure its security, and each believed its ideas produced the most liberty, equality, and prosperity. This period of disagreement between the United States and Russia often is called the Cold War.
After World War II, many empires fell, and many civil wars occurred. The United States wanted stability, democracy, and open trade. Because it feared that postwar economic weakness would increase the popularity of communism, the U.S. offered European nations including the Soviet Union large sums of money to repair the war damage and help their economies. The Soviet Union and the communist nations of Eastern Europe turned down the offer. By 1952, through a program to rebuild Western Europe (called the Marshall Plan), the United States had invested $13.3 billion.

The Soviet military forced communist governments on nations in Central and Eastern Europe. The United States wanted to limit Soviet expansion. It demanded Soviet withdrawal from northern Iran. America supported Turkey and helped Greece fight against communist revolts. When the Soviets blockaded West Berlin, a U.S. airlift brought millions of tons of supplies to the divided city.

In 1949, the communist forces of Mao Zedong took control of China. Communist North Korea invaded South Korea with the support of China and the Soviet Union in 1950. The United States got support from the United Nations, formerly the League
of Nations, for military intervention, and a bloody war continued into 1953. Although an armistice eventually was signed, U.S. troops remain in South Korea to this day.

In the 1960s, the United States helped South Vietnam defend itself against communist North Vietnam. All American troops withdrew by 1973. In 1975, North Vietnam conquered South Vietnam. The war cost hundreds of thousands of lives, and many Vietnamese “boat people” fled their nation’s new communist rulers. Americans were divided over the war and not eager to get into other foreign conflicts.

**Quiz**

1. **What was the Cold War?**
   A. A short-lived war against Canada
   B. The melting of icebergs
   C. The disagreement between the United States and the Soviet Union about their systems of government

2. **The Marshall Plan**
   A. Gave $13.3 billion to rebuild Western Europe
   B. Gave $13.3 billion to rebuild Japan
   C. Gave $13.3 billion to rebuild Vietnam

Answers: 1. C; 2. A
Cultural Change
1950–1980
At home, some Americans began to have easier lives. Families grew and some moved from the cities into outlying areas where they could purchase larger homes. Not all Americans were so successful. African Americans started a movement to gain fair treatment everywhere.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that separate schools for black children were not equal to those for white children and must be integrated. President Lyndon Johnson supported the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in his peaceful fight for civil rights and voting rights for African Americans. Some
prejudice /ˈprɛʤədəs/ noun plural prejudices
: an unfair feeling of dislike for a person or group because of race, sex, religion, etc. • The organization fights against racial prejudice.

opportunity /ˌɑ:pərˈtuːni ti/ noun plural opportunities
: an amount of time or a situation in which something can be done: chance [count]
* There are fewer job/employment opportunities this year for graduates. * There is plenty of opportunity for advancement within the company.

Above right: Martin Luther King walks with children who are going into what was an all-white school in Mississippi in 1966.

black leaders, such as Malcolm X, believed in less peaceful means to reform. New laws ended segregation and guaranteed African Americans the right to vote. Many black Americans worked toward joining the more prosperous middle class. While racial prejudice was not gone, African Americans had a better chance to live freely and well.

During the 1960s and 1970s, many American women grew angry that they did not have the same opportunities as men. Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem were leaders of a movement that worked to change
laws so women could compete equally with men in business and education. A proposed constitutional amendment promising equal rights for women failed when not enough states ratified it, but many new laws did grant equal rights.

Native Americans fought for the government to keep its past promises. They won back control of
tribal lands and water rights. They fought for assistance for housing and education. In 1992, Ben Nighthorse Campbell became the first Native American elected to the Senate.

Hispanic Americans from Mexico, Central America, Puerto Rico, and Cuba were politically active too. They fought against discrimination. They were elected to local, state, and national positions. César Chávez organized a nationwide boycott of California grapes that forced growers to work with the United Farm Workers union.
Students protested the war in Vietnam, and President Johnson began peace negotiations. Long hair, rock ’n’ roll music, and illegal drugs were visible symbols of the “counter-culture” thinking of some young people during this time.

Americans became more concerned about pollution. The first Earth Day was designated in 1970. The Environmental Protection Agency was created. New laws cut down on pollution.

American society was changing. Slowly, the United States was embracing its multicultural population.

**Quiz**

1. Who regained control of tribal lands and water rights?
   A. Malcolm X  
   B. Native Americans  
   C. Cuba  

2. César Chávez led a nationwide boycott against what group?
   A. Environmental Protection Agency  
   B. Railroad  
   C. California grape growers  

3. Interest in reducing pollution led to the creation of what agency?
   A. Environmental Protection Agency  
   B. United Farm Workers  
   C. Pollution Reducing Agency

Answers: 1. B; 2. C; 3. A
End of the 20th Century
The United States always has been a place where different ideas and views compete to influence law and social change. The liberal activism of the 1960s–1970s gave way to conservatism in the 1980s.

Conservatives wanted limited government, strong national defense, and tax cuts. Supporters of President Ronald Reagan (1981–1989) believe his policies helped to speed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. American politics, however, can change quickly: In 1992, Americans elected the more liberal Bill Clinton as president.

Politics became more bitter than usual when the election was very close in 2000. A Supreme Court ruling about disputed ballots in Florida ensured that George W. Bush won the election over Al Gore.
President Bush expected to focus on education, the U.S. economy, and Social Security. On September 11, 2001, everything changed. Foreign terrorists crashed four passenger airplanes into the two World Trade Center towers in New York, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and a rural field in Pennsylvania.
Bush declared war on worldwide terrorism and sent U.S. troops into Afghanistan and Iraq. At first, most Americans backed President Bush, but many grew uncomfortable with his policies. In 2008, Americans chose Barack Obama for the presidency. Obama became the first African American to hold the nation’s highest office. He faces serious economic difficulties—the worst, many think, since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

It is too early to know how the new president’s administration will face the challenges of the 21st century. Regardless, Americans know that theirs will remain a land of freedom and opportunity.
Conclusion
The United States has dramatically changed from its beginnings as 13 little-known colonies. Its population of 300 million people represents almost every national and ethnic group in the world. Progress continues in economics, technology, culture, and society. Americans live in an interdependent, interconnected world.

The United States still is connected to the values of its early days. Among these are a belief in individual freedom and democratic government and the promise of economic opportunity and progress for all people.

The work for the United States is to keep its values of freedom, democracy, and opportunity secure and vital in the 21st century.
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