

A little history

How did all those American states emerge? And get united? You can find out here.

The United States



People first reached North America over 12 000 years ago. They crossed from Asia to Alaska, on land that is now under water. Today's Native Americans are their descendants.



European explorers began to arrive around 1500 AD. And by 1733, Britain had 13 colonies along the east coast. France, Spain, and other countries took over other areas.



Some Europeans set up plantations. They needed workers, so bought hundreds of thousands of African slaves. The British sent convicts too. Poor Europeans came as servants.



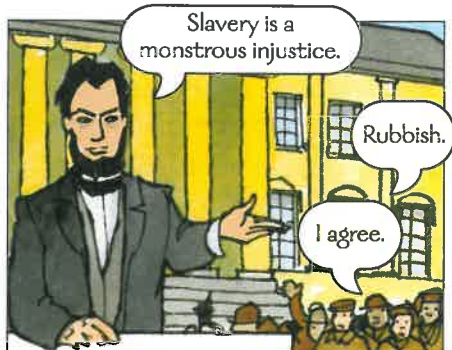
By 1775, the British colonies were tired of being ruled and taxed by Britain. A war for independence began: **the American Revolution**. The colonies won.



So in 1783, Britain granted its 13 colonies their independence. They became **the United States**. They chose George Washington as their first president.



By 1900, 117 years later, the United States had reached its present size. It had spread by buying land, and gaining land through wars, conflicts, and treaties. (See page 139!)



The states did split up for a short time, from 1861. The president then, Abraham Lincoln, was against slavery. 11 southern states were in favour of it. They broke away ...



... to form their own **Confederacy of States**. This led to the **American Civil War** (1861 – 1865). The Confederates lost. The states were reunited, with slavery abolished.



Today, the 50 states are strongly united, under the American flag. It is called the Stars and Stripes – or sometimes the Star-Spangled Banner, after the national anthem.