

# America



## ACTIVITY MENU

### PRE-LISTENING

Picture Predictions  
What Do You Know About...?  
Unscramble the Sentences

### LISTENING

Relax and Enjoy!  
Mixed-Up Lyrics  
Did You Hear What I Heard?

### SINGING

Disappearing Song  
Show Me the Word  
Your Moves

### POST-LISTENING

Speaking: Small Group Discussion and Summary  
Reading: Our Land, Your Land  
Writing: Songwriter Histories



## America

by Victoria Vox  
(4:16)

1      Pack up the car  
        Turn the ignition  
        Got my guitar  
        And my intuition  
        I follow the signs  
        And obey the rules  
        Cuz I've got the time  
        But everything to lose  
        As I drive across America  
10     I know you're watching over me  
        As I drive across America  
        You're hearing every song I sing  
        America, America, America, America  
        Well, I see the light  
        The light of day  
        I don't know what's right  
        Or what I should say  
        Cuz I've got a dream  
        Don't know how to fill it  
20     It's not what it seems  
        But I feel your spirit  
        As I drive across America  
        I know you're watching over me  
        As I drive across America  
        You're hearing every song I sing  
        As I drive across America  
        I know you're watching over me  
        America, America, America, America  
        Pack up the car  
30     Turn the ignition



**Pre-listening Activities:** Choose one or two of the activities below.

### **Picture Predictions**

**Purpose:** To generate interest in the song; to activate background knowledge about the topic; to introduce vocabulary related to the song.

**Level:** All    **Time:** 15 – 20 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Hang the picture of the girl with the guitar on the board.

**Instructions:** Show the picture to the students and explain that it represents a story. Tell the students that together they are going to create the story. You can prompt them by asking who the characters are, where they live, when the story took place, what happened first, etc. After they have created their own stories, tell students they are going to listen to a song about the same picture, and they should compare their story to the one they hear in the song.

### **What Do You Know About...?**

**Purpose:** To generate interest in the song; to activate background knowledge about road trips.

**Level:** All    **Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Make a copy of the quiz for each group of students. Write the topic of the song (“road trip”) on the board.

**Instructions:** Organize students into small groups and tell them that you are going to give them a quiz on this topic. The team that answers the most questions correctly is the winner. Allow them time to discuss each question in their groups and decide on an answer. Students should record their group’s answer on a piece of paper. At the end of the quiz, go through the questions and answers together.

### **Unscramble the Sentences**

**Purpose:** To generate interest in the song; to write phrases and sentences; to introduce vocabulary and grammar from the song; to practice forming sentences with adverbial clauses and *wh*- clauses.

**Level:** Level 3 and above    **Time:** 25 – 35 minutes, plus the length of the song (4:16 mins.)

**Preparation and Materials:** Make a copy of the Scrambled Sentences handout for each group of students. Answer key: see the following lines in the song lyrics: 9 – 10, 11 – 12, 16, 20).

**Instructions:** Divide the students into small groups and have each group unscramble all of the sentences. Groups can compare their version with the other groups’ versions and then check their answers with the lyrics of the song.



## America: Picture Predictions



## America: What Do You Know About...?

We are going to listen to a song about a woman who takes a road trip across America. What do you know about road trips?

### True or False? All About Road Trips

Decide if each statement below is true or false.

1. A road trip is a vacation in which you travel by high-speed train.

*true*                      *false*

2. Many families in the United States take road trips during the summer months to see different parts of the country.

*true*                      *false*

3. Most people take a road trip alone.

*true*                      *false*

### Why Do Americans Love Road Trips?

Road trips are popular in the United States for many reasons. Look at the list of possible reasons below. Decide if each of the statements below describes a reason why people might like to take road trips rather than flying somewhere on an airplane.

4. For large families, driving is less expensive than flying.                      \_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no
5. The time spent in the car gives people time to reflect and relax.                      \_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no
6. Families are stuck together in a car for long periods of time, and children might become bored. They often ask "Are we there yet?"                      \_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no
7. People enjoy being on their own schedule. They can stop and look at something whenever they'd like, and stay for as long as they want.                      \_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no
8. Driving places is the fastest way to see many things.                      \_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no
9. The United States is very large, and contains many different types of climates and landscapes to see.                      \_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no
10. Almost everyone in America has a car, so anyone can take a road trip.                      \_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no



## America: Unscramble the Sentences

*Directions:* Each sentence below has been scrambled – the words are mixed up. For each sentence, put the words in the correct order to form grammatical and sensible sentences.

1. I I As me know across you're over drive America watching

*Unscrambled sentence:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. America across you're song sing I I drive hearing every As

*Unscrambled sentence:* \_\_\_\_\_

3. what's I don't right know

*Unscrambled sentence:* \_\_\_\_\_

4. seems it not It's what

*Unscrambled sentence:* \_\_\_\_\_



**Listening Activities:** Choose one of the listening activities below.

### **Relax and Enjoy!**

**Purpose:** To enjoy listening to the song.

**Level:** All    **Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Write the following three discussion questions on the board, or create your own:

1. *Who is the person speaking in the song?*
2. *Is this person happy or sad? Why do you think so?*
3. *When would you enjoy listening to this song?*

**Instructions:** Tell the students they are going to hear a song and that you want them to focus on how the song makes them feel and what it reminds them of. Play the song once. Have a general class discussion about the students' ideas and feelings using these questions.

### **Mixed-Up Lyrics**

**Purpose:** To listen for specific words or phrases; to make print and sound connections.

**Level:** Level 2 and above    **Time:** 20 – 25 minutes (to play the song 2 times)

**Preparation and Materials:** Make a copy of the handout for each group of students. Cut apart the lines and mix them up. Answer key: see the song lyrics.

**Instructions:** Divide students into groups of three. Explain that you are going to give them the lyrics from the song, divided into sections. They should read through the lyrics and put the sets into the order they think is correct. Tell students that as you play the song they should check their work and put the strips in the correct order. Play the song two or three times so the majority of students have the strips correctly ordered. Then check their answers.

### **Did You Hear What I Heard?**

**Purpose:** To listen for main ideas and specific details.

**Level:** Level 3 and above    **Time:** 15 – 20 minutes (to play the song 1 – 2 times)

**Preparation and Materials:** Write the following questions on the board (note: since these questions focus on inference and interpretation, various answers are possible):

- Road trips are usually fun vacations, but the singer does not sound happy.*
- Why do you think she chose to go on a road trip?*
- Who do you think is listening to and watching over the singer?*

**Instructions:** Tell the students that as you play the song, they should try to answer the questions on the board. After the song is finished, ask the students to compare their answers in groups. Play the song again, if needed, and then check the answers with the whole class. If an answer is wrong, help the students to understand *why* it is not correct.



## America: Mixed-Up Lyrics

----- ✂ -----  
Pack up the car  
Turn the ignition  
Got my guitar  
And my intuition

----- ✂ -----  
I follow the signs  
And obey the rules  
Cuz I've got the time  
But everything to lose

----- ✂ -----  
As I drive across America  
I know you're watching over me

----- ✂ -----  
As I drive across America  
You're hearing every song I sing

----- ✂ -----  
America, America, America, America

----- ✂ -----  
Well, I see the light  
The light of day

----- ✂ -----  
I don't know what's right  
Or what I should say  
Cuz I've got a dream

----- ✂ -----  
Don't know how to fill it  
It's not what it seems

----- ✂ -----  
But I feel your spirit  
As I drive across America  
I know you're watching over me

----- ✂ -----  
As I drive across America  
You're hearing every song I sing

----- ✂ -----  
As I drive across America  
I know you're watching over me

----- ✂ -----  
America, America, America, America  
Pack up the car  
Turn the ignition



**Singing Activities:** Choose one of the singing activities below.

### **Disappearing Song**

**Purpose:** To practice pronunciation and intonation; to recall words and phrases.

**Level:** Level 2 and above   **Time:** 25 – 30 minutes (to sing the song 4 times)

**Preparation and Materials:** Write the song lyrics on the board.

**Instructions:** Practice singing the song with the students, line by line. Then begin erasing 10% of the words each time you sing the song. Draw a blank space under each erased word and make sure that they can remember and sing the missing words. Practice singing the song with the students until about 50% of the words remain.

### **Show Me the Word**

**Purpose:** To make print and sound connections; to learn the vocabulary from the song.

**Level:** Level 2 and above   **Time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare pieces of paper or cards for students to write on. Write the following words on the board in random order:

*car guitar ignition intuition signs rules time drive watching  
hearing America light right dream seems fill it spirit*

**Instructions:** Divide the students into small groups. Have students copy the words onto separate pieces of paper or cards. Tell them to distribute the words so that each student has an equal number of word cards. The class will sing the song as they sit in their groups. Whenever students hear and sing any of the word on their cards they need to raise the corresponding card above their heads. Play the song and ask students to sing along, raising their words whenever they sing those words. To make it more competitive, you could select a class judge to watch the groups and make sure they raise the correct words.

### **Your Moves**

**Purpose:** To learn vocabulary from the song; to represent word meanings with actions.

**Level:** All   **Time:** 30 – 40 minutes (depending on how many groups will perform)

**Preparation and Materials:** Make a copy of the song lyrics for each student, or write the lyrics on the board. Circle the following words and phrases each time they appear in the lyrics:

*pack up turn the ignition guitar intuition follow the signs obey the rules  
got the time drive across watching over hearing every song see the light  
don't know got a dream feel your spirit*

**Instructions:** Elicit possible motions that could be associated with each keyword or phrase. Have the students choose one of different mimes for each keyword or phrase, practice that one, and then go on to the next until each keyword has a mime. Practice all of them so that students can remember them. Play the song and have the students sing along and do the correct mime when they hear the word or phrase.



**Post-Listening Activities:** Choose one or two of the activities below.

### **Speaking: Small Group Discussion and Summary**

**Purpose:** To think critically; to express opinions

**Level:** Level 3 and above    **Time:** 25 – 35 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Write the following discussion questions on the board:

1. *What is your idea of perfect vacation?*
2. *Do you think a road trip is a good activity when you are sad or upset? Why or why not?*
3. *What do you do when you need to think through a problem or regret?*

**Instructions:** Divide the students into small groups. Tell the students their task is to discuss the questions. You can assign them all of the questions or assign different questions to each group. When groups have finished their discussions, ask each group to comment on one aspect: the most surprising opinion, the funniest opinion, or the similarities and differences among groups.

### **Reading: Our Land, Your Land**

**Purpose:** To think critically; to make connections between the reading and the world; to practice comparative adjectives; to develop an understanding of geography.

**Level:** Level 3 and above    **Time:** 40 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a map of your own country. Make a copy of the reading text for each student. Write the following types of places on the board :

*a large nature area*

*a large city*

*a geographical feature that formed long ago*

*a geographical feature involving water*

*a place where the government is located*

**Instructions:** Have students read the text for comprehension, and label each of the places with one of the descriptions on the board. Have students identify one place in their country for each of the five types of places listed above. Have students compare the corresponding place in the United States with the place in their country.

### **Writing: Songwriter Histories**

**Purpose:** To write short past tense narratives.

**Level:** Level 2 and above    **Time:** 40 – 50 minutes (or extended over several class sessions)

**Preparation and Materials:** None.

**Instructions:** Divide students into pairs or small groups and ask them to brainstorm some ideas about the mood of the song: *happy, sad, joyful*, and then about the songwriter: age, personality, background, and so on. Next, ask the students why they think the songwriter wrote this song. Tell the students that they are going to write a short story about the life of the songwriter before he/she wrote the song. Give the students time in their groups to discuss their ideas and write their stories. When the students are finished, post the stories on the walls of the classroom, or have the groups read their stories aloud.



## Packing Your Worries Away

We all have problems, doubts, and worries in life, no matter where we come from. People deal with their problems in different ways. They might, for instance, engage in hobbies and activities that make them more relaxed, and allow them to gain a better perspective<sup>1</sup> on their problems. In “America”, by Victoria Vox, the singer decides to reflect on her problems in a different way: pack up her worries, pack up her car, and drive across the USA.



In fact, taking “road trips” is a common pastime in the USA, as the country is quite large, has a well-developed system of roads, and has many different landscapes and climates. A road trip is a type of vacation that involves packing your suitcases into your car and driving long distances to visit many different places, all in one trip. Many American residents and international visitors drive across the USA each year. During a road trip in the USA, travelers can experience the diversity of climate, culture and landscapes at a leisurely<sup>2</sup>, relaxed pace. Travelers can go from very warm and dry states such as California, Florida and Texas to much colder states such as North Dakota or Alaska, where it snows quite often. Travelers can also drive to places as diverse<sup>3</sup> and extraordinary as *Yellowstone National Park* and the *Grand Canyon*. Some of the most common road trip destinations in the USA are described below.



### Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone National Park was the first national park to be established in the USA, and covers almost 3,500 square miles (about 9,000 square kilometers) in three states: Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The park is home to numerous wildlife species, an active volcano, waterfalls and geysers<sup>4</sup>, and Native American<sup>5</sup> historical sites.



### The Grand Canyon National Park

The Grand Canyon is located in Arizona in the southwestern portion of the USA. The canyon was carved out of the land by the Colorado River over many years. Visitors to the canyon can camp in the park, walk around the upper rim of the canyon, and hike or ride mules down into the canyon.

<sup>1</sup> **perspective** point of view; in the phrase *put [something] into perspective*, the meaning is to think about something as it actually is in order to see the true importance of that thing

<sup>2</sup> **leisurely** slowly,

<sup>3</sup> **diverse** containing many different things

<sup>4</sup> **geyser** a natural water source that sprays warm water up into the air

<sup>5</sup> **Native American** people who lived in North America before Europeans arrived in the 1400s





### **Hollywood, California**

Hollywood is the home of the movie and television industry in the USA, and is located in Los Angeles, California. Here, visitors can tour movie studios, see the Hollywood Walk of Fame (a sidewalk honoring entertainment stars), or take a tour of the neighborhoods containing movie stars' homes.



### **Niagara Falls, New York**

Niagara Falls is part of a larger system of waterfalls between the USA and Canada, in New York state. The falls are known for their beauty, and are most often visited during the summer months. At night, large lights illuminate the falls. Visitors can take a trip on a boat to experience the falls up close.



### **Washington, D.C.**

Washington, D.C. is the capital of the USA, and is the home of the national government. The city is full of historical sites, national monuments, the White House (the home of the President), and the National Mall. The National Mall is a large park in the center of many of the national monuments and eleven Smithsonian museums. The Smithsonian Institution is the largest museum organization in the world.



### **The Florida Keys and the Everglades**

The Florida Keys are located in the southeast part of the USA, on the tip of the Florida peninsula. The climate is tropical, and visitors can go scuba diving, eat fresh seafood, or relax on the beach. The Florida Everglades National Park is also located in the southern part of Florida. This national park is the home of many endangered species. Visitors can watch alligators, birds, and many other wildlife species in their natural habitat at the Everglades.

In a country with so much diversity, going for a drive in order to put things into perspective<sup>1</sup> does not sound like a bad idea. The change of pace and environment can help people see situations from a different point of view and bring inspiration. It can also make us grateful for what we have in life and give us the strength we need to deal with our problems.



## America: Answer Keys

### What Do You Know About...? Answer Key

1. False – Road trips are vacation in which people drive cars or RVs (recreational vehicles) to their destinations. These trips often involve stopping to visit several different locations.
2. True
3. False – While some people do travel alone, road trips are usually taken by small groups
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. No – This is a common complaint for children!
7. Yes – road trips are more flexible than other forms of travel, and people have the freedom to choose their own schedule and change it if they want to
8. No – in fact, road trips often take more time than travelling by plane, and some people enjoy the time in the car to relax
9. Yes – There are many different landmarks and cities to visit in the U.S.
10. No – While many American have cars, not everyone does (especially those who live in large cities)

