

Many people say that America is a great country, but that begs the question--what makes America great? There are many things that make it such a powerful and respected nation, but the most important are its opportunity, its innovation, and its perseverance. Without these key features, America would not have been founded, nor would it have sustained itself thus far, being the longest-running democratic nation in the world. America, and American greatness, began with opportunity.

When the first settlers came to America in the 1600s, they came for opportunity; they came for a chance at a better life. America is great because people in America today still have those opportunities. America offers freedoms like no other country in the world--freedoms of opportunity, speech, religion, and others. Today in America, all people have the chance to succeed in life and further themselves through education, vocational training, or other means. They can speak their minds and say what they want peacefully without fear of government intrusion. They can practice whatever religion they want. Given the opportunity, Americans worked hard, bettering the world through innovation.

Innovation is another factor in American greatness. Without American innovation, the world as we know it would be vastly different. The Wright brothers, born in Ohio, invented the self-powered airplane; airplanes made it possible to travel to far away places without lengthy sea voyages or overland treks. The assembly line process, pioneered by Michigianian Henry Ford, revolutionized and greatly accelerated the production of goods on a global scale, providing the readily available amount of goods everyone takes for granted today. The light bulb, while not technically invented in the US, was refined and perfected here into what it is today; that process

also birthed the research laboratory, a thing of extreme relevance in the modern world. More recently, GPS, or Global Positioning System, was developed in America, a system with applications in military, transportation, agriculture, and consumer settings. Myriad other innovations that make life easier and that are taken for granted were born out of American ingenuity. Americans innovated to make this country great, though it was not easy; this took much determination, and in turn the country has persevered.

Lastly, America is great because of its perseverance. As far as civilizations go, America is quite young at only 243 years. However, as a nation, America is the longest-running democracy in the world; it also has the longest-standing constitution. America has suffered more than its share of bloodshed to get to this point; millions have fought and died to protect our nation. However, because of their sacrifice, America stands strong, a beacon of light and freedom in the world.

America has earned its position in the world through hard work and perseverance, and it has done those things only because of the opportunity that it has to offer. The country's foundations in freedom and opportunity continue to hold true as part of the quintessential American values; American innovation continues to and will continue to challenge and better the global economy and ways of life; and American perseverance, which has brought us thus far, will continue into the future to show the world a nation of strength and liberty. Because of these things, America is and will continue to be the greatest nation on the face of the earth.