

1. Питання для самоконтролю.
2. Зміст лекцій.
3. Довідкова література.

ПИТАННЯ ДЛЯ САМОКОНТРОЛЮ

THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

- What's the official name of the country?
- How many parts does Great Britain consist of?
- What are the capitals of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?
- When was the official name of the country adopted?
- Name the biggest cities in England.
- Name the biggest cities in Scotland.
- Name the biggest cities in Wales.
- Name the biggest cities in Northern Ireland.
- What organizations is the UK member of?
- What kind of a country is the UK?
- Who is the head of the state?
- What's the total area of the UK?
- What's the highest mountain in the UK? What's its height?
- What's the longest river in the UK?
- What's the deepest lake in the UK? How deep is it?
- What is the UK washed by?
- Where is the Lake District situated?
- How is the UK linked to France?
- What river is the capital of the UK situated on?
- What do you know about the political system of the UK?
- Who's the head of the state? Who is the head of the government?
- What are the main elements of the government?
- Who is simultaneously a member of all the three branches?
- What do you know about the British parliament?

What do you know about the House of Lords?

What do you know about the House of Commons?

What's the maximum period of the sitting of the British Parliament?

What's the main function of the House of Lords nowadays?

Who heads the Cabinet? Is it an executive or legislative branch?

Who is the current Prime Minister? Since when has he been the Prime Minister? What party is he a member of?

Where does the Parliament meet?

What does any Bill passed by the Parliament require to become a law?

When was the British Constitution adopted?

Who can be the Prime Minister of the UK?

What are the two largest political parties in the UK?

What's the approximate population of the UK?

What institutions represent higher education in the UK?

What do you know about the financing of the UK universities?

What's the only private university in the UK?

What do you know about the "Red Brick" universities?

What do you know about the "Russell Group"?

What are the three most prestigious universities in the UK?

What do you know about the Open University?

What two categories do British newspapers split into?

What's (the) BBC?

What's the flag of the UK called?

What's the national anthem of the UK?

What's the population of London?

What's the Prime-Minister's Residence in London?

Where does the Queen live and work?

What's the name of London's underground?

What's the currency in the UK?

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

What kind of a country is the USA?

How many states does the USA comprise?

How many states are situated on the mainland?

What does the USA border on?

What's the area of the USA?

What's the approximate population of the USA?

What's the origin of the name "America"?

When did Columbus come to the Caribbean islands?

Who is the head of the state?

When was the Declaration of Independence issued? Who drafted it?

Provide the dates of the American Revolutionary War.

When was the US Constitution adopted?

Who was the first US president and when did he take office?

When was the Bill of Rights ratified?

When was Abraham Lincoln elected President?

What do you know about the American Civil War? How did it start? What were the Confederate States of America for?

Who's the US president nowadays and when was he elected?

Name some ranges of mountains in the USA.

What's the longest river in the USA?

What's the lowest point in the USA? Where is it and how low is it?

What's the highest mountain in the USA? Where is it and what's its height?

What's the biggest state in the USA?

Name the biggest cities in the USA.

What are the three levels of government citizens are usually subject to?

What are the three branches the federal government is composed of?

What do you know about the legislative branch of the federal government?

What do you know about the executive branch of the federal government?

What do you know about the judicial branch of the federal government?

What do you know about electing the US President?

What do you know about the Supreme Court of the US?

What are the two major parties in the USA?

Who is the US president nowadays? What do you know about him? When was he elected President?

For how many years do students usually study to get higher education?

What are the university or college years called in the USA?

What do universities pay attention to while admitting applicants?

What is SAT?

What's ACT?

What is GPA?

What do we call a field of concentration at American universities?

What degree do students usually get after graduating from a university?

What do you know about graduate studies in the USA? What degree do students get after finishing them?

What's PhD?

What are the most prestigious U.S. universities?

What is "tuition"?

What river is Washington D.C. situated on?

What is the White House?

What's the flag of the USA called?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

What is the capital of Australia?

What is the capital of New Zealand?

What is the capital of Canada?

Lecture 1. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

1. Introduction.

2. Geography.

3. Political System.

4. Population.

5. Education:

a) primary and secondary education;

b) higher education.

6. Religion.

7. Culture:

a) Literature;

b) Mass media;

c) Symbols.

8. London – the capital of the UK.

1. Introduction.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a [sovereign state](#) located off the northwestern coast of [continental Europe](#).

The United Kingdom is a [unitary state](#) consisting of four [countries](#): [England](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#). It is governed by a [parliamentary system](#) with its [seat of government](#) in [London](#), the [capital](#), but with three [devolved](#) national administrations in [Belfast](#), [Cardiff](#) and [Edinburgh](#), the capitals of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland respectively. The UK is a [constitutional monarchy](#) with [Queen Elizabeth II](#) as the [head of state](#). The official name of the country is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland although it is usually known by a shorter name. At the Eurovision Song Contest, at the United Nations and in the European Parliament, for instance, it is referred to as 'the United Kingdom'. In everyday speech this is often shortened to 'the UK'. In other contexts it is referred to as 'Great Britain'. The current name of the country, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was adopted in 1927.

The UK is a [Member State of the European Union](#), holds a permanent seat on the [United Nations Security Council](#), and is a member of the [G8](#) (Group of 8 - [Canada](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Japan](#), [Russia](#), the [United Kingdom](#), and the [United States](#)), [NATO](#), [OECD](#) (Organization for Economic Cooperation and development), [World Trade Organization](#) and the Commonwealth of Nations.

The capital is [London](#), which is among the world's leading commercial, financial, and cultural centres. Other major cities include [Birmingham](#), [Liverpool](#), and [Manchester](#) in England, [Belfast](#) and [Londonderry](#) in [Northern Ireland](#), [Edinburgh](#) and [Glasgow](#) in Scotland, and [Swansea](#) and [Cardiff](#) in Wales.

2. Geography.

The UK is an [island country](#), spanning [Great Britain](#), the northeast part of [Ireland](#), and many small islands. The UK is surrounded by the [Atlantic Ocean](#), the [North Sea](#), the [English Channel](#) and the [Irish Sea](#). The largest island, Great Britain, is linked to [France](#) by the [Channel Tunnel](#) (the English Channel). The total area of the [United Kingdom](#) is approximately 245,000 square kilometres. [England](#) is the largest [country of the United Kingdom](#), at 130,410 square kilometres accounting for just over half the total area of the UK. [Scotland](#) at 78,772 square kilometres is second largest, accounting for about a third of the area of the UK. [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) are much smaller, covering 20,758 square kilometres and 14,160 square kilometres respectively.

The highest [mountains](#) in the UK are all found in Scotland. The highest peaks in each part of the UK are:

- Scotland: [Ben Nevis](#) (1,344 metres)
- Wales: [Snowdon](#) (1,085 metres)
- England: [Scafell Pike](#) (the [Cumbrian Mountains](#), 977 metres)
- Northern Ireland: [Slieve Donard](#) (the [Mourne Mountains](#), 852 metres)

The longest river in the UK is the [River Severn](#) (354 km) which flows through both Wales and England. The deepest lake in the UK is [Loch Morar](#) with a maximum depth of 309 metres. The [Cumbrian Mountains](#) include the famous [Lake District](#) celebrated in poetry by William Wordsworth and the other [Lake poets](#) (England). The capital, London, is situated on the [River Thames](#) in southeastern England.

3. Political system

The politics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland takes place in the framework of a [constitutional monarchy](#), in which the [Monarch](#) is [head of state](#) and the [Prime Minister](#) of the [United Kingdom](#) is the [head of government](#). The United Kingdom is a [constitutional monarchy](#): [Queen Elizabeth II](#) is head of state of the UK as well as of fifteen other [Commonwealth countries](#).

The main elements of the government are the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. There is some overlap between the branches, as there is no formal [separation of powers](#). For example, the [lord chancellor](#) simultaneously is a member of all three branches, serving as a member of the cabinet (executive branch), as the government's leader in the House of Lords (legislative branch), and as the head of the country's judiciary (judicial branch). The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, with a queen and a parliament that has

two houses: the House of Lords (appointed), with *life peers*, *hereditary peers*, and *bishops*; and the House of Commons (elected), which has 646 popularly elected members. Supreme legislative power is vested in parliament, which sits for five years unless dissolved sooner. The main function of the House of Lords nowadays is to revise legislation. The executive power of the Crown is exercised by the cabinet, headed by the prime minister (David Cameron nowadays). The [Parliament of the United Kingdom](#) meets in the [Palace of Westminster](#), any Bill, passed by the Parliament, requires [Royal Assent](#) to become law.

In Britain, as in many European countries, the official head of state, the monarch has little real power. One of the most distinctive features of the UK political system is the fact that Britain does not have “a written constitution” at all. Of course, there are rules, regulations, principles and procedures for the running of the country – all the things that political scientists and legal experts study and which are known collectively as 'the constitution'. But there is no single written document which can be appealed to as the highest law of the land and the final ‘arbiter in any matter of dispute. Nobody can refer to 'article 6' or 'the first amendment' or anything like that, because nothing like that exists.

Instead, the principles and procedures by which the country is governed and from which people's rights are derived come from a number of different sources. They have been built up, bit by bit, over the centuries. Some of them are written down in laws agreed by Parliament, some of them have been spoken and then written down (judgements made in a court) and some of them have never been written down at all. For example, there is no written law in Britain that says anything about who can be the Prime Minister or what the powers of the Prime Minister are. Similarly, there is no single written document which asserts people's rights. Some rights which are commonly accepted in modern democracies (for example, the rights not to be discriminated on the basis of sex or race) have been formally recognized by Parliament through legislation; but others (for example, the rights not to be discriminated on the basis of religion or political views) have not. Nevertheless, it is understood that these latter rights are also part of the constitution.

The position of [Prime Minister](#), the UK's [head of government](#), belongs to the Member of Parliament who can obtain the confidence of a majority in the House of Commons, usually the current leader of the largest political party in that chamber. The Prime Minister and Cabinet are formally appointed by the Monarch to form [Her Majesty's Government](#). The [Cabinet](#) is traditionally formed from members of the Prime Minister's party in both legislative houses, and mostly from the House of Commons. Executive power is exercised by the Prime Minister and Cabinet, who become [Ministers of the Crown](#). David Cameron, [MP](#), leader of the [Conservative Party](#), has been Prime Minister, [First Lord of the Treasury](#) and [Minister for the Civil Service](#) since 11 May, 2010.

For elections to the House of Commons, the UK is currently divided into [650 constituencies](#). Each constituency elects one Member of Parliament by [simple plurality](#). General Elections are called by the Monarch when the Prime Minister so advises. Though there is no minimum term for a Parliament, the [Parliament Act \(1911\)](#) requires that a new election must be called within five years of the previous general election.

The UK has a [multi-party system](#). The UK's three major political parties are the [Conservative Party](#), the [Labour Party](#) and the [Liberal Democrats](#).

4. Population

In 2010 the total population of the UK is approximately 62.3 mln people, the fifth largest in the [Commonwealth](#) and the twenty-first largest in the world.

For centuries people have migrated to the British Isles from many parts of the world, some to avoid political or religious persecution, others to find a better way of life or to escape poverty. In historic times migrants from the European mainland joined the indigenous population of Britain during the Roman Empire and during the invasions of the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Normans. The Irish have long made homes in Great Britain. Many Jews arrived in Britain towards the end of the 19th century and in the 1930s. After 1945 large numbers of other European refugees settled in the country. The large immigrant communities from the West Indies and South Asia date from the 1950s and '60s. There are also substantial groups of Americans, Australians, and Chinese, as well as various other Europeans, such as Greeks, Russians, Poles, Serbs, Estonians, Latvians, Armenians, Turkish Cypriots, Italians, and Spaniards. Beginning in the early 1970s, immigrants from Latin America, Southeast Asia,

and Sri Lanka have sought refuge in Britain. People of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi origin make up more than half of the total ethnic minority population.

Migration from new EU member states in [Central](#) and [Eastern Europe](#) since 2004 has resulted in growth in the population groups, but, in 2008, the trend is reversing and many of these migrants are returning home. In 2001, 92.1% of the population in the UK identified themselves as White, leaving 7.9% of the UK population identifying themselves as mixed race or [ethnic minority](#).

The UK's *de facto* official language is English (British English). Largely due to the British Empire, the English language has spread across the world, and become [the international language of business](#) as well as the most widely taught [second language](#). Scots is recognised at European level and is not just a dialect of English. [French](#) and [German](#) are the two most commonly taught second languages in England and Scotland.

5. Education

a) Primary and secondary education

Education in the United Kingdom is a [devolved matter](#) with each of the [countries of the United Kingdom](#) having separate systems under separate governments. In each country, education, though not school attendance, is mandatory and attendance at [primary](#) and [secondary](#) is nearly universal. In England, e.g., children attend secondary education from the age of eleven, going to a [comprehensive school](#), grammar school or an independent (fee-paying) school. All of these types of schools may be single sex or co-educational, however the vast majority of comprehensive schools are co-educational. Children go to school from Monday to Friday, independent schools usually have a longer school day, sometimes including Saturday mornings, and longer holidays in compensation. Though most pupils are educated in state schools, there is also an important private sector.

Primary education is free and compulsory from age 5 to 11. Local Education Authorities provide secondary education, which is organized in a variety of ways, for children aged 11 to 19.

In most parts of the United Kingdom, pupils study till the minimum age of 16 to earn a certificate or take public examinations that qualify them for higher education. In much of Northern Ireland and in some parts of Great Britain, pupils take an intelligence examination at the age of 11, on the basis of which they are assigned to one of the kinds of secondary schools.

The secretary of state has the duty to establish a national curriculum applicable to all state schools.

b) Higher education

Universities historically have been independent and self-governing; however, they have close links with the central government because a large proportion of their income derives from public funds. Three types of entities represent higher education in the UK- colleges, universities and institutions of higher education. Most [universities in the United Kingdom](#) are state funded, though there is one private university in England - the [University of Buckingham](#) - where students are required to pay all the costs without state support.

There are several distinguished groups of universities in the UK. One of them is the 'Red Brick' group comprising the six universities in the industrial cities of Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield. These were founded in the Victorian era and achieved university status prior to World War II. The focus on practicality differentiated these universities from the other ancient and famous universities like Oxford and Cambridge. There is also the collaboration of twenty British universities to form the 'Russell Group'. These institutions are the recipients of two-thirds of the government grant and contract funding.

England has some of the top universities in the world; [University of Cambridge](#), [University of Oxford](#), and [University of London](#) are ranked among the top 20 world universities in 2007.

The [Open University](#)—a unique innovation in higher education—is a degree-granting institution that provides courses of study for adults through television, radio, and local study programs. Applicants must apply for a number of places limited at any time by the availability of teachers.

6. Religion

Christianity is the main [religion in England](#) with the [Church of England \(Anglican\)](#) as the [Established Church](#): the church retains a [representation](#) in the [UK Parliament](#) and the [British monarch](#) is a member of the church as well as its [Supreme Governor](#). The Church of England also retains the right to draft legislative measures (related to religious administration) through the [General Synod](#) that can then be passed into law by Parliament. The [Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales](#) is the second largest Christian church with around five million members, mainly in England. There are also growing [Orthodox](#), [Evangelical](#) and [Pente'costal](#) churches, with Pentecostal churches in England now third after the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in terms of church attendance. Other large Christian groups include [Methodists](#) and [Baptists](#).

The [presbyterian Church of Scotland](#) (known informally as [The Kirk](#)), is recognised as the [national church](#) of Scotland and not subject to state control. In the 1920s, the [Church in Wales](#) became independent from the Church of England and became '[disestablished](#)' but remains in the [Anglican Communion](#). Methodism and other more

independent churches are traditionally strong in Wales. The main [religious groups in Northern Ireland](#) are organised on an [all-Ireland](#) basis. Though Protestants and Anglicans are in the overall majority, the [Roman Catholic Church of Ireland](#) is the largest single church.

The link between [church and state](#) still remains in the UK. [Christianity](#) is the major religion, followed by [Islam](#), [Hinduism](#), [Sikhism](#) and then [Judaism](#) in terms of number of adherents. The biggest groups of Muslims are of [Pakistani](#), [Bangladeshi](#) and [Indian](#) origin. In 2007 53% identified themselves as Christians. There is also a large and growing [atheist](#) and [agnostic](#) population, the research suggests that 38% of the population have a belief in a [God](#) with a further 40% believing in a 'spirit or life force'.

7. Culture

The [culture of the United Kingdom](#)—British culture—is formed by the [UK's history](#) as a [developed island country](#), [monarchy](#), [imperial power](#) and, particularly, as a [political union](#) of four countries, each of which has preserved its heritage, customs and symbolism. As a result of the [British Empire](#), British influence can be observed in the language, culture and legal systems of many of its former colonies such as [Canada](#), [Australia](#), [India](#), and the [United States](#).

a) Literature

The English playwright and poet [William Shakespeare](#) is widely regarded as the greatest dramatist of all time. Among the earliest English writers are [Geoffrey of Monmouth](#) (12th century), [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) (14th century), and [Thomas Malory](#) (15th century). In the 18th century, [Samuel Richardson](#) is often credited with inventing the modern novel. In the 19th century, there followed further innovation by [Jane Austen](#), the [Brontë sisters](#), the social campaigner [Charles Dickens](#), the [naturalist Thomas Hardy](#), the visionary (yronic) poet [William Blake](#) and romantic poet [William Wordsworth](#). Twentieth century writers include the science fiction novelist [H. G. Wells](#), the controversial [D. H. Lawrence](#), the [modernist Virginia Woolf](#), the 'satirist, [Evelyn Waugh](#), the (проphetic) prophetic novelist [George Orwell](#), the popular novelist, [Graham Greene](#), and the poets [John Betjeman](#) and [Philip Larkin](#). Most recently, the children's fantasy [Harry Potter](#) series by [J. K. Rowling](#) has recalled the popularity of [J. R. R. Tolkien](#).

[Scotland's contribution](#) includes the detective writer [Arthur Conan Doyle](#), romantic literature by Sir [Walter Scott](#) and the epic adventures of [Robert Louis Stevenson](#). It has also produced the celebrated poet [Robert Burns](#).

Authors from other nationalities, particularly from Ireland, or from [Commonwealth](#) countries, have lived and worked in the UK. Significant examples through the centuries include [Jonathan Swift](#), [Oscar Wilde](#), [Bram Stoker](#), [George Bernard Shaw](#), [Joseph Conrad](#), [T. S. Eliot](#) and others.

b) Mass media

The prominence of the English language gives the UK media a widespread international dimension.

Traditionally, [British newspapers](#) could be split into *quality*, serious-minded newspaper (usually referred to as "[broadsheets](#)" due to their large size) and the more populist, *tabloid* varieties. For convenience of reading, many traditional broadsheets have switched to a more [compact](#)-sized format, traditionally used by [tabloids](#).

Generally, British newspapers are not formally tied to specific political parties. However, most display clear political sympathies that are usually determined by their proprietors. The tabloid [Daily Mail](#) and broadsheet [Daily Telegraph](#) have consistently supported the Conservative Party, while the tabloid [Daily Mirror](#) and broadsheet [The Guardian](#) (published in both London and Manchester) normally support Labour. [The Times](#) of London is one of the world's oldest newspapers. The United Kingdom's biggest-selling newspaper is [The Sun](#): 3.1 million, approximately a quarter of the market. Its sister paper, the [News of the World](#) has the highest circulation in the Sunday newspaper market, and traditionally focuses on celebrity-led stories. [The Financial Times](#) is the main business newspaper, printed on salmon pink broadsheet paper.

There are five major nationwide television channels in the UK, the most important of which are [BBC One](#) and [BBC Two](#). The [BBC](#) is the UK's publicly funded [radio](#), [television](#) and [internet](#) broadcasting corporation, and is the oldest and largest broadcaster in the world. It operates several [television channels](#) and [radio](#) stations in both the UK and abroad. The BBC's international television news service, [BBC World News](#), is broadcast throughout the world and the [BBC World Service](#) radio network is broadcast in thirty-three languages globally.

[Radio in the UK](#) is also dominated by [BBC Radio](#). The most popular radio station, by number of listeners, is [BBC Radio 2](#), closely followed by [BBC Radio 1](#). There are also hundreds of mainly local commercial radio stations in all the country, and they offer a variety of music or talk formats.





Aside from newspapers, British magazines and journals have achieved worldwide circulation including [The Economist](#) and [Nature](#). The leading "quality" daily newspaper in Scotland is [The Herald](#).

c) Symbols

The [flag of the United Kingdom](#) is the [Union Flag](#) (the Union Jack). The [national anthem](#) of the United Kingdom is "[God Save the King](#)", with "King" replaced with "Queen" in the lyrics whenever the monarch is a woman. The anthem's name remains "God Save the King".

Britannia is a **national personification** of the United Kingdom, originating from **Roman Britain**. Britannia is symbolised as a young woman with brown or golden hair, wearing a **Corinthian helmet** and white robes. She holds **Poseidon's** three-pronged trident and a **shield**, bearing the Union Flag. Sometimes she is depicted as riding the back of a lion. Since the height of the British Empire, Britannia has often been associated with maritime dominance, as in the patriotic song *Rule, Britannia!*. The **lion** symbol is depicted behind Britannia on the **British fifty pence coin** and it is shown crowned on the back of the **British ten pence coin**. It is also used as a symbol on the flag of the **British Army**.

Within the United Kingdom

Flag	Country	Patron saint	Flower
	England	St. George	Tudor rose
	Scotland	St. Andrew	Thistle
	Wales	St. David	Leek/Daffodil
	Northern Ireland	St. Patrick	Flax/Shamrock

The colours (as typically worn by sports teams of these nations): England – white; Wales – red; Scotland – dark blue; Northern Ireland – green.

8. London – the capital of the UK.

Самостійне опрацювання.

Lecture 2. The United States of America

1. Introduction.

2. History.

3. Geography.

4. Political System.

5. Population.

6. Education:

a) general information;

b) college and university education.

7. Washington, D.C.

1. Introduction.

The United States of America (commonly referred to as the United States, the U.S., the USA, or America) is a **federal constitutional republic** comprising **fifty states** and a **federal district** of Columbia. The country is situated mostly in central **North America**, where its **forty-eight contiguous states** and **Washington, D.C.**, the **capital district**, lie between the **Pacific** and **Atlantic Oceans**, bordered by **Canada** to the north and **Mexico** to the south. The state of **Alaska** is in the northwest of the continent, with Canada to its east and **Russia** to the west across the **Bering Strait**. The state of **Hawaii** is an **archipelago** in the mid-Pacific. The country also possesses **several territories**, or **insular areas**, in the **Caribbean** and Pacific.

At 9.83 million km² and with about 314 million people, the United States is the [third or fourth](#) largest country by total area, and third largest by land area and [by population](#). The United States is one of the world's most [ethnically diverse](#) and [multicultural](#) nations, the product of large-scale [immigration from many countries](#).

In 1507, German [cartographer Martin Waldseemüller](#) produced a world map on which he named the lands of the Western Hemisphere "[America](#)" after Italian explorer and cartographer [Amerigo Vespucci](#).

2. History

In 1492, [Genoese](#) explorer [Christopher Columbus](#), under contract to the Spanish crown, reached several Caribbean islands, making [first contact](#) with the indigenous people.

The first successful English settlements were the [Virginia Colony](#) in [Jamestown](#) in 1607 and the [Pilgrims' Plymouth Colony](#) in 1620. By 1634, [New England](#) had been settled by some 10,000 [Puritans](#). Between the late 1610s and the American Revolution, about 50,000 convicts were shipped to Britain's American colonies. Beginning in 1614, the Dutch settled along the lower [Hudson River](#), including [New Amsterdam](#) on [Manhattan Island](#).

In 1674, the Dutch ceded their American territory to England; the province of [New Netherland](#) was renamed New York. By the turn of the century, [African slaves](#) were becoming the primary source of bonded labor. With the 1729 division of [the Carolinas](#) and the 1732 colonization of [Georgia](#), the thirteen British colonies that would become the United States of America were established. So, the nation was founded by [thirteen colonies](#) of [Great Britain](#) located along the [Atlantic seaboard](#). On July 4, 1776, proclaiming that "[all men are created equal](#)", they issued the [Declaration of Independence](#) (drafted by Thomas Jefferson), which proclaimed their independence from Great Britain and their formation of a cooperative union. That date is now celebrated annually as America's [Independence Day](#). The rebellious states defeated Great Britain in the [American Revolutionary War](#) (1775-1783), the first successful [colonial war of independence](#). The [Philadelphia Convention](#) adopted the current [United States Constitution](#) on September 17, 1787; its ratification the following year (1788) made the states part of a single republic with a strong central government. The new republic's [first Senate](#), [House of Representatives](#), and [president](#)—George Washington—took office in 1789. The [Bill of Rights](#), comprising ten [constitutional amendments](#) guaranteeing many fundamental civil rights and freedoms, was ratified in 1791.

Attitudes toward [slavery](#) were shifting; a [clause in the Constitution](#) protected the African slave trade only until 1808. The Northern states abolished slavery between 1780 and 1804, leaving the [slave states](#) of the South as defenders of the "[peculiar institution](#)."

[Tensions](#) between slave and [free states](#) mounted with arguments over the relationship between the [state and federal governments](#), as well as [violent conflicts](#) over the spread of slavery into new states. [Abraham Lincoln](#), candidate of the largely antislavery [Republican Party](#), was elected president in 1860. Before he took office, seven slave states declared their [secession](#)—which the federal government maintained was illegal—and formed the [Confederate States of America](#). With the Confederate [attack upon Fort Sumter](#), the [American Civil War](#) (1861-1865) began and four more slave states joined the Confederacy. Lincoln's [Emancipation Proclamation](#) committed the [Union](#) to ending slavery. Following the Union victory in 1865, three amendments to the U.S. Constitution [ensured freedom](#) for the nearly four million [African Americans](#) who had been slaves, [made them citizens](#), and [gave them voting rights](#). The war and its resolution led to a substantial increase in [federal power](#).

The USA remained neutral during WWI, but during WWII supported the Allies. The United States, having [developed the first nuclear weapons](#), used them on the Japanese cities of [Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#) in August. In 1945, the United States emerged from [World War II](#) as the [first country with nuclear weapons](#), a permanent member of the [United Nations Security Council](#), and a founding member of [NATO](#).

The leadership role taken by the United States and its allies in the UN-sanctioned [Gulf War](#), under President [George H. W. Bush](#), and the [Yugoslav wars](#), under President [Bill Clinton](#), helped to preserve its position as a superpower. A [civil lawsuit](#) and [sex scandal](#) led to [Clinton's impeachment](#) in 1998, but he remained in office. The [2000 presidential election](#), one of the closest in U.S. history, was resolved by a [U.S. Supreme Court decision](#)—[George W. Bush](#), son of George H. W. Bush, became president.

On [September 11, 2001](#), [al-Qaeda](#) terrorists struck the [World Trade Center](#) in New York City and [The Pentagon](#) near Washington, D.C., killing nearly three thousand people. In response, the [Bush administration](#) launched a "[War on Terrorism](#)". In 2002, the Bush administration began to press for [regime change](#) in Iraq on [controversial grounds](#). Lacking the support of NATO or an explicit UN mandate for military intervention, Bush organized a [Coalition of the Willing](#); coalition forces [preemptively invaded Iraq](#) in 2003, removing dictator and former U.S. ally [Saddam Hussein](#). On November 4, 2008, amid a global [economic recession](#), [Barack Obama](#) was elected president.

3. Geography.

The eastern United States has a varied topography. A broad, flat coastal plain lines the Atlantic and Gulf shores from the Texas-Mexico border to New York City, and includes the Florida peninsula. The [Appalachian Mountains](#) form a line of low mountains separating the eastern seaboard from the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Basin. The five [Great Lakes](#) are located in the north-central portion of the country, four of them forming part of the border with [Canada](#). West of the Appalachians lies the [Mississippi River](#) basin and two large eastern tributaries, the [Ohio River](#) and the [Tennessee River](#).

The [Great Plains](#) lie west of the Mississippi River and east of the Rocky Mountains. The Great Plains come to an abrupt end at the [Rocky Mountains](#). The Rocky Mountains form a large portion of the [Western U.S.](#), entering from [Canada](#) and stretching nearly to [Mexico](#).

[Alaska](#) contains some of the most dramatic and untapped scenery in the country. Tall, prominent mountain ranges rise up sharply from broad, flat tundra plains. On the islands off the south and southwest coast are many [volcanoes](#). [Hawaii](#), far to the south of [Alaska](#) in the [Pacific Ocean](#), is a chain of tropical, volcanic islands, popular as a tourist destination for many from [East Asia](#) and the mainland United States.

The east coast Appalachian system, originally forest covered, is relatively low and narrow and is bordered on the southeast and south by an important coastal plain. The [Cordilleran system](#) on the western side of the continent is lofty, broad and complicated having two branches, the Rocky Mountain System and the Pacific Mountain System.

Both the [Columbia River](#) and [Colorado River](#) rise far inland near the easternmost members of the Cordilleran system, and flow through plateaus and intermontane basins to the ocean.

Elevation extremes:

- Lowest point: [Death Valley, Inyo County, California](#) -86 m below
- Highest point: [Mount McKinley, Alaska](#) - 6,194 m

The longest river in the USA is the Missouri. The biggest state is Alaska. The biggest cities are New York, Los Angeles (CA) and Chicago (IL).

4. Political System

The United States is the world's oldest surviving [federation](#). It is a [constitutional republic](#). Constitution serves as the country's supreme legal document and as a [social contract](#) for the American people. In the [American federalist system](#), citizens are usually subject to [three levels of government](#), federal, state, and local; the [local government's](#) duties are commonly split between [county](#) and municipal governments. In almost all cases, executive and legislative officials are elected by a [plurality vote](#) of citizens by district. There is no [proportional representation](#) at the federal level, and it is very rare at lower levels. Federal and state judicial and [cabinet](#) officials are typically nominated by the executive branch and approved by the legislature, although some state judges and officials are elected by popular vote.

The federal government is composed of three branches:

- **Legislative:** The [bicameral Congress](#), made up of the [Senate](#) and the [House of Representatives](#), makes [federal law](#), [declares war](#), approves treaties, has the [power of the purse](#), and has the power of [impeachment](#), by which it can remove sitting members of the government.

- **Executive:** The **president** is the **commander-in-chief** of the military, can veto **legislative bills** before they become law, and appoints the **Cabinet** and other officers, who administer and enforce federal laws and policies.
- **Judicial:** The **Supreme Court** and lower **federal courts**, whose judges are appointed by the president with Senate approval, appoint, interpret laws, and can overturn laws they deem **unconstitutional**.

The House of Representatives has 435 members, each representing a **congressional district** for a two-year term. House seats are **apportioned** among the states by population every tenth year. As of the **2000 census**, seven states have the minimum of one representative, while California, the most populous state, has fifty-three. The Senate has 100 members with each state having two senators, elected **at-large** to six-year terms; one third of Senate seats are up for election every other year. The president serves a four-year term and may be elected to the office **no more than twice**. The president is **not elected by direct vote**, but by an indirect **electoral college** system in which the determining votes are apportioned by state. The Supreme Court, led by the **Chief Justice of the United States**, has nine members, who serve for life. The **governor** (chief executive) of each state is directly elected.

The United States has operated under a **two-party system** for most of its history. For elective offices at all levels, state-administered **primary elections** choose the major party nominees for subsequent **general elections**. Since the **general election of 1856**, the major parties have been the **Democratic Party** and the **Republican Party**.

The winner of the **2008 presidential election**, Democrat **Barack Obama**, is the **44th U.S. president** and the first **African American** to hold the office. All previous presidents were men of solely European descent. The 2008 elections also saw the Democratic Party strengthen its control of both the **House** of Representatives and the **Senate**.

The next **United States presidential election** is to be held on Tuesday, November 6, 2012. It will be the 57th **quadrennial** presidential election in which **presidential electors**, who will officially elect the **president** and the vice president of the United States on December 17, 2012, will be chosen. Incumbent President **Barack Obama** is running for a second and final term during this election. His major challenger is former Massachusetts Governor, Republican **Mitt Romney**. Two other candidates have attained ballot access sufficient enough to mathematically win the election by a majority of the **electoral college**: former New Mexico Governor **Gary Johnson**, the Libertarian Party nominee; and **Jill Stein**, the Green Party nominee.

5. Population

The United States population is approximately 314 mln people including an estimated 11.2 mln **illegal immigrants**. The United States is the third most populous nation in the world, after China and India. Even with a birth rate of 13 per 1,000, 35% below the world average, its **population growth** rate is positive at 0.9%, significantly higher than those of many developed nations. In fiscal year 2011, over 1 million **immigrants** (most of whom entered through **family reunification**) were granted **legal residence**. Mexico has been the leading source of new residents for over two decades; since 1998, China, India, and the Philippines have been in the top four sending countries every year. 9 million Americans identify themselves as **lesbian, gay, bisexual** or **transgender**, making up 4% of the population.

The United States has a very **diverse population**—thirty-one **ancestry groups** have more than a million members. **White Americans** are the largest **racial group**, with **German Americans**, **Irish Americans**, and **English Americans** constituting three of the country's four largest ancestry groups. **African Americans** are the nation's largest **racial minority** and third largest ancestry group. **Asian Americans** are the country's second largest racial minority; the two largest Asian American ancestry groups are **Chinese** and **Filipino**.

The most populous U.S. state is California.

6. Education

a) General information. Education in the United States is provided mainly by government, with control and funding coming from three levels: **federal**, **state**, and **local**. School attendance is mandatory and nearly universal at the **primary** and **secondary** levels (known inside the United States as the **elementary** and **high school** levels).

The ages for **compulsory education** vary by state, beginning at ages five to eight and ending at the ages of fourteen to eighteen. A growing number of states are now requiring school attendance until the age of 18.

Compulsory education requirements can generally be satisfied by attending **public schools**, state-certified **private schools**, or an approved **home school** program. In most public and private schools, education is divided into three levels: **elementary school**, **junior high school** (often called middle school), and **high school**. In almost all schools at

these levels, children are divided by age groups into **grades**, ranging from **kindergarten** (followed by **first grade**) for the youngest children in elementary school, up to **twelfth grade**, which is the final year of **high school**. The exact age range of students in these grade levels varies slightly from area to area.

b) **College and university education.** **Post-secondary education** in the United States is known as **college** or **university** and commonly consists of four years of study at an institution of higher learning. Like high school, the four undergraduate grades are commonly called freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years (alternately called first year, second year, etc.). Students traditionally apply to receive admission into college, with varying difficulties of entrance. Schools differ in their competitiveness and reputation; generally, the most prestigious schools are private, rather than public. Admissions criteria involve the rigor and grades earned in high school courses taken, the students' **GPA**, class ranking, and standardized **test** scores (Such as the SAT or the ACT tests). Most colleges also consider more subjective factors such as a commitment to extracurricular activities, a personal essay, and an interview. While numerical factors rarely ever are absolute required values, each college usually has a rough threshold below which admission is unlikely.

Once admitted, students engage in *undergraduate study*, which consists of satisfying university and class requirements to achieve a **bachelor's degree** in a field of concentration known as a **major**. (Some students enroll in **double majors** or "minor" in another field of study.) The most common method consists of four years of study leading to a **Bachelor of Arts** (B.A.), a **Bachelor of Science** (B.S.), or sometimes another bachelor's degree such as **Bachelor of Fine Arts** (B.F.A.), **Bachelor of Social Work** (B.S.W.), **Bachelor of Engineering** (B.Eng.), or **Bachelor of Philosophy** (B.Phil.) Five-Year Professional Architecture programs offer the **Bachelor of Architecture** Degree (B.Arch.).

Graduate study, conducted after obtaining an initial degree and sometimes after several years of professional work, leads to a more advanced degree such as a **master's degree**, which could be a **Master of Arts** (MA), **Master of Science** (MS), **Master of Business Administration** (MBA), or other less common master's degrees such as **Master of Education** (MEd), and **Master of Fine Arts** (MFA). After additional years of study and sometimes in conjunction with the completion of a master's degree, students may earn a Doctor of Philosophy (**Ph.D.**) or other doctoral degree, such as **Doctor of Arts**, **Doctor of Education**, **Doctor of Theology**, **Doctor of Medicine**, **Doctor of Pharmacy**, **Doctor of Physical Therapy**, or **Doctor of Jurisprudence**.

The most prestigious American Universities are: Harvard University; **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**; Stanford University; **University of California**; Yale University; Princeton University; Duke University; Cornell University; Columbia University.

7. Washington, D.C.

Самостійне опрацювання.

Довідкова література.

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