

## NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS

### What is a U.S. Visa and What Does it Mean?

In general, a U.S. visa is a sticker placed in a traveler's passport that gives that person the right to apply for admission to the United States. ([Learn more](#)) Travelers should pay particular attention to the following information printed on the visa:

- the category of visa,
- the expiration date, and
- the number of entries

The **category of the visa** is indicated by a letter or a letter/number combination (see [Types of Visas](#)). The category of visa an applicant receives is determined by the purpose of travel (tourism, business, study, sports, transit, training, etc.) listed on the visa application. It is important because it determines which rights or privileges the traveler may enjoy. For example, it is legal to work in the United States on an "H-1B" visa, but not on a "B-2" visa.

A traveler can use his visa to travel to the U.S. until the **expiration date** printed on the visa. It is important to note that the expiration date indicates only the end of the timeframe in which the traveler may enter the U.S. using the visa. It does not determine how long the traveler may stay in the U.S. Please note that the visa can be used until its expiration date, even if the passport it's in has expired. In that case, the traveler would have to carry both a new valid passport and his expired passport containing the valid visa. For further information, [click here](#).

The **number of entries** indicates how many times the traveler may enter the U.S. using the visa. "M" means "multiple".

A U.S. visa **does not specify how long** a person may stay in the U.S. That decision is made by an immigration official when the traveler enters the United States. The official will usually indicate the date by which the traveler must depart the United States on a card (Form I-94) placed in the traveler's passport.

For additional information, see [What is a Visa](#).