

# Chaptre 2.

## How they live

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# The way of life.

- There have been many changes in the way of life of American families in the past 20 or 30 years.
- Many young people don't hurry to get married, and when they do get married, they don't hurry to have children. Quite often a woman has her first child only when she is past thirty.
- In a traditional family the husband worked and earned money, and the wife stayed at home with the children. This tradition is now changing. Many married women work, like their husbands.

- The divorce rate is very high in the United State. About half of married couples end in divorce.
- Rather often divorced people get married again.
- In the past it was traditional for three generations – grandparents, parents and children – to live together, now many elderly people prefer living separately from their grown-up children.



## Part 2 Education.

- There are three levels in the educational system of the United States.
- At the age of 7 children go to the elementary school, where they stay until the sixth grade. Then they pass to the so-called junior high schools and stay there from the seventh up to the eighth or 250 ninth grade. Finally they go to the high school(from the ninth or tenth grade up to the twelfth grade).
- Besides state-supported schools(called public schools), where education is free.

# Part 3. Culture. Leisure.

## Entertainment

- The United States is a great centre of culture. Its largest cities (New York, Boston, Chicago, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles) have many concert halls, exhibition halls and theatres. Smaller cities also regularly hold concerts, exhibitions, lectures, theatrical performances, both professional and amateur. The United States has the world's greatest museums, theatres, concert halls and orchestras.



- The most important sources of entertainment in America are television, movies and recorded music.
- Many Americans complain of the low intellectual and cultural level of TV programmes. Some people also say that the emphasis on youth, money teaches children the wrong values. Americans enjoy sport. They engage in sports themselves and also watch their favourite sports teams at the stadiums and at home on TV.
- Americans like to travel. Many families regularly go on weekend car trips, as well as on longer summer trips. Travelling by air is also very popular. During their holidays many people fly to other cities to visit friends and relatives.



## Part 4. Holidays.

- **New Year.** Many people don't sleep most of the New Year night on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, seeing the New Year in. ales. Some people go to parties at friends houses or at night- clubs.
- **Martin Luther King's Day.** Martin Luther King was a famous fighter for civil rights. In the 1950's and 1960's he organized the civil rights movement- the struggle for equal rights for black Americans.
- **Presidents Day.** Presidents Day is celebrated in February. It is the day on which two great Americans are honoured: George Washington, the country's first President, and Abraham Lincoln, the President who headed the country during the Civil War and put an end to slavery.

- **Memorial Day.** On Memorial Day Americans honour the soldiers killed in war. There are always parades on this day. Memorial Day is celebrated on the last Monday in May, and that's why it marks the beginning of the summer season. Many people spend this day on the beach.
- **Independence Day.** The Fourth of July, or Independence Day, is, of course, the most important American holiday. It was on July 4, 1776, that the American colonies declared their independence from Britain.





- **Labour Day.** On the first Monday in September, Americans celebrate Labour Day, which honours the American worker. While Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer, Labour Day marks the end of it.
- **Columbus Day.** Columbus Day marks the coming of Columbus's ship to America in 1492. Many Italian and Hispanic - Americans are especially, enthusiastic on Columbus Day. Columbus was an Italian working for Spain, so they feel that this great seaman is closer to their hearts than to the hearts of other Americans.
- **Halloween.** Halloween, which is celebrated on October 31, is not an official holiday, but, doubtless, it is a very special day. Children enjoy it. They dress in fancy costumes as witches, ghosts, or other monsters, pirates, or characters from TV programmes, and so on. The windows of many houses are brightly decorated on Halloween. In the evening groups of children go from house to house, knock at the doors and say, «Trick or treat».

- **Thanksgiving.** In 1620 the Mayflower brought a group of Pilgrims to America. The Pilgrims founded a settlement in Massachusetts. The Indians showed the Pilgrims where to fish, and in spring helped them to plant crops. The next November, when the Pilgrims had gathered the crops, they invited the Indians to a great feast. It was the first Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is celebrated every year in November.
- **Christmas.** On Christmas many families get together. There is a tradition to give presents on Christmas. People often start buying gifts right after Thanksgiving. Children believe that their gifts come from Santa Claus.



## Part 5 The Cowboy.

- People usually think of the cowboy as of a romantic and even rather fairy- tale creature. It is not so in reality. First of all, people think that all cowboys are white Americans. The cowboy's main Job was very prosaic- and very difficult.
- **Rodeos.** Rodeos are competitions in which cowboys show their skills. In the old days, when cowboys got bored during cattle drives, they sometimes organized informal competitions. With time, this tradition grew, then towns began organizing more formal competitions for cowboys. Today the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association organizes about 700 rodeos a year.