



# DISCOVER THE *U.S. CAPITOL*



AN ACTIVITY GUIDE

# Welcome to the United States Capitol!



**The Capitol, located in Washington, D.C., is a beautiful building. When people see the Capitol, they think about the United States. The Capitol is a symbol of our country.**

The United States is a democracy. Democracy is a word that means “the people rule.” In America the people vote and choose their leaders.

Like a strong tree with branches, there are three parts or branches of our government. The three branches make the law, carry out the law, and decide if the law has been broken.

The branch that makes the rules and laws is called Congress. Congress meets in the Capitol.

## **You will visit three important rooms in the Capitol:**

- **Crypt** (the area below the main floor of the Capitol)
- **Rotunda** (the round room with a dome)
- **National Statuary Hall** (the room used to display statues)

**Enjoy your visit to the U.S. Capitol! This activity book has things for you to do before or after your visit to the Capitol.**



## ..... America's Roots .....

**Does the United States Capitol look like buildings found in ancient Greece and Rome?** Yes, absolutely! We borrowed important ideas, such as democracy, from those cultures. The Capitol reminds us of our ties to the past.

There are many columns in the U.S. Capitol. Columns hold up heavy floors and ceilings. Columns also are used to decorate the building.

The top part of a column is called a “capital.” Look at the capital to the right. **What important American crop do you see?** Some of the columns in the U.S. Capitol building are topped with American crops and flowers. **Which capital below is the simplest? Which capital is the fanciest?** Find the columns as you walk through the Capitol.



Doric column



Ionic column



Corinthian column

Now it is  
your turn  
to draw  
a capital.

The corn cob capital  
represents America.

What design  
represents you?

## America's Story

In the Capitol Rotunda, if you look up, you will see 19 paintings arranged in a circle. This group of 19 paintings is called the “**Frieze of American History.**” They tell the story of our nation.



**Discovery of Gold  
in California**



**Declaration of Independence**





## Can you put these five paintings from the Frieze of American History in order of when they happened?

Number the paintings from one to five, from the beginning to the end of the story.

**Here is a bonus question:** can you add the date to each of the paintings?

Did you notice that there are many people in each scene? People work together to get things done. Each person has a skill or talent that helps the group.

**Circle the people working together in each of the paintings.**  
What are they doing to help?  
How do you help at home and in school?



**The Birth of Aviation**



**Landing of the Pilgrims**



**Landing of Columbus**

## Leaders and Helpers

**In the U.S. Capitol we honor people who have helped the country.** People help in many different ways. Sometimes artists are asked to create a statue of an important person for the Capitol. Look for statues and sculptures in the Capitol and in the Capitol Visitor Center.

Can you match  
the people to  
the correct  
description of  
their lives?

In the empty box, write the name or draw a picture of someone you have studied who helped our country.



- A.** I helped the Lewis and Clark Expedition. We traveled from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean.
- B.** I was known for an event that happened in 1773 called the Boston Tea Party. I was a member of a famous family from Massachusetts.
- C.** I was a priest who was born in Spain. I traveled to the New World to build settlements where people could live and learn about my church.
- D.** In 1955 I was asked to move to the back of the bus solely because of the color of my skin. I refused to do so and led protests against unfair laws.
- E.** I became the 16th President of the United States and served during the Civil War. I am known for writing the Emancipation Proclamation.
- F.** I led the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. I became the first President of the United States.
- G.** I was President of the Republic of Texas and a U.S. Senator. A city in Texas is named after me.
- H.** I was the Army general who led all U.S. troops in Europe during World War II. I was elected President of the United States twice, in 1952 and 1956.
- I.** I was deaf and blind but learned to communicate by touch. I went to college and wrote a book about my life story.
- J.** I was the main author of the Declaration of Independence and third President of the United States.
- K.** I led marches and made speeches about civil rights. I believed that all people should be treated equally.

 <p><b>Samuel Adams</b></p>	 <p><b>Dwight Eisenhower</b></p>	 <p><b>Sam Houston</b></p>	 <p><b>Thomas Jefferson</b></p>
 <p><b>Helen Keller</b></p>	 <p><b>Martin Luther King, Jr.</b></p>	 <p><b>Abraham Lincoln</b></p>	 <p><b>Rosa Parks</b></p>
 <p><b>Sakakawea</b></p>	 <p><b>Father Junipero Serra</b></p>	 <p><b>George Washington</b></p>	<p><b>Who would you include?</b></p>

## The Nation Grows

We are a nation of many states united to form one country. Some states joined the union in 1787. Others did not become states until 1959, 172 years later!

**Within each state is the date when it became a part of the United States.**

Color the first 13 states red.  
They became states between 1787 and 1790.

Color the states that became states between 1791 and 1800 purple.



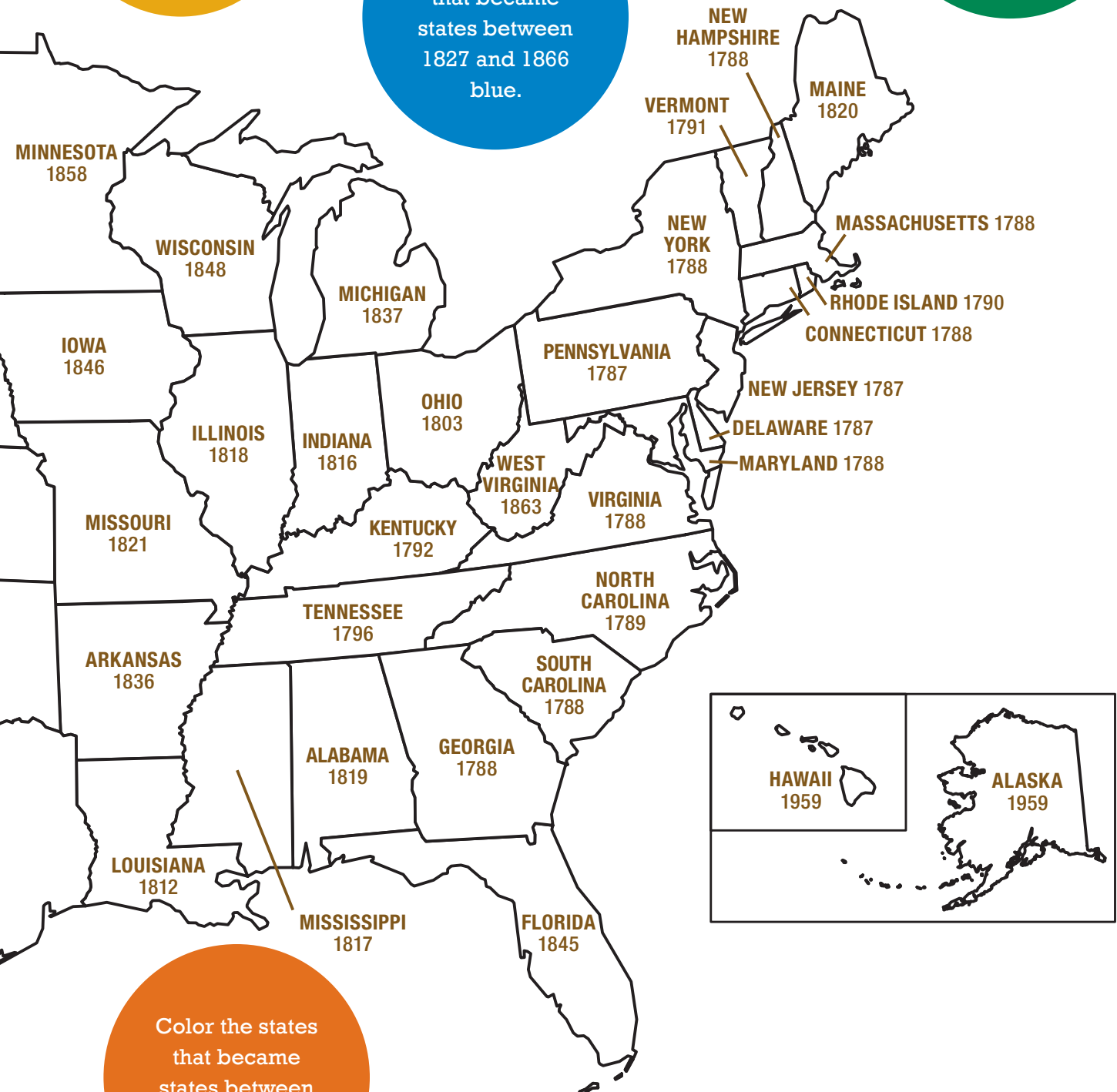
1. Where are the first 13 states located?
2. Twelve states joined the nation between which dates?
3. Which states were last to join the nation?
4. Which four states became part of the nation in 1889?



Color the states that became states between 1801 and 1826 yellow.

Color the states that became states between 1827 and 1866 blue.

Color the states that became states between 1867 and 1900 green.



Color the states that became states between 1901 and 1960 orange.

Find your state on the map. **When did your state join the union?**

## The Capitol Changes

**Study the drawings and photos of the U.S. Capitol. What changes do you see?**

The U.S. grew from 13 to 50 states. The new states elected people to Congress. More space was needed in the Capitol. Meeting rooms, offices and even a larger dome were added. As the nation grew, the Capitol grew as well!

The U.S. Congress has two parts, the Senate and House of Representatives. The parts are called houses. Each state sends two Senators and at least one member of the House of Representatives to the Capitol. Congress meets in rooms at either end of the building. Congress makes the nation's laws.

Next to each picture write the total number of states in the union at the date shown.

Use the map you colored to count the states.



**1800**  
U.S. Capitol

**1826**  
U.S. Capitol



**1866**  
U.S. Capitol



**1900**  
U.S. Capitol



**Today**  
U.S. Capitol



This is a famous painting by John Trumbull. It hangs in the Rotunda. **The painting tells the story of an important day in American history, December 23, 1783.**

George Washington is in the middle of the painting. He is handing a paper to Congress that says that he is no longer leading the army. The Revolutionary War has ended and he is going home.



## What happens after the event shown in the painting?

Answer these questions.

Notice the two children on the right. They are watching George Washington. **If you were present that day and decided to write in your journal about the event, what would you say?**

1. Some people wanted George Washington to become king of our new nation. Why did George Washington refuse to become king?
2. We needed a new plan for our nation. The founders wrote the U.S. Constitution in 1787. What is a constitution?
3. The founders did not want any person or group to have too much power. Why?
4. List your classroom rules. Why are rules important in the classroom? Why are rules important for a nation?



## American Inventors



**At the very top of the Rotunda, on the curved ceiling of the Dome, is a painting. The painting has several parts, and this is one section of that painting. The story is called, “Science.”**

This type of painting is called a *fresco*. In a fresco, the artist paints on damp plaster. When the plaster dries the painting becomes part of the wall or ceiling. Constantino Brumidi is the artist who painted this fresco.

Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, is shown with famous Americans. They were inventors. **Can you find Benjamin Franklin standing next to Minerva?**

Minerva is pointing to a battery. She is also standing near a printing press. On the other side of the painting, children listen to a teacher. The teacher is showing them how to use a drawing tool.

**We live in a country with many freedoms.**  
**The nation’s founders believed that free people would create many inventions.**  
**Do you agree? Have you ever thought of an invention? What was it?**

**Artists paint and sculpt inventors and their inventions.** Ask your guide to point out inventors or their inventions as you walk through the Capitol.

- Benjamin Franklin
- Cyrus McCormick
- Samuel Morse
- Orville and Wilbur Wright
- Robert Fulton



## Find the first and last name of each inventor in the puzzle below.

The words may be written up or down, across, diagonally, forwards and backwards. Complete the word find. Then, try to name an invention for each person listed.

Q	C	Z	M	L	T	D	V	J	W
F	Y	R	O	B	E	R	T	F	R
D	R	U	B	L	I	W	M	U	I
H	S	A	M	U	E	L	O	L	G
F	A	R	N	S	W	O	R	T	H
C	P	D	X	K	Q	B	S	O	T
Y	O	R	V	I	L	L	E	N	Y
R	Z	Y	D	P	H	I	L	O	Z
U	X	N	I	M	A	J	N	E	B
S	M	C	C	O	R	M	I	C	K

# Answer Key

## PAGE 1: AMERICA'S ROOTS

The American crop is corn.

The simplest capital is the Doric and the fanciest is the Corinthian.

## PAGES 2 – 3: AMERICA'S STORY

- #1 Landing of Columbus (1492)
- #2 Landing of the Pilgrims (1620)
- #3 Declaration of Independence (1776)
- #4 Discovery of Gold in California (1848)
- #5 The Birth of Aviation (1903)

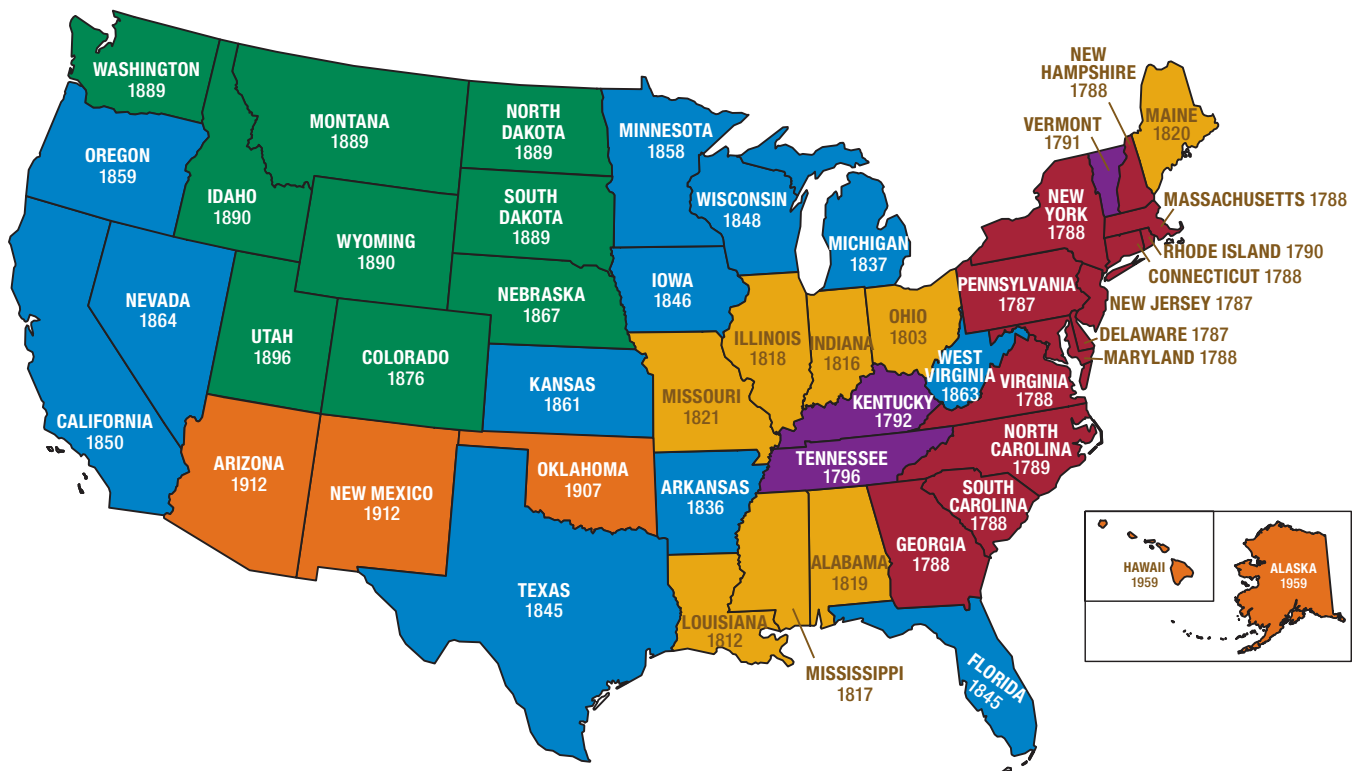
## PAGES 4 – 5: LEADERS AND HELPERS

- Samuel Adams – B
- Dwight Eisenhower – H
- Sam Houston – G
- Thomas Jefferson – J
- Helen Keller – I
- Martin Luther King, Jr. – K
- Abraham Lincoln – E
- Rosa Parks – D
- Sakakawea – A
- Father Junipero Serra – C
- George Washington – F

## PAGES 6 – 7: THE NATION GROWS

Colored map

- #1 The first 13 states are located on the east coast of the United States.
- #2 Twelve states joined the union between 1827 and 1866.
- #3 The last two states to join the union were Hawaii and Alaska.
- #4 Washington, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota all became states in 1889.





## PAGE 8: THE CAPITOL CHANGES

- 1800 – 16 states
- 1826 – 24 states
- 1866 – 36 states
- 1900 – 45 states
- Today – 50 states

## PAGE 9: A NATION OF LAWS

- #1 George Washington wanted our nation to be free. He thought that the people should choose their leaders. A king is not chosen by the people.
- #2 A constitution is a plan the government follows. The U.S. Constitution calls for a government of three branches: one that makes the laws (legislative); one that carries out the laws (executive); and one that decides if the laws are broken (judicial).
- #3 The founders were afraid that powerful people or groups would take away the rights of others. So, they created a government with three branches that share power. Each of the branches “checks and balances” the other branches.
- #4 Rules help all of us by keeping us safe and maintaining order. A nation follows rules just as people follow rules at home, school and work.

## PAGES 10 – 11: AMERICAN INVENTORS

Word find puzzle with answers

- Benjamin Franklin – lightning rod, metal-lined stove (Franklin stove), bifocal glasses
- Samuel Morse – telegraph and Morse code
- Orville and Wilbur Wright – powered airplane
- Cyrus McCormick – reaper that cuts grain
- Robert Fulton – steamboat

Q	C	Z	M	L	T	D	V	J	W
F	Y	R	O	B	E	R	T	F	R
D	R	U	B	L	I	W	M	U	I
H	S	A	M	U	E	L	O	L	G
F	A	R	N	S	W	O	R	T	H
C	P	D	X	K	Q	B	S	O	T
Y	O	R	V	I	L	L	E	N	Y
R	Z	Y	D	P	H	I	L	O	Z
U	X	N	I	M	A	J	N	E	B
S	M	C	C	O	R	M	I	C	K

## BACK PAGE: BONUS QUESTIONS

- |                     |                  |                             |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| #1 B – Coconut palm | #3 C – 30,000    | #5 D – Christopher Columbus |
| #2 A – Beaches      | #4 C – Rich Port | #6 B – 1800                 |

## BONUS Questions

In addition to the 50 states, five territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands) and Washington, D.C. are part of our country, too.

**Answer the questions, then see if you can find each of them on a map.**

Which is the correct answer to the following questions?

The answers are found on the previous page.



1. **American Samoa** is a group of islands in the South Pacific. Thick rainforests are found on American Samoa. American Samoa is known for its many \_\_\_\_\_ trees.

- a) Maple
- b) Coconut palm
- c) Oak
- d) Redwood



2. **Guam** is an island and found in the Western Pacific Ocean. Guam is located south of Japan and east of the Philippines. Tourists like to visit Guam to enjoy \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) Beaches
- b) Snow skiing
- c) Rodeo shows
- d) Cycling



3. Fourteen islands form the **Northern Mariana Islands**. They are located north of Guam in the Pacific Ocean. The nearby Mariana Trench – more than \_\_\_\_\_ feet deep – is the deepest part of the ocean!

- a) 10,000
- b) 20,000
- c) 30,000
- d) 40,000



4. **Puerto Rico** is an island in the Caribbean Sea. Most Puerto Ricans speak Spanish and English. Many ships visit Puerto Rico. “Puerto Rico” is Spanish for \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) Open Door
- b) Island Home
- c) Rich Port
- d) Round Rocks



5. The **U.S. Virgin Islands** is made up of 68 islands and cays (pronounced “keys”). They are located in the Caribbean Basin. Indian tribes lived on the islands before the first European,

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

landed there.

- a) Hernando de Soto
- b) Marco Polo
- c) Amerigo Vespucci
- d) Christopher Columbus



6. **Washington, D.C.**, also called the **District of Columbia**, is our nation’s capital. It is a city, not a state. Congress first met in the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. in the year \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) 2000
- b) 1800
- c) 1776
- d) 1900

U.S. CAPITOL  
Visitor Center