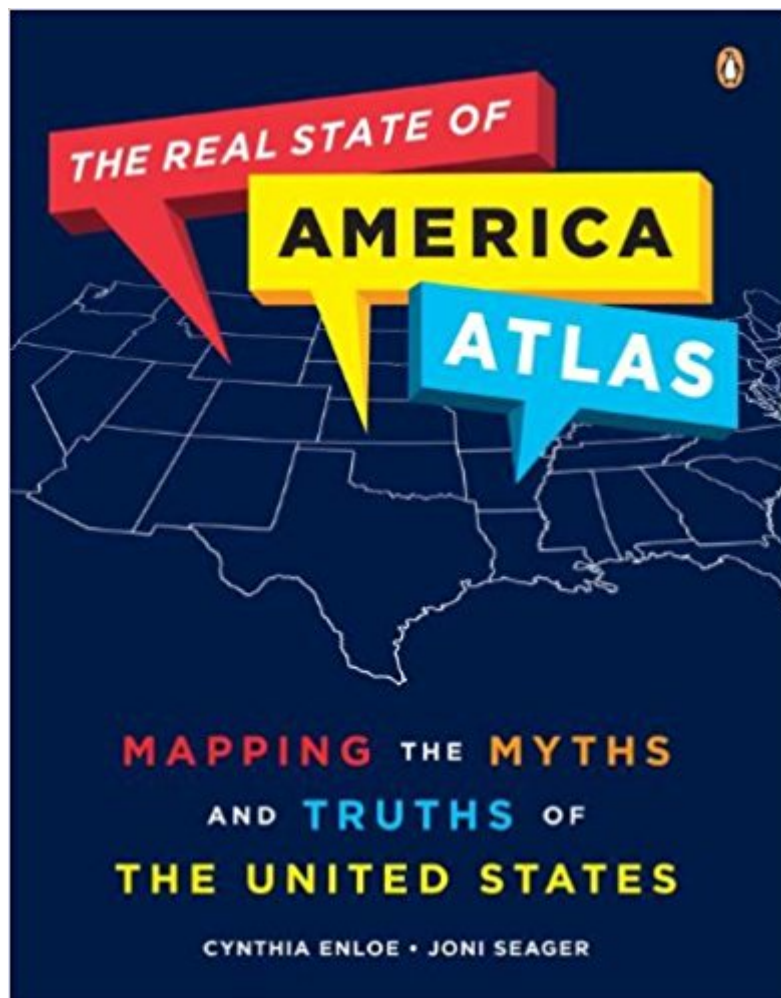




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The Real State Of America Atlas: Mapping The Myths And Truths Of The United States



Synopsis

A vivid and frequently surprising picture of America in the twenty-first century. Packed with fascinating facts and illustrated throughout with clear, easy-to-read, four-color graphics, The Real State of America Atlas draws back the curtain on our complex nation to reveal the myriad realities of the American experience—from our changing demographics to patterns of home ownership to the kinds of food we eat. Cowritten by two esteemed scholars, this comprehensive and enlightening work upends many long-held myths and shows us who we are today. It is the perfect read for anyone who wants to better understand our ever-changing nation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“a visually stunning collection of 40 chapters that lays bare the condition of the modern US.” (Tim Hall Times Higher Education 2011-07-28) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Cynthia Enloe is Research Professor at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Joni Seager is Professor and Chair of Global Studies at Bentley University in Boston, Massachusetts. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Great visuals, help make abstract concepts more concrete

Some interesting material, so I see it mostly as an interesting coffee-table book. Much too scattered however, and the attempt at cohesiveness through chapter headings isn't very successful. A nice book, but more a collection of almost random information.

This atlas is amazing! It is not just geography, it is crammed full of amazing facts and figures. It sits in my living room, and everyone seems to pick it up. Once they open it, they are hooked. It is so interesting and intriguing, a definite positive addition to my coffee table.

Flipping randomly through the book, I burst out laughing at the map of a gerrymandered district on p. 37. I now understand why redistricting is an issue! The changing Indian territories maps on p.17, religious identities map on p. 31 and the amount of raw materials to build a car on p. 86 were eye-opening. The economic map on p. 46 showing the size of a state based on its GDP was an interesting way to present the data. The incarceration rate on p. 74 is striking and causes one to ask does the US have better enforcement or is something else going on? The book doesn't attempt to answer these questions but it provides a springboard for your own questions. For example, in the section on Poverty & Wealth, a short listing of Income Inequality shows the USA falls between Poland and Turkey. Really? Let's see - the authors provide us with pointers to the original data for all of their statistics. In this case the original source material is based on OECD data and, after a few minutes on that site, I found the original data as well as trend and other data. That lead to thinking about whether Gini numbers are important and what should be a reasonable value. The above points out some of the key strengths of the book. First, the book provides references to original authoritative data sources (like US Census Bureau, Pew, and OECD) to allow one the option to follow up, validate and explore further. This is critical because it seems that so much of what we hear from talk shows and read in blogs today are merely opinions cloaked as facts. If one wants reasoned debate, one needs start with well-researched statistical data from reputable sources. It is refreshing to have a book that presents complex data so engagingly. Few people would be inclined to navigate their way around the OECD site noted above! Comparisons between states or other nations are useful because a number in isolation can be difficult to assign importance to and comparisons allow benchmarking. The book covers a very wide range of topics, from a graphic showing the consumption of Coke around the world of to more current '3rd rail' topics like how the US compares to other countries on per capita health care costs or rates of violence against women. In choosing the topics and data to present, the authors are presenting a point of view but it is up to the reader to rationalize the data on their own terms. Statistics, at least well-researched ones, are

politic-, color- and gender-neutral. The real issue is how they are interpreted. This is a book both to entertain and to provoke you to think. The US is a very big, diverse and complex nation and living in one's small section of it, it is hard to grasp how we are actually doing. This book serves a useful and important role by providing an engaging way to access core statistics about our country, covering a wide range of topics, and serving as a starting point for debate about the deeper questions those figures raise.

This book had lots of colors and was easy to understand. It used lots of graphs and pictures to illustrate sociological statistics.

This is a very interesting view of where we are. The few factual items I have researched align pretty well with material in the book. No doubt, the authors have some bias here and there. People who only want facts that reaffirm their beliefs may be disappointed, but that is the point. Facts sometimes surprise us and hopefully help us make better decisions.

In some ways, this book would have been the ideal coffee table book. Every page has eye-popping visuals along with compelling data tied together in unorthodox ways. The book's content is as varied as the visual techniques employed -- expect to read about demographics, government, health, sports, and much more. While you might argue that the book lacks a central thesis or an articulated agenda or point of view, I think as a compilation of fun facts presented creatively it's a great read. Not necessarily a "page turner", but a great "open to a random page" type of book. Five stars.

This book looked really intriguing... so I purchased it. What a mistake. I would NOT recommend wasting your money on this book for three primary reasons: 1) it is wrought with errors! (example: on the inside back flap it refers to the World Trade Center terrorists attacks on "September 9, 2001" instead of September 11th! 2) it is "spun" with some very disturbing and annoying bias. For example, in the section "Dreams Foreclosed," it says that "modest assistance to homeowners in crisis has staunched the flow, but for most Americans there is little relief." HUH?! I know 5+ people who haven't made a mortgage payment in over 3 years who are still in their homes; unemployment benefits now last over 2 years; etc. etc. There is a LOT of relief... some would say too much, which has contributed to the crisis (i.e. people purchasing things they can't afford because they know they'll get a LOT of assistance). 3) I love most of the graphics and charts... but oftentimes they straddle 2 pages, so the middle of the graphic is hidden/blocked by the book binding, which makes

them impossible to see in their entirety. Not sure why they didn't design the book in a way that allowed you to actually see all the graphics. I think this book COULD be very interesting... but unfortunately it's all lost in the execution.

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