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## America, *n.*

**Pronunciation:** Brit. /əˈmɛrɪkə/, U.S. /əˈmɛrəkə/

**Frequency (in current use):**

**Origin:** From a proper name. **Etymon:** proper name *America*.

**Etymology:** < *America*, the name of a land mass of the Western hemisphere, consisting of the two continents of North and South America, joined by the Isthmus of Panama; frequently used also as the name of the United States of America; apparently first used in M. Waldseemüller *Cosmographiae Introductio* (1507) < *Americus*, Latinized form of the name of *Amerigo* Vespucci (1451–1512), Italian explorer who navigated the coast of South America in 1501.

*literary and poet.*

A place which one longs to reach; an ultimate or idealized destination or aim; an (esp. newly identified) object of personal ambition or desire. Usually with preceding possessive adjective.

In later use, probably in allusion to Donne or Shirley (see quotes. a1631, 1631).

a1631 J. DONNE *Elegies* xix, in *Poems* (1669) 98 Licence my roaving hands, and let them go, Before, behind, between, above, below, O my America! my new-found-land, My Kingdom's safest when with one man man'd.

1631 J. SHIRLEY *Schoole of Complement* II. i. 19 O my bird, my Chicke, my Doue, My America, my new-found world, I shall shortly Run backe into one and twenty againe.

1659 J. SHIRLEY *Honoriam & Mammon* ii. 23 Is't not so, My America?

1901 'L. MALET' *Hist. Richard Calmady* II. i. 90 That America of his childish dreams... the Long Gallery.

1922 J. JOYCE *Ulysses* II. xiv. [Oxen of the Sun] 402 Thou sawest thy America, thy lifetask, and didst charge to cover like the transpontine bison.

1944 M. RUKEYSER *Ninth Elegy* in *Coll. Poems* (1978) 259 We want to find and will spend our lives in finding: The landfall of our broken voyages Is still our America of contradictions.

1983 J. JONES *Dostoevsky* vii. 279 Whether the suicide who teases the murderer about his ability to do something is himself achieving anything deedy by going to his America—that question *Crime and Punishment* never voices.

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