

Learning Objectives

- 1) Realize that the United States of America is a country. A country is a land that is shared by the people who live there. It has its own leaders and its own laws. Many times people call the United States of America the “United States” or “America” for short.
- 2) Understand that the United States is just one country on the continent of North America. A continent is a very large area of land that can contain many countries. Canada, which borders the United States to the North, is part of North America, and Mexico, which borders the United States to the south, is also part of North America.
- 3) Know that the Pacific Ocean borders the United States on the west and that the Atlantic Ocean borders the United States on the east.
- 4) Understand that American citizens are very different from each other, but they also have many similarities. American citizens come from different backgrounds. Consequently, they may eat different kinds of foods, live in different homes, speak different languages, and/or wear different clothes. However, Americans have to follow the same laws, and they have the same freedoms. Most American citizens were born in America, although other people moved here and continue to move here from different countries.
- 5) Realize that the nation is divided into 50 states. Each state has its own flag, bird, flower, and tree. Every state has a capital city, where its leaders work to make and enforce laws. States are made up of several communities and cities where people live, work, and attend school.
- 6) Know examples of how people show they are patriotic.
 - a) **Saying the Pledge of Allegiance:** Americans say the Pledge of Allegiance to show their loyalty to the nation.
 - b) **Displaying the flag:** Americans hang it outside of their homes and wave it at rallies to show their love for the country.
 - c) **Singing the national anthem:** Americans sing “The Star Spangled Banner” to show their national pride. Francis Scott Key wrote this account of a battle that he observed between the United States and Great Britain.
 - d) **Taking care of the country:** Americans show their pride by keeping their neighborhoods clean, making other people feel welcome, and constructing nice homes and buildings.
- 7) Know about the federal government. The United States government consists of many different people. Using the Constitution as a guide, these people run the country. Americans choose their government leaders by voting. The government is divided into three branches. They are: The President, who leads the nation; Congress, which makes laws; and the Supreme Court, which decides if laws are constitutional.
- 8) Realize that Washington, D.C. is the capital of the United States. It is where the President, Congress, the Supreme Court, and many government agencies are located. Washington, D.C. was named after George Washington (the first president); the D.C. stands for District of Columbia. The fact that it is a district means that no state controls it.
- 9) Know about some of the major landmarks in America.
 - a) **Redwood National Park:** This beautiful park in the state of California is home to some of the tallest trees in America.
 - b) **Mississippi River:** The Mississippi River is one of the longest rivers in the United States. Large boats travel up and down the river delivering goods to many ports.
 - c) **Everglades:** This famous area of wetlands is home to many diverse forms of plants and animals.
 - d) **The Golden Gate Bridge:** This majestic bridge represents the entrance into the “golden state” of California.
 - e) **The Gateway Arch:** This St. Louis landmark is known as the gateway to the West. It was built to help people remember the pioneers who started their long journey west from St. Louis.
 - f) **The Statue of Liberty:** This copper-clad statue, which rises over New York harbor, is a symbol of freedom. It also reminds Americans of the people who came to the United States looking for a better life.
 - g) **Mount Rushmore:** This monument in South Dakota pays tribute to four legendary Presidents: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt.
- 10) Know the holidays Americans celebrate:
 - a) **Thanksgiving:** Every November Americans celebrate this holiday to remind them of what they are thankful for.
 - b) **Independence Day:** On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed. It established the independence of the United States from Great Britain. Americans celebrate this date to remind them of their freedoms.
 - c) **Presidents Day:** This holiday commemorates the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.
 - d) **Martin Luther King Jr. Day:** Americans celebrate this holiday to honor Dr. King and the struggle for equality.
 - e) **Labor Day:** This holiday honors those who work.
 - f) **Memorial Day:** This holiday asks that people honor those soldiers who died fighting for the United States.

