

# Revision for american culture and society

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



## AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN STUDIES REVISION FOR " AMERICAN

CULTURE AND SOCIETY" " We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" —The United States Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776

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American Culture and Society" 1. The U. S cultural diversity. What brought

about the cultural diversity in the US? " America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming...

Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians - into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American."-Israel Zangwill

(1908)- \* The US was described as a melting point by Zangwill. \* The U. S is a society of immigrants. Since its early days, the country has admitted more

than 50 million newcomers, a large number of immigrants than any country in history. \* The first immigrants were the Spanish. \* Then, French people

came to the US for the prospects of wealth. \* The British, who were the first

to colonize (xam chiem thuoc dia) on a large scale, came for profit and also

for religious freedom. \* Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, the U. S was home

to diverse cultures when the first Europeans & Africans arrived added their

own varying cultures to this diversity. \* Between 1840 & 1860, the US

received the greatest influx of immigrants ever. During this period, 10 million

people came to America. Most of them mainly came from the northern and

western Europe. \* During the years from 1860 to 1914, the new wave of

immigration began. The new immigrants were Latin, Slavic, and Jewish

peoples from the southern and Eastern Europe, some of them were brought to US to be slaves working on agricultural estates. \* A variety of Native American peoples who spoke more than 300 different languages. \* Some statistics: In 1815, the population of the US was 8.4 million. Over the next 100 years, the country took in about 35 million immigrants, with the greatest numbers coming in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. In 1882, 40,000 Chinese arrived, and between 1900 and 1907, there were more than 30,000 Japanese immigrants... Overall, the United States has become the home of immigrants from all over the world. The immigrants brought different languages & different cultures to the US. It is the flood of immigration that has affected, left an indelible imprint and brought the cultural wealth and diversity to the US. " Everywhere immigrants have enriched and strengthened the fabric (khia canh, co cau) of American life" --- John F. Kennedy, 35th president, the first Catholic to be elected President of The United States --- The U. S is certainly one of the most diverse countries of the world. \* The US- a melting pot in the past & a salad bowl, a vegetable soup nowadays. 2. Three most important events in the US history, their impact on the development of the country. A- The Civil War. B- Great Depression C- World War II A- The Civil War. Reason to choose this event: Sequence of event: \* Throughout the 17th and 18th century, there were a large number of Africans (more than 10 million), unwilling immigrants, being forcibly transported to the America to provide slave labor in the Southern colonies. \* " We hold the truth to be self-evident (hien nhien), that all men are created equal, that they are endowed (ban tang) by their Creator with certain inalienable (khong the chuyen nhuong) rights that among these are Life,

Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. " ---The Declaration of Independence-- \*

The ringing words of the America's Declaration of Independence, " all men are created equal", were meaningless for these slaves. \* In 1820s of the 19th century, southern and northern politicians debated the question of whether slavery would be legal in the western territories. \* After Abraham Lincoln, a foe of slavery was elected president in 1860, 11 Southern slave states seceded (ly khai), left the Union and proclaimed themselves an independent nation formed the Confederate States of America the Civil War broke out. \* After 2 years war, the Confederates surrendered (dau hang) bringing an end to the Civil War, slavery was abolished throughout the United States. Its impact: \* The Civil War was the most traumatic episode (su kien dang buon) in American history. \* It brought about to some changes (some developments) to the political, economic and social life of the US: \* The Civil War resolved two matters that had vexed (lam phien long) Americans since 1776: put an end to slavery and it decided that the country was not a collection of semi-independent states but an indivisible whole. B. Great Depression. Context: \* In the 20th century, the US economy flourished making this country become a leading industrial power. For big business, the 1920s were golden years when shrewd (nhay ben) businessmen made great fortunes. \* But unrestrained economic growth brought dangers and superficial property masked deep problem. \* With profits soaring (tang vot) and interest rates low, plenty of money was available for investment. \* Much of it, however, went into reckless speculation (su dau co) in the stock market. Frantic bidding (su tra gia dien cuong) pushed prices far above stock shares' real value the stock market crashed, triggering (lam no ra) a worldwide

depression. Sequence of event: \* By 1932, thousands of American banks and > 100, 000 businesses had failed. \* Industrial production was cut in half, wages had decreased 60%, and one out of every four workers was unemployed. \* The US president at that time was Franklin D. Roosevelt, a famous person with saying " the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" also the president reserving longer than any other president in US history. \* He introduced a series of economic and social reforms known as the New Deal. With 3 months-the historic " Hundred Days"-Roosevelt had rushed through Congress a great number of laws to help the economy recover. Impacts: \* Although Roosevelt's New Deal programs did not end Great Depression totally, it played an important role in helping the US overcome the Great Depression. \* The market crash marked the beginning of a decade of high unemployment, poverty, low profits, deflation, plunging farm incomes, and lost opportunities for economic growth and personal advancement. Although its causes are still uncertain and controversial, the net effect was a sudden and general loss of confidence in the economic future. The usual explanations include numerous factors, especially high consumer debt, ill-regulated markets that permitted malfeasance by banks and investors, cutbacks in foreign trade, lack of high-growth new industries, and growing wealth inequality, all interacting to create a downward economic spiral of reduced spending, falling confidence, and lowered production. \* 13 million people became unemployed. In 1932, 34 million people belonged to families with no regular full-time wage earner. \* Industrial production fell by nearly 45% between the years 1929 and 1932. \* Homebuilding dropped by 80% between the years 1929 and 1932. \* In the 1920s, the banking system in the

U. S. was about \$50 billion, which was about 50% of GDP. \* From the years 1929 to 1932, about 5, 000 banks went out of business. \* By 1933, 11, 000 of the US' 25, 000 banks had failed. \* Between 1929 and 1933, U. S. GDP fell around 30%, the stock market lost almost 90% of its value. \* In 1929, the unemployment rate averaged 3%. \* In 1933, 25% of all workers and 37% of all nonfarm workers were unemployed \* C. World War II. Context: \* At first, like to the World War I before, neutrality was the initial American response to the outbreak of World War II. \* However, the bombing of Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii, the 50th state in the US, by the Japanese in December 1941 brought this country into the war, first against Japan and then against its allies, Germany and Italy. Sequence of event: \* First, America co-operated with British and Soviet to concentrate on defeating Germany first the Germans finally surrendered on May 5, 1945. \* Then, the allies' forces proceeded to Italy and liberated Rome on June 4, 1944. \* The war against Japan came to a swift (nhanh chong) end in August of 1945 after 2 atomic bombs against the cities of Hiroshima & Nagasakinearly 200, 000 civilians were killedJapan surrendered unconditionally World War II ended. Impacts: 3. The US- a country/ a society of immigrants. The U. S is a society of immigrants. Since its early days, the country has admitted more than 50 million newcomers, a large number of immigrants than any country in history. Most people came, and still come today for wealth, land and freedom. There are 4 great waves of immigration to America in term of name, period of time, the composition of immigrants and the reasons of immigration for each wave. a. First Immigrants. b. Old Immigration. c. Southeastern European. d. Recent Immigration

\*\*\*\*\* a. First Immigrants: Period of time: began from 1500s to 1700s The composition of immigrants & reasons \* The first immigrants coming to the US were Spanish explorers stories of the New World's gold attracted. \* French fur traders prospects of wealth. \* The British, who were the first to colonize on a large scale, came for profit and also for religious freedom. \* Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, many German farmers came to the US \* Africans, America's unwilling immigrants, provided slave labor in the southern colonies. \* Immigrants also came from France, Spain, and Switzerland. b. Old Immigration. Period of time: between 1840 and 1880. Composition & reasons: \* In the mid-1800s, thousands of Chinese immigrated to California, where most of them worked on the railroad. \* Up until 1880, the overwhelming majority of immigrants, however, came from northern or western Europe many left Europe to escape poor harvests, famines or political unrest. \* 1845-1860, a serious blight (tai hoa) on the potato crop in Ireland sent hundreds of thousands of Irish people to the US to escape starvation. \* The northern & western Europeans who arrived between 1840 and 1880 are often referred to as the " Old immigration" Statistics: \* Between 1840 and 1860, the US received the greatest influx of immigrants ever. \* During this period, 10 million people came to US. \* By the middle of the century the US, with over 23 million inhabitants, had a larger population than any single European country. \* The proportion of newcomers increased rapidly so that by 1860 about 13 of every 100 persons in the U. S. were recent immigrants. c. Southeastern European Period of time: the late 1800s. Composition & reasons: \* Northern & Western Europe were no longer providing the majority of the immigrants. \* The new immigrants were Latin,

Slavic, and Jewish people from southern & eastern Europe. \* Among these new arrivals were Italians, Hungarians, Poles, Russians, and Greeks... \* This new wave of immigrants was so great that in the peak years of unlimited immigration between 1900 and 1920 the number of immigrants sometime rose to as many as 1 million a year. d. Recent Immigration. Immigration in the 1900s is the largest in almost 100 years and accounts for one third of the yearly growth in total population in the US. Period of time: after the 1920s. Composition & reasons: \* The majority of the newest immigrants come from Mexico, Latin America, or Asia. \* Many are Cambodian and Vietnam refugees who fled the destruction & upheaval (su noi len/ su day len) of the Vietnam War. Reasons: \* They fled their country because of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. Common reasons for 4 waves of immigration to the US: \* Some immigrants journey to the United States in search of a place to practice their religion freely \* Others seek asylum (noi an lap) from political or economic persecution (su khung bo/ nguoc dai). \* Still others arrive in hopes of building a better life for themselves & their families. Statistics: \* In 1815, the population of the US was 8. 4 million. Over the next 100 years, the country took in about 35 million immigrants, with the greatest numbers coming in the late1800s and the early 1900s. In 1882, 40, 000 Chinese arrived, and between 1900 and 1907, there were more than 30, 000 Japanese immigrants... \* In 1908, a year when 1 million new immigrants arrived in the US, Israel Zangwill used the term " melting pot" to describe this country. \* There are areas of the country where majority of students in the schools are from minority groups, many of whom are recent immigrants



who do not speak English well. \* In Miami, three fourths of the populations speak a language other than English at home & 67% of these people say they do not speak English very well. 4. American traditional belief & values, their realization (su nhan thuc ro/ su thuc hien/ su thi hanh) in different fields, & their contribution to the success of the nation. A- American traditional beliefs & values: \* American ideas and values: a. Freedom \* At the center of all that Americans value is freedom. \* American's understanding of freedom is shaped by the Founding Fathers' belief that all people are equal and that the role of government is to protect each person's basic "inalienable" rights. \* The US Constitution's Bill of Rights, ratified in 1791, assures individual rights, including provisions (dieu khoan) for freedom of speech, press, and religion. b. Idealizing what is practical \* The American tendency is to realize whatever is practical. \* In America, what works is what counts \* This "can-do" spirit is something that Americans are proud of today. They like to think they are natural-born-do-it-yourselfers. c. Volunteerism \* The "do-it-yourself" spirit is known as volunteerism in American community & political life. \* Volunteerism means people helping people through privately initiated, rather than government-sponsored, agencies. e. x. when a high school football team requires money for uniforms, parents & students form an athletic association which organizes car washes & bake sales to raise money for uniform. d. Psychology of abundance \* It's easy to be an optimistic do-it-yourself in so many spheres when one takes for granted (cho la tat nhien) an abundance of resources. \* Historically, Americans have regarded their country as a land of limitless wealth, a land of plenty. e. Mobility \* The pragmatism (tinh thuc dung) of

Americans & their trust in an abundance of resources relates to the American habit of mobility. \* Mobility in America is not a sign of aimlessness but optimism. \* The American habit of mobility has been important in contributing a degree of homogeneity (tinh dong nhat) to a society of such extreme cultural diversity & spaciousness (su rong rai) f. Patriotism \* A further consequence of Americans' mobility is that they develop relatively little attachment to place. \* In the US, national pride has become generally stronger than regional pride. \* In many nations, patriotism is essentially the love of the land. In US, American patriotism is concentrated instead upon the particular historic event of the nation's creation as a new start \* upon the idea of freedom which inspired the nation's beginnings. g. Progress \* Directly associated with the value of the freedom is the ideal of progress. \* The nation's progress has been measured by the taming (su thuan phuc/ che ngu) of the frontier & industrial expansion. h. American Dream \* The American Dream is expressed as " the dream in which life should be better, richer and fuller for every man with opportunities for each according to his abilities and achievements. " \* The phrase " going rags to riches" has been a slogan for the great American Dream. \* It teaches Americans to believe that contentment (su hai long/ ma nguyen) can be reached through virtues (duc hanh/ duc tinh) of thrift (su tiet kiem), hard work, family loyalty (long trung thanh), 7 faith in the free enterprise (su nghiep) system. \* Traditional American Values: The US has been viewed as " the land of opportunity", attracting immigrants from all over the world. The opportunities they believed they would find in the US & the experiences they actually had when they arrived nurtured this set of values. Therefore, there are 6 basic values

that become " traditional" American values. Three represent traditional reasons why immigrants have been drawn to the US: the chance for individual freedom, equality of opportunity, & material wealth. In order to achieve these benefits, however, there were prices to be paid: self-reliance, competition, & hard work

a. Individual freedom & Self-reliance \* Individual freedom \* The most basic of all American values \* Perhaps the word " freedom" is one of the most respected words in the US today. \* By freedom, Americans mean the desire & the ability of all individuals to control their own destiny without outside interference from the government, a ruling noble class, the church, or any other organized authority. \* Self-reliance. \* A price to be paid for this individual freedom: self-reliance. \* Individuals must learn to rely on themselves or risk losing freedom. It mean that they should take care themselves, solve their own problems, & " stand on their own feet. "

b. Equal of opportunity & Competition \* Equal of opportunity. \* The second important reason why immigrants have traditionally been drawn to the US is the belief that everyone has a chance to succeed here. \* Individuals are free from excessive political, religious, & social controls; they have better chance for personal success. \* Of particular importance is the lack of hereditary aristocracy. \* Americans mean equality of opportunity that each individual should have an equal chance for success. \* For them, equality means that everyone should have an equal chance to enter the race & win. \*

Competition. \* A price to be paid for this value. \* It much of life is seen as a race, then a person must run the race in order to succeed; a person must compete with others. \* The pressures of competition in the life of an American begin in childhood & continue until retirement from work. \*

Learning to compete successfully is a part of growing up in the US, & competition is encouraged by strong programs of competitive sports provided by the public schools & community groups. \* In fact, any group of people who do not compete successfully-for whatever reason-do not fit into the mainstream of American life as well as those who do compete. c.

Material wealth & Hard work. \* Material wealth. \* Reasons why immigrants have come to the US have a better life raise their standard of living. \* America appeared to be " a land of plenty" where millions could come to seek their fortunes. \* The phrase " going from rags to riches" became a slogan for the great American Dream. \* Acquiring & maintaining a large number of material possessions are of great importance to most Americans. \* The reason for it is that material wealth is a means to measure of social status in the US. \* Hard work. \* A price to be paid. \* Only by hard work could natural resources be converted into material possessions, allowing a more comfortable standard of living. \* Hard work has been both necessary & rewarding for most Americans throughout their history B- American traditional beliefs and values' realization in different fields (neu cac American beliefs & values truoc sau do phan tich vao cac systems) \* The US economy: \* In private enterprise: \* Freedom: \* The US economy is described as a free enterprise system which allows private business the freedom to operate for profit with minimum government interference & regulation. \* These ideas are compatible with the American beliefs & values. Freedom from economic control seemed an extension of freedom from the control of religion, speech, & the press. \* It is this value freedom in economic system that helps American believe in the potential for individual success that exists within their free enterprise

system: going from bare hand success. Ex. The Coca-cola company began when an American pharmacist mixed together the first Coca-cola drink & began selling it in Atlanta, Georgia, in the 1980s. \* In business: \* Equal of opportunity & Competition: \* Americans view business as being more firmly based on the ideal of competition than other institutions in society. \* Competition is not good only in itself; it's the means by which other basic American values such as individual freedom, equality of opportunity, & hard work are protected. \* Competition protects individual freedom by ensuring that there is no monopoly of power. \* Competition in business is also believed to strengthen the idea of equality of opportunity Americans compare business competition to a race open to all, where success & status go to the swiftest person regardless of social class background \* Business competition is also seen by most of Americans as encouraging hard work. \* In the US, American Dream has usually accomplished through successful business careers. All of the great private fortunes in the nation were built by people, who were successful in business, many of whom started life with very little. \* Careers in business still offer the best opportunities for the ambitious individual to become wealthy. \* In the US, entrepreneur who " makes it on their own" was perfect example of the American idea of equality of opportunity in action. \* Americans have great respect for those who can say " I am my own boss". Ex. In the 1996 presidential campaign, another billionaire, Steve Forbes, tried unsuccessfully to get the Republican nomination. In contrast to the wealthy entrepreneur Ross Perot, Forbes inherited his fortune from his father, Malcolm Forbes. Although both men were extremely wealthy, Americans seemed to respect the self-made Perot

more than privileged Forces. \* The US political system \* The idea of the free individual has had a profound effect on the way Americans view their government. \* Traditionally, there has been a deep suspicion that government is the nature enemy of freedom, even if it is elected by the people. \* The bigger & stronger the government becomes, the more dangerous most Americans believe it is to their individual freedom The division of governmental power is based on the belief that if any one part or branch of government has all, or even most of the power, it will become a threat to the freedom of individual citizens. \* These features in the US government were created to ensure that government power will not be usurped by a small power group or a few leaders: the federal organization of government, the separation of powers among 3 branches (legislative, executive & judicial) of government & a system of checks and balances to restrict the powers of each branch. e. x Checks & Balances system: - The division of government power among 3 separate but equal branches provides for a system of checks & balances. Each branch checks or limits the power of other branches. For example, although Congress makes laws, the president can veto them. However, even if the president vetoes a law, Congress may check the president by overriding his veto with a two-thirds vote. - The Constitution gives each of these two branches enough power to prevent the other from acting on its own. - In addition to dividing government power into 3 branches, the Constitution includes a Bill of Rights, which is designed to protect individual rights & freedoms from government inference. The Bill of Right is another statement of the American belief in the importance of individual freedom. \* The US educational system. \* Equal of

opportunity. \* Educational institutions in the US reflect the nation's basic values, especially the ideal of the equality of opportunity. \* From elementary school through college, Americans believe that everyone deserves as an equal opportunity to get a good education \* From the beginning, when Americans established their basic system of public schools in 1825, they reaffirmed the principle of equality by: making schools open to all classes of Americans, and financing the schools with tax money connected from all citizens. \* American schools tend to put more emphasis on developing critical thinking skills than they do on acquiring quantities of facts \* American students are encouraged to express their own opinions in class & think for themselves, a reflection of the American values of individual freedom & self-reliance. \* "No child is left behind" C- American traditional beliefs and values' contribution to the success of the nation. 5. What is the "American Dream"? (Is it open to all?) \* The term "American dream" was used in widely different contexts from political speeches eluding (vuot qua) precise definition. \* According to J. T. Adams in *The Epic of America* (1931) expressed it as "the dream of land in which life should be better, richer and fuller for every man with opportunities for each according to his abilities and achievement" \* The American Dream is popularized in countless rags to riches stories & in the portrait of the good life in advertising & on TV shows (The phrase "going from rags to riches" became a slogan for the great American Dream.) \* It teaches Americans to believe that contentment (su hai long/ ma nguyen) can be reached through virtues (duc hanh/ duc tinh) of thrift (su tiet kiem), hard work, family loyalty (long trung thanh), 7 faith in the free enterprise (su nghiep) system. \* American Dream is a

..... Examples of American Dream: California Gold Rush in the 1840s However, throughout America's history, reality has also taught her citizens, particularly minorities, that the American Dream is not open to all: \* Segregation & discrimination are effective tools which have barred minorities from equal opportunities in all spheres. Examples: The American Dream in Black and White: In the suburbs | In the urban core | White flight | Black blight (mo suong/ tai toa) | New subdivisions | New prison | Supermarkets and shopping malls (pho buon ban lon) | Liquor stores & check cashing... | A full range of commercial banks | Blood | Cup rennet over with federal subsidies (bao cap) | Empty bottles as far as the eye can see. | Economic growth | Cancer | All the best public schools | The school of hard knocks | 6. American economic achievements. a. The US is one of the most affluent nations in the world. \* The US today is a leading economic power, with a high standard of living and enormous productivity in industry & agriculture. \* E. x. the average annual income for American families in 1985 was 27, 700, and 60% of all families and individuals are in the middle-income or high-income ranks. \* It has the highest income per hour worked b. The US is the world's leading producer \* The US remains the world's leading producer of goods & services. \* Industrial & technological production is high. \* The US is the world's leading producer of electrical energy, aluminum, copper, sulphur, & paper, & one of the top producers of natural gas & automobiles \* No other nation exports as much high technology as the US. c. Agriculture. \* American agriculture is a highly productive sector of the US economy. \* It is technological advancement that has accelerated changes in American agriculture. \* Farming is highly mechanized & commercialized \* In productive



terms, the achievements of this sector of the economy are extraordinary. \*

US farmers produce enough food for domestic consumption & still supply 15 % of the world food need. \* Thanks in large part to the high mechanization of production tools, prosperous agricultural estates have been set up. d.

Foreign trade. \* The US is the world's largest importer & exporter. \* The leading US imports are petroleum products, foods & beverages (do uong), machinery, & iron & steel products. \* The leading US exports are.....

Some statistics:..... 7. The US bicameral (luong vien) legislation (chi neu legislative branch va how to make a law, bai duoi day duoc su dung cho cau separation of government power) The basic framework of American government is described in the Constitution. When the Constitution was first written about two hundred years ago, many Americans feared that the government power could become concentrated in the hands of a few. Therefore, several features were created to guard against this possibility: the federal organization of government, a system of checks & balances to restrict the powers of each branch. Besides two features, the separation of powers among different branches of government also contributes to limit power of government/ to form the US limited government. The US national government is divided into three separate branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. A- Legislative Branch (lap phap) \* The function of legislative branch is to make laws \* The legislative branch is made up of representatives elected to Congress. Congress is comprised of two groups, called houses: the House of Representatives (the House) & the Senate. a. The House of Representatives (the House): \* Member: elected-lawmak \* ers from all of the states. \* Quantity: the number of

representatives each state sends to the House depends on the number of districts in each state. Each district chooses one representative. There are currently 435 representatives divided among 50 states by population in the House. \* In the House, states with large populations have more representatives than states with small populations, while in the Senate, each state has equal representation. \* Term: Each representative is elected to a 2-year term. b. The Senate. \* Smaller than the House \* Quantity: Each state, regardless of population has two senators \* Term: the senatorial term is 6 years. Every two years, one third of the Senate stands for election. c. How a bill becomes a law. \* Each house of Congress is engaged in making laws. \* A law first begins as a "bill" \* Each house of Congress has set up committees which specialize in a particular area in legislation, such as foreign affairs, defense, banking, and agriculture, etc. \* Bill is considered & discussed and sent to the House or Senate Chamber where it was first introduced. \* After a debate, the bill is voted on. If it passes, it's sent to the other house where it goes through a similar process. \* The Senate may reject a bill proposed in the House or add amendments. If that happens, a "conference committee" made up of members from both houses tries to work out a compromise (tho hiep). \* If both sides agree on the new version, the bill is sent to the president for his signature. At this point, the bill becomes a law. \* If the president vetoes a legislative bill passed by Congress- that is he refuses to sign it-the bill dies unless two-thirds of both House & Senate vote to override the veto. B- Executive Branch (hanh phap): \* This branch is responsible for administering/ carrying out the laws passed by Congress. \* The president is the chief executive, heads executive branch. \* He is elected to a four-year

term & can be re-elected to a second-term. \* The president has many important powers: As chief executive, the president appoints secretaries (bo truong) of the major departments that make up the president's cabinet. \* There are 13 major departments in the executive branch: the Department of State ( bo ngoai giao), Treasury, Defense, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health & Human Services, Housing & Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, & Education. \* The president also appoints senior officials (quan chuc cap cao) of many agencies in the expansive bureaucracy. \* He represents the country abroad, entertains foreign leaders, & addresses the public... C- Judicial Branch (tu phap) \* It is headed by the Supreme Court. \* Under the Supreme Court, there are many state & federal courts \* An important function of the Judicial Branch is to determine whether laws of Congress or actions of the president violate the Constitution. \* The Judicial Branch settles disputes about the exact meaning of the law through court cases. 8. The system of " Checks & Balances" & " Separation of Powers" A- The system of " Checks & Balances": \* The division of government power among 3 separate but equal branches provides a system of checks & balances. \* Each branch checks & limits the power of the other branch. With this system, no branch of government has superior power. It's a means for the Constitution balance government power. e. x. — Congress-President: Although Congress makes laws, the president can veto them. However, even if the president vetoes a law, Congress may check the president by overriding his veto with a two-thirds vote. \_ Supreme Court-Congress-President: The Supreme Court can overturn (lat do/ bai bo) laws by Congress and signed by the president. The president appoints judges, but

the Senate reviews his candidates & has the power to reject his choices. \* By dividing power among the 3 branches of government, the Constitution effectively ensures that government power will not be usurped (chiem doat) by a small powerful group of leaders. B. " Separation of Powers"..... 9. The main features of the US education system. " Americans regard education as the means by which the inequalities among individuals are to be erased and by which every desirable end is to be achieved. "-George S. Counts-- A- What's learned in the school? Educating the individual. \* American schools tend to put more emphasis on developing critical thinking skills than they do on acquiring quantities of facts \* American students are encouraged to express their own opinions in class & think for themselves, a reflection of the American values of individual freedom & self-reliance. \* The goal of the American education system is to teach children how to learn & to help them reach maximum potential. \* The development of social & interpersonal skills may be considered as important as the development of intellectual skills. \* Schools have designed extracurricular activities to develop competitive, political, & social skills in students such as team sports (football, basketball, & baseball) & student government. \* Curriculum in education: + Almost every elementary school instructs children in penmanship (thu phap), science, mathematics, music, art, physical education, language arts... + Most secondary schools require students to take English, mathematics, science, social studies & physical education. In addition to this " core" curriculum, students choose " elective" courses in their areas of interest. B- Diversity in education (the education ladder): \* Stages: 3 including primary education,

secondary & higher education. \* About 85% of American children attend public schools. The other 15% choose to pay tuition to attend private schools. Most private schools are run by religious organization & generally include religious instruction. a. Primary education: 5 or 6 years from grade 1 to grade 6. b. Secondary education: include 2 division: middle school (junior high schools = 2 years/ 3 years) and senior high schools = 4 years. c. Higher education: vocational & academic skills: include 3 states: schools, colleges & universities. Students have to pay tuition for their attendances. \* The main reason for such diversity in course offering & standards is that there is no national education system in the US. \* In public schools, decisions about school curriculum, teacher certification, & student achievement standards are made by boards of education at the state and/or district level. \*

Education standards & requirements differ from state to state.

Decentralization in education (decentralized funding & administration)

diversity in education. e. x. In some states, the selection of textbooks is decided by local official, whereas in other states, textbook selection is made state education official. \* Equal opportunities in education to all citizens: \*

Educational institutions in the United State reflect the nation's basic values, especially the idea of equality of opportunity. \* From elementary school through college, Americans believe that everyone deserves an equal opportunity to get a good education. \* American public schools are free & open to all at the elementary & secondary level (high school), but public universities charge tuition & have competitive entrance requirements. \* In the US, there are no separate educational systems with a higher level of education for the wealthy & a lower level of education for the masses. There

are also some elite private schools but they do not conflict with the American idea of equality of opportunity. However, because these schools are relatively few in number, they do not replace the public school as the central educational institution in the US. \* The idea of public school is very popular. e. x. Take Harvard University as an example. Before World War II, the majority of Harvard students came from elite private preparatory schools. Now, the majority of them come from public high school \* Rather, there is one system that is open to all. Individuals may climb as high on the ladder as they can. The abilities of the individuals, rather than their social class background, are expected to determine how high each person will go. \* Many aids for education which offer government scholarships to needy college students. They can borrow money from government to cover expenses encourage study. Some foundation: Economic Opportunity Act, Higher Education Act, etc. \* The numbers of students going to college increase. In 1900, less than 10% of college Americans entered college. Today, over 60% of Americans ages 25 to 38 have taken some college courses & over 20% of all Americans have attended four years of more. At present, 80% of all college students attend public universities. C- Although many efforts have made in education, the fact cannot be denied. \* It is desegregation (phenomenon) in the US education: \* Black people in the southern states were prohibited by law from attending schools with white. \* Blacks had separate schools that were inferior to (thua kém) the white schools by almost any measure. \* Three times as much money was spent per pupil in white school as in black schools. In the deep South, it was 5 times as much. \* Because of the way schools are funded, the quality of education that

American students receive in public schools varies. \* More than 90% of the money for schools comes from the local level (cities & counties), primarily from property taxes. \* The fact that public schools receive the bulk of their funds from local property taxes creates inequalities. \* Rural farming communities & poor inner-city districts have less money available for school buildings, learning materials & teacher salaries. \* More money is spent for the education of a child living in a wealthy district than a child living in a poor community. e. x. the amount of money spent on education may vary from \$ 7, 000 per child in a wealthy suburb to only \$1, 200 per child attending an inner-city school,, or one in a poor rural area. \* For the next years, Americans has being tried various methods to achieve a more balance in the public schools. \* The most controversial method used to deal with this inequality is "bussing"- carrying students by bus to a school in a different area where the pupils are or a different race, especially as a compulsory integration measure through a landmark case "Brown case". \* And, to eliminate inequalities, the federal government has increased its share of school financing & now contributes between 10 & 15 percent.