

The Political System of the USA.

The USA is a federal union of 50 states. The basic law is the constitution, adopted in 1787, which prescribes the structure of national government and lists its rights and fields of authority. Each state has its government and all of them have the dual character of both Federal and State government. The political system of the USA is divided into three branches: judicial, legislative and executive. Each branch holds a certain degree of power over the others, and all take part in the governmental process.

.. It is called the stars and the stripes and old glory. It was adopted in 1777. The red stripes proclaim courage, the white - liberty, and the field of blue stands for loyalty.

... The coat of arms of the US represents an eagle with wings outspread, holding a bangle of rods (the symbol of administer) in the left claw and olive twig (the emblem of love) in the right claw. The motto of the coat of arms is 'one out of many' (aplīnibus nun).

.... It was in 1812 when the nickname of the US government "Uncle Sam" appeared. 'Uncle' Samuel Wilson supplied beef to the American army, during the war of 1812, standing his barrels with the letters 'U. S.' The army as 'Uncle Sam's' knew this beef, and later on this familiar name became associated with the US government.

..... Although the American system of government is based on Great Britain's, it differs in having a written constitution, that is the bases of all government and law. The constitution of the US was adopted after the War of Independence on the 17th of September 1787. It lists the set of rules, law regulations, which provide the practical norms, regulating the work of the government. The document embodied the practical theories of man of property. The main principle underline the constitution was as follows: "Private property is the backbone of liberty". It was put forward by a rich plantation owner from Virginia James Madison, who is known to be a father of the constitution.

The constitution consists of Preamble and seven articles. 27 amendments have so far been added to its original text. The first 10 amendments, known as "the Bill of Rights", were added in a group in 1791. These amendments establish the individual rights and freedoms to all people of the states, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship etc. Americans fill that of all freedoms, proclaimed in the constitution, there is only one freedom - the freedom of enterprise. But it means freedom of the wealthy people only. The 21st amendment limited the President's ruling by maximum two terms.

... Supreme legislative power in the American government lies with Congress: the Senate, the upper house; and the House of the Representatives - the Lower House. Each state has its own government - State Assemblies or, Legislatures with two houses. According to the constitution of the USA, **all citizens of both sexes over 18 years of age has a right of voting**, but in reality the number of voters is much smaller. The main task of Congress is to make federal laws, to levy federal taxes, to make rules for trade, to coin money, to organise Armed forces, to declare war, to make amendments to the constitution or put foreign treaties into effect.

Under the constitution the US Senate has some special powers, not given to the House of representatives. It approves or disapproves the main presidential appointments: Ambassadors. Cabinet Members and federal judges; also ratify by a 2/3 vote treaties between the USA and foreign countries. The House of Representatives has a special power of its own - to invent a bill to raise money.

The Senate is composed of 100 members - two from each of 50 states, who are elected for a term of * years. Although congressional elections take place every two years, only 1/3 of the Senate is reelected. **A Senator must be at least 30ty years old, a citizen of the USA for 9 years and a resident of the state from which he is elected.** Democrats sit in the western part of the chamber - on Vice-president right. Republicans sit on his left. Vice-president presides over the Senate and conducts debates. The Senate is stable and more conservative than the House of Representatives and many Senators are more experienced politicians.

The House of representatives has 450 members. The number of Representatives depends on the population of each state. **A Representative must be at least 25 years age, a US citizen for 7 years and live in the state from which he is elected.** Democrats sit on the Speakers right, republicans - on his left. The Speaker presides over the House and conducts debates. The Speaker, like Vice-president, may vote. Most of the Congressmen are layers, businessman and bankers. The American press as an unrepresentative institution sometimes criticises the US Congress.

... A new Congress session begins on the 3rd of January each odd number year and continues for two years. A Congressman must work long and hard. But most of their work is done in committee meetings. Here bills are studied, experts are consulted, and recommendations are made to the whole House of Senate. During a two year term of a Congress, as many as 20000 bills are introduced. There are 16 'standing' or permanent committees in the Senate, and 22 in the House. They accept and improve some bills, but reject most of them. For a bill becomes a law it must be read, studied in committees, commented on and amended in the Senate or House chamber in which it was introduced. It is then voted upon. If it passes, it is sent to the other house where a similar procedure occurs. Members of both houses work together in "conference committees" if the chambers have passed different versions of the same bill. Groups who try to persuade Congressmen to vote for or against a bill are known as "lobbies". When both houses of Congress pass a bill on which they agree, it is sent to the president for his signature. If President is disapproves, he vetoes and refusing to sign it, and sends it back to Congress. President's objection are read and debated. To overcome the President's veto, the bill must get a 2/3 majority in each chamber.

. Often discussing Congress of the USA, the third chamber is mentioned. It's a specific American phenomena called lobbies. Today if's big corporations, social organisations, foreign diplomats, who try to influence lawmaking process in their favour. This is done with the help of lobbyists. Practically lobbyism (backstage influence in legislation) has become legal, it means, that the passing of a bill can be prevented, if it doesn't suit the interests of a definite group of big business. Lobbyists make all themselves legislative councils. More and more people realise that legislation is shaped as much by the hidden influences, as by the public debates.

... The executive power in the USA belongs to the President and his Administration. The Presidency in the USA is the highest governmental office. President in the USA is the head of the state and the government, and also the commander-in-chief of the US Armed Forces.

Vice-president and the Cabinet assist president. The President and Vice-president are elected for a term of four years and can be reelected. **President must be a natural-born citizen of the USA and at least 35 years old, and for at least 14 years resident of the USA.** The term of office of the President begins on the 2nd of January. Presidential elections are held in two stages - in November and December. Before the elections the candidates for Presidency tour the country, meeting people and delivering speeches.

The president, as the chief formulator of public policy, often proposes legislation to Congress. The president can also veto (forbid) any bill passed by Congress. The veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both the Senate and House of Representatives. As head of his political party, with ready access to the news media, the president can easily influence public opinion regarding issues and legislation that he deems vital. President conducts foreign affairs, signed documents, appoints diplomats, Cabinet Members, federal judges with the consent and advice of the Senate. He outlines the course of his administration through Congress.

Vice-president presides over the Senate, his other duties are indefinite. He takes the president's office, if the president is unable to finish his term. So Vice-president is 'a forgotten man of the American politics'. A Cabinet of 12 members assists the US President. Cabinet secretaries correspond to European ministers. They are heads of different departments and are responsible to President. Today these 13 departments are State, Treasury, Defence, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labour, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy and Education. The State Department ranks ahead of others. The political power of the Secretary of the State is the second only to that of the president. He must maintain peace and negotiates economic and political treaties.

Besides, President has an inner Cabinet, the so-called 'white-house office', i. e. immediate assistance and advises of the President. The House of Representatives may bring charges against the President, it is called 'impeachment' - a formal accusation against a public official by a legislative body, for treason, bribery and other high crimes.

Under the Constitution, the president is primarily responsible for foreign relations with other nations. He often represents the United States abroad in consultations with other heads of state, and, through his officials, he negotiates treaties with other countries. Such treaties must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate. Presidents also negotiate with other nations less formal "executive agreements" that are not subject to Senate approval.

. Inauguration always takes place on the 20th of January, it is an official act of installing the President of the USA to his office. Inauguration is connected with some traditions. Thus the incumbent President gives dinner on the eve in honour of the President elected and to conduct him through the White House'. By 12 o'clock of the 2nd of January two participants of the ceremony and guests take their places in front of the Capitol. The central point of the ceremony is the taking of an oath by the President and the delivering of his Inaugural speech, it is

regarded as a declaration of principles, proclaimed by the new administration. The ceremony ends in a military parade.

... The US began as a one party political system. But gradually two-party system appeared. The present-day **Democratic Party was founded in 1828**, representing southern states. It united slave owners. The **Republican Party was founded in 1854** and united people from Northeast, who were against slaving. The emblem of the Democratic Party is a donkey. The emblem of the Republican Party is an elephant. The main task of the parties is to win elections. One of the reasons of stability at the two party systems is family tradition to inherit politics from fathers.

. The judicial branch is headed by the Supreme Court, which is the only court specifically created by the Constitution. In addition, the Congress has established 11 federal courts of appeal and, below them, 91 federal district courts. Federal judges are appointed for life or voluntary retirement, and can only be removed from office through the process of impeachment and trial in the Congress.

Federal courts have jurisdiction over cases arising out of the Constitution: laws and treaties of the United States; maritime cases; issues involving foreign citizens or governments; and cases in which the federal government itself is a party. Ordinarily, federal courts do not hear cases arising out of the laws of individual states.

The Supreme Court today consists of a chief justice and eight associate justices. With minor exceptions, all its cases reach the Court on appeal from lower federal or state courts. Most of these cases involve disputes over the interpretation of laws and legislation. In this capacity, the Court's most important function consists of determining whether congressional legislation or executive action violates the Constitution. This power of judicial review is not specifically provided for by the Constitution; rather, it is the Court's interpretation of its Constitutional role as established in the landmark.