

The USA at a glance

Interkulturelle Kompetenz anhand des Themas „USA“ erwerben (Klassen 8/9)

Nach einer Idee von Gus Simons, Basel

Seit mindestens 70 Jahren spielen die USA weltweit eine dominierende Rolle – kulturell, ökonomisch, politisch und militärisch. Weil der amerikanische Einfluss auf unterschiedlichen Ebenen beobachtbar ist, glauben viele, die USA schon zu kennen, auch wenn sie sich vielleicht nie mit der Geschichte, der Vielfalt und den Besonderheiten dieses Landes auseinandergesetzt haben.

Diese Unterrichtseinheit vermittelt den Schülern grundlegende landeskundliche Informationen zu den USA. Die Lernenden erhalten einen Überblick über die Entstehungsgeschichte der Vereinigten Staaten und lernen typische Verhaltensweisen sowie einige amerikanische Eigenheiten kennen. In einer *Multiple-Choice*-Aufgabe wenden sie das Gelernte an. Sie ziehen Vergleiche zwischen Deutschland und den USA und trainieren dabei ihre eigene Meinung in der Fremdsprache zu äußern.



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Ihre Schüler lernen die Geschichte und Kultur der USA näher kennen und trainieren dabei ihre Sprachfähigkeit.

Das Wichtigste auf einen Blick

Kompetenzen:

- Grundwissen zur Geschichte, Kultur und Gesellschaft der USA erwerben
- US-amerikanische Sitten und Verhaltensweisen richtig interpretieren
- die eigene Meinung schriftlich und mündlich auf Englisch äußern
- authentischen Fremdsprachentexten grundlegende Informationen entnehmen
- thematischen Wortschatz zum Thema „USA“ aneignen und richtig gebrauchen

Dauer:

5 Schulstunden + Test

Niveau:

Klasse 8/9

Einbettung:

English G 21 (Band 4)

Red Line (Band 4)

The United States of America

M 1



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How well do you know the USA?

M 3

Compare your knowledge to your classmates'!

1. _____

This Californian city is famous for its film industry. Hollywood is located here. Many famous actors, actresses and musicians live here. It is very warm, so you can go swimming in the Pacific Ocean.

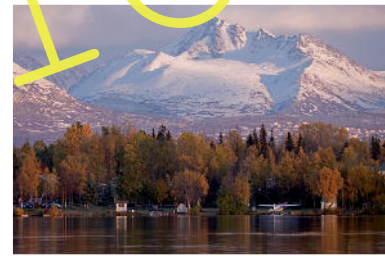


2. _____

This state is a large peninsula¹ in the southeast United States. It is very warm and is called the "Sunshine State". In its second largest city, Miami, there is a large Cuban population², so most people can speak Spanish.

3. _____

This is the largest US state, but it is not connected to the other states. In 1867 the USA bought the land from Russia. It is very cold here, but some Native American³ groups have lived here for thousands of years!



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4. _____

This northern state is home to many groups of Native Americans³. Here you can find Mount Rushmore. It is a monument⁴ of the faces of four US Presidents carved⁵ into a mountain. The problem is that the region is sacred⁶ for Native Americans, so it was a big insult⁷ to carve the presidents' faces there!

1 **peninsula**: die Halbinsel – 2 **population**: die Bevölkerung – 3 **Native Americans**: die amerikanischen Ureinwohner – 4 **monument**: das Denkmal – 5 **to carve**: meißeln – 6 **sacred**: heilig – 7 **insult**: die Beleidigung/Kränkung

Tasks

1. What is "typical US-American" for you? Think of food, music, language, economy, free time, ... Take five minutes and write down as many things as you can. Then, compare your results to your classmates'.
2. Read the short texts and write the names of the places on the lines. The pictures next to the texts will help you. Have a look at the map (M 1), if you can't find the answer.

Card 3

Rosa Parks (1913–2005) grew up in Alabama, a state with laws (“Jim Crow Laws”) that discriminated against black people. These laws said, for example, that black people could not go to the same schools as white people and could not sit together with them on buses.

On December 1, 1955 she refused¹ to stand up and give her bus seat to a white man. Because of this, she was arrested². This event led to black people boycotting buses in the city, which became part of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Parks became a symbol of black resistance³ to discrimination in the United States.

The rest of her life, Parks was often paid to speak at civil rights events. She gave most of her money to civil rights organizations. She died very poor in 2005. Her birthday is now a holiday in some states.



© Photo: Bureau of Public Affairs/National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

1 **to refuse:** verweigern – 2 **to arrest so.:** jmdn. festnehmen – 3 **resistance:** der Widerstand



Card 4

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) is probably the most well-known civil rights activist in US-American history. He earned a doctorate in theology from Boston University in 1955 and became a Baptist preacher¹. Although black people should have had equal rights since 1865, there were still racist laws in regions of the United States. Because of the “Jim Crow Laws” black people could not go to the same schools as white people, eat at the same restaurants or ride the same buses.

King organized many protests against these laws during the 1950s and 1960s. The most famous protest was the “March on Washington” in 1963. During this protest, King gave one of the most famous speeches of the 20th century, his “I have a dream”-speech, in which he talked about his vision of the United States without racism.

Once he said, “Freedom is one thing. You have it all or you are not free.” His actions helped lead to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a law which ended segregation and other racist laws in the country. In the same year, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1968, while preparing for another large protest against racism, he was assassinated². Nowadays, the third Monday in January is a national holiday in the USA, called “Martin Luther King Jr. Day”.



© Photo: Walter Albertin/United States Library of Congress Prints and Photographs division, ID cph.3c22985

1 **preacher:** der/die Prediger/in – 2 **to assassinate so.:** ein Attentat auf jmdn. verüben

Americanize the conversation!

M 10

You've learned US-American social customs. Try them out in this activity.

Task

Read the two conversations between US-Americans at work and complete the dialogues by choosing A, B or C. Think about American social customs when you choose your answer. What would Americans say? How would they act? Tick (✓) the correct answer to make the dialogues sound typically US-American.

At lunchtime

1. "Hey, can I sit here?"

- a) "Yeah, sure Joseph."
- b) "Yeah, sure Joey. How are you?"
- c) "Hello Joseph. It's free."



2. "Fine, thanks, and you?"

- a) "Fine, thanks."
- b) "Actually not good at all. My brother borrowed my dad's car and crashed it. He broke his leg and now the car is ruined. Now I have to call the insurance and the police and go visit him at the hospital."
- c) "Great! I'm so happy about the election results. Finally the Republican Party is in control!"

3. "The pizza here is so bad!"

- a) "Yeah, I don't like it either."
- b) "You're right."
- c) "Yeah, it's awful! It must be the worst pizza in town!"



4. "Actually, none of the food here is good."

- a) "I don't care."
- b) "Yeah, true."
- c) "You're so right! The cook has dropped the ball in the last weeks!"

5. "Hey, some of us are going bowling on Saturday night. Want to come?"

- a) "Umm ... I'm not sure. I'll have to check if I am free later. When and where will you meet? I will call half an hour before."
- b) "Yeah, that sounds good!"
- c) "Thanks, but after a hard week at school I need time without my classmates."