California was the 31st state admitted to the United States. It was admitted to the United States on September 9, 1850. The capital of California is Sacramento, which is located in the center of the northern region of the state. California is bordered by Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon.

The name “California” comes from the Spanish word califia. Califia was the mythological paradise in a Spanish romance written by Garcia Ordonez de Montalvo in 1510. California has also been nicknamed the Golden State, both because of the gold that was discovered there in 1848, and because of the fields of golden poppies that cover the Californian hills in springtime.

A multitude of famous people are from California. A few include: Sally Ride, astronaut; Tiger Woods, golfer; Shirley Temple, actress; Jack London, author; Robert Frost, poet; Richard Nixon, President; and Theodore Harold Maiman, inventor.

California’s state bird is the California Valley Quail. The valley quail became the state bird in 1931. It is a hardy grey bird that is smaller than a pigeon. A ground bird, the valley quail does not build a nest, but uses its feet to scratch a hollow in the dirt. Valley quails lay between 6 to 28 eggs at one time. They are highly prized by hunters as game birds.

The state tree of California is the redwood. These trees can grow to be over 300 feet tall, and the base of the tree can measure up to 22 feet in diameter.

The state flower of California is the golden poppy. These flowers grow wild throughout the state. Every year, the state of California celebrates Poppy Day on April 6th.

California’s current population is approximately 33,871,648. It is the most populous state in the United States of America. California is well known for film production, computers and computer software, as well as tourism.
Comprehension

Respond using complete sentences.

1. What is the connection between California’s state nickname and its state flower?

2. What is one interesting fact about the state tree of California?

3. Name two famous people from California. What are they famous for?

4. How long has California been a state?

5. What is the capital of California, and where is it located?

6. What is the origin of the name “California”?
Answers will vary—accept all reasonable answers.

1. The state nickname is the Golden State. One of the reasons that it is called the Golden State is because of the poppies that bloom there. The poppy is the state flower.

2. Accept either answer. The redwood grows to be over 300 feet tall or it measures 22 feet at the base.


4. California has been a state for 154 years. (As of 2004)

5. The capital of California is Sacramento, which is located in the northern center of the state.

6. The word California comes from the word califia, a mythical paradise from a Spanish romance novel.