

Summary: United States Today

A Nation of Immigrants

Millions of immigrants come to the United States. Some come for a better life, and some come for religious or political freedom. Until 1965, most immigrants came from Europe or Mexico. In 1965, Congress changed the immigration laws. Now immigrants come from many nations. Spanish-speaking immigrants come from Central and South America and the Caribbean. Refugees from wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua came during the 1980s.

People also come from Africa and the West Indies. Today almost one-third of America's immigrants are Asians from India, China, the Philippines, and other countries. Immigrants often live in communities where other people from their country live. They influence the culture and government of the places where they live.

Many People, One Nation

Many immigrants to the United States find the freedom they need to start successful careers. The United States has a diverse population, with many different ethnic groups. People bring music, food, language, art, and customs from their countries. Each person brings knowledge, skills, and talents. These things improve the United States. Ethnic diversity is one of the greatest strengths of the United States.

All people in the United States share a heritage of democracy. All United States citizens share the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights explain the rights of U.S. citizens. Our democratic heritage unites us into one nation. You can see the Latin motto "E Pluribus Unum" on American money. These Latin words mean "out of many, one." These words remind us that the United States became one nation by joining together 13 colonies. Today 50 states and many ethnic groups are joined together into one nation.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

refugee *noun*, a person who escapes war or other danger and seeks safety in another country

heritage *noun*, something that is passed down from one generation to the next

motto *noun*, a short statement that explains an ideal or goal



After You Read

REVIEW Why did immigration to the United States change after 1965? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW What do all U.S. citizens share? Draw a box around the sentence that tells the answer.