

# Lesson One

## United States of America: An Exploration

This lesson introduces pupils to the USA and its key features. This lesson focuses on familiarising pupils with the region, and key human and physical characteristics.

### Key Questions

- What are the key geographical features of the USA?
- How many states does the USA have?
- What does the USA 'sound' like?
- Where are the rivers, lakes and mountains in the USA?
- How is the USA different to where you live?

### Subject content areas

- Locational knowledge: name and locate key features in the USA including states, lakes, rivers, mountains, deserts, and settlements.
- Place knowledge: understand geographical similarities and differences of different places within USA. Interpret a range of images and sounds to be able to link places to a location on a map.
- Physical geography: understand the diversity of physical landscapes in the USA including lakes, rivers, mountains, deserts etc.
- Human geography: understand the location and features of key settlements in the USA.
- Geographical skills: use an atlas to be able to locate key features on a map of USA.

### Downloads

- Lesson Plan PDF | MSWORD
- USA: An exploration (PPT)
- Factsheet for Teachers PDF | MSWORD
- USA outline map PDF | MSWORD
- Map Task Sheet PDF | MSWORD
- USA Sounds Audio Files (MP4)

### Additional Resources

- Flipchart, or whiteboard to document 'key words'
- Printing of images (slides 3-23 of *USA: An exploration* PowerPoint presentation, see downloadable resources) for each group. These can be used for class display once the lesson is completed.

- Printing of world map on A3 for each group

## Starter

Using slide two of *USA: An exploration* PowerPoint presentation (see downloadable resources), ask pupils to write down five words they associate with the USA. Collect from the class and record some of these on a board to return to at the end of the lesson. Discuss with the class what they know about the USA – states, cities, national parks, animals, other features.

This is a good time to ask if any of the class have been to anywhere in the USA (or can talk about images of the USA they have seen online, on TV or in films) and share their experiences – how is it different to where they live? Ensure that any new vocabulary is explained.

## Main

*Task one:* Pupils should be provided with a series of images or features and places in the USA and sort them into categories to introduce them to different types of features they will be studying in the unit. Images are provided on the *USA: An exploration* PowerPoint presentation slides 3-23 (see downloadable resources) and can be printed for the pupils. Discuss these as a class.

*Task two:* Download the *USA outline map* (see downloadable resources) and print on A3 for each group. Equip each group with an atlas (and if possible access to Google Earth on a computer). Pupils should be put into groups to create a collaborative map of the USA, annotating the states and adding places and features provided in the *Map Task Sheet* (see downloadable resources).

*Extension:* Pupils should then try to find the locations of the images from the first task.

*Task three:* Once pupils have created their group maps they can move on to the next task. Using *USA Sound Audio Files* (see downloadable resources); pupils are played a series of sounds. They should try to match where they are most likely to hear them, from the pictures they had sorted previously. Ask the pupils:

- What other kinds of sounds do they think they would hear in the places they have been exploring in this lesson?
- How are these sounds different to what they hear in their daily lives in the UK?

## Plenary

Go to YouTube website <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tt-juyvIWMQ> to watch the USA Timelapse video. Return to the list of words that was collected at the beginning of the lesson. Are there any new words that can be added?