

Regional Geography of the USA

Textual Questions And Answers:

Q1. Write in short the locational and geographical characteristics of the USA.

Ans: The USA lies in the continent of North America. The USA is surrounded by Canada in the north, the Atlantic Ocean in the east, Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico in the south and the Pacific Ocean in the west. The longitudinally between 66° W--- 125° W. Some of the important geographical features of the USA are :

- (i) Its total geographical area is 96 lakh square km. which constitutes about 6.37% of the earth's total area.
- (ii) It is the 4th largest country in the world.
- (iii) Although it is the 4th largest country in the world, yet it supports only 4.6% of the world's total population. The total population of the USA is only 302 million as per the 2007 estimate.
- (iv) The whole of the USA lies in the temperate climate zone.

(v) The geographical location and the climate condition of the USA are ideal for the development of agriculture, industries, trade and commerce. In fact, these factors have played a major role in the industrialisation and agricultural progress of the USA.

(vi) In respect of population, the USA ranks third in the world.

Q2. Divide the USA into physical divisions. Give a comprehensive description of each of them.

Ans: The USA is situated in the continent of North America. It has certain unique physical and geographical characteristics. On the basis of geophysical structure or features, the whole of the USA can be divided into the following divisions :

(i) The Appalachian Highlands : The highlands that are situated on the eastern part of the USA running parallel to the Atlantic Ocean are known as the Appalachian highlands. This region extends between the Hudson valley and the Erie-Onterio Lakes in the north to the Alabama state in the south. Some of the significant features of the Appalachian Highlands are :

(a) It consists of hills, mountains, plateaus, plains, etc. and is quite complex in structure. Important among these are the Allegheny mountains in the west, the Cumberland plateau in the south-west, the Appalachian mountain system and valley in the east, the Bloris

mountain in the south and the Coastal lowlands in the east.

(b) It originated much before the Rockies situated on the western side and so it is much more weathered than the Rockies.

(c) The average height of these highlands is not more than 2000 metres above sea level.

(d) The region is drained by many large and small rivers such as Ohio, Tennessee, Hudson, Alabama, etc.

(e) The Atlantic coastal plain which lies in the east and to the southern side of the Appalachian Highland and narrower in the north and wider in the south.

(f) This region is very rich in minerals and so numerous cities and towns such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, Washington D.C., etc. have developed here. The Appalachian Highlands are one of the most industrially and economically advanced regions of the USA. This is due to the availability of important minerals such as coal, petroleum, iron, etc. which have helped the development of several industries.

(ii) The central Plain : The Central Plain is the vast and extensive plain that lies between the Rockies in the west and the Appalachian Highlands in the east. This region extends between the Great Lake Region in the north to the Mexico coast in the south. It is a part of the

Mississippi-Missouri basin. These two rivers and their tributaries have made the Central Plain, the most fertile region of the USA which is highly suitable for agriculture. This plain can be divided into four parts :

(a) The Highland Plain region : This consists of the foothill lowlands lying east of the Rockies.

(b) The Mississippi plain : This is the plain region that lies between the Highland Plain and the Appalachian Highlands drained by the Mississippi-Missouri drainage system. The average altitude of this region is not more than 300 m from the mean sea level. Few hillocks are found in this vast and extensive plain.

(c) The Great Lake region : This comprises the area lying in and around the Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario formed by glacial deposits.

(d) The Mexico coastal lowlands : To the southern part of the Central Plain, lies the Mexican coastal lowlands with altitude below 200 m above sea level. This region is drained by frequent floods. The delta of the Mississippi lies in this plain.

The important cities of the central plain are Minneapolis, Chicago, Kansas, St Louis, Birmingham, New Orleans, Miami, Houston, etc.

(iii) The Rocky Mountain or the Cordillera : The region comprising hills, mountains, plateaus, valleys, lakes, etc. that lies between the Central Plains in the east and the Pacific coastal lowlands in the west is the Cordillera

region. This region aligns in the north-south direction and the highlands located towards west of this region is the Rocky mountain. The Rockies are young folded mountains. Some of the peaks of the Rockies are above 4,200 m above the sea level. Some of the important mountain ranges located west of the Cordillera are Sierra Nevada, Cascade, Coast Range, etc. while the major plateaus situated in between the two parallel ranges of the Cordillera are Columbia Plateau, Great Basin, Colorado, etc. There are several plateaus in the rainshadow zone of the Pacific Coastal Range including the Great Basin Region. Several lakes such as the Great Salt Lake are also found in this region.

Several small rivers such as Columbia, snake and Colorado which flow westward and empty in the Pacific Ocean while the rivers such as Missouri, Arkansas and Red join with Mississippi and flow southward into the Gulf of Mexico. The river Rio Grande flowing towards south-east also empties in the Gulf of Mexico. There are also some fertile valleys such as Puget Sound, Willamette and California valleys in the mountains located west of the Cordillera. The world famous Grand Canyon of Colorado and the Death Valley are situated in this Cordillera.

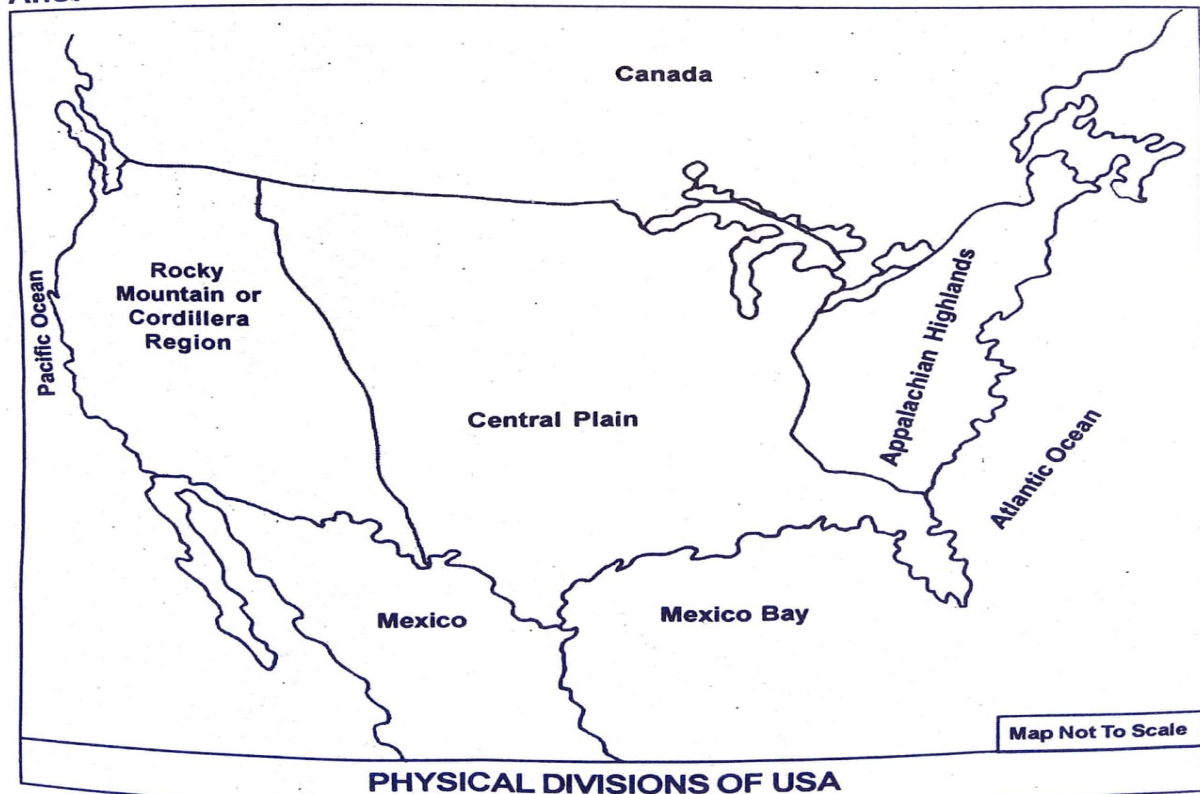
The Cordillera is very rich in mineral resources like gold, silver, copper, coal, petroleum, etc.

The California coastal region is most suitable for agriculture. In this region, rain fall occurs during winter due to the influence of Mediterranean climate. Some of

the important metropolitan cities of this region are Siatol, Portland, San Fransisco, Los Angeles, Las Vagus, etc.

Q3. Show on a sketch the physical divisions of USA.

Ans:



Q4. Discuss with the help of a sketch the growth and the distribution of population in the USA.

Ans: At the time of independence of the United States of America in 1776, there were 13 states in the USA and the total population of the country was only 3 million. But soon after independence, the population of the USA grew rapidly due to the migration of people from Europe and merging of another 37 states with the USA at different times. The population of the USA in 1800 was only 5 million which grew to 76 million in 1900. Since the dawn of the 20th century, the rate of the growth of

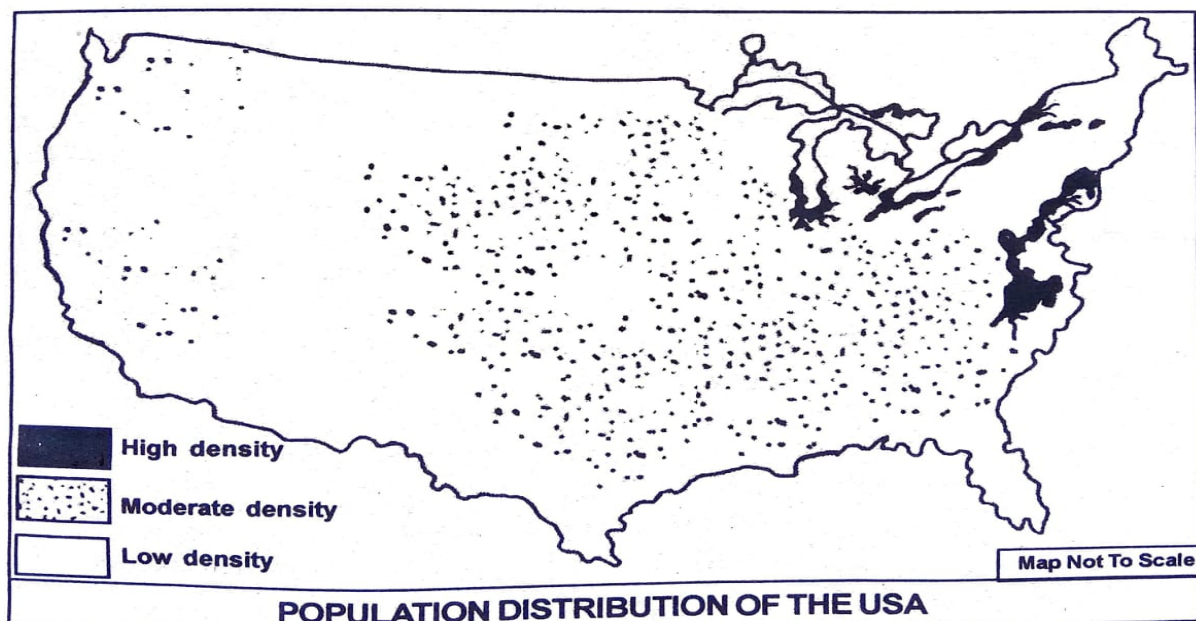
population in America has been very high due to better living conditions and availability of modern medical facilities. From 76 million in 1900 United States of America currently comprises 50 federal states with a total population of 302 million according to the 2007 estimate. The USA is third most populated country in the world. The following table gives an idea of the growth pattern of the population of the USA during the last three centuries. Population Growth in the USA :

Census year	Population (in million)
1776	3
1800	5
1900	76
2000	281
2007	302

Today there is a great decline in the growth rate of population in the USA. Currently, the population growth rate in the USA is only 0.6% as against the world population growth rate of 1.20%.

One of the most significant features of the population of the USA is its uneven distribution due to variation in natural condition, transportation system and development processes. The Appalachian Highlands and the Atlantic Sea Board located in the eastern part of the USA have high in the coastal region of California in thDiscuss The south and east part of the Michigan State comprising one-fourth of the total area of the USA is inhabited by two-third of the total population of the country. The average density of population in this region is 85 persons per sq. km. compared to the average

density of 32 persons per sq. km for the whole country. The states of Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island have a population density of 300 persons per sq. km. The district of Columbia where Washington D.C. the capital of the country is situated, has a density of 3600 persons per sq. km. The States of Montana, Nevada, North Dakota and Wyoming situated in this region have a population density of less than 5 persons per sq. km. This region is unsuitable for human habitation and economic development due to its rugged terrain and scanty rainfall. The Cordillera region having sources of mineral resources is also inhabited to some extent. Majority of the population of the USA, i.e. nearly three-fourth of the total population live in the urban areas due to the industrial development of the country.



Q5. Discuss the role of agriculture in the economy of the USA.

Ans: The USA is one of the most developed nations in the world. It occupies the first place in the world regarding natural resource, agriculture, industrial

production and standard of living. One of the factors that has contributed to the economic progress and national advancement of the USA has been agriculture.

Agriculture plays a significant role in the economy of the USA though only 5% of its population is dependent on it.

(i) Provides employment : One of the greatest contributions of agriculture in the economy of the USA is that it provides job opportunities to thousands of people. Though only 5% of the total population of the USA is dependent on agriculture such as paper, pulp, sugar, rubber, etc. are the major sources of employment to millions of people in the USA.

(ii) Brings in foreign exchange : The USA occupies a high position in the production of several essential agricultural commodities in the world. She is the highest producer of wheat and barely. She produces 46% and 18% of world production of corn and wheat respectively. Bulk of these agricultural produce are exported bringing in considerable foreign exchange.

(iii) Supplies food for its own people : The USA is self-sufficient in almost all food items. Today many developed countries also import a lot of food items to feed their population. The USA is fortunate to have sufficient local production of food items. This makes the country less dependent on foreign countries.

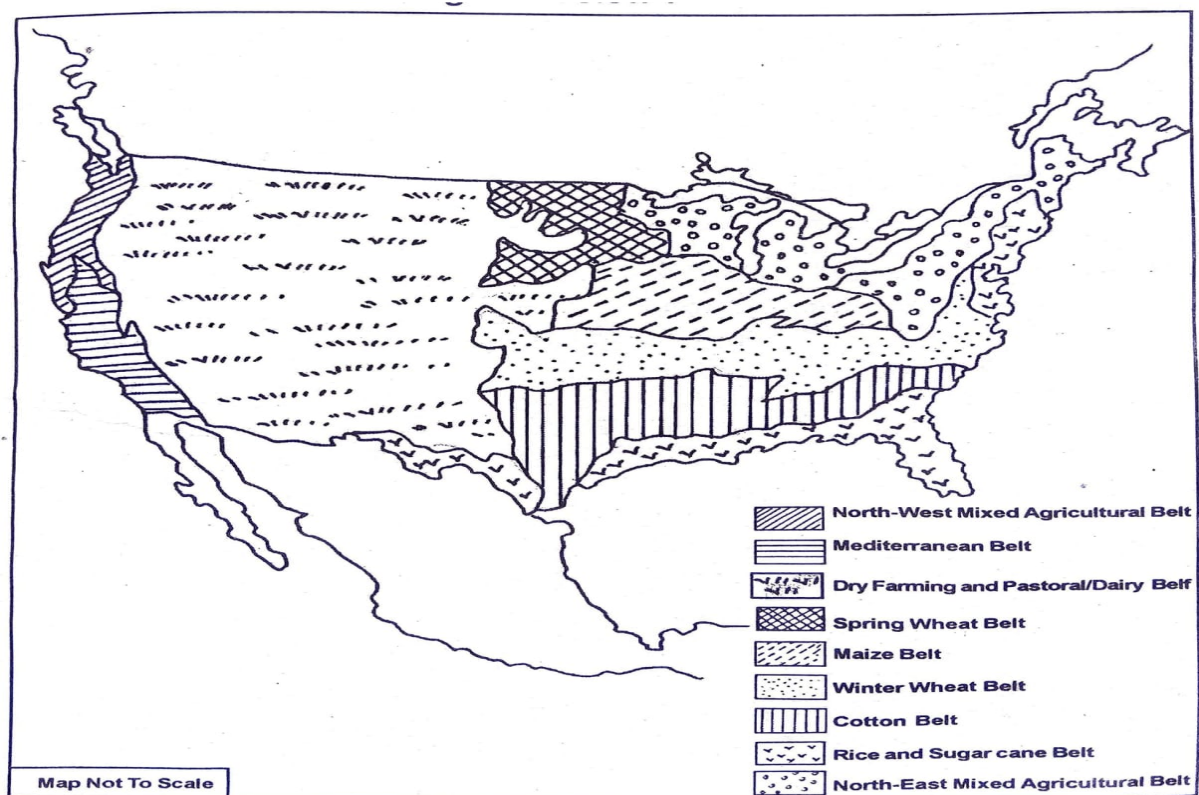
(iv) Supplies food grains to the world : The surplus food items that are produced in the USA are exported to other countries. Many nations of the world are greatly

dependent on the free food items supplied by the USA. The USA is considered to be the 'wheat bowl' of the world. The central plain of the USA produces a major part of the wheat production in the world. This has raised the USA's economic position in the world.

(v) Encourages industrial production : The USA is one of the most industrialised nations in the world. Her agricultural sector is highly mechanised and many modern agricultural machines are utilised for various agricultural operations. Thus, the expansion of agriculture in the USA has evidently boosted industrial production in the country. Industries have greatly benefitted from the modernisation of agriculture introduced in the USA in the recent past.

Q6. What do you mean by agricultural belt ? How many agricultural belts have been recognised in the USA ? Show them on a sketch and describe each of them briefly.

Ans: By the term 'agriculture belt' we mean the division of the country on the basis of the cultivation of crops or on the basis of certain agricultural characteristics. On the basis of physiography, climate, soil, etc. there are nine recognised agricultural belts in the USA. A detailed description of each of them is given below :



(i) Rice and sugar cane belt : This agricultural belt is located on the Mexican coast. It covers Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and southern part of Louisiana state. This region experiences sub-tropical climate characterised by high temperature and heavy rainfall. Since most part of this belt is made of alluvial soil, it is ideal for the cultivation of rice and sugar cane. Banana and pineapple are also abundantly grown in the region.

(ii) The cotton belt : This agricultural zone lies to the north of the rice and sugar cane belt and covers the southern part of the Mississippi valley. The northern limit of the cotton belt is bounded and demarcated by the 36°N parallel. Nearly 50% of the cotton of the USA is cultivated in Texas, Mississippi and Arakansas states.

(iii) Winter wheat and tobacco belt : The agricultural belt and extends from the Atlantic coast on the east to the

Colorado in the west, is known as the winter wheat belt. The tobacco belt covers North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, etc. The eastern part of this belt produces large quantities of tobacco and the western part covering Nebraska, Kansas, East Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas produce winter wheat. Much of the winter wheat produced here is exported to other countries.

(iv) Maize belt : This belt lying to the north of the winter belt extends from mid-Ohio to mid-Nebraska. Most of the maize produced in the USA is obtained from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Nebraska.

(v) Spring wheat belt : This belt is located north of the Prairies. As their belt extreme cold during winter, wheat is cultivated here during the spring season. It mainly comprises the eastern part of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and the western part of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and the western part of Minnesota. Superior quality of wheat is obtained from this belt and surplus amount is exported to some other countries.

(vi) Mixed agriculture of north-east : This belt includes the southern and the eastern states of the Great Lake Region and covers Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New England State. This belt is also known as the dairy farming belt. Animal rearing is widely practised in the new grasslands of this belt. Besides, rye and barely are also produced in this belt.

(vii) Dry farming and dairy belt : This agricultural belt is mostly situated in the western part of the central plain and the eastern part of the Cordillera region. Since this region gets less rain, abundant grasses grow here resulting in the development of dairy farming. The geographical conditions are ideal for the rearing of animals like sheep and cattle. The main areas included in this belt are western part of Texas part of Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, etc.

The major crops produced under dry farming method include jowar and bajra while barley and maize are practised often with irrigation. The important dairy products obtained from animal rearing include milk, beef, meat, wool, etc.

(viii) The Mediterranean agricultural belt : This belt comprises California, located on the Pacific coast of the USA. Besides wheat and cotton, the region also produces a variety of fruits like orange, grapes, apple, etc.

(ix) The Mixed farming belt of the north west margin : The main areas that fall under this belt are the states of Washington, Idaho and Oregon located in the north--western margin of the USA. This region is noted for the cultivation of wheat and maize. Besides production of crops, rearing of animals is also done in the region for milk and meat. Hence, this region is known as the mixed agricultural belt.

Q7. Name the major industries of the USA and show them on a map. Describe any one of them.

Alternative Question : Name the major industrial regions of the USA and show them on a map. Describe any one of them.

Ans : Do your Self.

Q8. Write short notes on the following :

(a) Physiography of the Rocky mountaineous region.

(b) Physiography of Appalachian highlands.

(c) Drainages of central plain.

(d) Urbanisation of the USA and the principal urban centres.

(e) Economic characteristics of the USA.

(f) Agricultural belts of the USA.

(g) North-eastern industrial region of the USA.

(h) Pacific coastal industries of the USA.

(i) Dry agriculture and dairy farming belt of the USA.

(j) Mineral resources of the USA.

Ans : (a) Physiography of the Rocky mountainous region : Do your Self.

(b) Physiography of Appalachian highland : Do your Self.

(c) Drainage of central plain : Do your Self.

(d) Urbanisation of the USA and the principal urban centres : The USA is economically and industrially the most developed country in the world. Of the total population of the country (302 million), more than 76% lives in the urban centres. Thus, a major portion of the population of the USA lives in towns and cities. New York with a population of 22 million is the largest and the most populated city in the USA. The second most populated city is Los Angeles with a population of 18 million. The other important urban centres of the USA are Massachussetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburg, Whilling, Cliveland, Detroit, Michigan, San Francisco, Los Angeles, etc.

(e) Economic characteristics of the USA : The United States of America is economically the most advanced country in the world. The Gross National Product of the country is the highest in the world. The per capita income of the USA is currently 38,000 dollars. The USA produces 20% of the world's coal, copper and petroleum. It is the highest producer of corn, cotton and tobacco and second highest producer of wheat and barley. It produces 46% and 18% of world production of corn and wheat respectively. More than 10% of the world export comes from the USA.

Another notable features of the economy of USA is that agriculture contributes to only 2% of the Gross National Income while industry contributes about 30% and trade, transport and communication accounts for 68% of the national income. Out of the total population aged between 15-64 years, 79% are engaged in different economic activities. Only 5% of the population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Besides, people of USA are involved in several economic activities like trade and services, fishing, animal rearing, mining and lumbering. Thus, USA is basically an industry-based country rather than an agriculture-based country. She is one of the fastest growing economics in the world. The economy of USA is considered to be the bedrock of stability for most economics in the world.

(f) Agricultural belts of the USA : Do your Self.

(g) North-Eastern Industrial region of the USA :Do your Self.

(h) Pacific coastal industries of the USA : Do your Self.

(i) Dry agriculture and diary farming belt of the USA : Do your Self.

(j) Mineral resources of the USA : The United States of America ranks first in the world regarding the possession and utilisation of several minerals. In fact, her mineral wealth is far greater than any other developed country. The USA has a rich supply of petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, copper, bauxite, lead,

zinc, gold, silver and uranium. The USA produces nearly 20% of the world's coal, copper and petroleum. The USA ranks third and fourth in the production of petroleum and iron ore in the world respectively. She also produces a variety of other minerals such as lead, zinc, bauxite, silver and gold. Thus, the USA has all the vital minerals required for industrial development. This has been one of the primary reasons for the high industrial development and economic progress of the USA.