

WARM UP - QUIZ

1 Complete the following sentences about the geography of the USA. Then listen and check your answers.

1. With an area of 9,372,610 sq. km, the USA is the
(*second, third, fourth*) largest country in the world.
2. The USA consists of (*48, 50, 52*) states.
3. The lowest point of the country (86 m below sea level) is
(*Death Valley, Monument Valley, Silicon Valley*) in California.
4. The capital, Washington DC, is in the (*south, west, east*)
of the USA.
5. The largest state in the USA is (*Alaska, Texas, California*).

MAP READING

2 Working in pairs, look at the map of the USA on page 165 and fill in the gaps in the following passage. Then check your answers with your teacher.

The geography of the USA

The fact that the USA has 12 Natural World Heritage Sites is an indication of the variety and richness of this country's geographical features. Here you can find coral reefs, deserts, glaciers, mountains, **plains**, lakes and volcanoes. The two longest mountain **ranges** are the Appalachian Mountains in the east and the Rocky Mountains in the (1), while the highest mountain is Mount McKinley in Alaska (2) (..... m). The longest river in the USA is the Mississippi-Missouri (6754 km), which flows into the (3) Between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River lie the (4) of the Midwest: this fertile area is where most of the USA's agricultural products, such as corn, soybean and wheat, are grown. The north-central area, on the border with (5), is home to the five Great Lakes, the world's biggest group of **freshwater** lakes. Alaska is characterized by large areas of tundra; Hawaii in the (6)
..... Ocean is made up of hundreds of tropical, volcanic islands.

READING AND WRITING

3 Read the passages on the following pages and, in pairs, write questions about them using the question words *what, which, why, when, where, how*. Then swap pairs and ask your questions.



Natural wonders

Two of the USA's most famous World Heritage Sites are the tropical forests and wetlands of Florida's Everglades and the **brehtaking** land formations of the Grand Canyon National Park on the Colorado Plateau in the southwest.

GLOSSARY

brehtaking	mozzafiato
drained	prosciugato
freshwater	di acqua dolce
marsh	palude
plain	pianura
range	catena
uplift	innalzamento
wading bird	trampoliere



▲ The Everglades is the only place in the world where you can see both alligators and crocodiles.

The Grand Canyon

The south-western region of the USA, known as the Four Corners, is home to natural phenomena such as pinnacles, natural arches and canyons. The most famous of these is the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River in the state of Arizona. It is 446 km long, more than 1,600 m deep and its width goes from 8 to 29 km. The gorge is the result of a number of processes, which combined to create what can be seen today. The layers of rock date back to the period when the area was totally submerged under the sea. This period was followed by the **uplift** of the Colorado Plateau, which began about 65 million years ago. The Grand Canyon was formed by different kinds of erosion: the Colorado River cut into the rock, creating the depth of the canyon, while its pyramids are the result of erosion by wind and by the alternation of extremes of heat and cold.

◀ The Grand Canyon's most spectacular rock formations include the Shiva Temple or the Visnu Temple, so named because they look like Indian temples.

The Everglades

Everglades National Park, located at the south of the Florida peninsula, is the largest subtropical wetland in the USA. Wetlands (also called **marshes**) are areas which are constantly saturated with water. The Everglades is also known as "the river of grass," because it is home to a plant called sawgrass, which sometimes totally covers the water. The Everglades is a rich, but fragile ecosystem. The Sawgrass marshes, pine forests and mangrove islands are home to a wide variety of wildlife, including alligators, crocodiles and different kinds of **wading birds**. The area is now in danger: as a result of urban growth and agriculture, half of the original area has been **drained** of water.

SPEAKING EXAM practice

4 Prepare an oral report about the geography of the USA. Mention the following points:

- area and location
- different geographical features (mountains, lakes, rivers, etc.)
- natural wonders

WRITING

5 Using the information in Trail 9 and your general knowledge, write a short passage about the geography of Australia. Mention the following points:

- area and location
- different geographical features (mountains, lakes, rivers, etc.)
- natural wonders