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HOW OLD IS THE UNITED STATES?

Multiple Choice Quiz

ABOUT THIS QUIZ



How Old Is the United States?

This quiz is about how old the United States is.

All questions have 4 possible answers of which only 1 is correct.

You may read the article over the next few pages to freshen up before taking the quiz!

At the back of the book, will be an answer sheet.

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The age of the United States depends on what stage you are counting as the birth. For the purpose of this article, we will define birth as the Declaration of Independence.

How old is the United States?

The Declaration of Independence was 1776 which makes the United States 246 years old in 2022.

Read on to find out how we calculate and define what the age is.

United States – A Young Country?

Historians often refer to the United States as a young country.

There isn't as much history about the country as an independent nation because of its ties to the British before the Revolutionary War.

But how old is the USA and how old is America?

Just how young is it really?

How Old Is the USA?

When we ask the question of how old is the USA, the answer is more complex than you might suspect. The deeper you go into the colonization of the landmass and settlements, the older the country gets.

But, if you specifically mean the country of the United States of America, it is just less than 250 years old.

This takes us back to 1776 and the official “birth” of the nation. It is also why the nation could celebrate its bicentennial in 1976.

History of the United States and Mayflower

However, the history of America is much older than that. With so much emphasis on the Mayflower 400 celebrations of 2020, it is easy to assume that the country is 400 years old, not 246.

Then there is the fact that the establishment of the first of the thirteen colonies occurred earlier still.

Finally, we can't overlook the fact that America as a landmass was inhabited long before the Europeans formed any official colonies.

Born on the 4th of July

Let's start with that official age of 240-250. Relatively speaking, the USA is a very young country. The United States of America became an official country in its own right on July 4th, 1776 with the Declaration of Independence following the War of Independence.

The aim was to break away from the British rule that governed the colonies of America and to form their own independent nation.

The Puritans Arrived 400 Years Ago

But, this means that the basis of an American nation began much earlier than 1776. It must have been, as for those colonies to exist that would feel so separate from the British as to want to rule themselves.

Therefore, the age of “America” as a nation colonized by the British and other European settlers is much older.

Thanksgiving and Pilgrims

If we think back to the origins of Thanksgiving and the Pilgrims that landed at Plymouth Rock, we go back much further to 1620. This would make the colonized America over 400 years old.

This is the date etched in history as when these brave Puritans set sail for the New World, shared their meal with the local natives, and went on to successfully begin what is now New England. Of course, it wasn't a New World as it was already inhabited.

Also, they weren't the first Europeans to form a colony on the other side of the Atlantic.

The Creation and Expansion of the Thirteen Colonies

While there is the misconception that the formation of Plymouth led to the first American colony of Massachusetts, this is the second of the Thirteen Colonies. The first was Virginia.

Settlers landed at Jamestown in 1607 – 13 years before those Mayflower Pilgrims set sail. While this settlement wasn't that successful, it is still the first time that European settlers created a town and make a corner of North America their own.

The East Coast of United States

Over time, the east coast of what is now the United States grew with more and more colonies. By the time of the Revolutionary War, there were thirteen of them, all with strong identities and generations far removed from their British ancestry.

The USA may have been born in 1776, but its people were expanding and populating the region for 169 years. For perspective, that's the same amount of time as between the birth of the USA and the end of the Second World War.

- Virginia came first in 1607
- Then it was Massachusetts in 1620
- This was followed by New Hampshire in 1623
- Maryland in 1634
- Connecticut in 1635
- Rhode Island in 1636
- Then there was Delaware in 1638, ending a very quick expansion through these neighboring states.
- A little later, the Virginians settled in North Carolina.
- South Carolina followed in 1663
- A year later saw the formation of New Jersey and New York, the latter named for founder the Duke of York.
- William Penn founded Pennsylvania sometime later in 1682
- Then came Georgia in 1732, making it almost 100 years younger than Maryland.

Different states will have their own idea of how old America is, which may be more significant to them than the age of the USA.

Varying Ages of the US

As you can see, there are vast differences in the ages of various parts of what makes up the United States today. The age of the USA as a whole may be 246 years old. But, Virginians would argue that their part of the country is 413 years old. Arizona is only 108 years old. The youngest state is Hawaii, which was only admitted into the union in 1959, but the people of Hawaii would say that their state is much older because of their rich native culture.

Great History of the States

With that in mind, we can't talk about the age of the USA, and the age of America, without taking a moment to consider the greater history of some of the states. While young in terms of their involvement with the USA, many were home to Native Americans for millennia.

Early Native Americans and Settlers

It is thought that settlers first inhabited the country as long as 30,000 years ago before the land bridge between continents fell to rising sea levels. Various cultures emerged across the states, many of which still exist in some form today.

How Old Is the USA?

Officially, the USA is 246 years old and we will celebrate its birthday on July 4th, Independence Day. But, the official formation of an independent nation isn't the only factor to consider here. The USA began on a specific date. However, the formation of its colonies, population, culture, and views to fight for independence began much earlier.

The first European settlement is 413 years old while New England is 400 years old. That history counts – as does the native history of those already on the North American landmass before the Europeans arrived, and indeed that of African-Americans who celebrate Black Independence Day on what has come to be known, Juneteenth.

Multiple Choice Quiz

1. The goal of the Declaration of Independence was to:

- A. Create a nation independent from the British
- B. Establish laws for the United States
- C. Plan ideas for what colonies would be part of the United States
- D. Ensure the United States would be a part of British territory

2. Which colony was settled by Europeans first?

- A. Maryland
- B. Virginia
- C. Massachusetts
- D. Rhode Island

3. Which state is the youngest based on when it entered the United States?

- A. Arizona
- B. New Mexico
- C. Hawaii
- D. Alaska

4. Juneteenth is a date considered to be:

- A. Indian Celebration Day
- B. Black Independence Day
- C. The anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower
- D. The formation of the Articles of Confederation

5. New England was formed in the year:

- A. 1607
- B. 1620
- C. 1623
- D. 1634

6. The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in which present-day state?

- A. Massachusetts
- B. Connecticut
- C. New Jersey
- D. Virginia

7. North Carolina was settled by people from what colony?

- A. Rhode Island
- B. Massachusetts
- C. New Hampshire
- D. Virginia

8. In what year was the United States' bicentennial held?

- A. 1820
- B. 1807
- C. 1976
- D. 1991

9. Which of the original thirteen colonies was formed last?

- A. Georgia
- B. Pennsylvania
- C. Vermont
- D. New Hampshire

10. Which of the original thirteen colonies was the last one to be formed in the seventeenth century?

- A. Pennsylvania
- B. New Jersey
- C. New York
- D. Georgia

11. Native Americans have inhabited various parts of the country for at least how many years?

- A. 400
- B. 1,000
- C. 5,000
- D. 30,000

12. The colony of New York took its name from the:

- A. The Duke of York
- B. The English city
- C. The ship that initially landed in the colony
- D. None of the above

13. The birthday of the United States is considered to be the day of:

- A. When the Declaration of Independence was made
- B. When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock
- C. When Virginia was first formed
- D. When Vermont became a colony

14. The exact date of the United States' birthday is what date?

- A. June 19
- B. July 4
- C. July 30
- D. November 20

15. Which of these states is not considered one of the original thirteen colonies?

- A. Georgia
- B. Vermont
- C. Rhode Island
- D. Maryland

Multiple Choice Quiz Answers

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. A
7. D
8. C
9. C
10. A
11. D
12. A
13. A
14. B
15. B