The United States began as a nation of 13 states. These were the colonies which had broken away from Great Britain in 1776 and fought a six- year War Independence. The original 13 colonies were then located in the area today occupied by 16 states and 34 other states were admitted to union one by one.

Washington, in the District of Columbia, is the national capital. It was named in honor of George Washington, the 1-st US president. The whole country west of the original 13 states was surveyed in regular blocks, a mile square. This way of dividing the land is reflected in the borders of the states.

One of the famous symbols of the USA is the Statue of Liberty. Another symbol is the American flag, which is often called “The Stars and Stripes”. As there are 50 states in America there are 50 stars on the American flag: one star for each state. It also has seven red stripes and six white stripes. There is one stripe for each of the first 13 colonies of the United States.



Columbus Day is a great holiday in America. It is celebrated on the second Monday of October. On Columbus Day you can see the American flag everywhere to honor the man who was the discoverer of their country.

Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492.He was a seaman and made many sea voyages to the New World. He was born in Italy but lived in Spain for a long time. There is a nice poem about him. The title of the poem is “Let’s Remember Columbus”.

In fourteen hundred and ninety two

Columbus sailed the ocean blue…

Let’s sing together this old song

About the voyage that took him long,

About the sailors, those strong brave men.

Let’s sing and remember them all again.

The last Thursday in November the American celebrate Thanksgiving Day. It is, perhaps, the most important day in the American year. People go to churches, families gather together for the day. They decorated their houses with the fruits and flowers of autumn and prepare traditional American food: roast turkey and pumpkin pie.

But why do people celebrate this holiday? What does it mean? In 1620 the first colonists came to America and began a new life there. It was a very hard life. The colonists started to farm the land. The work was difficult and full of danger. In the autumn of 1621 the colonists had their first harvest. It was rather good. The colonists decided to have a special dinner. They wanted to thank God.

So the colonists had a thanksgiving dinner for all the people. It lasted three days. There were wild turkeys for this dinner and since then turkey has become a symbol of Thanksgiving Day.

The Great Salt Lake is in the northwest of the state of Utah, close to Salt Lake City, the capital. It is so salty that the human body cannot sink in it. Its present area is much smaller than the ancient lake of which it is a remnant.

The saltines of the lake have increased as its area has diminished, and today it is about six times as salty as the ocean. Three large rivers flow into the Great Salt Lake from the mountains to the east and southeast-the Jordan, the river upon which Salt Lake City stands, the Weber, and the Bear. But it has no outlet. There are many islands. The largest is Antelope Island.

The existence of the Great Salt Lake was known to early travelers. In 1689 the white men were told by Indians of ”a Salt Lake 300 miles in circumference”, and in 1776 it was reached by other white men. For a long time it was thought, because of the lake’s saltiness, that it must be an arm of the Pacific Ocean.

Part of the boundary between the USA and Canada is formed by four of the five Great Lakes. The largest of them is Lake Superior, which, as its name implies, is the highest above the sea. South of it is Lake Michigan, entirely in the United States territory; to the east is Lake Huron, from the southern end of which the ST. Clair River leads into Lake



(Niagara Falls). Erie. From the Lake Erie the Niagara River rushes over the famous Niagara Falls into Lake Ontario, out of which flows the ST. Lawrence River.

(Mississippi River).

All the Lakes are connected by canals or navigable channels to form not only the largest body of fresh water in the world, but also the most important unit of inland waterway. The Lakes take a very important place in the economic life of both the USA and of Canada. From Chicago at the southwest end of Lake Michigan, railway lines radiate in all direction - across the Rockies to the Pacific Coast, southwards following the line of the Mississippi to New Orleans – and the city’s prosperity has been much increased by its position as a lake port.



Another lake port is Buffalo, at the northern end of Lake Erie. It’s the fourth largest port and the seventh industrial city in the USA. The Lakes can be used only between the months of April and December, as they freeze in winter. The importance of the Lakes is not only commercial: along their shores are vast stretches of forest, meadowland, and grassland, as well as towns, camps, and small country towns.