

To the Student

Who Is an American?

In this book, you will see the word *American*. This can be confusing. The Americas include many countries. In this book, the word *American* is used to refer to a citizen of the United States of America.

Why Do You Need to Know about U.S. Holidays?

If you live in the U.S., you will experience about 30 holidays every year. You might be curious about the traditions of the holidays. Do you know why Americans celebrate these holidays? What do people do on these days? What do they say to one another? How can you participate?

Each unit in this book has two parts. The first part is about the holiday. The second part is about an American who has an important connection to the holiday. The readings in both parts will give you helpful and interesting information. You will practice a lot of vocabulary before the readings. Exercises will help you to practice and remember the new words. They will also help you to understand the readings.

Why Do You Need to Know about Important Americans?

Learning about the United States and who its people are requires more than just learning the language. You also should know something about the history and culture of the United States. One enjoyable way to do this is to study important people in history. Who do many Americans admire? Why do many Americans admire these people? If you learn the answer to these questions, then you will learn something about American values. You might agree with these values, or you might not. But it is important to try to understand them if you want to better understand Americans.

How Can You Improve Your Vocabulary?

When we encounter a new word in any language, we need to hear it or see it many times before we can learn it. The first time that we hear or see a new word, we might find out what it means. The next time we hear or see it, we will probably

notice it and we might remember what it means. After we hear or see it several times, we might be able to use the word. We might say it in a conversation. We might write it in a school assignment. When this happens regularly, it means that we have learned it. The exercises in this textbook practice this step-by-step process. First, you will be introduced to a new word. Then you will learn what it means. After that, you will practice it several times in different and interesting ways. Next, you will read the words in the stories. Finally, you will use the word in your own sentences. By this time, the new word will start to become part of your memory, and you should be able to use it whenever you want.

In each unit of this book, you will practice 10 new words. These words will help you understand the readings better. They are common words that you will be able to use in everyday English. These words will help you understand and talk about life in the United States. They will help you understand and talk about American people and history. They will help you understand and talk about American culture and values. To learn all of these new words, there are several things that you can do.

1. Complete the exercises carefully.
2. When you read the stories in this book, don't just read them one time. Read each story two or even three times. Reading the same text several times will help you understand the words.
3. Keep a vocabulary journal of all the new words that you learn. Write any new words in your journal that you learn from reading this book and doing the exercises. Write a definition or a translation of each new word and write it in a sentence. You could also write what part of speech it is. Is it a noun? Is it a verb? This information will help you know where it goes in a sentence.
4. Notice the new words as you see them. Pay attention to how they are different from words that you already know. Use the new words in conversations, in your homework, and in your writing. Practice the new words again and again. You will find that your vocabulary is growing. You will be able to understand and express more ideas.

Have fun with the readings and exercises here. You probably already know more than you think about the ideas in this book. Think about your own experiences in life. Think about the holidays in your family's native country. Think about its heroes. Think about what you might already know about North American holidays and heroes. Use this information when you answer the questions in this book.

I hope that *Fireworks and Festivals* is fun and interesting for you. Good luck as you continue to learn this challenging and fascinating language.