

# Chapter 9

## United States of America

### Chapter Preview

#### *People*

Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., George Washington

#### *Places*

Death Valley, Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Mountains, Denali

#### *Terms*

Declaration of Independence, temperate, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ethnic group, First Amendment, United States Constitution, checks and balances, American Civil War, League of Nations, Roaring Twenties, Great Depression, civil rights movement, al-Qaeda, World Trade Center, Pentagon, Articles of Confederation, representative democracy, presidential system, Congress, United States Supreme Court, marketplace, pharmaceuticals

**Top:** The US Capitol building in Washington, DC, is home to the US Congress. **Background:** The Statue of Liberty and the American flag are familiar symbols of the United States of America.



In 1776, thirteen British colonies in North America declared their independence from Great Britain. This declaration sparked the American Revolutionary War, which did not end until the signing of a formal treaty in 1783. The new country consisted of thirteen states surrounded by hostile powers including

the French, the Spanish, and various Native American tribes. Today, the United States of America is a country of 50 states stretching across the North American continent from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. The country's military is among the most powerful in the world, and its economy produces almost one-fourth of the world's wealth.

Every nation on Earth has some unifying quality, that is, something that brings its people together in some way as a group. This quality might be a common ethnic background, a common religion, or a shared history. The United States is different. It was founded at a particular time, by a particular people, on the basis of particular principles about people, freedom, and constitutional government. As Abraham Lincoln referred to it in 1863, it was a nation "of the people, by the people, for the people."

The founding of the United States was revolutionary. This was not just in the sense of replacing one set of rulers with another, or overthrowing the institutions of society, but in placing political power in the hands of the citizens. The United States was founded on a set of beliefs described in its founding documents. The **Declaration of Independence** of the United States is a statement of rights, the proper purposes of government, and the limits of government. This and other founding documents show that this country was organized to be a nation where its people could be free to live in liberty and pursue happiness in that life.

“

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.*

-Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, July 4, 1776

**Above:** This sketch shows immigrants on the ocean steamer *Germanic* as it passes the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor.

# PASSPORT



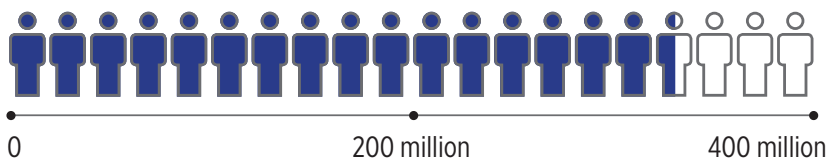
**Official Name:** The United States of America  
**Capital:** Washington, DC  
**Form of Government:** constitution-based federal republic  
**Head of Government:** President  
**Head of State:** President  
**Suffrage:** 18 years of age; universal  
**Currency:** US dollar (Code: USD; Symbol: \$)



**Above Right:** President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris took office in January 2021. **Middle:** A mirror image of the US Capitol appears in the Capitol Reflecting Pool. **Right:** US currency.

# CULTURE CONNECTION

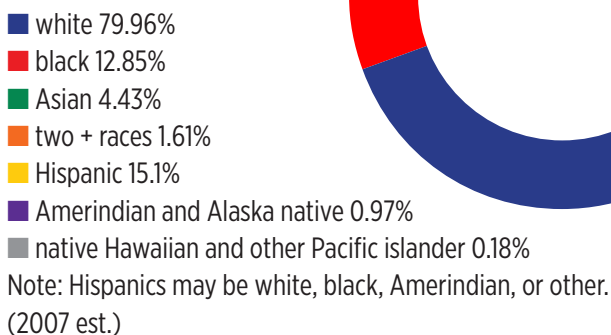
## POPULATION



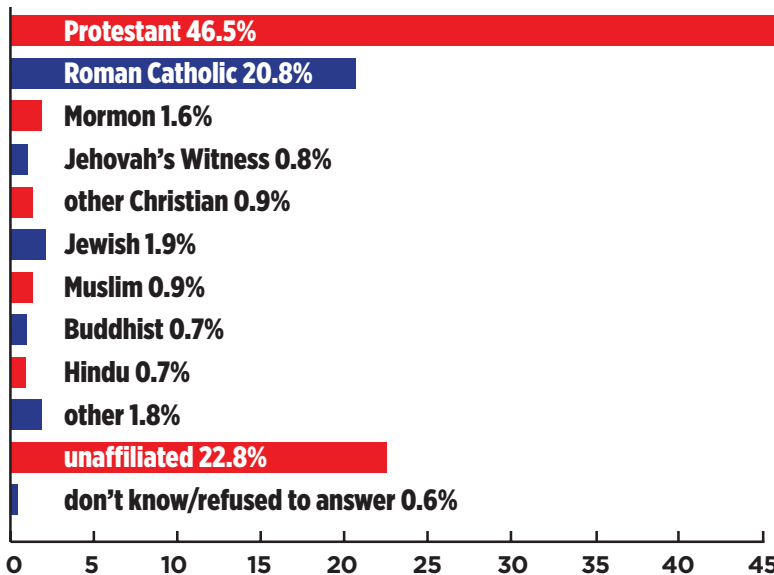
### United States

323,995,528 (est. July 2016)  
Population Rank 3

## ETHNIC GROUPS



## RELIGION



## FUN FACTS

National symbols of the United States include the bald eagle (bird), North American bison (mammal), rose (floral emblem), and oak (tree).

**Official Language:**  
No Official Language

English has acquired official status in 31 of the 50 states; Hawaiian is the official language in Hawaii.

## LIFE EXPECTANCY

**Average** 79.8 years  
**Male** 77.5 years  
**Female** 82.1 years

## EDUCATION

**Education Expenditures** 4.9% of GDP  
**Rank** 63

**Background:** The World Trade Center Twin Towers collapsed as a result of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. **Below:** Reenactor soldiers stood at attention at James Fort on the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown Settlement in Virginia. **Right:** This lithograph from a Gustav Bartsch painting shows President Abraham Lincoln visiting Union troops at City Point, Virginia, in 1865. **Bottom:** US soldiers landed in France during the Normandy Invasion of 1944.

# TIMELINE

## OF UNITED STATES HISTORY



Figure 9.1



1600

1607 Jamestown, first permanent English settlement

1700

- 1733 Georgia established as the 13th British colony
- 1776 Declaration of Independence
- 1781 Articles of Confederation adopted
- 1783 Formal treaty ended the American Revolutionary War
- 1787 US Constitution written
- 1789 George Washington became 1st US president
- 1791 Bill of Rights written

1800

- 1861 US Civil War began
- 1865 US Civil War ended

1900

- 1913 17th Amendment allowed voters to elect US senators
- 1917 United States entered World War I
- 1929 Beginning of Great Depression
- 1941 United States entered World War II after Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor
- 1945 World War II ended
- 1971 26th Amendment lowered voting age to 18
- 1972 US government banned use of DDT

2000

2001 Terrorist attacks of September 11



**Area:** 3,796,742 square miles

**Area Rank:** 3

**Natural Resources:** coal, copper, lead, molybdenum, phosphates, rare earth elements, uranium, bauxite, gold, iron, mercury, nickel, potash, silver, tungsten, zinc, petroleum, natural gas, timber, arable land

**Environmental Issues:** large emitter of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels; air pollution resulting in acid rain in both the US and Canada; water pollution from runoff of pesticides and fertilizers; limited natural freshwater resources in much of the western part of the country require careful management; desertification



**Map 9.1**

**United States of America**

**Map Skill:** Which areas on the map do you think have the higher elevation: the brown areas or the green areas?

## Section 1

# The Land and People of the United States

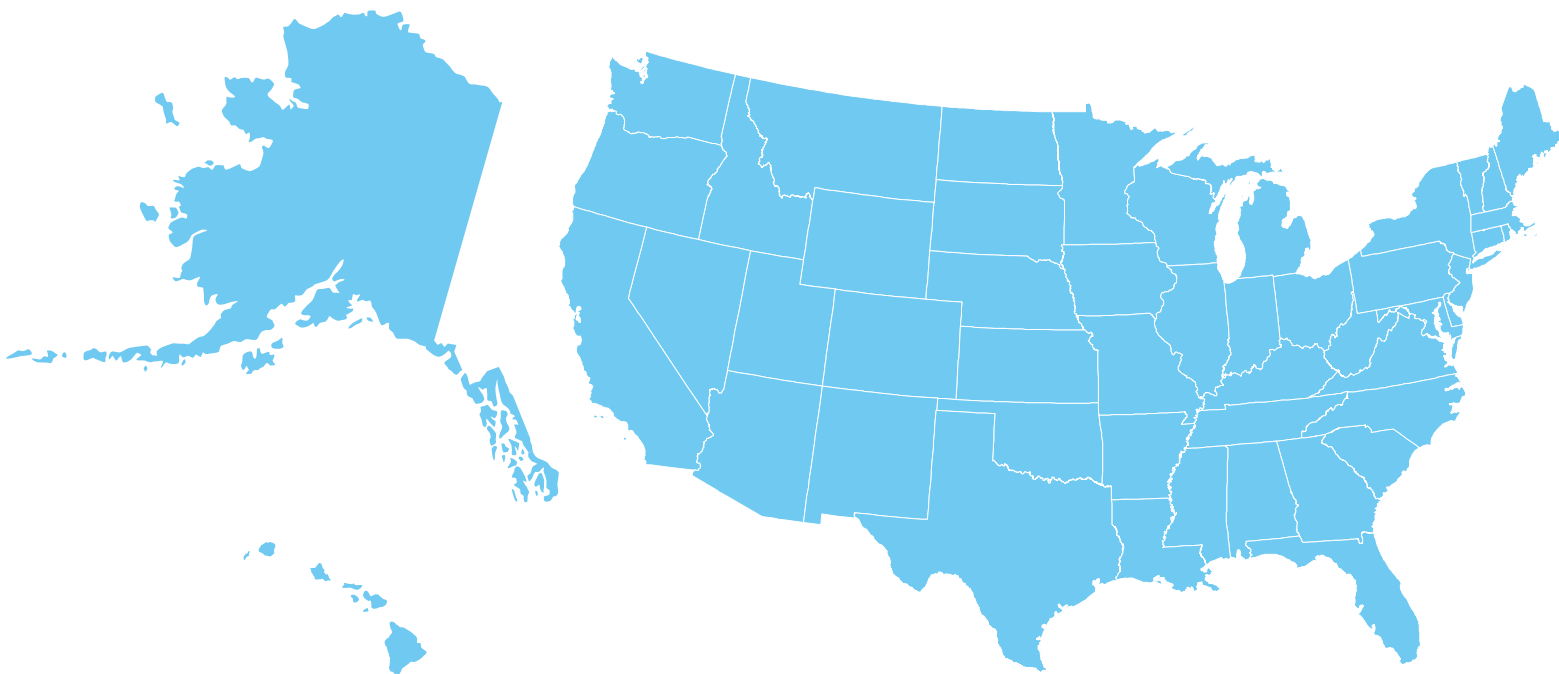

 Setting a Purpose

### As you read, look for

- ▶ the location of the United States in the world;
- ▶ how climate affects where people live in the United States;
- ▶ environmental problems in the United States;
- ▶ ways in which the United States is a diverse country;
- ▶ terms: **temperate, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ethnic group, First Amendment.**

### Location and Size

The United States is located on the continent of North America. That places it in the western hemisphere. This refers to the half of Earth that contains North and South America and the surrounding waters. From another point of view, the United States is also in the northern hemisphere. This refers to the half of Earth that contains all of the land and water areas north of the Equator.



The United States is the second-largest country on the continent of North America, bordering both the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, with Canada (the largest country) to its north and Mexico to its south. The country ranks third largest in the world at almost 3.8 million square miles. It is about half the size of Russia, about half the size of South America (or slightly larger than Brazil), slightly larger than China, and more than twice the size of the European Union.

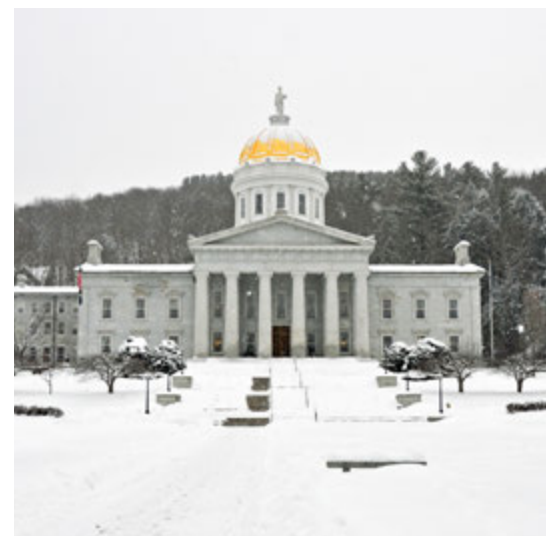
The United States shares a border with only two countries: Canada and Mexico. When you include both the border between Canada and Alaska and the border between Canada and the “lower 48” states, the Canadian border is over 5,500 miles long. It is the longest undefended international border in the world. The border with Mexico is almost 2,000 miles long and is an area where political leaders often struggle with immigrants illegally entering the United States.

## Climate

Because the United States is such a large country, climate varies greatly depending on location. Latitude, altitude, and distance to the oceans may affect the climate in the United States. Climate can even differ from one side of a mountain to the other.

The climate of the United States is mostly **temperate**. In other words, because of its location between the tropics in the south and the Arctic in the north, most of the United States has generally moderate temperatures that are not extremely hot or extremely cold. The southern portions of the country, however, are in a subtropical zone. In areas such as parts of Georgia, summers tend to be long and hot and winters tend to be short and mild.

Rainfall amounts vary across the country. The Southwest is a large desert with temperatures on many summer days over 100° Fahrenheit. Rainfall can be less than 2-1/2 inches per year, as it has been in Death Valley, California. The wettest parts of the country are in the Pacific Northwest and in the eastern half of the country, where rainfall is usually over 30 inches per year. The state of Georgia is in this zone and averages about 50 inches of rain per year.



**Top:** Each state has a unique capitol building. The Vermont State House is shown in February, surrounded by snow. **Bottom:** These red sandstone buttes (isolated hills with steep, vertical sides and small, relatively flat tops) are found in Monument Valley, Arizona.





At the extremes of climate in the United States are Alaska and Hawaii. The northern portion of Alaska lies north of the Arctic Circle. This frigid Arctic zone is known for long cold winters and short cool summers. There are long periods when ice and snow cover the ground. In some places, the ice does not melt all year. Hawaii, on the other hand, is in a tropical zone. That does not mean it is always hot in Hawaii. Summers are hot; winters are warm. Rainfall levels of a location vary. Brief showers are common, but heavy downpours can drop several feet of rain in one day. It is surprising to some people that it can snow in Hawaii. The high altitude of the state's three tallest volcanoes means that Hawaii has at least a dusting of snow every year.

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### Physical Features

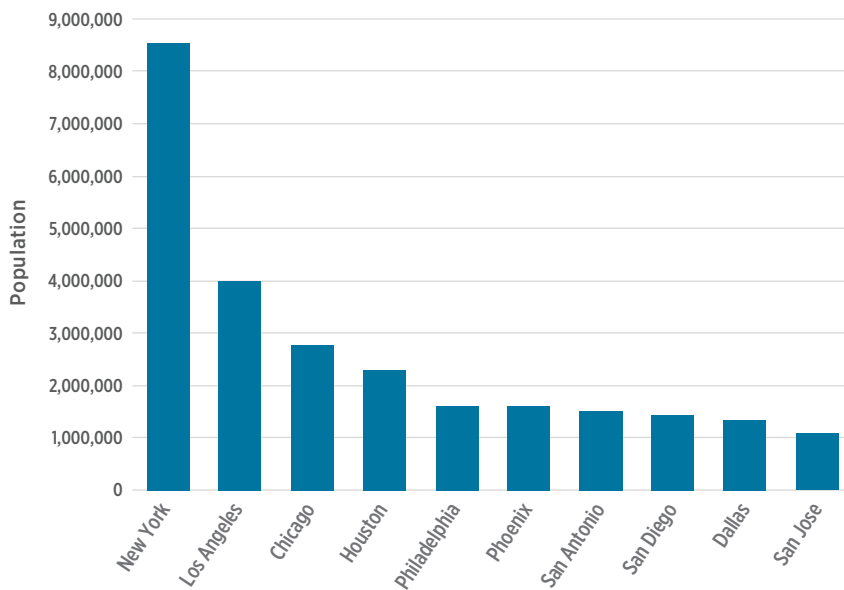
The United States consists of a variety of terrains. There is a vast central plain known for food production. The Rocky Mountains are in the western part of the country, and there are hills and low mountains in the east called the Appalachian Mountains. There are rugged mountains and broad river valleys in Alaska and rugged volcanic topography in Hawaii. The lowest point in the United States is Death Valley, California, at 279 feet below sea level (also the lowest point in North America). The highest point in the United States is Denali (Mount McKinley) in Alaska at 20,308 feet (also the highest point in North America).

### Natural Resources

The United States has an abundance of natural resources that can be used to produce goods and services. Coal, copper, lead, molybdenum, phosphates, rare earth elements, uranium, bauxite, gold, iron, mercury, nickel, potash, silver, tungsten, zinc, petroleum, natural gas, timber, and arable (farmable) land are the most plentiful. The United States has the world's largest coal reserves accounting for 27 percent of the world's total.

**Top:** Hikers admire the rugged landscape in Death Valley National Park, California. **Above:** "General Sherman" is a giant sequoia tree located in Sequoia National Park, California. **Bottom:** Denali (formerly Mount McKinley) is the highest peak in North America. It is the centerpiece of Alaska's Denali National Park and Preserve.



**Figure 9.2**

Ten Largest Cities in the United States, 2015 (Incorporated or within City Limits)

## Population Distribution

The population of the United States in 2016 was about 320 million, making it the third most populated country in the world. Urban areas can be densely populated. For example, New York City has a density of about 27,000 people per square mile. The state of Georgia has a density of about 165 people per square mile, and the country as a whole has a population density of about 84 people per square mile. Less densely populated areas include the mountainous areas (principally the Rocky Mountains and Appalachian Mountains), the southwestern deserts, the dense forests in the extreme north, and the central prairie states. Alaska's population is concentrated along its southern coast, with particular emphasis on the city of Anchorage, and Hawaii's is centered on the island of Oahu.

The United States is an urban country with about 80 percent of the population living in cities or towns. The approximate populations of the major urban areas (which are larger than the incorporated cities) are these: New York City at 20 million people; Los Angeles, California, at 13 million; Chicago, Illinois, at 10 million; Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, at 7 million; Washington, DC, at 6 million, and Miami, Florida, at 5 million. For comparison, the metropolitan Atlanta area has an estimated population of 5 million people and the state of Georgia as a whole has 10 million people.



**Left:** A huge crowd gathers in Piedmont Park for the annual Atlanta Ice Cream Festival.



**Top:** The Deepwater Horizon oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico before the disastrous accident of 2010. **Below:** Over a period of 87 days, the damaged wellhead leaked an estimated 4.9 million barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, making it the largest accidental ocean spill in history. **Bottom:** An explosion on the rig killed 11 crewmen and ignited a fireball visible from 35 miles away.



## Environmental Issues

Clean air, clean water, and healthy soils are essential for a healthy country. As with any large, industrial, and technologically advanced country in the world today, the people of the United States face a number of threats to their environmental health. Urban areas are expanding. That means clearing more land for people, leaving less habitat for native plants and animals. Loss of habitat has led to extinction of some animals including a type of pygmy rabbit, the dusky seaside sparrow, and the lined pocketbook, a mollusk that once lived in the rivers of southern Georgia.

Urban areas also have high demands for energy and water but may not have sources of either of these nearby. Construction of dams can help solve these problems. They can be used to store water for cities, and they can generate electricity. On the other hand, dams flood and destroy large areas of habitat and may disrupt the migration patterns of certain animals.

Generating power and running engines of various types in the United States is mostly accomplished by burning fossil fuels such as coal and petroleum products. These activities generate a number of pollutants including carbon dioxide, steam, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and soot. Sulfur dioxide is a source of acid rain. The other pollutants contribute to smog, which can affect younger people, older people, and those with asthma. These chemicals in the air are sometimes referred to as

greenhouse gases. Many scientists believe that evidence shows Earth's climate is warming. They believe the greenhouse gases may be the cause of this rise in temperature. Others suggest that, if there is a rise in Earth's temperature, it is a natural activity and is not a result of humans' use of fossil fuels.

In any case, the country has worked to reduce its pollution levels. The United States established the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** in the early 1970s to monitor the environment and make sure people and companies are following laws designed to keep the country clean.



# special Feature

## Saving the Bald Eagle

During World War II, the United States military used a chemical known as DDT to kill lice, flies, ticks, and mosquitoes that spread diseases such as typhus, malaria, and bubonic plague. The chemical was very effective. After the war, American farmers increased their use of it to kill pests that damaged crops. In Georgia, DDT was effective against the boll weevil, an insect that damaged millions of dollars in cotton crops in the southern states. While using DDT, however, the military and the farmers were accidentally killing their national symbol!

Scientists had noticed a reduced number of bald eagles in the mid-20th century. Congress passed the Bald Eagle Protection Act to prevent people from killing, selling, or owning a bald eagle. By the 1960s, evidence was growing that DDT was a big part of the problem for the eagles. The chemical, sprayed on crops, eventually washed into streams, rivers, and lakes, where it was taken in by fish. It was stored in the fish that were in turn eaten by eagles. Once in the eagles, the chemicals weakened the eggshells of the birds, making the eggs easier to break before the eaglet inside was mature enough to hatch. It is believed that less than 500 pairs of bald eagles were alive in the United States in the mid-1960s.

In 1972, the United States government banned the use of DDT. It is illegal in the United States to harm a bald eagle, its nests, or its eggs. These steps, along with other strategies, have helped the bald eagle population reach an estimated 10,000 pairs. The bald eagle is still a protected bird, but it is not considered to be in danger of extinction.

The bald eagles' story demonstrates that humans can cause problems for animals but they can also find solutions to save them. The eagles' story shows that humans must be careful about how they treat the environment. Air and water pollution, clearing of forestlands (deforestation), and loss of wetlands are among the reasons animals may become extinct. The permanent loss of a species can have untold consequences. Extinction is a natural part of life on earth, but humans have increased the number of extinctions and will have to work hard to have good outcomes for species that are endangered today.



**Top:** Berry College, in Rome, Georgia, has an eagle nest right on campus.

**Above:** The bald eagle, the United States' national symbol, is still protected but is no longer in danger of extinction.

## Race, Ethnicity, Language, and Religion

An **ethnic group** is a category of people grouped together because they have a common ancestry, language, or culture. Many times people think of members of the same race as being in the same ethnic group. However, physical features such as skin color that are often associated with race are only a part of being in an ethnic group. People in the same ethnic group share cultural traits that cause them to be grouped together. For instance, in the United States, about 72 percent of people identify as “white” when asked for their race, but only about 16 percent of those identify as being in the ethnic group of Hispanic or Latino. These two terms refer to a person’s cultural background and history of connections to the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America.

Less than 1 of every 100 persons in the United States has a family tree that consists solely of Native Americans. Instead, most citizens of the United States are descended from immigrants, or people who came from other countries. About 72 percent are white, indicating their ancestors originally came from a European country. About 13 percent are black, indicating their ancestors came from Africa. The most common other racial identities are Asian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian.

English is the most common language spoken in the United States. In some states, English is the “official” language, meaning that all government work and perhaps even public school activities must be in English. After English, Spanish is the most common language spoken in the United States, at about 13 percent of the population. This is followed by Chinese at 1 percent.

Religion can be a challenge to define. The term may refer to ways in which people worship, their belief systems about the origin and place of humans in the world, objects and places that are considered sacred, and practices and behaviors that go along with these beliefs.



The **First Amendment** of the US Constitution states, in part, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The idea, written in 1791 as part of the Bill of Rights, is sometimes called freedom of religion. In the United States, the government is not allowed to set an official religion or force people to worship in a certain way. Furthermore, money from the government cannot be used to support a particular religion. Many in the United States would be surprised to learn that freedom of religion is not practiced in all countries. Germany, for instance, has a church tax. In Saudi Arabia, Sunni Islam is the basis for government and law. In North Korea, the practice of religion is officially discouraged. Instead people are instructed in what some describe as a political religion focused on the country’s dictator.

In the United States, the largest religious groups today are forms of Christianity. Approximately 70 percent of people in the United States identify as Christians. This includes many groups including Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Mormons, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics. About 2 percent identify as Jewish, and less than 1 percent identify as Muslim.

## Reviewing the Section

1. What is unique about the border between the United States and Canada?
2. Choose one of the environmental problems in the United States. Explain why the problem exists and why it is difficult to solve the problem.
3. How does information on race, ethnicity, language, and religion show the diversity of people in the United States?



**Bottom:** Most US citizens are descended from immigrants and some are immigrants themselves. This diversity of ethnic groups and races is one of the strengths of the United States.

## Section 2

# A Brief History of the United States

### As you read, look for



- ▶ how the country came together in the American Revolution and was almost torn apart in the American Civil War;
- ▶ the role the United States played in World War I and World War II;
- ▶ how Americans have worked to gain equal rights;
- ▶ threats the United States faced from terrorists;
- ▶ **terms: United States Constitution, checks and balances, American Civil War, League of Nations, Roaring Twenties, Great Depression, civil rights movement, al-Qaeda, World Trade Center, Pentagon.**

**Below:** This idealized depiction of (left to right) Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson writing the Declaration of Independence was painted by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris.



## A New Nation

The United States was formed from 13 British colonies in North America in the late 18th century. The new nation won its first war, the American Revolution, even though it seemed much weaker than its mother country, Great Britain. The country's founding documents, the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, were very unusual because they described clear, basic rights the founders believed should apply to all people. The **United States Constitution** (the document that set up our nation's framework for government) created a form of government where the citizens could elect their leaders. This government would be divided into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. Power in the government was shared among these three branches (balanced power). And each of the three branches had a way to have some control over the other (a check on power). This system of **checks and balances** helped to ensure that no single person or group would be able to violate the rights of other Americans. For more than 200 years, the country has grown and become stronger. Its ideas about freedom and democracy have spread to many countries. In the 21st century, the United States is a major world leader with a powerful military and economy. The journey has not been easy, however, and citizens of the United States just need to continue working hard to make their country successful.

## Expansion in the 19th Century

In the time between 1800 and 1899, the United States grew at an incredible rate. The country expanded from a group of states along the Atlantic Ocean to stretch across North America to the Pacific Ocean. New technologies helped fuel this growth. Horses and covered wagons were replaced by steamboats, steamships, and railroads. These new inventions moved people and goods more quickly across the continent, increasing trade and allowing people to move to new jobs more rapidly. The telegraph and later the telephone improved nationwide communication. The ability to govern was improved because leaders could get information from all parts of the country more quickly.

The country was almost torn apart, however, when the **American Civil War** began in 1861. During colonial times, slavery was legal. However, the number of slaves was much greater in the South than in the North. One of the reasons for this difference was that the geography in the South allowed for very large farms. Laborers were needed on such farms, and slavery provided a cheap source of labor. Africans were taken from their homelands and brought to the United States. On arrival, they were most often sold as laborers to owners of large farms. As the United States grew, more and more people, especially in the North, began to believe that allowing slavery did not agree with Americans' ideals about freedom for all people. States disagreed on whether the national government could end slavery. In the end, the American Civil War settled the issue. More than 600,000 American soldiers died in the war. Slavery was ended and the southern states where most of the fighting occurred were rebuilt.



**Top:** The Erie Canal was the best known and most used of all the canals built during the 19th century. This image is from the 1840s after the canal was widened. **Bottom:** Two trains from opposite directions met in Utah when the first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869.



## A World Leader in the 20th Century

During the 20th century, the United States took an important position as a world power. Some of Europe's larger countries had been competing with each other for centuries. By the early 1900s, Germany led a group of nations (the Central Powers) in a war against Great Britain, France, and Russia, among others (the Allies). The United States joined the Allies and fought alongside them until the war (later called World War I) ended in 1918. US President Woodrow Wilson helped to create the **League of Nations**. He believed countries could discuss their problems and find solutions without going to war. The League was not successful because the United States did not join. No organization was able to prevent an even bigger war just twenty years later.

The United States economy did very well after World War I. In fact, it was a time called the **Roaring Twenties**. However, a series of problems in the stock market in 1929 led to bank failures. Low farm prices and drought destroyed many farmers' businesses. The 1930s became best known for this time of poor economic conditions called the **Great Depression**. Many families suffered greatly for more than a decade as government leaders tried to provide jobs and get the country's economy moving.

In 1939, the countries of Europe were again at war. Germany—led by Adolf Hitler—Japan, Italy, and other Axis countries fought against Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and other Allies. The United States did not join the fighting until 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. That action brought the United States into World War II. This conflict was the bloodiest in human history. Over 400,000 US military personnel died in the war, but military losses were even greater in other countries. About 3-1/2 million Germans and over 7 million Soviets were killed. The war ended in 1945 when the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan.

**Below:** In 1945, UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and USSR Premier Joseph Stalin met at Yalta in Crimea to plan the final defeat and occupation of Germany in World War II.



After World War II ended, the Soviet Union and the United States became rivals for world power. The defeated nation of Germany had been divided into four parts to be rebuilt by the victorious countries. The Soviet Union decided to keep control of the eastern part of Germany. Both the United States and the Soviet Union had nuclear weapons capable of killing hundreds of thousands of



people very quickly. Tensions rose between the rivals, and finally the Iron Curtain, as it was called, divided the Soviet Union and countries under its control from the rest of Europe. Fences and walls were built by the Soviets to separate the eastern part of Germany from the rest of the country. This rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union lasted from 1945 to 1991. It was known as the Cold War because, although there were many tense moments and relatively small fights, total war (a “hot” war) did not break out between the two nations. By 1991, the Soviet Union fell apart, and democratically elected leaders replaced communist rulers in many of the former Soviet territories.

During the time of the Cold War, there was a war of sorts going on in the United States. This struggle was for the equal rights of all Americans. Activists in the **civil rights movement** worked for full civil rights and racial equality for African Americans. Activists fought against unjust treatment that excluded African Americans from voting, left them vulnerable to violence, and ignored their economic and educational needs. Many leaders came to the nation’s attention during this struggle, but the best known was from Georgia: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King’s influence and leadership helped to secure for African Americans voting rights and access to quality public education through desegregation.



**Map 9.2**

**West Berlin Air Corridor**

## DID YOU KNOW ?

Russia created the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922. When this union fell apart in 1991, the Russian Federation was created along with 14 other countries.

**Top:** These C-47 Skytrains carried food and other supplies to Berlin’s Tempelhof Airport during the Berlin Airlift of 1948. **Above:** The only three permissible air corridors to Berlin. **Left:** Mathew Ahmann and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (2nd and 3rd from left) joined other leaders of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963.

# special Feature

## The Space Race

The rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union took on many forms. Each country was a nuclear power with the ability to destroy large portions of its rivals. But the rivalry was also about

which country was “best”! One way each country hoped to show the world it was superior was by being the first into space. In a contest known as the “space race,” each country spent billions of dollars to be the first to send humans off planet Earth.

The Soviet Union achieved early success. In 1957, Sputnik became the first man-made object to orbit Earth. Soon after, Sputnik II was launched carrying a dog named Laika. In 1961, the Soviets succeeded in sending Yuri Gagarin into space as the first man to orbit Earth. Nikita

Khrushchev, the premier of the Soviet Union, claimed that the “economy, science, culture and the creative genius of people in all areas of life develop better and faster under communism.”



**Background:** Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin planted the American flag on the moon when they were the first to land there on July 21, 1969. **Top:** Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin was the first human to journey into outer space when he completed an orbit of Earth on April 12, 1961. **Above:** Sputnik 1 was the first artificial Earth satellite. The Soviet Union launched it into an elliptical low Earth orbit on October 4, 1957.

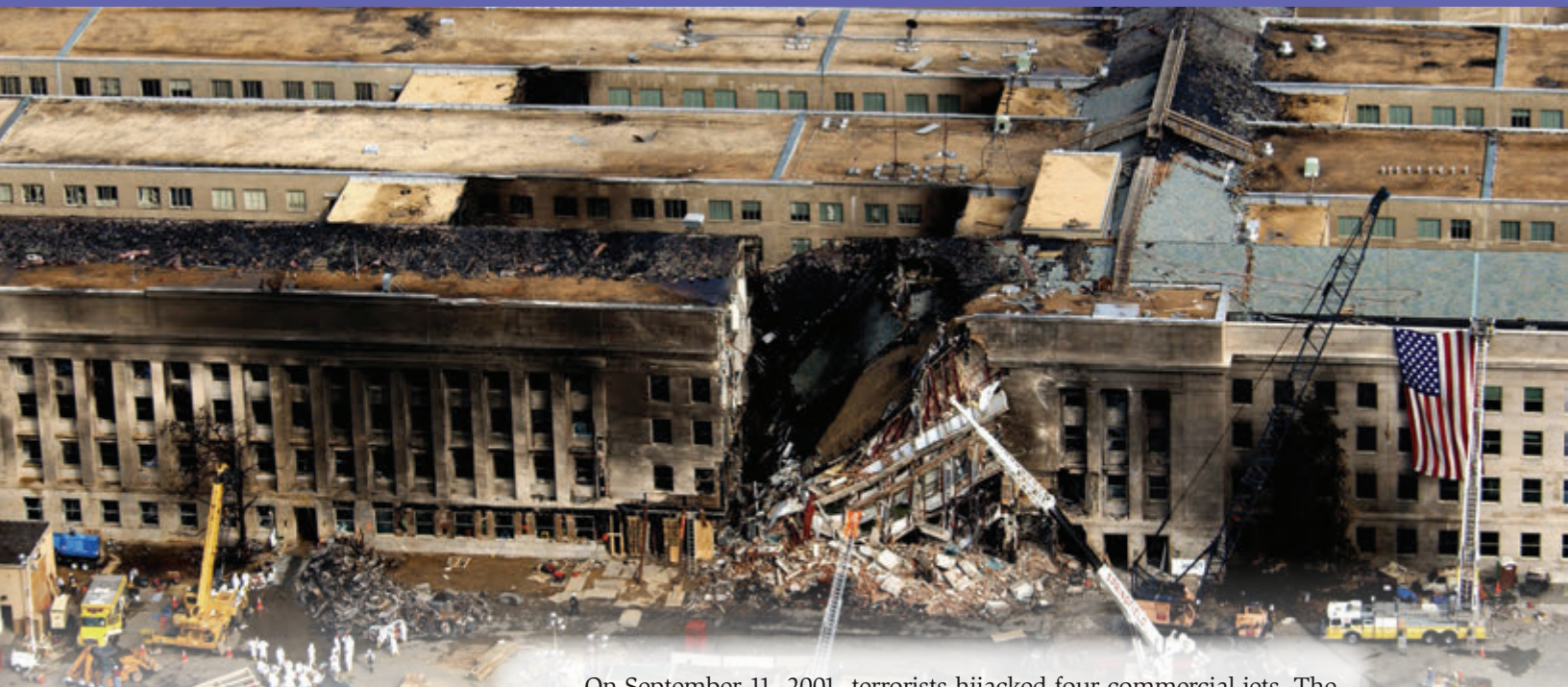


Four months after Gagarin's trip, American astronaut Alan Shepard made a successful suborbital flight, and in 1962, John Glenn became the first American to orbit Earth. American President John F. Kennedy was quoted as saying, "Everything we do ought to... be tied in to getting on to the Moon ahead of the Russians... we hope to beat the USSR (Soviet Union) to demonstrate that instead of being behind by a couple of years, we passed them."

The Soviet Union had setbacks in their space program including the death of one of their key scientists and the high cost of the projects. In the end, the Americans won the race to the moon. On July 21, 1969, on their Apollo 11 mission, Americans Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin successfully landed on the moon. This achievement encouraged even more work to explore space by both countries, but the Americans remained in the lead for the remainder of the century. In what ways are Americans and Russians cooperating in outer space today? Do you think cooperation is more productive than competition?



**Top, Left to Right:** John Glenn; Alan Shepard; Gene Cernan on the moon; Apollo 17 launch in 1972, the last moon shot. **Above:** Three US astronauts and two Soviet cosmonauts posed with a model of their docked spaceships from the Apollo-Soyuz mission of 1975.



On September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four commercial jets. The takeover was planned by a group called **al-Qaeda**. Members of this group were Muslim extremists who wanted to do harm to the United States. The hijackers crashed two of the planes into the **World Trade Center** buildings in New York, which at one time were the world's tallest buildings. Damage from the impacts and the resulting fires caused the towers to collapse. The third plane was crashed into the **Pentagon** building outside Washington, DC. This building was the headquarters of the US Department of Defense. Passengers on the fourth plane heard about the other attacks. They realized their plane would be used to destroy another building, perhaps the White House or the US Capitol building, so they fought the hijackers and the plane was crashed into an empty field. Nearly 3,000 people were killed in the attacks. These violent acts were a beginning of additional attacks around the world by Islamist extremists. These groups presented new problems for world peace and freedom.

In the 21st century, citizens of the United States still struggle with fully implementing their ideals of equality and freedom. However, they also have the world's most powerful military and largest economy. They enjoy the greatest overall wealth in history, and their citizens have many rights and freedoms protected by their constitution and legal system.

### In Other Words

People sometimes refer to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as the 9/11 attacks, or simply 9/11.

**Top:** The third airplane hijacked by al-Qaeda terrorists crashed into the Pentagon building outside Washington, DC. **Above:** When two hijacked airplanes crashed into the Twin Towers of New York's World Trade Center, the buildings collapsed in less than two hours.

## Reviewing the Section

1. What role did the United States play in the two world wars?
2. Read the Declaration of Independence quotation on the second page of this chapter. How did the reality of life during the civil rights movement differ from the ideal?
3. What type of security problem was a threat to the United States at the beginning of the 21st century?

## Section 3

# The Government of the United States


### As you read, look for

- ▶ the type of government used in the United States;
- ▶ the role of the citizen in selecting leaders in the United States;
- ▶ terms: **Articles of Confederation, representative democracy, presidential system, Congress, United States Supreme Court.**



## Foundations of Government

The first plan of government for the United States was the **Articles of Confederation** adopted in 1781. The document was not as effective as the Founding Fathers had hoped. As a result, it was replaced with the United States Constitution, and in 1789, George Washington became the first president of the United States. Today, the United States has the oldest written constitution in the world. It has provided a stable government with peaceful elections for over 200 years and has only been amended (changed) 27 times.

A large, ornate rotunda with high ceilings and classical architecture. The walls are covered in large murals depicting historical figures. In the center, there is a large, dark, rectangular monument. Two American flags stand on either side of the monument. People are seen walking around the rotunda, some looking at the murals and others at the monument. The floor is polished and reflects the light.

**Bottom:** The Declaration of Independence, US Constitution, and Bill of Rights are displayed in the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom of the National Archives building in Washington, DC.

## DID YOU KNOW ?

Washington, DC, the capital of the United States, is not a part of any state. Those living in Washington live in the District of Columbia.

## DID YOU KNOW ?

Americans won the right to vote for their senators in 1913 with the 17th Amendment to the US Constitution. Before that time, state legislators chose the senators.

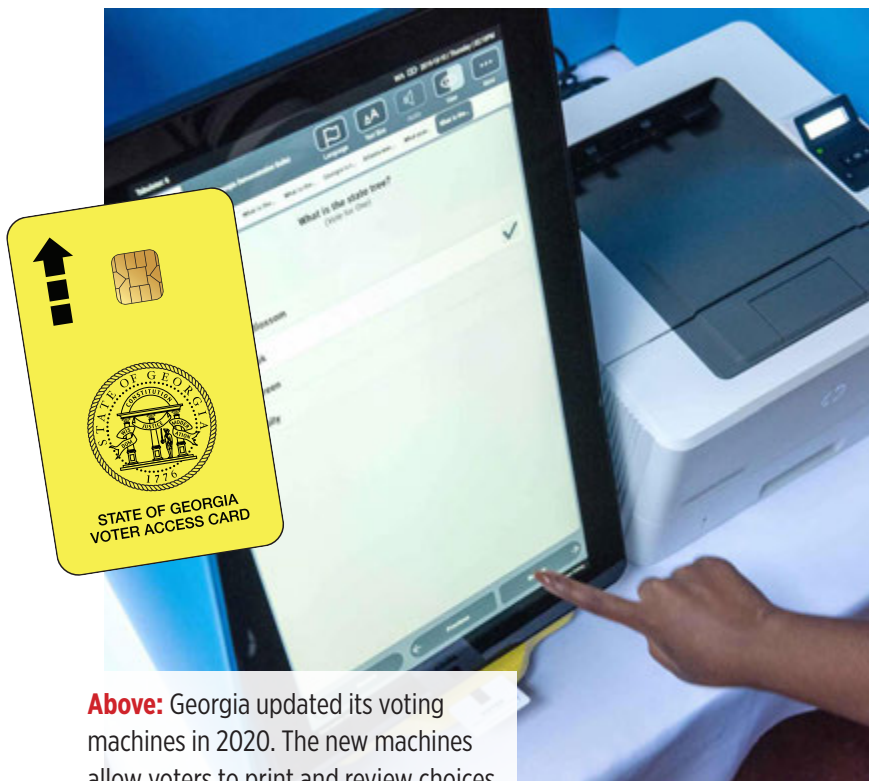


Government in the United States is based on the idea of democracy, or rule by the people. In a direct democracy, citizens would vote directly on each law. This would be quite time-consuming and difficult for a large country. Instead, the United States has a **representative democracy**. Citizens elect representatives to vote on laws and lead the country. Because of this, the United States may also be described as a republic.

### Role of the Citizen

The United States has a **presidential system** of government. The president heads the executive branch of government and is considered the head of government. The executive branch has the responsibility of enforcing the laws of the United States. However, the president is not the leader of the legislative, or lawmaking, branch of government—as would be the case in a parliamentary system. The president is the head of state, or the official representative of the country to other nations. Citizens vote for electors who cast the official ballots to choose a president. The president is elected to serve a four-year term and may run for a second term.

The legislative branch of government consists of a **Congress** composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Voters in each state elect two senators for six-year terms. The House of Representatives has 435 members. The number of members for each state is based on its population. States with more people are entitled to more representatives. States are divided into districts of roughly equal population. Citizens vote for a representative from their district to serve them in Congress for a two-year term.



**Above:** Georgia updated its voting machines in 2020. The new machines allow voters to print and review choices before casting their ballots.



The third branch of government is the judicial branch. This branch is made up of the court systems that interpret the laws passed by the legislative branch. The highest court in the nation is the **United States Supreme Court**. This court is made up of nine justices, or judges. The chief justice is in charge of administrative duties and hears cases together with the eight associate justices. Citizens do not vote for the justices. The president nominates justices who must be approved by the Senate. Once approved, a justice can have the job for life.

Citizens of the United States are able to vote in elections based on where they live. Citizens regularly vote on representatives, taxes, and laws that apply to their local community. Of course, voters also participate in elections such as the presidential election. A voter must be a US citizen age 18 years or older. A voter usually must register to vote before election day. Some states have special rules restricting who can vote. For instance, a person who has committed a serious crime (felony) or who has serious mental issues may not be allowed to vote.



The 26th Amendment to the US Constitution was approved in 1971. It sets the voting age at 18 or older.

## Reviewing the Section

1. What is the role of a United States citizen in selecting leaders for the national government?
2. Which term, presidential or parliamentary, best describes democracy in the United States? Explain your thinking.
3. Why do you think the Senate has a different number of members than the House of Representatives?

**Above:** US Supreme Court in Washington, DC.



## Section 4

# The Economy of the United States

## As you read, look for


 Setting a Purpose

- ▶ the type of economy in the United States;
- ▶ goods exported from and imported to the United States;
- ▶ changing labor trends in the technology and health care fields;
- ▶ terms: **marketplace**, **pharmaceuticals**.

## The US Economy

In the United States, private individuals and business firms make most of the decisions regarding the three economic questions: What to produce, how to produce, and for whom to produce. The federal and state governments buy needed goods and services mostly in the private **marketplace** (the world of trade or economic activity). This makes the United States a market economic system.

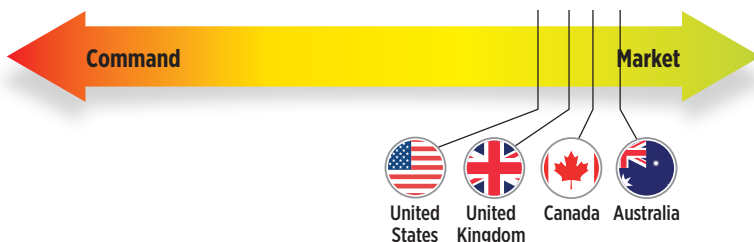
Businesses in the United States have fewer rules and laws to follow than businesses in Western Europe and Japan. This freedom allows them

to make faster decisions to invest in the business, to lay off unneeded workers, or to develop new products. At the same time, United States businesses may face greater barriers exporting to other countries than those countries face exporting to the United States.

The United States has one of the most powerful economies in the world with a Gross Domestic Product per capita of over \$53,000 per year. Companies in the United States are leaders in the technology field, especially in computers, **pharmaceuticals** (medical drugs), aerospace, and military equipment.

**Figure 9.3**

**Economic Systems with British Ties**



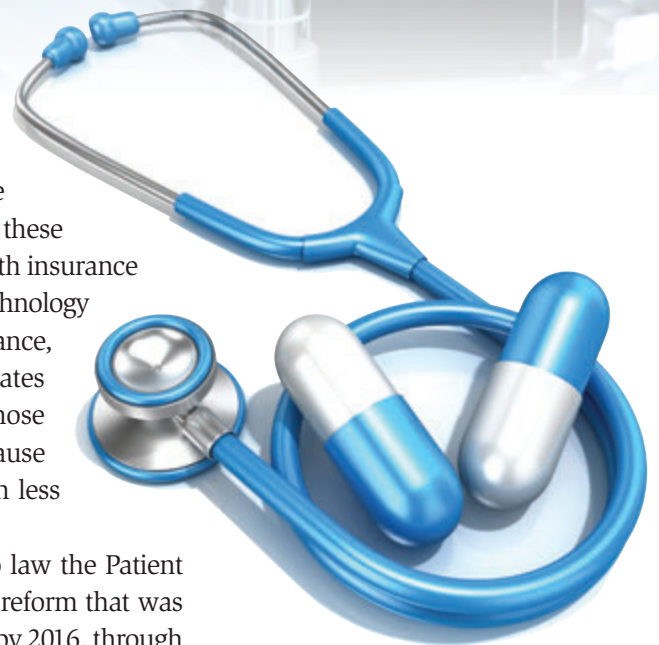
**Right:** The automobile industry employs thousands of workers in the United States.





One concern for the future of the US economy has to do with technology. The growth of necessary technology skills has caused the development of a “two-tier” labor market in which those at the bottom lack the education and skills of those at the top. More and more, these unskilled workers fail to get comparable pay raises, health insurance coverage, and other benefits. A second problem is that technology is increasingly able to replace human workers. For instance, record numbers of cars were assembled in the United States in 2016. However, the number of workers assembling those cars has decreased by over 30 percent since 2000 because robots can do many of the jobs more quickly and with less cost than humans.

In March 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, a health insurance reform that was designed to give 32 million Americans health insurance by 2016, through private health insurance and Medicaid. This reform helped many people who were unable to receive health insurance coverage from their job. Total spending on health care, public plus private, rose from 9.0 percent of GDP in 1980 to 17.9 percent in 2010. Many more jobs became available in the medical field to serve the growing number of people able to pay for health care. This law may be repealed and replaced in the future.



**Top:** Robotic machines can perform some repetitive tasks much cheaper than people can. **Above:** A substantial amount of our nation’s economy goes toward keeping people healthy.

**Top:** The United States is the world's third-largest producer of oil and natural gas. This oil storage facility is in Bayonne, New Jersey, on upper New York Bay.



### Trade

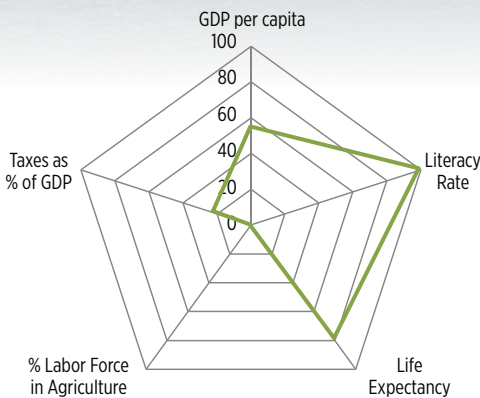
Between 2014 and 2016, the number of exports from and imports to the United States decreased. However, the United States is still one of the largest exporting countries in the world behind China.

US exports decreased from \$1.633 trillion in 2014 to \$1.510 trillion in 2015. United States exports include agricultural products (soybeans, fruit, corn), 9.2 percent; industrial supplies (organic chemicals), 26.8 percent; capital goods (motor vehicle parts, computers, telecommunications equipment), 49 percent; and consumer goods (automobiles, medicines, toys), 15 percent. Most of these exports are sold in Canada, Mexico, and China.

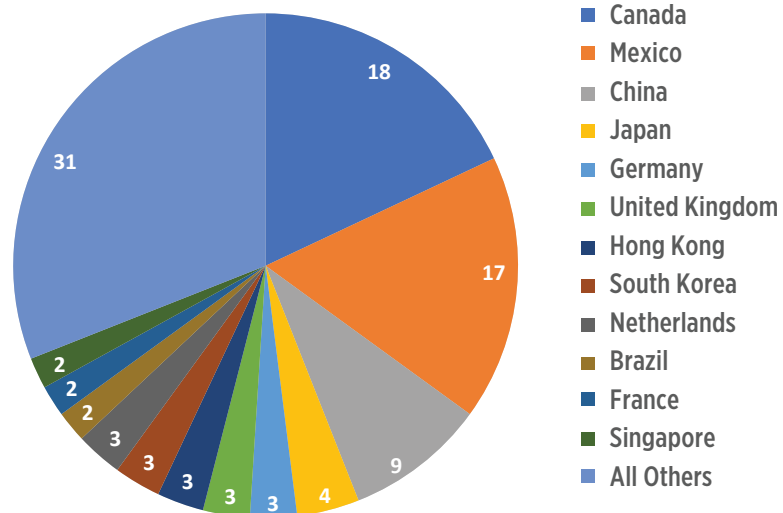
In the same period, US imports decreased from \$2.386 trillion to \$2.273 trillion. US imports include agricultural products, 4.9 percent; industrial supplies, 32.9 percent (8.2 percent of which is crude oil); capital goods, 30.4 percent; and consumer goods, 31.8 percent. The United States gets most of its imports from China, Canada, and Mexico.

More than half the oil used in the United States is imported from foreign countries, and oil has a major impact on the overall health of the economy. Between 2001 and 2006, oil prices doubled, and gasoline prices reached an all-time high. This affected consumers' budgets, and many individuals were not able to afford their house payments. When oil prices rose again, many people lost their homes. Falling oil prices since 2013 have helped to ease many of these problems.

**Figure 9.4**  
**US Spider Graph**



**Figure 9.5**  
**Percent of Exports from the United States by Country**



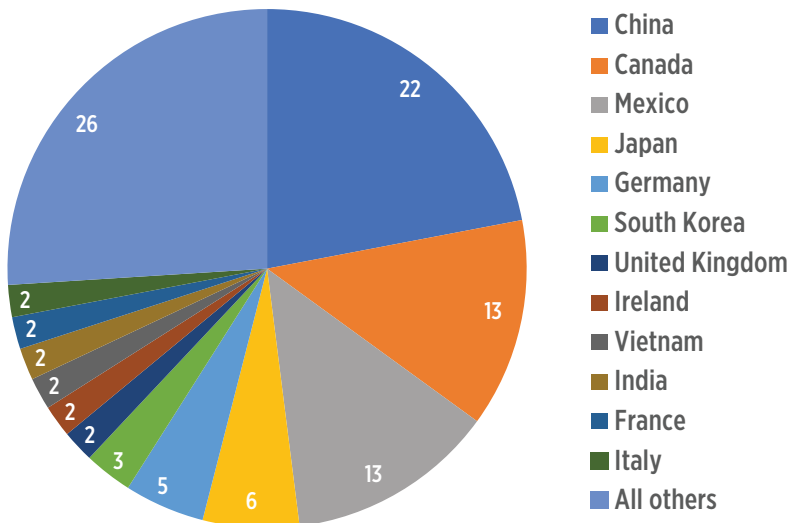


## Reviewing the Section

1. Describe the “two-tier” labor market. How does this system impact workers’ wages?
2. Copy the graph below. Fill in the percentage of US exports.

PRODUCT	PERCENTAGE OF EXPORTS
Agriculture	
Industrial Supplies	
Capital Goods	
Consumer Goods	

3. Name the main countries that supply the United States with imports.



**Figure 9.6**

Percent of Imports to the United States by Country

# Chapter Review

## Chapter Summary

### Section 1: The Land and People of the United States

- The United States is the second-largest country in North America and the third most populated country in the world.
- The country has a variety of climates but is mostly temperate and contains many natural features like the Rocky Mountains and Death Valley.
- The First Amendment promises freedom of religion for all Americans.

### Section 2: A Brief History of the United States

- The founding documents of the United States were unusual for the time because they guaranteed rights to citizens, spread power across the government, and allowed citizens to choose their leaders.
- Thanks to new technologies, the country grew quickly across the continent but was almost destroyed by the American Civil War when states disagreed over slavery.
- During the 20th century, the United States grew as a world leader and became involved in global politics including World War I, World War II, and the Cold War.
- Activists in the civil rights movement, like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., worked to ensure full civil rights and racial equality for African Americans.
- The 9/11 attacks changed the country's relationship with the world and signaled a new era of concern over Islamic extremism.

### Section 3: The Government of the United States

- The United States has the oldest written constitution in the world.
- The United States has a president, a Congress made up of the House of Representatives and Senate, and a court system including the United States Supreme Court.
- American citizens 18 and older must register to vote before an election. They then can elect representatives based on where they live.

### Section 4: The Economy of the United States

- The United States has a market economic system.
- US businesses have fewer rules and laws to follow than businesses in Western Europe and Japan. This encourages a fast-moving economy.
- US companies lead in the fields of technology and pharmaceuticals.
- Economic concerns include a “two-tier” labor market and the use of robots to replace workers.
- Jobs in the health care field have increased after passage of the Affordable Care Act.
- The United States is one of the largest exporting countries behind China.

## Activities for Learning

### Reviewing People, Places, and Things



Create a crossword puzzle with the following words. Create clues for each of the words.

Denali  
 Pentagon  
 marketplace  
 temperate  
 Articles of Confederation  
 Congress  
 First Amendment

### Understanding the Facts



1. What part of the United States is referred to as the “lower 48”?
2. What responsibilities does the Environmental Protection Agency have?
3. What is the difference between ethnicity and race?
4. Why are checks and balances important?
5. On 9/11, what group targeted which buildings?
6. What is a representative democracy?
7. How does someone become a Supreme Court justice?
8. Why did the United States finally decide to fight in World War II?

### Developing Critical Thinking



1. Based on your knowledge of the British Empire, what experiences with them influenced the founders’ decision to create a federalist democracy? Give specific examples as well as describing the likely reactions of American colonists that encouraged the creation of this unusual form of government.
2. The United States has many climates from tropical Hawaii to the temperate plains to Arctic Alaska. In what ways do you think different regional cultures and values around the United States are shaped by the environment?

## Writing across the Curriculum



Write a short report comparing and contrasting direct democracies and representative democracies. Include a benefit and disadvantage of each democracy.

### Applying Your Skills



Learning to recognize reputable organizations and interpret data is an important skill. One great resource is the United States Census. Go to [www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2014/demo/computer-use-infographic.html](http://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2014/demo/computer-use-infographic.html) and review the infographic on computer and Internet use in America since 1984. When you interpret this information, you can make smart choices. How could this information help (a) business owners, (b) game designers, (c) politicians, and (d) a historian?

### Exploring Technology



There are many digitized collections on the Internet you can view for free. The collections provide easy access to primary sources. Search through the National Park Service Historic Photos Collection online at [www.nps.gov/hfc/cfm/npsphoto.cfm](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/cfm/npsphoto.cfm). Locate a photo you find interesting and write a paragraph about how it relates to information you learned in this chapter.