

## Simplified Speech #183 – Regions of the USA

AD-FREE

### Episode description

As you can imagine, a country as large as the United States has many regions with their own distinct personalities. In this episode, Andrew and Kassy chat about all of the different regions in the United States. They discuss things like food, culture, accents, natural features, and demographics. If you'd like to learn more about culture in the United States, then this episode is for you!

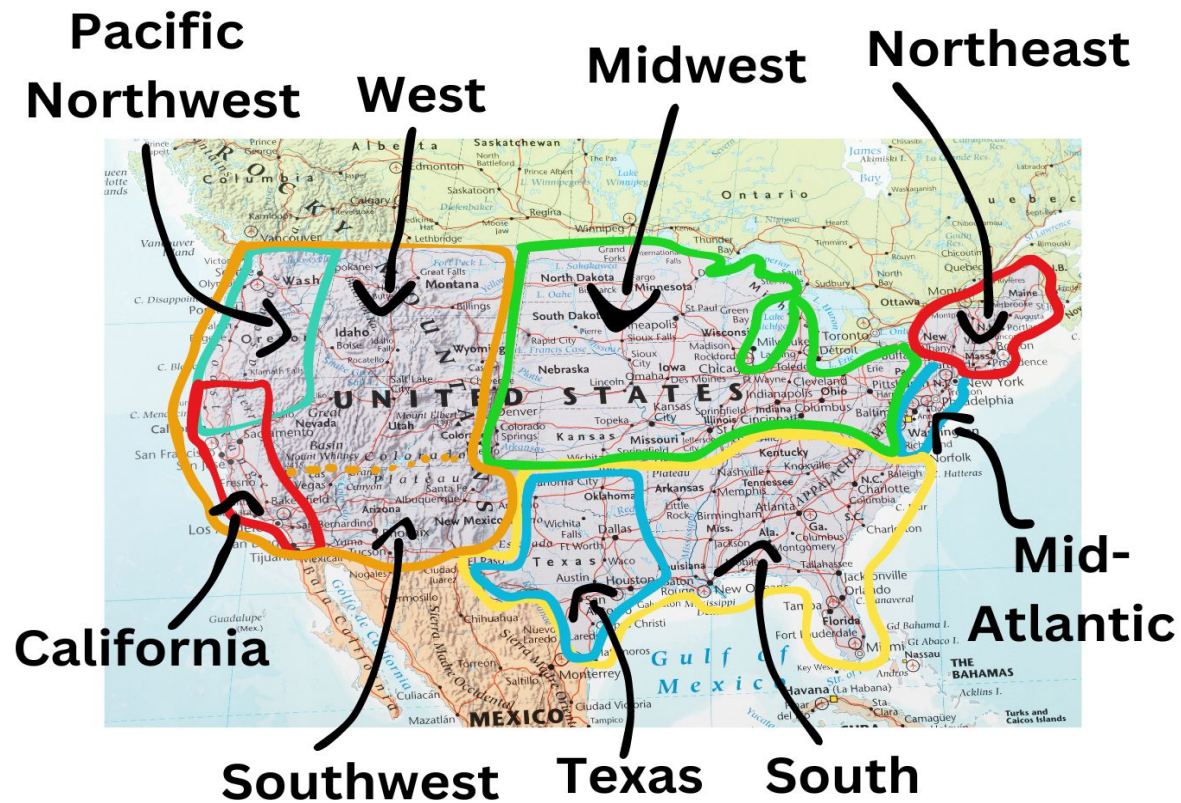
### Fun fact

The United States contains a multitude of dialects. Depending on the resources you've taken advantage of in your English learning journey, you may be using a blend of different linguistic styles!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Waspy
- To be built up
- To lump together
- Indigenous
- To push back
- Overrated/underrated





---

## Transcript

---

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

---

**Andrew:** Episode #183, Regions of the USA, featuring Andrew and Kassy.

And, guys, just a quick note before we get started with this episode, Kassy and I talk about a lot of different regions of the USA, which may be difficult to follow if you're not too familiar with the geography of the country. So because of that, we've included a map that you can find in the PDF version of this study guide. And now, let's get started. Enjoy!

I'm your host, Andrew, and joining me today is my cohost, Kassy. Hey there, Kassy.

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew, and hello, listeners. We're excited to be here today and to talk about a topic that was suggested to us through our Discord server by a listener named Roger. Roger asked us to talk about the different regions of the United States.

**Andrew:** Yeah, that's right, Kassy. And this is perfect, because you're an American, so you're a great person to help us with this topic. I can try my best, too, but of course, I'm a Canadian so I don't know as much as you do, Kassy. So I think you'll be the expert for today, maybe you can take the lead, and I'll try my best to fill in the gaps. So, that's our topic for today. And we'll talk about the different regions of the USA, and some of their special characteristics, what makes them unique. And now let's get started with our talk, Kassy.

And when I think of the USA, it's really hard to just come up with one image in mind of it, because it's such a big, diverse country. It's big in terms of population, but it's also big in terms of area and landmass, right? It's just a massive, massive country, little bit smaller than Canada, but still a massive, massive country. And so I thought we could go through

each area, region by region, and just talk about some of the unique things about that area, Kassy.

Now, technically, I guess most Americans, and you can correct me on this if I'm wrong, but most Americans divide the USA into about how many, maybe six to eight different regions, depending on how you want to organize things. Is that correct?

**Kassy:** Yeah, actually, for listeners who don't know, Andrew has compiled a list of different regions already. And I was reading through them and I agree with most of them, but some of them I would even separate further. For example, Andrew wrote here, the first region is called the Northeast, where he included New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, but I would not pair a lot of those together. I would call the Northeastern states, the more tippy-top ones, strictly Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, places like that. But I would consider New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York, more of the Mid-Atlantic states, which have their own separate category.

**Andrew:** OK. So, why don't we start in that area of the USA, then, and then we'll work our way toward the west. We'll start in the east and go west, because, Kassy, you're from that area of the country, so I think you probably know that pretty well. So, we'll start then with the Northeast, like those states that you mentioned, that are really close to Canada, Vermont, Maine. What are the other ones you mentioned there?

**Kassy:** Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island. That's the tiniest one, Rhode Island is so tiny.

**Andrew:** Yeah, just a tiny little state. So, what can you tell us about that Northeast area of the country? What's it like? Have you ever visited there before? Maybe we should start with that question.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I have. My aunt went to Yale University, pretty famous, in Connecticut. And then my sister lived in Boston for a while. So, I've been up in that region quite a bit. And what are the characteristics? The people there are nice and the food is really good. It's

different from what you'd find in other parts of the country. You see a lot of seafood because you're on the coast, but you're not going to eat the seafood you might see more further south. You'd eat, you know, soups maybe or lobster or things that are warmer, essentially. Because it's colder weather, you want to eat warmer food.

**Andrew:** I think of clam chowder.

**Kassy:** Yeah, that's a famous one.

**Andrew:** Clam chowder. And also that area of the USA is pretty famous for having really good craft beer, especially Vermont. I remember when I lived in Montreal, some of my friends would road trip down to Vermont just to take advantage of the craft beer there, so apparently it has a very good reputation.

And like you said, Kassy, it's also a colder area of the country, right? The winters are pretty nasty in that neck of the woods. You can get some really strong winter storms. I also have the stereotype, of course, we're going to be talking a lot about stereotypes in this episode. So, the stereotype for me is that it's not as diverse, it's a little bit **Waspy**, a little bit more white and maybe affluent. Like I know that area of the country is where a lot of rich people go to vacation in the summer. Martha's Vineyard, is that around there, that kind of place?

**Kassy:** It is. But I think there's some really beautiful mountain areas there. So a lot of people will go to go camping or glamping. And then a lot of the Ivy Leagues are also situated in this part of the country where, for those of you who don't know, Ivy Leagues are the very coveted, top of the top tier universities in the States.

**Andrew:** Exactly. So it does have that reputation of being a little bit affluent, right?

**Kassy:** However, there's also the rougher parts of the cities, especially Boston. Boston is famous for having its rougher areas and very strong accents.

**Andrew:** That's what I wanted to mention as well, are the strong accents.

**Kassy:** If anybody knows about Mark Wahlberg, the famous actor, he has such a strong and iconic Boston accent.

**Andrew:** Mmhmm. Could you give us a little bit of the Boston accent, Kassy, can you do it?

**Kassy:** I'm not great at accents. But we want to say words that don't use the Rs. So instead of saying car, you'd say ca. So where's my ca keys? Not so great at the accent.

**Andrew:** No, Kassy, that's a pretty good accent. I think that sounds good to my Canadian ears, at least.

Anyways, why don't we move to the next region? And we'll go a little down the map, towards the south. And you call that the North Atlantic region? What did you call that area?

**Kassy:** Mid-Atlantic.

**Andrew:** Sorry, Mid-Atlantic region. And that's a really, really highly densely populated area of the USA, right? We have New York, New York City, the biggest city in the country, New Jersey, Pennsylvania. What else is around there?

**Kassy:** My geography is not great, guys, haven't taken it since elementary school. But I'm pretty sure you can include Maryland, which has Washington, DC, as well, our capital.

**Andrew:** Of course. So what are some of the characteristics of this part of the country?

**Kassy:** Also big historical area, because Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, actually used to be the capital of the United States, but we moved it more south because the Southern states were angry that it was so far north, so we had to bring it down a bit. But, yeah, we have a lot of historical areas, especially in New York and Pennsylvania. Food: so good. Philly cheesesteaks, New York style pizza, New Jersey cheesecakes, bagels, yeah, you can find lots of good food in this area.



**Andrew:** Mmhmm. And of course, New York City, especially, is maybe the city that really stands out compared to the rest, but I don't know. That area is so urbanized and so **built up** that it's almost like one big city, really. When you look at it on the map, at least, it just looks like it's one huge city, you know, it's so developed in that part of the country. So, I think you have a lot of diverse populations, right, multiculturalism, a lot of different languages, a lot of different accents.

And New York especially used to have a lot of varied accents. I don't hear them as much anymore. You know, when you hear older New Yorkers talk, sometimes you can hear those really strong, unique regional accents. But when I hear younger people talk, it's not as strong anymore, which is unfortunate.

**Kassy:** Yeah, one of my favourite New York accents comes from a SpongeBob episode where they're selling chocolate, but they say, chocolate. I love chocolate.

**Andrew:** Yeah. Nice, I like it.

**Kassy:** This area of the country is also probably some of the most diverse because, like you said, New York City's uber diverse. But we also have huge populations from Puerto Rico that move here because if citizens from Puerto Rico move to the United States, they get citizenship automatically, so they can vote. Since a lot of their family members from the past moved to this region, it grows every year. We also have a lot of people who moved from the Middle East, maybe, or Egypt in this area. It's a very a big melting pot in this part of the country. I think that's because, you know, New York used to be the starting point to head out to the rest of the country. So a lot of the immigrant population started here and then spread out. So we're the central zone.

**Andrew:** I watched the movie The Godfather not too long ago and—was it The Godfather? Or maybe it was The Godfather 2, I watched them both. And you can see early New York in that movie. And you see a lot of different people immigrate there and they actually show the family coming from Italy to New York. And, yeah, it's really cool to see like back then there were, you know, lots of Irish immigrants, Italian immigrants, from other

parts of Europe and all different sorts of countries. So, yeah, huge immigrant populations, both new and historical in that area, really cool. And it makes for a very diverse place, right?

**Kassy:** Yeah, that's actually why my family ended up in Pennsylvania. My great-great-grandfather was from Yugoslavia, and he moved to the States to follow his brother to Colorado. However, he got to Pennsylvania and ran out of money. And so he started working in the coal mines. Pennsylvania was really famous for coal mines back in the day. And so a lot of immigrants moved to that area to work in the mines.

**Andrew:** Interesting. OK. Well, Kassy, where should we go next? If we're going to keep going down the Eastern coast, then what's next? We have like the Virginias.

**Kassy:** The Carolinas.

**Andrew:** The Carolinas. Yeah. It would be nice if we had a picture of the American map in front of us, wouldn't it? We wouldn't have to go from memory.

**Kassy:** Yeah, as we go down the coast, we just pass all the really cool beaches that people like to go to in the summer. Virginia Beach. The Outer Banks is a really popular beach that my family and a bunch of people go to every year. We've got, yeah, Georgia, and then all the way down into Florida, where you could go to Disney World or the Florida Keys or the Everglades, all very famous travel destinations.

**Andrew:** And would you kind of **lump those states together** in the Southeast? States like Florida and Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, I think that you could kind of group those together as a distinct region of the States. Would you agree with that?

**Kassy:** Yeah. Honestly, the South is probably the region that is **lumped together** the most, we would even include states further inland like Tennessee and Kentucky and Arkansas in that group as well.



**Andrew:** The South. Yeah. And what can you tell us about the South? What are some of the characteristics about the people or the weather or the cuisine?

**Kassy:** The South is much warmer, and it's a lot slower. In the North, we all like to talk fast and move fast and be busy, busy, busy, but in the South, you know, you slow down, you relax, you play your guitar.

The food style is also very different, there's a lot more barbecues and fried food is really popular. Louisiana is so famous for food because Louisiana was first owned by the French. So there's a lot of French influence in that area in terms of music and culture and food, which is really cool.

**Andrew:** Well, Kassy, I should say it was first owned by the **indigenous** people who were there. But then the French came much later.

**Kassy:** It was first taken over by the French.

**Andrew:** Always that dark history in North America, isn't it? But we'll save that conversation for a different episode. So, yeah, I mean, I haven't been to the South in the States. It's on my bucket list. I would love to do a road trip through the Southern states. I've heard lots of good things about New Orleans, I'd love to go there one day. Also, you know, Nashville in Tennessee, country music. I've always wanted to go to Graceland where Elvis lived and just like check out that area. I don't know. So I've always wanted to go there.

Yeah, like you said, the stereotype of the people at least is that it's kind of laid back, a little easier. Even the speaking seems a little bit slower. I'm not sure if that's actually true or just a stereotype, but that's kind of what a lot of people think.

**Kassy:** It's definitely true. My sister in elementary school, she had a classmate move from the South to the North. And even though he was born and raised in America, he spoke English his whole life, he had to take a couple of days to get used to our speaking speed. He didn't know what we were saying, which is hilarious.

**Andrew:** And there is a negative stereotype of people from the South as being maybe perhaps not as highly educated as Northerners. And, again, I don't think that's really true. There's been some really smart people from the South, like Bill Clinton's from Arkansas, right? He was a Rhodes Scholar and a two-term president of the States. So definitely, that's just a stereotype. But there is that kind of feeling sometimes that people from the South are just not the same as Northerners. But, yeah, of course, that's just a stereotype.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I think it's maybe because of the euphemisms they use. The Southerners have such cool phrases, and slang terms that we don't use in the North. And maybe because of that, it's considered more, I don't know, crass, but it's just a different way of talking.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I agree. Lots of different varieties of English. And I mean, we can debate about what is proper grammar and improper grammar. But at the end of the day, if you're communicating a message and the other person understands it, then the grammar works. So, yeah, maybe that's something we could talk about in a future Culips episode is the different accents and different dialects of American English. And maybe we could find some people to help us out with that, as well. But we'll save that for another episode because if we go into that now, we'll be here for hours and hours. We want to keep things moving along.

So, what is the next area of the country we should talk about, Kassy?

**Kassy:** The next area is unfortunately the most overlooked, kind of considered the most boring, and that is the Midwest.

**Andrew:** The Midwest, OK. So the Midwest, I have been through, I did a road trip through the Midwest once and ...

**Kassy:** Ah, poor Andrew.

**Andrew:** Yeah, no, I actually loved it because I stopped in Chicago for a couple of days. And Chicago's an amazing city. And I also went to the Twin Cities in Minnesota. And those

are two cities that are very close together to each other. So they're often called the Twin Cities, but really it's Minneapolis and St. Paul. And I thought they were awesome. I really enjoyed going to both of those places, Chicago and the Twin Cities, and just generally that area.

I didn't really like Indiana, though. I remember Indiana as being nothing special. But the Midwest is that area in kind of the middle northern part of the USA. So states like Illinois, and Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri. Yeah, all of those areas. So, Kassy, you said that it's not so great in the Midwest. Why do you not like the Midwest?

**Kassy:** No, it's not that I don't like it. It's just I think the big culture hubs are in the East and the West, and maybe the Rocky Mountains, slightly more in between the Midwest and the West because those are where the mountains are. It's where the cool geographical features are. The Midwest is pretty much just flat, cornfields for miles and miles and miles. But the cities, you're right, are very cool. Chicago has some of the coolest architectural designs, the coolest artwork that you can find, the food also awesome. But in the surrounding areas, there's a lot of cows, corn, and pigs.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I'm gonna **push back** a little bit here, Kassy, because there are the Great Lakes in the Midwest. So it's not just all farm, there are these amazing lakes, which are huge lakes, guys. If you haven't seen the Great Lakes before, then your mind will be blown when you see them because they are huge. They're almost like oceans in the middle of the North American continent here. So there is some variety.

And also, I think there's a lot of great culture, too, in cities like Chicago and Detroit with different styles of music originating from those areas.

And, Kassy, I have to ask you, what do you think about Chicago deep dish pizza? Is it **overrated** or **underrated**?

**Kassy:** I think it's a good thing to try once, but I would definitely prefer the thinner New York style pizza. How about you?

**Andrew:** I completely agree with you, **overrated**. I waited in line for a long time at a famous Chicago deep dish pizza restaurant and I was really disappointed. I thought it was too big, too heavy, too greasy. And wasn't my style, even though I love pizza. So yeah.

**Kassy:** Yeah. There is one thing, so you mentioned some cool stuff already. But the Midwest is also famous for one, really friendly people and two, county fairs. If anybody can put on a good fair, it is the Midwest.

**Andrew:** Exactly. Yeah. I haven't been to any of the fairs there. But I imagine with all of the farmland that's around that area, that there would be some really great state fairs, probably in the fall, right? They usually happen in the fall?

**Kassy:** Yeah, in the fall, maybe even in the early summer. I'm not sure. The best ones are in the fall, of course. But you can have so many cool different kinds of foods. You can see animals, you can see horse shows, you can ride kind of sketchy carnival rides, it's a lot of fun.

**Andrew:** I always like going to, well, in Canada, we just call it the fall fair, because we don't have any states. So the fall fair. But in my province, we also had the PNE, the Pacific National Exhibition and, yeah, super fun. I love going to those kind of fall fairs.

And, Kassy, I don't know about what your favourite thing to do is, but mine is to go and look at all of the different vegetables. People grow the vegetables and then they compete. They'll be like, "Oh, I grew a pumpkin that's 200 pounds." And then somebody else will be like, "Oh, yeah? I have a 250-pound pumpkin." And then they actually have judges that come around and give medals to the pumpkins or ribbons, right? Like, you'll see, oh, this one has a blue ribbon, it's the best pumpkin this year. Or this one has a second-place ribbon. I don't know, it's really fun. And they do that for all different sorts of vegetables. You'll see somebody, like, this guy grew the best onions this year. He's the blue ribbon for the onions. It's really funny.

**Kassy:** They grew a carrot the size of my arm.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So I love that kind of thing. That's great.

What about the next region? Where should we move to next?

**Kassy:** There's only a few left. I think the next region, if we're moving further west, honestly, I don't know what we'd call it, but you could lump some of them into other regions. But in my opinion, I like to call the whole border along the Rocky Mountains like its own region. So you could start up in the north in Montana and go all the way down to New Mexico, honestly. And all of those states in between, you have Colorado, you have Arizona, you have Nevada with the Grand Canyon, I would lump those all in their own little line from tippy top of the US to the south.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I mean, this is getting closer to where I'm more comfortable talking about the USA, because I've visited the West more than any other region. So for me, it's like in terms of Western United States, you have the Pacific Northwest, which is, like, Washington state, and maybe Oregon, and Northern California, that area. And then you have California, it's kind of a thing of its own. And then you have the Rocky Mountain states. So Colorado, maybe Montana, Utah. Those are really, like, nature-heavy states, you know, lots of amazing natural beauty in those areas. And then you have like the Southwest, so maybe New Mexico, Arizona, those states, and Texas, even, although Texas is another state which is kind of its own place, right? Just like California.

**Kassy:** We lump it in with the South but, honestly, it could be its own country, it's so big.

**Andrew:** Right. Well, I think many Texans sort of think of it as being its own republic, right? Isn't it the Republic of Texas?

**Kassy:** Yeah, they tried to secede from the US at one point.

**Andrew:** Right. But there is that strong, independent streak to Texans.

OK, so why don't we break down these different Western areas really quick. We'll start with the Pacific Northwest, because that's the area that I've visited the most. Washington

state, amazing, beautiful place. Seattle is the biggest city in Washington state, and the home of grunge music. It's really famous for rainy weather and for coffee. Starbucks first opened their first café in Seattle, and also has, you know, a lot of great seafood because it's close to the Pacific Ocean. There's great craft beer as well. It's another place that's really popular for that and also kind of laid back, I don't want to say hippie, but more open-minded population, I think. There are a lot of artists there, a lot of musicians there, maybe more artsy-fartsy than other areas of the country, I would think.

**Kassy:** Yeah, that's right. I've also been to this area a bunch because my aunt and my sister live in Oregon, directly below Washington. And Oregon is just an absolutely amazing state. It has all of the biomes you can imagine. It has, you know, the beach, which on the Pacific coast, and then it also has the City of Portland, Oregon, which had its own TV show, it was such a cool wacky city.

**Andrew:** Portlandia.

**Kassy:** Yup. It also has some temperate forests with lots of cool mountains that you can hike in, but on the west, it also has a desert region. So you could literally be in the city at one point, drive 3 hours south to go hiking in these huge mountain ranges, and then drive 3 hours east and be in the desert with cacti and tumbleweeds blowing past.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it's an awesome area of the country. I love Oregon and Washington. Washington's the same way. If you go towards Eastern Washington, it's very desert-y as well. It's really cool.

California, we should talk about California quickly. I think maybe a lot of our listeners will be most familiar with California, right? Los Angeles, Hollywood, movie stars, surfers, laid-back culture, fast food. That's what comes to mind, like famous hamburger restaurants. What else do you think of when you think of California, Kassy?

**Kassy:** Honestly, I hear a lot of people say like, "Oh, I want to travel to the States and I want to go to LA." And, yeah, don't get me wrong, LA is a cool place. But it wouldn't be the place I recommend if I was going to California. I would go to San Francisco, which has just



as much cool culture, but you don't have to drive around as much. You could actually take public transport. Or I would get out of the cities and go to the national parks. California has some of the most beautiful national parks in the world. I got to travel them with my grandmother a few years ago, and I had the best time.

**Andrew:** Awesome. Unfortunately, I've never been to California. It's really frustrating for me, because it's one of those things, like, you know, I lived pretty close to California for my whole life. You could fly down there in just 2 hours or so or, you know, drive down there in less than a day. And it's one of those things that you take for granted. You're like, "Yeah, I'll go there someday, of course I'm gonna go one day." And then I moved to Korea, and now it's really far away and very difficult to visit. So, ah, it's one of those regrets that I have growing up is that I never visited, but definitely on the to-do list.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I think the hardest part for you, too, Andrew, is to do with your break schedule around school. The best time to visit California is in what we call the shoulder seasons, which is not the peak winter Christmas-time season or the peak summertime season. It's those shoulders when the weather is more mild in maybe late spring or early fall. And the reason is because California is a pretty hot place, but some of the best national parks in California are the desert regions. And if you try to go there in the summer, you'll melt. It's so hot. But if you could go maybe in September and October, it will be amazing. I recommend it to anyone, especially Death Valley. Death Valley is the area of the States that is closest to sea level. And it's the hottest place that you can find in North America.

**Andrew:** I would love to go on a road trip through California and into Nevada and into the desert one day.

So maybe we should talk about that Southwest area. You know, getting into Nevada, we're getting closer to Arizona, to New Mexico. Of course, Las Vegas is in Nevada, right? And it is very dry and desert-like. Have you visited that area of the country before, Kassy?

**Kassy:** My best friend actually just moved out there to Arizona. And I've only been there for 10 hours. I was flying from Pennsylvania to Oregon to meet my family. But I had a 10-hour layover in Arizona. And we decided to leave the airport because who wants to sit in the airport for 10 hours, right? And I will say it was summer and we only had 10 hours. But the surrounding area outside the airport for miles and miles and miles was literally nothing but desert and strip malls. I think the Southwest is a bit of the last wild frontier of the States. It's probably the least developed while not being, you know, super elevated in the mountains. It's the least developed flat part of America.

**Andrew:** Hmm, OK, interesting. I would love to check it out, too. I mean, I want to check out all of the areas of the States that I haven't visited yet, but that area seems really interesting to me.

Let's talk now quickly about Texas. What can you say about Texas?

**Kassy:** When I think about Texas, I think about boisterous, confident people. I think about the growing tech community in the cities. I think about cowboys and lots of food and the American dream.

**Andrew:** Yeah, Kassy, it's interesting that Texas is starting to become a little bit of a tech hub now. I think it was Tesla, is it Tesla company moved from California to Texas, I believe? So, yeah, there's a kind of growing tech scene in Texas as well. And I've heard there's a lot of cool places to visit there. But, yeah, I don't want to keep repeating myself too much. It's on the list. I got to visit and check it out for myself some time.

**Kassy:** Andrew, before we finish this episode, though, there are two more tiny places we have to talk about, which they're not on the mainland. But we can't have a US episode without talking about Alaska and Hawaii.

**Andrew:** Yeah, Alaska and Hawaii, as well. This really shows the variety of different landscapes in the USA. So why don't we start with Hawaii? I've been there. Have you been to Hawaii, Kassy?

**Kassy:** I have, yes, on vacation.

**Andrew:** Ah, I thought maybe that would be the one place that I had visited that you hadn't. Hawaii is awesome, right? Just an amazing, amazing place.

**Kassy:** Yes, this is also a travel tip. You do not need to have copious amounts of money. When I went, I went with my sister and my aunt, and we did not stay at hotels, we camped. There are some really cool campgrounds that you can rent for \$20 a night that include showers and bathrooms and running water. And, yeah, totally affordable. The weather's beautiful in January. So camping is definitely an option.

**Andrew:** Yeah. And I don't know what else we have to say about Hawaii, just this beautiful tropical, lush island in the middle of the Pacific there. And, yeah, I don't think we need to describe Hawaii, everybody will know about it already. And if you get a chance to visit, listeners, definitely check that out.

And then Alaska is up there by itself, close to Canada. And perhaps it's the most sparsely populated state. I'd take a guess that it probably is because it's so big and so cold. So, what do you know about Alaska?

**Kassy:** I think Alaska is probably similar to a lot of places in Canada. It could be very remote, you might have areas where you only have one school in that town or village. And there's a lot of places in Alaska where you don't want to go alone because you might die in the wilderness. But it has some of the most beautiful hiking areas. And I heard that the communities are really tight there. Like if you somehow had to move there some day and you worried about moving there alone without any connections, I think you could make a fresh start in that area and find some close and deep relationships with your neighbours in Alaska.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think of Alaska as being a very wild place. Lots of forests, lots of snow, lots of ice. It's a place where there's a lot of natural resource-based economies. So like mining, forestry, maybe hunting and fishing, all of those kinds of activities make up a lot of the local economy, I think. And pretty similar to Northern Canada in many ways. I think

there are probably a lot of similarities between the two places. But although I've been to Northern Canada, I haven't been to Alaska, so I can't quite make that connection. But when I think of Alaska, I think, you know, if I were to go there, I'd feel pretty much at home because it seems to be very, very similar to a lot of the northern areas of Canada, as well.

OK, so Kassy, we're going to keep the conversation going here for just a little bit longer for our members. And, Kassy, I have a quick question for you right off the start. If you were to move back to the States, what part of the country would you like to live in?

**Kassy:** Such a hard question, Andrew. I could see myself living in two or three, but probably where I'm from, Pennsylvania. Pretty great.

**Andrew:** There's no place like home, right?

**Kassy:** Yeah.

**Andrew:** OK, what about your favourite regional cuisine from the States? What part of the country has the best food, in your opinion?

**Kassy:** Every year my family goes to the beach, the Outer Banks. I mentioned it earlier, which is in North Carolina. I really love the food there because I love seafood. And I don't eat a lot of fried food in my everyday life, but on vacation, it really hits the spot. And also there's a lot of homegrown fruits and vegetables down there in the summer. So I'm going to say summertime food in the South.

**Andrew:** Hmm, OK. What would I choose? I mean, I love all the different types of American food, but I probably go with, yeah, what do we call it the Mid-Atlantic area? You know, New York pizza, bagels, Philly cheesesteaks. It's probably not great for the waistline, but definitely good for the taste buds.

Kassy, do you have a favourite regional accent from the States?

**Kassy:** I think when the Southern ladies talk, they just sound so cheery and sweet. And then when the Southern men talk, of course it depends, but if you ever have like a Southern-accented male lead in a romantic comedy, ah, so swoon-worthy.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I like all of the accents that are really different from mine. So, you know, accents, like, from the West Coast and accents from Northern USA, like Minnesota and Wisconsin, I think those are most similar to my accent. So they're a little bit boring and not as interesting. But the Southern accents are great. I think you call it AAVE, African American Vernacular English. I love their accent as well. And the different way that ideas are expressed through that dialect. So, yeah, I love that there's this rich diversity of different ways of talking in the USA. Those are two of my favourites.

**Kassy:** Andrew, I know you said you'd love to travel more in the States if you had the time. If you could attend a major cultural event or festival, what festival or event would you like to go to?

**Andrew:** Hmm, that is a question I'd have to think about for a long time, because there are so many great festivals in the States. You know, I'm a music guy. So probably a big music festival, like Coachella is a great festival in California. They always have a lot of big bands playing. And there are hundreds of really cool music festivals that happen usually during the summer in the States.

**Kassy:** I could see you going to a cool bluegrass festival in the South, too. I think you'd like that.

**Andrew:** Heck, yeah, that would be awesome. I'd, I'd love to do that. Also, you know, there's Burning Man festival. I don't know. I've always been curious. It just looks like such a gong show that it might just be cool to check out. But I don't know if it's really my scene. Who knows? It's just something that's so different than what I experience in my day-to-day life here in Korea that I'm kind of curious.

What about you, Kassy? Do you have a festival that you're curious about or would like to go check out?

**Kassy:** I'm not a huge crowds person. But I've never been to Louisiana, and I've always wanted to check out their food scene, especially during Mardi Gras. I want to eat those beignet doughnuts and have some Cajun-style food.

**Andrew:** That sounds awesome. I'd love to check out Mardi Gras as well.

Well, anyways, everybody, I think we'll wrap up this episode here. So thanks again for tuning in. And if you have any questions about the USA, then send them our way through our Discord. And we'll be as helpful as we can and try to answer your questions for you. So, yeah, that's it for now, but take care, and we'll talk to you in the next episode. Bye-bye!

**Kassy:** See ya!

**Andrew:** That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time. Bye!



## Detailed Explanations

### **Waspy** Adjective

Kassy and Andrew begin their conversation about US regions with the Northeast. This region is composed of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, although sometimes other states like New York and New Jersey are included in this category. Andrew mentions that there's a lot of wonderful craft beer in this area, and Kassy brings up the delicious seafood. One stereotype Andrew knows about this region is that it tends to be a little **Waspier** than other areas of the country.

No, **Waspy** doesn't refer to the insect! **Waspy**, sometimes written **WASPy**, is a colloquial adjective that comes from the term **Wasp**, an acronym for "white Anglo-Saxon Protestant." The United States is a melting pot of people from many different backgrounds, but white Anglo-Saxon Protestants are historically the most privileged group in the country. The term **Wasp** excludes white Jewish people, white Catholic people, and white people of Southern European heritage, such as Italians. All of these groups have faced varying forms of discrimination in US history.

**Wasp** typically refers to individuals who come from upper-class and conservative backgrounds. The stereotype of a **Waspy** person is someone who is white, wealthy, and elitist. They might be a member of an expensive country club and enjoy sports like golf, tennis, or horseback riding. They may have attended a prestigious Ivy League university and likely vacation at a summer home in Martha's Vineyard or Cape Cod.

**Waspy** is generally used in an insulting way, so be mindful when you use this adjective!

Here are a couple more examples with **Waspy**:

**Fred:** Hey, I'm going to visit Newport this weekend. Want to come along? We can go to the beach!

**Tina:** I don't know, isn't it really **Waspy** there? I don't want to feel judged for not wearing a brand-name swimsuit.

**Fred:** Oh, don't worry about it. No one's going to care what you're wearing!

**Becky:** I'm thinking of signing us up to join the tennis club. What do you think?

**Mark:** I'd love to play tennis with you, but that club is kinda **Waspy**. I'd rather be in a more diverse environment. How about we just play at the courts at the recreation centre?

## To be built up

Phrasal verb

As Kassy and Andrew move onto the Mid-Atlantic region, composed of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, they bring up New York City. Andrew mentions that New York City is a super diverse and multicultural place and that it is a very **built-up** city.

**To be built up** means exactly what it sounds like—to have many buildings and other structures in an area. It usually refers to having such a high density of buildings that there's very little open space. Dense major metropolises like New York City, Hong Kong, and Tokyo can be called **built up**. Some neighbourhoods may have fewer buildings and more open space, but the downtown area tends **to be built up** and developed.

Some major cities in the United States are incredibly **built up**, such as New York, San Francisco, and Seattle. Meanwhile, there are other cities that have **built-up** sections but also have a lot of sprawl, or a low density of buildings and people. These include Nashville, Phoenix, and Dallas. If you have the chance to visit the United States or travel to multiple cities, try to compare which cities feel more **built up** and which feel more sprawled out!

Some synonyms of **built up** include urbanized, developed, and densely populated. Some antonyms include undeveloped and sparsely populated.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be built up**:

**Isabella:** Hey, check out these apartment listings I found. Any of them look good to you?

**Harry:** Let me take a look ... This one by the water looks nice. These two are no good—let's take them off the list. I don't want to live in the most **built-up** area of the city. There's hardly any green space or parks over there!

**Isabella:** That's true, but it would be so convenient to live downtown. The nightlife would be right outside our door!

**George:** There's a new bakery in the neighbourhood. Want to check it out tomorrow morning?

**Polly:** Another new business? Wow, our area has been getting really **built up** recently. I'm enjoying all of these new buildings and businesses, but I hope it doesn't make rent prices go up.

## To lump together

Phrasal verb

As Andrew and Kassy move down the map past the Mid-Atlantic, they begin to approach the Southwestern part of the United States. They ask each other which states can be **lumped together** into the category of “the South.” Ultimately, they decide to **lump together** the Virginias and the Carolinas with Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Arkansas.

**To lump together** or **to lump in with something** means to combine distinct things into a single group or unit. We often use this verb when we’re making generalizations or categorizing things.

For instance, when we talk about generational differences, we often **lump all millennials into one group** and make assumptions about their beliefs. Not all millennials have identical tendencies or values, but we tend to **lump them together** to make general statements about this age group.

Sometimes you might hear someone say, “Don’t **lump me in with him!**” In this case, the speaker doesn’t want to be associated with the other person. The speaker wants to be seen as different or distinct from the other person. In this way, **to lump together** is a good term to use when talking about stereotypes or generalizations.

Here are a couple more examples with **to lump together**:

**Larry:** So, Charlotte, I hear you’re a big Taylor Swift fan.

**Charlotte:** Ha, that’s true, but I’d prefer it if you didn’t **lump me in with her fans**. I’m not as obsessed with her as the rest of them. I just love her music.

**Larry:** Oh, I totally understand. There are some musicians I love, but their fanbases are really obnoxious. Anyways, want to go see her new concert film with me?

**Benjamin:** Hey, can you take a look at the survey data I’ve collected for this study and give me some feedback?

**Nicole:** Sure thing! Let’s see ... Honestly, I don’t think you should **lump Asian respondents together** as one ethnic group for your final results. Can you distinguish them into different groups, like East Asian and Southeast Asian?

**Benjamin:** Oh, that’s a good idea. I’ll see if that has any impact on my findings. Thanks, Nicole!

## Indigenous Adjective

Kassy comments on the French influence in Louisiana's culture and food because the French were the first group to settle and own that area. Andrew says that, in fact, it was the **indigenous** people who first owned that area, and Kassy corrects herself and says the French were the first to take over that area.

**Indigenous** is an adjective that refers to people or wildlife that are native to a particular place, region, or country. It is often used to describe the original inhabitants of a land, or the first ones there. This term has been growing in popularity over the years as social movements have been striving to recognize, protect, and lift up **indigenous** groups.

The United States has a long and terrible history of brutality towards **indigenous** Native Americans. Although this can be difficult to read and hear about, it's important to learn about this history along with the rest of US history. Many museums and historical monuments have information and exhibits dedicated to local **indigenous** history. Next time you're in the United States, try to learn a little about the **indigenous** history of the city you're visiting!

In Australia, you often hear the word **aboriginal** used instead of **indigenous** when referring to people. There are lots of countries with rich **indigenous** cultures that you may have never heard about, such as the Ainu in Japan and the many aboriginal tribes of Taiwan.

Here are a couple more examples with **indigenous**:

**Gina:** There's an interesting lecture on the main campus of school this evening. It's about the preservation of **indigenous** languages that are facing extinction. Would you like to come along?

**Terry:** Definitely. That sounds very interesting. It's hard enough to learn a language with all the resources out there online, let alone a language that hardly has any speakers left. I wonder how they manage to preserve them.

**Kyle:** Mom, how come there are no kangaroos in New York?

**Lois:** Because they live in Australia. In fact, kangaroos are **indigenous** to Australia.

**Kyle:** What does that mean?

**Lois:** It means the first place kangaroos ever existed was Australia!

## To push back

### Phrasal verb

Eventually, Andrew and Kassy make their way to the Midwest in their geographical conversation. This area includes states like Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Kassy says the Midwest is a little boring, full of nothing but flatlands and corn fields, but Andrew **pushes back** and reminds her that the beautiful Great Lakes are in the Midwest.

**To push back** on or against something means to disagree with and oppose it. For instance, you might **push back** on an idea your coworker suggests at a meeting if you don't think it's realistic. Similarly, you might feel that it's difficult **to push back** against a customer's demands.

Andrew says, "I'm gonna **push back** a little" when Kassy says the rural Midwest is nothing but flatland. In this way, he politely disagrees with what Kassy says. By saying "I'm gonna **push back** a little," Andrew softens his next statement, which goes against what Kassy said. This is a nice way to make your opinion or criticism sound a lot gentler to the other person.

Like many other phrasal verbs, **to push back** can be made into and used as a noun: **pushback**. For instance, you could say, "The new legislation was unpopular and received a lot of **pushback** from the public."

Here are a couple more examples with **to push back**:

**Monica:** Did you hear that the school administration is going to cut almost all of the funding for arts and music programs?

**Tyler:** That's terrible news!

**Monica:** I know. But the good thing is, they haven't finalized the budget yet. There's a big group of students who are going to protest this Friday and **push back** against the proposed budget cuts. Will you come with me?

**Tyler:** Definitely.

**Drew:** As you can see, the timeline for the project is anticipated to be 3 months.

**Olivia:** Drew, I hate to interrupt, but I want **to push back** a little on this timeline. I'm not sure that 3 months is a realistic goal. We're already quite overworked with upcoming deadlines.

## Overrated/underrated Adjectives

Andrew asks Kassy about her opinion on one of Chicago's most famous foods, the deep-dish pizza. He wants to know if she thinks it's **overrated** or **underrated**. Ultimately, both hosts agree that the dish is **overrated**. When they tried it, it wasn't as good as they expected it to be.

**Overrated** and **underrated** are really useful adjectives for describing your opinions about things. **Overrated** means that it's more popular and beloved than it actually deserves to be. The thing's quality does not quite match its popularity. On the other hand, **underrated** means that not many people praise or love something, but it's actually really great. Something that's **underrated** deserves more recognition and popularity than it gets.

For example, if you had a mediocre experience at a popular restaurant, you might feel that the restaurant is **overrated**. However, if you discover a fantastic new band that has very few streams on Spotify, you could call them **underrated**.

There are several synonyms for these words with similar prefixes, such as **overhyped** and **underappreciated**.

Here are a couple more examples with **overrated/underrated**:

**Dennis:** Mmm, my coffee is delicious!

**Rebecca:** Mine is, too. Wow, and this muffin is so moist and flavourful! I can't believe we've never been to this café before.

**Dennis:** Yeah, it's such an **underrated** spot. I don't know why more people aren't talking about it!

**Sammy:** Hey, do you want to see the new Christopher Nolan movie with me at the movie theatre?

**Sophie:** Uh, maybe I'll just wait until it's out on streaming services. Honestly, I think he's a bit **overrated**. I don't think I've loved any of his movies.

**Sammy:** Really? Didn't you like Interstellar? And what about The Prestige?

**Sophie:** No, they just didn't do it for me. I'm not a big fan of his directing style.

**Sammy:** I'm shocked. He might be one of my favourite directors.



## Quiz

- 1. Which of the following is a synonym for “to lump together”?**
  - a) to jumble up
  - b) to group
  - c) to split
  - d) to bubble up
  
- 2. Your sister says she thinks ramen is an overrated food. What does she mean?**
  - a) it's as delicious as everyone says
  - b) it's not talked about very often
  - c) it's more expensive than she expected
  - d) it's not as good as people say it is
  
- 3. Which of the following people might be described as Waspy?**
  - a) an affluent white American woman
  - b) a middle-class Jewish man
  - c) an impoverished white American woman
  - d) an affluent Muslim man
  
- 4. Which of the following is an antonym for indigenous?**
  - a) native
  - b) foreign
  - c) local
  - d) aboriginal
  
- 5. Your coworker says, “I’m going to push back a little on that statement.” What does she mean?**
  - a) she's going to add extra details to that statement
  - b) she's going to support that statement
  - c) she's going to disagree with the statement
  - d) she doesn't have any particular opinion about the statement

---

## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you been to the United States? If so, which regions have you visited? If not, where would you like to visit if given the opportunity?
2. Can you split your home country up into distinct regions? How would you do so? Please explain which areas you would lump together as one region and where you draw the line between distinct regions.
3. Are there any indigenous groups in your home country? If so, please describe them. If not, please tell what you know about the indigenous groups of the United States (that is, the Native Americans).
4. Which popular food do you think is overrated? Are there any foods you think are underrated? Please describe.
5. Do you think you would prefer to live in a built-up city centre or in a sparsely populated rural area? Why?

## Quiz Answers

1.b    2.d    3.a    4.b    5.c

### Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Kassy White

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Marshall Vaillancourt

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Indiana Brown

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Image: Raghavendra V. Konkathi (Unsplash.com)