



**Otázka:** The USA

**Jazyk:** Angličtina

**Přidal(a):** skasarka, Demi

## Introduction

- The USA has about 300 millions of inhabitants and covers an area about 10 millions square kilometres which is almost same as Europe.

## Geography

- Forty-eight states of fifty are situated in the southern part of North America and two states left, which is Alaska in the northwest and an island Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean. Neighbours of America are Russia, Canada and Mexico. With its area is America the third largest country in the world. American coasts are washed by Pacific Ocean in the west and Atlantic Ocean in the east.
- Great central plains are bordered by the Rocky Mountains, Sierra Nevada and Cascades in the west and by Appalachian Mountains in the east. Another extensive plain is around the Gulf of Mexico. The highest point of the USA is Mount McKinley in Alaska which is more than 6000 meters high.
- On the borderline with Canada lie five Great Lakes. Their names are Ontario, Huron, Michigan, Erie and Superior. Between lakes Ontario and Erie there are Niagara Falls. Among the biggest rivers belong the Mississippi and her principal tributary the Missouri.

## Climate



- Climate in the USA is very various because there are hot deserts, subtropical Hawaii or cold tundra in Alaska.

### System of Government

- The USA is a **federation of 50 states** governed by the President Barack Obama who was voted in the end of the year 2012.
- Government was established with the Constitution which went into effect in the year 1787. This document guarantees freedom of religion and of press, free speech, the right for a fair trial and protection against cruel and unusual punishment.
- American power is divided into **three branches**:
  - legislative
  - executive
  - judicial
- The main legislative body is called **the Congress** which resides in the Capitol in Washington D.C. Congress is divided into two parts – **House of Representatives** and **the Senate**.
- The President and 13 executive departments represent the executive branch and on the top of the judicial branch is the Supreme Court.
- In the USA there are two main political parties: **the Democratic Party**, which is more liberal and **the Republican Party**, which puts more emphasis on private companies and individual initiative.

### Flag

- Consists of two parts – a small blue square filled with 50 white stars symbolising the 50 American states and one larger rectangle which is composed by 6 white and 7 red stripes symbolising original 13 states which used to be British Colonies.
- The American **anthem** is called “The Star-Spangled Banner”

### History

- America as a continent was discovered by an Italian mariner under the Spanish Monarch **Christopher Columbus in 1492** because he wanted to find shorter way to India. In **1620** the ship named **Mayflower brought 102 English men, women and children** to the north eastern region (today's Massachusetts) where they **founded the colony named Plymouth**. They were puritans and called themselves **The Pilgrim Fathers**. The first winter was very cold and half of them died. In spring they planted corn and other plants with the help of local Indians with whom they lived in peace. **In October 1621 they celebrated good harvest and held a feast** with much food, especially turkey. They called this day as **Day of Thanks giving** which is celebrated every fourth Thursday on November.
- During the **17<sup>th</sup> century** many colonists, mostly British, but also German, Irish and Dutch, settled in the country mainly along the eastern coast. These settlements became the 13 colonies under the British.
- In the middle of **18<sup>th</sup> century** French and Indian war brought under British control all the territory east of the Mississippi, except New Orleans which was French and Florida which was Spanish.
- During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century an area of the original 13 states was expanded through purchase of land, through treaties or war.
- Very important part of American history is **the War of Independence**. The British government levied new taxes on tea, sugar, coffee and textiles but the colonist refused to pay and the conflict out broke the so called **the Boston Tea Party** when colonists dressed as Indians and threw all the British tea into Boston Harbour. The war started in 1775 and **on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776 colonists agreed on the Declaration of Independence**. **This day was the United States of America founded and Americans celebrate the July 4<sup>th</sup> as the Day of Independence**.
- In this era of expansion social reforms became important especially abolition of slavery which wanted Abraham Lincoln. Many northern states abolished slavery by early 80's in 18<sup>th</sup> century but southern economy was based on large plantations where slaves were used for growing cotton, sugar and tobacco.
- Due to this dispute **The Civil War** started **between north and south in 1860**. In 1863 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which granted freedom for all Americans, including slaves. **War ended in 1865 when Lincoln was assassinated**. The Civil War was the worst time in an American history. But war has two main good results: Abolition of slavery and unification of America.

## Interesting places of the USA

- **The Statue of Liberty:**

- The Statue of Liberty commemorates the friendship and assistance that France provided to American settlers in their struggle for independence over Great Britain, which began in 1776 when France sent troops to America. The statue has stood on an island in front of New York since 1886. The Statue of Liberty was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

- **Grand Canyon:**

- It is one of the greatest natural wonders on the world. Located in the state of Arizona in the USA. The landscape intertwines for 446 km in length, 30 km in width and occupies the total area 5000 km<sup>2</sup>. In Grand Canyon is desolate landscape full of red walls. Some walls, up to 1 km high, contain up to 40 geological layers. By observation individual layers can be identified historical flora and fauna of these places. A river flows through the center of the Grand Canyon Colorado, which flows into California the bay

- **Central Park:**

- Central Park is a „forest“ in the middle of New York. It is also the oldest city park. This is a huge green area with a length of 4 km and a width of 800 m, which lies in the heart of downtown New York, next door one of the most expensive streets in the world – the Fifth Avenue.

- **Yellowstone National Park:**

- Yellowstone National Park is a national park located in the US states of Wyoming (91% of the park), Montana (7.6%) and Idaho (1.4%). It is the oldest national park in the world and is known primarily for its wilderness and a number of geothermal phenomena, especially the Old Faithful geyser, which is one of the park's most popular attractions. There are a number of ecosystems in the park and the dominant one is the subalpine forest.