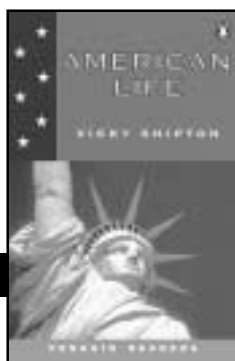


Teacher's notes

American Life

by Vicky Shipton



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ELEMENTARY

SUMMARY

T *American Life* offers an enormous amount of interesting information and statistics about the way Americans live, how the United States and its people developed as a nation, and the passions and problems in American society today. This magazine-style Penguin Reader includes a general knowledge test, a map of the country, a comic strip story on High School Life, and many short articles on everything in America today from hot dogs to movie stars. The statistics on the average American couple and their earnings clearly show that white Americans and African Americans do not live in a society that always believes in equal pay for equal work. The brief history of America's favorite sports gives information on the most famous and the highest paid athletes. Movies, music and television are big money-spinners and Americans are hooked on all three. Entertainment plays a big part in American life, but so does hard work. When someone starts in a new job in the USA, generally speaking, it will be years before that worker gets more than one or two weeks' vacation per year. And some people earn only the minimum wage - \$5.75 per hour. It is a country where people work hard and play hard.

ABOUT VICKY SHIPTON

Vicky Shipton is from Michigan, in northern USA, and she lived for some years in Turkey and in Britain. When she lived in these countries, she learned about other cultures, which opened her eyes to the way people live in America. She lived in Chicago, Illinois for four years and is now living with her husband and two daughters in Madison, Wisconsin.

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

In the days before Europeans discovered America, it was a wild and beautiful country with very few people, but with many wild animals. Native Americans first came from Siberia and lived off the land. They were called "Indians" by Europeans because Christopher Columbus thought he had landed in India when he

reached North America. When white men from Europe first arrived in the "New World," the Native Americans were friendly and helpful. But these white men took land away from the Native Americans, and they fought and became bitter enemies. More and more immigrants from Europe poured into America, especially from England, France, Germany, Holland, and later Ireland. People from Africa were brought to America from as early as the 1600s to work as slaves for the white men. From 1861-65, Americans in the north fought Americans in the south in a very bitter Civil War. The North won and as a result, the slaves were freed. But, for the most part, they lived separately from white people until the 1960s. Many immigrants to the USA today are from Latin America and Asia. People go to America for a better life, more freedom, and many people think they will become rich. However, life in the USA today is not always easy for immigrants. If they do not speak much English, they cannot get good jobs. Although there are a lot of Spanish speakers in the southwest, English remains the first language.

The USA is a very big country, with four time zones, and there are a lot of differences between different parts of the country. Not everybody lives the same way. There are big cities, like New York and Los Angeles, but a great part of the country is farmland, desert, and mountainous regions. Some people live near oceans or great lakes while others have never even seen an ocean. Nearly everybody in the country, except vegetarians, eat hot dogs and hamburgers, but some people eat food that other Americans have never tasted - and never will unless they go to that part of the country. Nearly everybody has one or more cars, TVs, music systems, and everybody celebrates the same national holidays. But some people are very, very rich and others are very, very poor. It is a country wishing for unity and peace, but many people own guns - and use them to hurt or kill other people. It is a country full of possibilities and promise; it is a country of striking contrasts.

AMERICAN LIFE



Teacher's notes

Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the reader, and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopyable Student's Activities pages of the Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of discussion and pair/group work questions, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access center.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

- Put students into small groups. Write these questions on the board and give the students about 20 minutes to discuss them.
 - What does the average person in your country dream of?
 - Are people in your country very different from Americans, do you think? Why (not)?
- Divide the class into two teams and tell them to look at the map on page 3. Tell them that you are going to ask 10 questions. The first team to shout out the correct answer gets one point. The team with the most points wins. (You may wish to give them 5 minutes to study the map, then ask them to close the book. If this is too difficult, let them look at the map for answers.)

Which ocean is to the east? (Atlantic Ocean)
How many states are there? (50)
Is California in the east or west? (west)
Are the states in the east bigger or smaller than the states in the west? (smaller)
What country is north of the USA? (Canada)
Where are there a lot of mountains? (in the west)
Is Florida in the north or south? (south)
What state is Chicago in? (Illinois)
Which states are near Mexico? (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California)
What state is the most northern? (Alaska)
- Ask the class what holidays are important in America. Find out how much they know about the 4th of July, Halloween, and Thanksgiving. Ask them to open their books to page 26 and look at the pictures. Would they like to go the US on one of these days? Why (not)? Do their countries have similar holidays?

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Pages 1-11

- Write the 16 words below on small slips of paper. Make two sets. Divide the class into two groups and give each group a set of 16 words. Tell them to match the words that go together. The first group to finish with all correct matches are the winners.

average/Americans country/music American/dream
German/immigrants
shopping/mall President/Washington African/slaves
football team
- Ask your students to work in pairs to make a test like the one on page 1. They should use different information from pages 2-11. While they are making their tests, check that their questions make sense and correct any mistakes. When everyone is finished, they should exchange tests with another pair of students who will do the test together, then return it for correction. The two pairs can discuss questions and answers afterward.
- Put students into small groups and ask them to write eight questions they would like to ask the following people:

an American child a Native American man
Christopher Columbus
Thomas Jefferson a slave in the 1850s an immigrant to America from your country
a Mexican American woman an average African American man or woman
Ask the groups to read their questions to the rest of the class. After each question, elicit possible answers to the questions.

Pages 12-26

- Write these words on the board: *channels, commercials, shows, stars, stations*. Put the class into small groups and ask them to discuss the differences between TV and radio in their country and in the USA. How many channels are there? How many hours do they watch TV? What are the most popular shows? etc.
- Tell the students that they are going to be average Americans for this activity. They must choose an American name for themselves, state whether they are a white American, African-American, Mexican American, etc. How old are they? What sex? Give them 5 - 10 minutes to plan their new identity. Then, tell them that they are at a party and they are meeting each other for the first time. Let them walk around and talk to each other for about 15 minutes. (You might play some music and give them some drinks.) When time is up, have a class discussion. How did they feel? Who was the most interesting person they met? Who was the most believable, and why?
- Ask students to make their own comic strip story like High School Life. It should either be about someone in their country going to America to live with an American family or an American coming to live with their family.

Glossary

It will be useful if your students know these new words. They are practiced in the 'Before You Read' sections at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.)

Pages 1 - 11

average (adj) regarded as usual or ordinary
country music (n) popular music in the style of southern and western US
American dream (n) the best things that money can buy
government (n) the people who rule a country
immigrant (n) a person coming into a country from abroad to make their home there
land (n) ground owned as property
mall (n) a large building with many stores under one roof
president (n) the head of government in some countries, as in the USA
shop (v) to go to stores because you want to buy things
slave (n) a person who is owned by another person and must work for them
team (n) a group of people who play a sport together

Pages 12 - 26

album (n) a record which plays for about twenty minutes on each side
channel (n) a particular television station
commercial (n) an advertisement on television or radio
crime (n) an action which is punishable by law
professional (adj) working in a job that needs a high level of education and special training
show (n) a performance on television, especially one that is not very serious
star (n) a famous performer
station (n) an organization that broadcasts on television or radio
war (n) fighting



Student's activities

Photocopiable

Students can do these exercises alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group only activities are marked.

American Life



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ELEMENTARY

AMERICAN LIFE

Activities before reading the book

- Read the Introduction. What American things are you going to read about in this book? Circle the answers.
 food weather movies language cars
 TV money mountains music houses
- How many people live in America? Write the answer in words.
- On what page do you see a picture of
 - the Empire State Building
 - the Statue of Liberty
 - a hot dog
 - a map
 - one dollar

Activities while reading the book

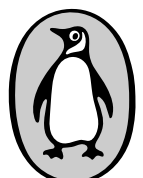
Pages 1-11

- Write the correct word in the sentences below.
 - The Sears Tower is than the Empire State Building.
 - The Golden Gate Bridge is than the Sears Tower.
 - Alaska is than California.
 - New York City is the city in the USA.
- Match the dates with what happened. Then put them in order on a time-line that you have drawn.

1492	(a) English people arrive on the <i>Mayflower</i>
1587	(b) President Thomas Jefferson buys land from the French

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1620 | (c) Christopher Columbus finds America |
| 1789 | (d) Northerners and Southerners fight a war |
| 1803 | (e) George Washington is the first president of the USA |
| 1861-65 | (f) the British build Jamestown in Virginia |
| 1890 | (g) Americans kill Sioux people at Wounded Knee, South Dakota |

- Circle Y (Yes) or N (No).
 - There are more African Americans than Asian Americans.
Y N
 - Half of all Mexican immigrants to the USA live in California.
Y N
 - Some stores in the US are open seven days every week, 24 hours every day.
Y N
 - "Fast food" first came from Mexico.
Y N
 - The average American eats more than one hot dog every week.
Y N
- Answer these questions.
 - How much does the average house cost in America?
 - How many days of vacation does the average new worker get every year?
 - How much more money does the average white man get than a black man every year?



Student's activities

Pages 12-29

1 Who is speaking?

Wayne Gretzky Henry Ford
Mel Gibson Michael Jackson
Martin Luther King, Jr. Jackie Robinson
Sammy Sosa Michael Jordan

- (a) "A lot of people bought my Model T."
- (b) "I have a dream."
- (c) "I play baseball for the Chicago Cubs."
- (d) "People said that I could fly!"
- (e) "I was a professional hockey player for twenty years."
- (f) "I made \$25,000,000 for one movie."
- (g) "My album did as well as *The Eagles Greatest Hits 1971-75*."

2 Write these words in the sentences below.

*puck baseball field touchdown pitcher
stick hitter bat net quarterback*

Americans play baseball on a

- (a) The
- (b) throws the ball and the
- (c) hits it with a
- (d) Hockey players hit a
- (e) with a
- (f) into a
- (g) In American football, the
- (h) throws the ball.
Each team tries to make a
- (i)

3 Put the words in order to make good sentences.

- (a) than/year/Indians/movies/new/make
Americans/more/every
- (b) There/movies/sound/was/in/no/early
- (c) music/The/Tennessee/country/is/
center/of/Nashville
- (d) Almost/show/all/commercials/
television/channels

4 These dates are the answers to the questions below. Write them in the correct place.

1874 1891 1903 1927 1950s

When was the first

- (a) Ford car made in Detroit, Michigan?
- (b) big car made?
- (c) game of American football?
- (d) game of basketball?
- (e) movie with sound?

Activities after reading the book

- 1 What do you think is the biggest problem in America today? Too many cars, guns, immigrants, people without money? Write a letter to the president of the USA and tell him. What changes do Americans have to make?
- 2 You are going to America for two months. What do you want to see there? What do you want to do? Where do you want to go? Make a plan. Look at another student's plan. Is it different or the same?
- 3 You are going to write a book like this one about your country. Choose one of these to write about: Food, Mr. and Mrs. Average, Cars, Problems, Sports, Music, or TV.



american.life. Home. American Companies. Subscribe Now. Contact Us. Company Profile "Zombie Tinder. June 11, 2018 August 21, 2018. Metacritic Music Reviews, American Life by Madonna, Madonna's second collaboration with French electronic producer Mirwais includes the lead single title track as well as her recent James Bond theme. Unlike recent collections Music and Ray of Light, the lyrical content of American Life relies less on spiritual introspection and more on woman-in-the-mirror confrontation. All this publication's reviews. Read full review. American Life is the ninth studio album by American singer-songwriter Madonna. It was first released on April 21, 2003, by Maverick Records and Warner Bros. Records. The album, produced in its entirety by Madonna and Mirwais Ahmadza, features references to many parts of American culture. The album is a concept album, with recurring themes of the American Dream and materialism. These themes reject the reputation Madonna held in the 1980s, earned by songs such as her worldwide hit "Material Girl" (1985). American Life is the ninth studio album by Madonna. The album was unique in that it featured deeply personal perspectives, views and observations from Madonna that reflected on modern life in America. The album was critical towards or reflected on an Americanised world based on the principles of Hollywood and standard or standardised global culture. The album also examined American dreams, expectations and illusions, particularly in songs like "American Life", "Love Profusion" and "Hollywood". The