Geography & background of the United States of America
Fast Facts (according to National Geographic)

- **Population:** 310,000,000
- **Capital:** Washington, D.C. (pop. 4,190,000)
- **Area:** 9,826,630 square kilometres (3,794,083 square miles)
- **Language:** English, Spanish
- **Religion:** Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish
- **Currency:** U.S. dollar
- **Life Expectancy:** 77
- **GDP per Capita:** U.S. $36,300
- **Literacy Percentage:** 97
- **National independence:** July 4, 1776
- **Motto:** In God We Trust
• **Border countries & oceans:** Canada, Mexico, Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean
• **Largest state:** Alaska
• **Smallest state:** Rhode Island
• **National bird:** Bald eagle
• **National flower:** rose
• **National Anthem:** The Star-Spangled Banner

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhrrGu2rcZ4
How was the US governed?

• The Constitution & the Bill of Rights.
• A federal system
  – The State governments.
• Central government with three branches:
  1. President – Executive Branch
  2. Congress – Legislative Branch
     • Made up of House of Representatives and Senate.
  3. Supreme Court – Judicial Branch
• Checks and balances
• Political parties:
  – Republicans
  – Democrats
• Voting – not compulsory.
So, how big is the USA?
Early Settlement:

• Indian / native American settlers arrived from Asia about 15000 y.a. – spread over the continent.

• Late 1400s – Spanish and French explorers, traders and missionaries.

• 1492 - Christopher Columbus.

• Early 1600s – arrival of first permanent British settlers.
• 1607 – first English settlement at Jamestown.
  – John Smith & Pocahontas.

• Commerce & religion motivated settlement.

• 1620 – “Mayflower” landed with ‘Puritans’:
  – “New England”
    • ‘Puritans’ & others fleeing persecution in England.
    • Although most English settlers came to establish religious settlements, soon saw possibilities of trade, particularly in tobacco and beaver furs.

• 1621 – ‘Thanksgiving’ tradition began – Indians invited by Pilgrims / Puritans to feast to celebrate first harvest.
The ‘Mayflower’
The American War of Independence:

• Theoretically governed from Britain, thirteen original colonies grew used to being left alone by the British government.

• Britain sought to impose new taxes to help pay the cost of recent wars with France and to maintain British troops defending the colonies, American businessmen and merchants began to revolt.

• 1776 (July 4) – the United States of America is proclaimed – the Declaration of Independence (from Britain).

• War with the British followed – America ultimately won independence in 1783.
• In proclaiming the America to be a new nation, Thomas Jefferson wrote that ‘all men are created equal’, but the proclamation did not include slaves, women or native Americans and would not do so until the twentieth century.
Expansion:

- Having established a new nation, people began to move westwards in search of land.
- Settlers took native American lands by force or by unequal treaties.
Westward Expansion of the U.S., 1803 – 1860

- Port cities
- Other cities

Purple indicates states as of 1803. Areas that became states or territories between 1803 and 1860 are shown in other colors.
• African slaves were brought into the south in increasing numbers.
• In the north, technology fed industrial development rather agriculture.
• Slave-owning agricultural south – industrialised and urbanised north.
$1200 TO 1250 DOLLARS! FOR NEGROES!!

THE undersigned wishes to purchase a large lot of NEGROES for the New Orleans market. I will pay $1200 to $1250 for No. 1 young men, and $850 to $1000 for No. 1 young women. In fact I will pay more for likely NEGROES, than any other trader in Kentucky. My office is adjoining the Broadway Hotel, on Broadway, Lexington, Ky., where I or my Agent can always be found.

WM. F. TALBOTT.
LEXINGTON, JULY 2, 1852.
The Civil War:

• 1861 – issue of ending / restricting slavery led to war between north and south.
  – South tried to secede / break away from the union.
  – North fought them to keep them in the union.

• 1\textsuperscript{st} Jan, 1863 – Emancipation Proclamation.

• 1865 – after a bloody 4-year fight, the southern forces surrendered and the United States was re-established.

• More than 620,000 Americans died.

• President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at the end of the war.

• More westward expansion followed.

• By 1890s, whole of the North American continent was occupied by white America, with strong pockets of blacks, native Americans, Spanish Americans and Mexican populations.
The United States becomes an industrial giant:

- US was rich in natural resources, inc. coal & iron.
- American belief in ‘rugged individualism’ combined with capitalism, spurred the efforts of entrepreneurs.
- By 1900, the US had become the leading industrial nation of the world.
- Growth of the US had depended on influx of labour:
  - During the 19th century, millions of mainly poor immigrants poured to into North America from Europe – industrial labour force & growing domestic market.
- US society became less British and began to develop a rich cultural and ethnic mix.
America today – some key concepts
The South
The Midwest Corn Belt

The Jordan Family Farm
Get your politics out of our health care –

NO Obama/Romney Health Care

YES Medicare for All NOW!