



USA HISTORY

“I had always hoped that this land might become a safe and agreeable asylum to the virtuous and persecuted part of mankind, to whatever nation they might belong.”

George Washington (1732 – 1799), 1st president of the United States

1. United States History Discussion

1. What do you know about the origins of the United States? Which were some of the original states? How did it develop into the country it is today?
2. Why were slaves from Africa taken to the American colonies? How does that slave trade still affect American society and politics today?
3. Why did the American Revolution happen? How would the US be different today if the revolution had not happened?
4. What was the American Civil War fought over? How does this conflict still affect American society and politics today?
5. Which people have immigrated en masse to the United States through history? Why did they leave their home countries?
6. What happened during the Prohibition Era? Was prohibition a good idea?
7. Was the United States justified in dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?
8. Who shot JFK?

2. United States History Vocabulary

- **Founding Fathers** (noun) – *the group of revolutionary leaders that established the United States.*
- **checks and balances** (noun) – *a system of government where the different branches (executive, legislative, judiciary) have powers to counterbalance the other branches to prevent them from becoming too powerful.*
- **The Great Depression** (noun) – *a worldwide economic recession caused by the Wall Street stock market crash in 1929.*
- **red scare / McCarthyism** (nouns) – *a fear of communism or other left-wing ideologies / a campaign led by Senator Joseph McCarthy that accused many people of subversion or treason for their supposed links to communism.*
- **Civil Rights Movement** (noun) – *a campaign to abolish the segregation, discrimination, and disenfranchisement of black people in the 1950s and 1960s.*
- **world / global policeman** (noun) – *a powerful state that seeks global hegemony or the right to intervene in other countries.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. **Checks and balances** give a president the right to nominate members of the Supreme Court.
2. During the 19th century, Britain was the **world policeman**. After World War 2, the United States took on that role.
3. In 1776, the **Founding Fathers** signed the Declaration of Independence.
4. More than 300 screenwriters, actors, and directors were blacklisted by Hollywood studios during the **red scare/McCarthyism** after being accused of having communist sympathies.
5. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger, she became a hero of the **Civil Rights Movement**.
6. When share prices began to fall, millions of people rushed to sell them, crashing the economy and eventually leading to **The Great Depression**.

United States History vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Given many of the Founding Fathers, such as George Washington, James Maddison and Thomas Jefferson, were also slave owners, should they still be honoured as heroes?
2. Are checks and balances necessary in a democracy, or do they prevent governments from modernising and adapting to current challenges?
3. How did the Great Depression affect the rest of the world? Did it affect your country?
4. Was McCarthyism anti-democratic, or was it necessary to defend the country? Is there still a red scare today? If so, how is that possible considering the USSR collapsed in 1991?
5. If slavery was abolished in 1863, why did Martin Luther King have to march on Washington during the Civil Rights Movement to demand equal rights for African Americans over 100 years later in 1965? Is there still a need for a civil rights movement today?
6. Should the United States be the world policeman? Why or why not?

3. Video: The Boston Tea Party

You are going to watch a video by TED Ed called "The story behind the Boston Tea Party."

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-united-states-history/>

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. How many cups of tea did British people drink per year in the 1700s?
a) 200 **b) 300** c) 400
2. By the 1760s, how many pounds of tea were Americans drinking?
a) just under a million b) a million **c) more than a million**
3. Tax decisions that affected the American colonies were made where?
a) the 13 colonies b) Washington DC **c) London**
4. "No taxation without..."
a) exploitation **b) representation** c) temptation

Sentence completion

5. About **three quarters** of the tea drunk in the American colonies was smuggled in to avoid tax.
6. In **1767**, Britain imposed new taxes on a variety of imports.
7. British troops shot and killed protesters in **Boston/the Boston Massacre**.
8. Under the terms of the 1773 **Tea Act**, the British East India company would sell tea through consignees in the American colonies.

Short answer

9. How many Bostonians were crowded into the Old South Meeting House? **5,000**
10. How many tea chests were thrown into Boston Harbor? **340**
11. Representatives from the colonies met in Philadelphia to discuss how to respond to what?
(continued) British oppression
12. The representatives were more united in their determination to protect what? **Their rights and liberties**

4. United States History Conversation Questions

1. What do you know about the Cold War? Why did it start? What were some significant events that happened during the Cold War? How did it end?
2. Why did the United States send a man to the moon in 1969? Is this humanity's greatest ever achievement? Will humans ever return to the moon?
3. How did 9/11 change the United States and the rest of the world? What were the consequences of this terrorist attack?
4. Why was the election of Donald Trump in 2016 considered so significant for US history? How did it change society?
5. Which major conflicts has the United States been involved in? Why did it become involved in these conflicts?
6. Which countries has the United States been accused of interfering in? Why did it do this?
7. Who was the greatest American president in history? Who was the worst?
8. What role will the United States have in the world over the next 100 years?

5. United States History Writing Task

Write about your opinion of American history. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- The most significant events from US history.
- How the US has affected the rest of the world through history.
- The future role of the US.

Alternative exam practice question:

Since the end of World War 2, the United States has successfully defended the free world. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?