

UNIT 1

Introductions

Europeans began to come to North America after Christopher Columbus came here. In 1492 Columbus left Spain to cross the Atlantic Ocean because he wanted to find an easier way to the Indies, which was another name for Asia. He found an unexplored continent instead. On October 12, 1492, Columbus landed on an island in the Caribbean Sea, close to the coast of North America. The European people called the Americas, the New World.

People already lived in this New World. These people were native to the Americas, so they are called Native Americans. When Columbus first saw these people he called them Indians because he thought he was in the Indies. There were many different Native American or American Indian tribes: Iroquois and Cherokee in the east, Choctaw and Seminole in the south, Cheyenne and Sioux in the middle of the country, Navajo and Pueblo in the southwest and Chumash and Modoc in the west.

More explorers from Europe came to the New World to find treasure and other opportunities and they discovered that the Americas were actually two continents: North America and South America. Many Europeans moved to the New World and started building colonies. Colonies were land areas that Europeans claimed for their own countries. In North America, Spain had many colonies in the south and the west, France had colonies on the Mississippi River and Canada and England had colonies in the east.

North America is made up of the three countries: Canada, Mexico and the United States. The capital of the United States is Washington, D.C. The contiguous United States is 3.79 million square miles, which includes the 48 states on the continent between Canada and Mexico. There are also the largest state, Alaska; the offshore state, Hawaii; and the U.S. territories: Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



(Below) Coins representing U.S. territories.



Word Spot

America
United States
American Indians
Columbus Day
colonies
Alaska
Canada
California
Mexico
New York City
Washington, D.C.
capital

USCIS 100 Questions

- Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?
- Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States.
- What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?
- What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?
- Name one U.S. territory.
- Name one state that borders Canada.
- Name one state that borders Mexico.
- What is the capital of the United States?*
- Where is the Statue of Liberty?

How many of these questions can you already answer? Practice answering each question in a full sentence. Write it out and say it aloud.

Dictation

During your USCIS interview your interviewer will dictate sentences, or say them out loud while you write them on a piece of paper. It is important to practice listening skills so that you are able to understand and write down spoken English.

Your teacher will read several sentences to you.

Try to write down everything that you hear your teacher read. Once your teacher has read all the sentences, look them over and see if you can make any corrections.

Check your answers on page 6.

Check in

Decide whether each statement is true or false.

If the statement is false, find the correct answer in the reading.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. The Spanish lived in America before the Europeans arrived. | True / False |
| 2. The Mississippi River is one of the two longest rivers in the United States. | True / False |
| 3. The Atlantic Ocean is on the West Coast of the United States. | True / False |
| 4. Washington is a state that borders Canada. | True / False |
| 5. New Mexico is a state that borders Mexico. | True / False |

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

6. When do we celebrate Columbus Day?
7. What is another name for American Indians?

(Check your answers on page 6. Remember to review the correct answers to questions that you answered incorrectly.)



Columbus landing on Hispaniola, by Theodor de Bry

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Skill Set

Questions in English often begin with one of the question words listed in the box above. These question words ask for information that cannot be answered by only saying "yes" or "no." You can ask for some information in different ways using different question words.

WHERE were you born?
In WHAT city were you born?

WHAT is your full name?
HOW do you spell your full name?

Practice making questions using these common question words. Think of five things you want to know about your classmates. Write out five questions. Try to use different question words when you can.

Ask five of your classmates each of your five questions. Which answers were similar and which were different?



Practice

Choose the correct question word from the list above to complete each of the following questions. Read the answers carefully before selecting a question word.

An example has been done for you. (Check your answers on page 6).

1. what is your address? (My address is 609 Jackson Ave.)
2. _____ were you born? (I was born on October 25, 1980.)
3. _____ were you born? (I was born in Mandalay, in Myanmar.)
4. _____ did you come to the United States? (because my wife is a U.S. citizen.)
5. _____ do you live with? (my wife, my son and my daughter.)
6. _____ did you become a permanent resident? (because I want to become a U.S. citizen.)
7. _____ did you become a permanent resident? (through marriage to a U.S. citizen.)

Small talk

When you come in for your USCIS interview, the interviewer may not begin by asking you the questions you are prepared for.

Many times, people start conversations by asking friendly and simple questions to help you feel more comfortable. We call this *small talk*.

- The weather is nice, isn't it?
- Did you have a nice morning?
- Did you find a parking spot easily?
- How are you today?

Pronunciation

Some English words have only one syllable and some have four or more syllables.

When a word has more than one syllable it is important to *stress* (or make sound stronger than the other syllables) the correct syllable when you say the word.

Think about the word **state**. Say it out loud.

How many syllables are in the word **state**?

How many syllables are in the word **capital**?

Because **capital** has three syllables you can practice by writing the word out like this:
ca/pi/tal.

Say the word and underline which syllable should be stressed in the word **ca/pi/tal**.

Practice marking the syllables and underlining the stressed syllable with the following words and place names. Number one has been done for you. *Check your answers on page 6.*

1. ca / pi / tal
2. coast
3. ocean
4. border
5. the United States
6. Atlantic Ocean
7. Pacific Ocean
8. Washington, D.C.
9. the Statue of Liberty

Lady Liberty

French artist, Frédéric Bartholdi, created the Statue of Liberty in 1886 and gave it to the people of the United States as a gift of friendship from the people of France.

The Statue of Liberty is located on Liberty Island in New York Harbor. It has become an important symbol of freedom and democracy.

For many immigrants who came to the United States by boat through New York, the statue was the first thing they saw.

It is still a very popular landmark for people who visit New York City and a popular symbol of the United States.



(Above) Edward Moran called this painting, "Unveiling of the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World" (1886).

Map it

Which state names do you know? Label them on the map below. Label the rivers, lakes, oceans and major mountain ranges that you know.



Before moving on

With a partner or in groups, take turns discussing the following:

- Describe a few things that you learned about the states.
- Share what you learned about the Statue of Liberty.
- Share what you know about the history of North America.

Look back at the USCIS 100 questions and the unfamiliar words you circled in the reading at the beginning of the unit. Choose three questions and three new words from this unit that were most difficult for you.

Write each question and each word on an index card to use for self study.



Check in

(From page 2)

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. In October.
7. Native Americans.

Remember to review the correct answers to questions that you answered incorrectly.

Skill Set

(From page 3)

1. **What** is your address?
2. **When** were you born?
3. **Where** were you born?
4. **Why** did you come to the United States?
5. **Who** do you live with?
6. **Why** did you become a permanent resident?
7. **How** did you become a permanent resident?

Dictation

(From page 2)

Your teacher will read these sentences to you. Do not read them until after your teacher dictates them and you have written them down as carefully as you can.

When you are finished writing what you heard, you can check your work by reading the following sentences:

- The United States has 50/fifty states.
- The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.
- Alaska is the largest state in the U.S.
- The Pacific Ocean is on the west coast of the United States.

Which words sounded different when spoken than they look when written down?
Are there any connecting words or articles that you forgot to write down?
What other words were difficult to hear when your teacher read them out loud?

Pronunciation

(From page 4)

1. ca/pi/tal
2. coast
3. o/cean
4. bor/der
5. the U/ni/ted States
6. At/lan/tic O/cean
7. Pa/ci/fic O/cean
8. Wash/ing/ton, D.C.
9. the Sta/tue of Li/ber/ty

Now, go back to the set of questions from the USCIS 100 questions on Page 2. With a partner, take turns and ask each question out loud while the other person says the answer. Mark the words or parts of words that are difficult to pronounce. Focus your pronunciation practice on these words.

UNIT 2

Origins:

Colonies, Revolution and Independence

The Colonies

Many people came to America because they wanted freedom and economic opportunity. In many countries in Europe, people could be put in jail or killed if they disagreed with the king or if they wanted to practice a different religion. People also did not want to be poor any more and they wanted to live in a country where they had opportunities to start their own business, farm their own land or get an education.



This painting of the First Thanksgiving was painted by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris.

A group of English people built a colony in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. These people were called the Pilgrims because they were leaving England to find religious freedom. Almost half of these Pilgrims died in the first winter in America, but they were saved with help from the Native Americans. When the Pilgrims harvested their first crops, they thanked the Native Americans for their help by inviting them to a big feast, which is still celebrated as a holiday in November called Thanksgiving.

Great Britain still ruled the colonies. When Great Britain tried to make the colonies pay high taxes, the colonists said the taxes were unfair because the people could not argue for themselves in the British government. This “taxation without representation,” was unfair also because colonists were forced to give each British soldier a place to live and to buy important things like tea only from England. Colonists in Boston decided not to let British ships bring tea into town. Some colonists put on disguises and threw the tea into the harbor. This “Boston Tea Party” made England angry.

Word Spot

Thanksgiving
November
George Washington
Father of Our Country
dollar bill
independence
Independence Day
July
taxes
Thomas Jefferson
blue, red, white
American flag
anthem

Brainstorm

Work with a partner and talk about what each phrase below means. Write down everything you can think of about each word and give examples when you can.

- Freedom of religion
- Freedom from persecution
- Political freedom
- Economic opportunity