

Headline English

2010, week 47 *Learn English through reading on current world affairs*

1 Karl Smith

2 **Why Is America So Great**

3 original at:

4 <http://modeledbehavior.com/2010/11/08/why-is-america-so-great/>

5 The U.S. is the greatest, best country God has ever given man on the face
6 of the earth, someone once said.

7 I tend to think that that assertion suffers from more than a little
8 patriotism bias but there is no doubting it – America is the richest large
9 nation in the world.

10 One could argue that the U.S. out-performs because of the high quality of
11 our public institutions, but of course many states in northern Europe outdo
12 us on that front, as does Singapore.

13 My conventional theory is that America's prosperity is based on a
14 combination of three big factors

15 1. The Common Law; 2. Massive Immigration; 3. The Great Scientific
16 Exodus during WWII

17 You'll notice that four of the top five countries in the Human Development
18 Index have the Common Law and the top, Norway, the odd one out, is
19 awash in oil. Without the petro-kronors they probably wouldn't be so hot.

20 You'll also notice that 3 of the top 4, again with Norway the odd man out,
21 are immigrant nations. The founder effect here should be clear.

22 The bonus from the great exodus is definitely waning. Most of our hey-day
23 German and Jewish scientists are dying off, but it has still given us a
24 boost that lingers to this day. There is no fundamental reason why the US
25 should be the center of the scientific world but for a time it was the only
26 place in the world safe for many scientists.

Questions

- 1) Explain the meaning of 'on the face of Earth' (lines 5 to 6).
- 2) What is the author's opinion on the assertion that America is the best country God has ever given to man?
- 3) What role does the quality of American public institutions play in the country's position in the Human Development Index?
- 4) What is the 'Common law' (line 15)?
- 5) What makes, according to the author of the text, Norway rank within the top 5 countries in the Human Development Index although it does not meet the conditions for success named by the author?
- 6) What is the 'founder effect' (line 21)?
- 7) Why has, according to the article, the US become the leading country in the world in terms of scientific output?
- 8) Do you agree with the author of the Article? Do you think that America has become so rich thanks to the three principles given by him?

Vocabulary

assertion (line 7) – a positive statement, usually made without an attempt at furnishing evidence; claim, allegation.

outdo (line 11) – to surpass in performance:

wane (line 22) – to decrease in strength, intensity, etc.

linger (line 24) – to remain alive; continue or persist, although gradually dying, ceasing, disappearing, etc.

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> or <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

Přejeme Vám mnoho studijních úspěchů.

Tým jazykové skupiny Spěváček:

