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## UNIT 11

### THE USA

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#### The United States of America

The United States is situated in the central part of the North American continent (except for Alaska and Hawaii). It is washed by the Atlantic Ocean in the east and by the Pacific Ocean in the west. In the north it borders Canada and in the south it borders Mexico. The United States is the fourth largest country in the world after Russia, Canada, and China. It has an area of about 10 million square kilometers and its population is over 270 million people. The great majority of the population is English-speaking Americans. There are many ethnic groups in the United States. The largest group is Black Americans (about 12% of the population).

The US consists of 50 states and the District of Columbia. It is a special federal area where the capital of the country, Washington, is situated. The largest state is Alaska. Hawaii is one of the smallest states; it is a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean. California, New York, Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio are the most heavily populated states, and Wyoming, Vermont and Alaska are the least populated states. The largest cities are New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San-Francisco and Philadelphia.

The continental part of the USA consists of 4 geographical parts: 2 highland and 2 lowland regions. The highland regions are the Appalachian Mountains in the east and the Cordillera in the west. The Appalachian Mountains are ancient, strongly destroyed mountains of no great height. The valleys between them are rich in coal. It is the oldest mountain system in the US.

Unlike the Appalachian Mountains of the east, the Cordillera is not a continuous chain. It consists of several high ranges, which are the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Sierra Nevada and the Cascade Range on the west. The Rocky Mountains are considered to be young, high, rough and irregular in shape. Between the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachian Mountains there is the vast Central Plain and the Plateau of Prairies or the Great Plains.

The main rivers of the USA are the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Rio Grande, the Colorado, the Columbia and the Hudson River. The five Great Lakes, between the USA and Canada, include Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. They are all joined together by short rivers or canals, and the St. Lawrence River joins them to the Atlantic Ocean. The region around the Great Lakes is known for its changeable weather. In the west of the USA there is another lake called the Great Salt Lake.

The USA has many natural resources, such as coal, petroleum and natural gas. The economy of the US is based upon free enterprise.

The United States is one of the few countries in the world that has no "official" national language. The basic language spoken throughout the country is American English. The second language is Spanish.

The main symbol of the USA is the national flag, which is often called "The Stars and Stripes". As there are 50 states in the USA, there are 50 stars on the American flag. The flag also has 13 stripes: seven red stripes and six white stripes. There is one stripe for each of the first thirteen colonies of the United States. Other most famous symbols of the USA are the bold eagle and the Statue of Liberty, which is situated in New York on Liberty Island.

#### Vocabulary

**to be situated** — располагаться

**to border** — граничить

**majority** — большинство,  
большая часть

**island** — остров

**highland** — горная местность,  
нагорье

**lowland** — низина, долина,  
низменность

**the Appalachian Mountains** —  
Аппалачи (*горы*)

**the Cordillera** — Кордильеры (*горы*)

**ancient** — древний

**destroyed** — разрушенный

**valley** — долина

**coal** — уголь

**unlike** — в отличие от

**continuous chain** — непрерывная  
(горная) цепь

**the Rocky Mountains** — Скалистые горы

**the Sierra Nevada** — Сьерра-Невада (*горы*)

**the Cascade Range** — Каскадные горы

**to consider** — считать

**rough** — неровный

**shape** — форма

**vast** — обширный

**the Mississippi** — Миссисипи  
(*река*)

**the Missouri** — Миссури (*река*)

the Rio Grande — Рио-Гранде  
(река)  
the Colorado — Колорадо (река)  
the Columbia — Колумбия (река)  
the Hudson River — Гудзон (река)  
to include — включать

petroleum — нефть  
natural gas — природный газ  
free enterprise — свободное  
предпринимательство  
throughout the country — по всей  
стране

### Questions

1. Where is the USA situated? 2. What's the total area of the country? 3. How many states does the USA consist of? 4. What is the capital of the country? 5. What is the population of the USA? 6. What mountains in the USA do you know? 7. What are the largest rivers? 8. What lakes in the USA do you know? Where are they situated? 9. What is the official national language in the USA? 10. Can you compare the geographical positions of Russia and the USA?

## American Climate

The climate of the US is temperate, with four distinct seasons. The USA is a very large country, so it has several different climate zones.

The coldest regions are in the north and northeast, where a lot of snow falls in winter. The climate of Alaska is arctic.

All along the western coast, the temperature changes little between winter and summer months, while in the north central part of the country the temperature difference between winter and summer is very great — 36 degrees centigrade and even more. In all of the heavily populated parts of the United States the summer can be extremely hot, and particularly near the eastern seaboard it is very unpleasant. In the winter, on the other hand, it can be very cold.

The climate along the Pacific coast is much warmer than that of the Atlantic coast. Parts of the Pacific coast are very wet. It is determined by the range of mountains. The west coastal territory is favourable for agriculture.

To the east, beyond the mountains, there is a vast dry region. This dry land extends from Canada to Mexico. But still farther east.

in the southeastern United States, you can find another wet region. On the whole the East is much wetter than the West. The climate of eastern and central America is continental and more resembles that of Russia.

One of the most important geographical boundaries in the United States is the 50-centimeter rainfall line, which runs north and south almost through the middle of the country. East of the line, farming is relatively easy, and the population is relatively large. West of the line, there are irrigation systems, dry-farming, grazing and fewer people.

The south has a subtropical climate. The hottest places are Florida, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

Americans can gather several crops a year. They grow wheat and corn (in the north and the northeast), tobacco and cotton (in the southeast), grapes (in the west). In the west cattle breeding is popular (sheep, cows). On the whole agricultural conditions are very favourable.

### Vocabulary

temperate — умеренный  
extremely — чрезвычайно, очень  
particularly — особенно,  
в особенности  
seaboard — морское побережье  
to determine — определять  
range — цепь  
favourable — благоприятный  
agriculture — сельское хозяйство  
beyond — за, по ту сторону  
vast — обширный  
dry — сухой, засушливый  
to extend — простираться,  
тянуться  
farther — дальше  
wet — влажный  
on the whole — в целом  
to resemble — иметь сходство,  
напомянуть  
boundary — граница  
relatively — относительно

rainfall — атмосферные осадки,  
количество атмосферных  
осадков  
irrigation — орошение, ирригация  
dry-farming — сухое земледелие,  
богарное земледелие  
grazing — содержание скота на  
пастбище, на подножном  
корму  
several — несколько  
crop — урожай  
Americans — Обратите внима-  
ние: названия национально-  
стей могут употребляться  
как с определенным артиклем,  
так и без артикля  
wheat — пшеница  
cotton — хлопок  
cattle breeding — разведение  
крупного рогатого скота  
conditions — условия

## American People

America is a friendly country. People easily start talking with each other. When Americans meet people for the first time, they usually shake hands. When they meet friends or relatives they haven't seen for a long time, they usually kiss them. You can easily spot Americans abroad by their confident manners which come from their sense of individual freedom — their first value and belief.

America is a nation of risk-takers. The first Americans left the known of the Old World for the unknown of the New. They lived a hard life, and they had to be tough and self-reliant. So, self-reliance is usually the second national trait and moral value.

The first immigrants often faced difficult problems which needed new solutions. So they soon learned to experiment that led to another American trait, a sense of optimism. Most

Americans are sure that every problem has a solution: a difficult problem can be solved at once; an impossible one may take a little longer.

The third national value is material wealth. Most Americans believe that wealth is a reward for hard work. And of course, they believe in the American Dream "from rags to riches". Americans are optimistic and persistent. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" is their favorite saying.

Americans are always on the move. Moving about from place to place is such a common practice that most Americans take it for granted that they may live in four or five cities during their lifetime. American people love speed. They like to cook in microwave ovens, they prefer making phone calls to writing letters, and they like to travel by air rather than bus or train.

Americans are patriots. They are proud of their flag and display it in many places. National holidays such as Thanksgiving and Independence Day greatly contribute to this feeling. There is, of course, no typical American, but a certain stereotype does exist. In my opinion, Americans are open-hearted, straightforward, cheerful, relaxed and tough.

### Vocabulary

**to spot** — распознавать, узнавать  
**confident** — уверенный  
**freedom** — свобода  
**value** — ценность  
**belief** — убеждение  
**tough** — крепкий, выносливый, упорный  
**self-reliant** — полагающийся на свои собственные силы  
**self-reliance** — уверенность в себе, в своих силах  
**trait** — черта характера  
**solution** — решение  
**wealth** — богатство, благосостояние  
**to believe** — верить

**reward** — награда  
**from rags to riches** — из нищеты в роскошь, из грязи в князи  
**persistent** — упорный, настойчивый  
**to succeed** — добиваться успеха, преуспевать  
**common** — распространенный  
**to take for granted** — считать само собой разумеющимся  
**to contribute** — способствовать  
**open-hearted** — чистосердечный, открытый  
**straightforward** — прямой, откровенный, прямодушный  
**cheerful** — жизнерадостный  
**relaxed** — раскованный