

ANSWERS

Quiz: How Well Do You Know the US?

1. **A. Milk.** Milk is widely consumed in the US, especially in the Midwest, even by adults. Some families drink milk exclusively at every meal. In some schools, milk is the only drink available for lunch (even water isn't available). Milk is always available in restaurants and cafeterias. Some families easily consume at least one gallon of milk per day.

2. **C. Voting.** In most (if not all) states in the US, minors are allowed to work and drive. In Iowa, teenagers can start working at 16 years old, and they can work as young as 14 years old if they have authorization from their parents and school (the authorization is almost automatic). Therefore, it is typical to see adolescents as young as 14 working in supermarkets. In Iowa, a person can get their driver's license at 16 years old. They can drive with a parent or another authorized adult at 14 years old. This is fairly similarly in most states. Drinking, however, is illegal until 21 years old. Most people start drinking (illegally) before reaching 21.

3. **A. May Day.** May Day is celebrated in parts of the US, notably the Midwest. On May Day, children prepare baskets and fill them with candy and popcorn to give to their friends and neighbors. To deliver the baskets, they put them in front of the recipient's door, ring the doorbell, and run! The receiver would try to catch the giver, and if successful, a kiss is supposed to be exchanged. Unlike most countries, the US does not celebrate Labor Day on May 1 (it is in September instead).

4. **B. Nickel.** The US has four coins (plus a few others that are rarely used) and they all have names. The one-cent coin is the penny, the five-cent coin is the nickel, the ten-cent coin is the dime, and the 25-cent coin is the quarter. These names are used very regularly.

5. **C. To choose to not answer a question.** The 5th amendment of the US constitution is the right to not testify against oneself in a court of law. Therefore, if a person is accused of a crime and is defending himself in court, he has the right to choose to not answer a question that might incriminate him and does so by responding, "I plead the 5th." This expression is also used in everyday conversation when a person does not want to answer a personal question.

6. **B. St. Patrick's Day.** In the US, most holidays are associated with one or several colors, and most people try to dress in that color on the holiday. For example, Valentine's Day is red or pink, St. Patrick's Day is green, Easter is pastel colors, Independence Day is red, white, and blue (a flag shirt or pin is a plus), Halloween is orange and black, Thanksgiving is brown, orange, and yellow, and Christmas is red and green. It is especially important to wear green on St. Patrick's Day because if you don't, you will get pinched!

7. **C. Pledge of Allegiance.** "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." In many classrooms, this statement is pronounced in unison at the beginning of the school day. When reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, students stand up, put their right hands on their hearts, and face the flag. In many, if not most, American schools, there is an American flag in every classroom.

8. **A. Take Me Out to the Ballgame.** This song, which is more than 100 years old, is sung during the “seventh inning stretch”, a pause that takes place about three-quarters of the way through a baseball game. The entire crowd stands up and sings the song, accompanied by organ music. “Take me out to the ballgame, take me out to the crowd. Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jacks. I don’t care if I ever get back for it’s root, root, root for the home team, if they don’t win it’s shame. For it’s 1, 2, 3 strikes, you’re out! at the old ballgame.”

9. **B. 14.** The area of the United States is 3,794,101 square miles (9,826,675 sq. km). France is often compared in size to Texas, which is slightly larger. The United States is more than twice as large as the European Union and covers six timezones. Distances in the US are measured in miles, not kilometers.

10. **A. 600,000.** Washington, DC, is the 24th largest city in the US. The largest city is New York City, followed by Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Philadelphia. Washington, the capital of the US, is not the largest city in the US, just as most state capitals are not the largest cities in their state. Sacramento (not Los Angeles) is the capital of California, Springfield (not Chicago) is the capital of Illinois, Baton Rouge (not New Orleans) is the capital of Louisiana, Lansing (not Detroit) is the capital of Michigan, Carson City (not Las Vegas) is the capital of Nevada, Albany (not New York City) is the capital of New York, Harrisburg (not Philadelphia or Pittsburgh) is the capital of Pennsylvania, Olympia (not Seattle) is the capital of Washington.