

AMERICAN HIGHLIGHTS

▶ Have you ever been to America? If you have, tell the class about some of your experiences. Which images come into your mind when you hear the word *America*?



The Capitol, Washington D. C.

THE STARS AND STRIPES

America is a vast country with huge social, geographical and cultural variety, united under one president and under one flag: the *Stars and Stripes*. The first flag was made in 1717 when there were thirteen states. The thirteen stripes represent those original states and the 50 stars represent the number of states in America today.

NATIVE AMERICANS

At the beginning of the 1600s, Indians welcomed and helped the early settlers in America. But the Europeans took land from the “Redskins” and massacred thousands of them. Until very recently – 1924 – Indians were not allowed to become American citizens. Today Indian culture fascinates more and more people and there are Native American festivals all through the year, where visitors can buy traditional art work and watch Indian ceremonies.



Native American Indian

HOLLYWOOD

Hollywood is the centre of the world’s film industry. One (free!) tourist attraction in Hollywood is *Grauman’s Chinese Theater*. Since this movie theatre opened in 1927, nearly 200 stars have written their names in wet concrete in front of the exotic, pagoda-shaped¹ cinema. And every year two million visitors go to see the autographs, handprints and footprints of stars like Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor, Steven Spielberg, John Wayne and Cary Grant.

¹ pagoda-shaped: Pavillon-artig

CASINOS AND WEDDINGS

Which city comes to mind? Las Vegas, of course. In 1931, to make money for the state, gambling was legalised in Nevada and Las Vegas became the casino capital of the world. A huge entertainment industry has developed with exotic hotels and enormous gambling halls. Las Vegas also has very liberal marriage (and divorce!) laws. Over 100,000 couples get married here every year. The couple can choose a traditional wedding or a theme wedding – an Elvis look-alike wedding, a marriage in Camelot, a rodeo, a Harley Davidson motorbike wedding or a casino ceremony.



THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO

We’ve probably all seen films with car chases through the hilly streets of San Francisco. The crowded cable cars, the elegant houses and the Golden Gate Bridge are familiar to us even if we have never been to San Francisco. But the main attraction for 87% of the tourists in San Francisco is Fisherman’s Wharf, where the restaurants serve freshly caught fish and a special kind of local bread. Tourists can also enjoy boat trips around the harbour – or sail the 2 kilometres to the old prison island of Alcatraz, where Al Capone was in prison.



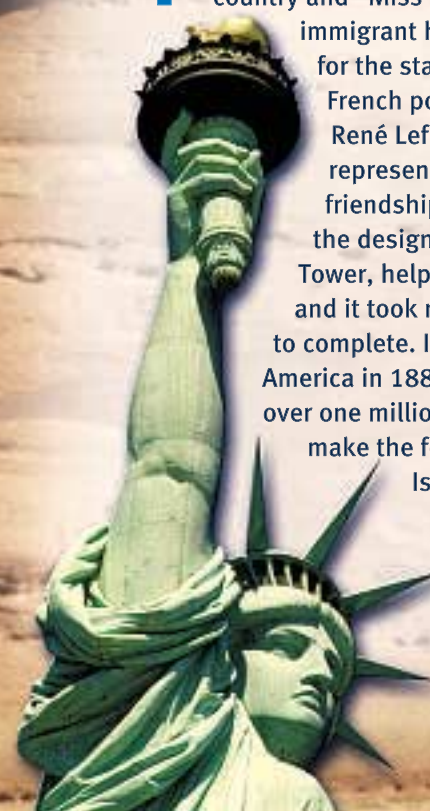
Arches National Park, USA

NATIONAL PARKS

The scenery in America is breathtaking. The Grand Canyon is one of the seven natural wonders of the world. The Yosemite National Park in California with its giant sequoia trees is 3080 square kilometres - bigger than the Saarland. Death Valley National Park has an average temperature of 47°C in July – and yet 900 different species of plants grow there. The rock formations in Antelope Canyon make it a paradise for photographers. The colourful rocks and exotic wildlife in Bryce Canyon attract 1.5 million visitors a year. If you want to see cliffs, caves and canyons, the National Parks are the place to be.

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

This statue was one of the first sights many immigrants had of their new country and “Miss Liberty” was an immigrant herself. The idea for the statue came from a French politician, Edouard-René Lefèvre and it was to represent Franco-American friendship. Gustave Eiffel, the designer of the Eiffel Tower, helped to design it and it took nearly 20 years to complete. It was given to America in 1886 and today over one million visitors a year make the ferry trip to Liberty Island and queue at the feet of “Miss Liberty”.



PUZZLE CORNER

Can you name the four presidents in the Mount Rushmore National Memorial? Here are their initials to help you:

G _ _ _ _ W _ _ _ _ _
T _ _ _ _ J _ _ _ _ _
T _ _ _ _ R _ _ _ _ _
A _ _ _ _ L _ _ _ _

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