

Name _____

Date _____

California

The term California originally referred to what is now known as the state of California and parts of Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Wyoming, and the Mexican peninsula of Baja California. The name California is most likely derived from a story of a paradise populated by Amazons and ruled by Queen Calafia. This mythical story was written by Garcia Rodriguez de Montalvo in his book, *The Exploits of Esplandian* in 1510. The kingdom of Queen Calafia was said to be rich in gold and inhabited by griffins.

California borders the Pacific Ocean. Its northern border is shared with Oregon. It borders Nevada to the east and the Mexican state of Baja California in the south. California has the largest population of any state in the United States. Based on land area, California is the third largest state, after Alaska and Texas.

Originally, the California area was inhabited by more than 70 different groups of Native Americans. Large groups of people lived along the coast. They used the Pacific Ocean as a food source, by fishing for salmon and gathering shellfish. Further inland, other tribes gathered nuts and berries for food.

Geographically, California is diverse. The Sierra Nevada mountain range is located in the east of the state. The Mojave Desert is in the southeast. The Mojave Desert is in Death Valley, which has the lowest, hottest point in North America. This point is called Badwater Flat.

There are also Redwood forests in the northwest of California. The California Redwoods are known for their size and for how long they live. A California Redwood can live for up to 2200 years. The center of California includes the Central Valley, which is one of the most agriculturally productive areas in the world. California is especially known for their grapes.

The California Gold Rush caused an influx of people that helped San Francisco grow from a small town to a boomtown. A boomtown is a community that has sudden and rapid economic and population growth. Early in the 20th century, Los Angeles became the center of the entertainment industry in America. Hollywood is a district of Los Angeles. It is known as the historical center of movie studios and movie stars.

While Los Angeles is the largest city in California, the capitol of California is Sacramento. California has been nicknamed the Golden State. California was admitted to the Union on September 9, 1850. It became the 31st state.

The state bird of California is the California Valley Quail. The California Poppy is the state flower. The state tree is the redwood. The motto of California is "Eureka," which means "I have found it" and refers to the discovery of gold in California.

California is home to the Golden Gate Bridge. This suspension bridge connects the City of San Francisco to Marin County. The Golden Gate Bridge was completed in 1937. At the time, it was the longest suspension bridge. Today, there are eight other suspension bridges that are longer, but the Golden Gate Bridge remains the second longest suspension bridge in the United States. Prior to the Golden Gate Bridge, the only practical route between San Francisco and Marin County was by boating across part of the San Francisco Bay.

Name _____

Date _____

California Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. The name California comes from:
 - a. Queen Califia
 - b. Gold miners
 - c. Redwood trees
 - d. Grape vines

2. California was the _____ state admitted to the Union.:
 - a. nineteenth
 - b. fourth
 - c. second
 - d. thirty-first

3. The motto of California is "Eureka" which means:
 - a. vacuum
 - b. oil
 - c. I have found it
 - d. I am lost

Fill In:

4. The Capital of California is _____.
5. The Golden Gate bridge connects _____ to Marin County.
6. California's state flower is the _____.
7. California's nickname is the _____.

True or False:

- ___ 8. California has the largest population of any state in the United States.
- ___ 9. Los Angeles is the largest city in California.
- ___ 10. California borders the Atlantic Ocean.

Name _____

Date _____

California Answers

Multiple Choice:

1. The name California comes from:

- a. Queen Califia
- b. Gold miners
- c. Redwood trees
- d. Grape vines

2. California was the _____ state admitted to the Union.:

- a. nineteenth
- b. fourth
- c. second
- d. thirty-first

3. The motto of California is “Eureka” which means:

- a. vacuum
- b. oil
- c. I have found it
- d. I am lost

Fill In:

4. The Capital of California is _____ **Sacramento** _____.

5. The Golden Gate bridge connects _____ **San Francisco** _____ to Marin County.

6. California’s state flower is the _____ **California Poppy** _____.

7. California’s nickname is the _____ **Golden State** _____.

True or False:

___ **T** ___ 8. California has the largest population of any state in the United States.

___ **T** ___ 9. Los Angeles is the largest city in California.

___ **F** ___ 10. California borders the Atlantic Ocean.