



American Panorama: A Comprehensive Guide to the Culture of the United States

Michael H. Collins

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American Panorama provides a comprehensive up to date guide to the culture of the United States in 12 chapters for the citizen, citizenship applicant, businessperson, the civics, language and culture student and the traveler, particularly readers who have limited access to libraries. American Panorama is a concise encyclopedia informed by the latest scholarship and statistics. In easy language, American Panorama surveys America's vast expanses and patterns of settlement, describes the rise and fall of cities, the growth of suburbs and gated communities, and the campaigns of the environmental movement. American Panorama describes the unity and conflict among the peoples of many heritages and identities who make up America, focusing on patterns of immigration, minorities, and the growth and aging of the population. Believing the founding of the United States to be the most important event in modern history, American Panorama explores the bases of its epoch-making Constitution, outlines the role and practice of government and the system of legal and cultural checks and balances that avert the abuse of power, and discusses current issues such as gun control and the surveillance society, candidates, elections, political action committees and campaign funding. American Panorama outlines the characteristics of the world's leading economy, its free markets, corporations, labor struggles, disparities in wealth, the effects of globalization and the changes in the workforce, with analysis of the current financial crisis. The book illustrates the sources of American power in its unparalleled ability to innovate, integrate and renew, to generate solutions to problems, to produce what people want and enjoy, and hire any passing talent to do it. The triumphs and problems of America's education system, especially its world class universities, are discussed and its groundbreaking achievements in science, space research and medicine outlined. The changes in print and electronic media, infrastructure issues and the role of the car in society are given due weight. Special attention is given to the arts, literature and popular culture, and to the personal and social attitudes of Americans, their values and behaviors, the frontier heritage, their views on a range of issues from debt to dating, and the profuse variety of American religion, with explanation of the role of the Religious Right and the growth of megachurches. Identity issues, social problems, cultural debates, and political movements such as the women's movement and the Civil Rights movement are discussed at length. Finally, the United States' place in the world, from an isolationism that avoids "foreign entanglements" to the fervent promotion of democracy abroad, trade and military affairs are discussed. American Panorama is designed to help readers become familiar with the main aspects of American society and culture and acquire sufficient historical background to illuminate current issues. Through this book, readers will become aware of the interactions among America's history, ideologies, government, economy and culture, and of the significant changes that are taking place in American society. American Panorama gives a balanced picture of America's heritage and current issues, provides generous sources for further information, reflection and study together with questions for prior reflection, post-reading discussion, and vocabulary definitions for readers whose first language is other than English. American Panorama can be used in the classroom or as a study aid. Attentive readers will gain knowledge about the US sufficient for academic and professional purposes. American Panorama introduces the fundamental concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. It includes material for the new Naturalization (Citizenship) Test.

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