# THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM (1)

1. **The Making of the United States**

a- The War of Independence

b- The American Constitution

c- The American Institutions

Notes typographiques

. *Le vocabulaire thématique en gras ; je vous recommande de vous constituer des FICHES THEMATIQUES de vocabulaire. L'enrichissement de votre vocabulaire passe nécessairement par l'apprentissage par cœur de telles listes. Toutefois, il peut être plus facile de retenir le vocabulaire en contexte, d'où son inclusion ici au sein de phrases rédigées.*

. *Les informations les plus importantes sont soulignées.*

. *Le vocabulaire en italique est utile pour les essais, (mots de liaison, connecteurs logiques etc)*

Les notes de bas de page :

. *les notes en rouge concernent le vocabulaire, la civilisation et l'histoire*

. *les notes en vert concernent les questions de langue, la grammaire*


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## INTRODUCTION

The first Americans were British settlers who set up a colony in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607; the Virginia Company's goal was mainly to find gold[1]. A new colony was also created in 1620 in Plymouth, Massachusetts[2]. It is more famous and more symbolical in American history as it is that of the **Pilgrims** who sailed to America on the Mayflower. It had a religious purpose: the settlers were dissidents, they had broken from the Church of England[3] and its stiff hierarchy and were thus under suspicion in the United Kingdom. They came to New England not to make money, but to build a new society upon their ideals of a purer Christianism –hence their name, the **Puritans**[4].
Thirteen colonies then grew along the East Coast, from Georgia to Massachusetts[5] from the early 17th Century to the mid-18th Century, either on religious or economic grounds.

This introduction is only a sketchy outline of early American history. Please, note that I must skip all the episodes of the life of the colonies to reach our main point: what are the fundamental principles of the American political system and where do they come from?

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[1] Although the Plymouth colony of the Pilgrims is more famous, you may have heard of the Virginia colony through the story of John Smith, one of its leaders, who was captured by the Indians and saved through the intervention of a young member of the tribe: Pocahontas. John Smith is the one who discovered corn –a gift from the Indians. Of course the culture of corn was to become very important in the development of the United States.

Attention
GB : Corn = blé en anglais britannique / On utilise « maize » pour maïs
US : Corn : = maïs en anglais américain.

« wheat » est un autre terme générique pour « blé » - dans les deux pays.

[2] One year after their arrival in New England, the settlers celebrated this anniversary. It was the first Thanksgiving ever; it is now one of the most important holidays in the United States, every November.

A birthday = l'anniversaire de la naissance de quelqu'un
An anniversary : la commémoration à la date anniversaire d'un événement

A holiday – au singulier- a le sens de « jour férié ». D'autant qu'aux USA, les « vacances » ne se dit pas « the holidays » -terme britannique- mais « the vacation ».

[3] You have learned from a previous presentation that the Monarch is both head of State and head of Church –namely the Church of England. So breaking from the Church of England had a political weight. Hence the repression.

[4] Actually they had left Britain earlier, around 1608-09, for Holland.

[5] Please, do check a map to make sure you can locate the 50 American states. The most famous colonies are those of Virginia and Massachusetts that I introduced, then Maryland, New York (then called New Amsterdam), Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the Carolinas.


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