**Faculty of Letters and Languages – M’sila**

**Department of English**

**Level:** Second year

**Course:** American Civilization.

**Lecture**: TheCountry + The People: Settlement and Immigration.

**Lecture number**: 02

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**INTRODUCTION:**

With an area of 9,363,123 square kilometers the United States is exceeded in size only by Russia, Canada and China. Of the fifty states, forty-eight lie between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and between Canada and Mexico, while two, Alaska and Hawaii, lie in the north-west corner of the continent and the Pacific Ocean, respectively. Island possessions in the Caribbean and the Pacific add another 17,600 kilometers to American territory.

**I-The Country:**

**The Political Geography of the United States:**

The [United States of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) is a [federal republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_republic) consisting of 50 [states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._state), a [federal district](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_districts_and_territories#United_States)([Washington, D.C.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.), the [capital city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_city) of the United States), five major [territories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territories_of_the_United_States), and various [minor islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Minor_Outlying_Islands). The [48 contiguous states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contiguous_United_States) and Washington, D.C., are in central [North America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_America) between [Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) and [Mexico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico); the two other states, [Alaska](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska) and [Hawaii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii), are in the northwestern part of North America and an [archipelago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archipelago) in the mid-[Pacific](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Ocean), respectively, while the territories are scattered throughout the [Pacific Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Ocean) and the [Caribbean Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean_Sea).

**1-STATES**

States are the primary [subdivisions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative_division) of the United States, and possess a number of powers and rights under the [United States Constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Constitution), such as regulating intrastate commerce, running [elections](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_the_United_States), creating [local governments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_government_in_the_United_States), and [ratifying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratification) [constitutional amendments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_amendment#United_States). Each state has its own [constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_constitution_(United_States)), grounded in [republican principles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republicanism_in_the_United_States), and government, consisting of three branches: [executive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_(United_States)), [legislative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_legislature_(United_States)), and [judicial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_court_(United_States)). All states and their residents are represented in the federal [Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Congress), a [bicameral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicameral) legislature consisting of the [Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Senate) and the [House of Representatives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_House_of_Representatives). Each state is represented by two Senators, while Representatives are [distributed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_congressional_apportionment) among the states in proportion to the most recent [constitutionally](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Constitution) mandated decennial (each 10 years) [**census**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Census). Additionally, each state is entitled to select a number of electors to vote in the [Electoral College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_College_(United_States)), the body that elects the [President of the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States), equal to the total of Representatives and Senators in Congress from that state.

**2-TERRITORIES:**

In addition to the 50 states and federal district, the United States has [**sovereignty**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty) over 14 [territories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territories_of_the_United_States). Five of them ([American Samoa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Samoa), [Guam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guam), the [Northern Mariana Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Mariana_Islands), [Puerto Rico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Rico), and the [U.S. Virgin Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Virgin_Islands)) have a permanent, nonmilitary population, while nine of them do not. With the exception of [Navassa Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navassa_Island), Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, which are located in the [Caribbean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean), all territories are located in the [Pacific Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Ocean).

**3-AMERICAN-“INDIAN” RESERVATIONS:**

An Indian reservation is a legal designation for an area of [land managed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_tenure) by a federally recognized [Native American tribe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_(Native_American)). The collective geographical area of all reservations is 227,000 [km2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square_kilometre), approximately the size of [Idaho](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idaho), and larger than England. While most reservations are small compared to U.S. states, there are 12 Indian reservations larger than the state of [Rhode Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhode_Island). The largest reservation, the [**Navajo Nation Reservation**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navajo_Nation), is similar in size to [West Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Virginia).

**II-The People: Settlement and Immigration**

Immigration is a central aspect of US history. It is a major reason that the nation's total population grew to 326 million by 2018. Believing in the American Dream, many tens of millions of people have come to live in the USA. They thus changed their homelands, America and their family histories forever. They strengthened the nation's commitment to ‘the dream’ and to its ideal of being a refuge for the poor and oppressed, a nation of nations. Gradually, over the centuries of massive immigration and the struggles of newcomers and Americans to adjust to each other, the view that the nature of the nation was and should be a composite of many national backgrounds, races and cultures gained popular acceptance. This view continues to face the opposition of those who believe newcomers should leave their homeland cultures behind and the dilemma of deciding what is necessary to hold the country and its increasingly diverse population together. **Emma Lazarus**, a poet, once wrote on the Statue of Liberty:

“Cries she with silent lips. ‘Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost, to me,”

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!’

Despite these warm welcoming feelings, the meetings of newcomers and native-born have also contributed to America's history of social disorder. The contacts, conflicts and mixing of cultures have fueled widespread discrimination, economic exploitation, anti-foreign movements and debates over equality, opportunity and national identity. In a country whose history began with the meeting of Native Americans and European colonists and continued through the importation of African slaves and several waves of immigrants, there has never been a single national culture.

**Early Encounters of Europeans and Native Americans:**

When European explorers and settlers encountered Native Americans in the late 1400s, a long history of mutual incomprehension and conflict began. These encounters amounted to a collision of worlds. Contacts between the Americas and other continents had been so rare that plants, animals, diseases and human societies evolved into different forms in the ‘new’ and the ‘old’ worlds. Europeans and Native Americans caught diseases from each other. Europeans survived the first contacts better, but for most of the seventeenth century well over half of them died from difficulties in adjusting to the new environment. The Native Americans fared far worse: epidemics annihilated entire native cultures. North America's pre-Columbian population of 5 million shrank to between 1 and 2 million.

**The founders**

The people who established the colonies are considered founders rather than immigrants because they created the customs, laws and institutions to which later arrivals (the first immigrants) had to adjust. The Spanish occupied coastal Florida, the south-west and California in the 1500s and 1600s. After trying to enslave the natives, they worked to convert them to Christianity, farming and sheep-herding. Because many natives rejected this way of life, the Spanish colonies faced border attacks for over 200 years. The English established their first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Their monarch had no desire to rule distant colonies, so instead the Crown legalized companies that undertook the colonization of America as private commercial enterprises. Virginia's early residents were so preoccupied with a vain search for gold and a sea passage to Asian markets that the colony failed until tobacco provided a profitable export. Because of the scarcity of plantation labor, in 1619 the first African laborers were imported as indentured servants (free people who contracted for 5 to 7 years of servitude). Supported by tobacco profits, however, Virginia imported 1,500 free laborers a year by the 1680s and had a population of 75,000 white Americans and 10,000 Africans in hereditary slavery by 1700.

**Exercises:**

**1-Explain and examine the significance of the following names and terms:**

Census-Sovereignty-reservations-Territories-The Founders-Immigrants-Slaves-Servitude.

**2-**In a short paragraph discuss **the nature** of the early encounters between Native Americans and the first Europeans.

**REFERENCES**

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