California State Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which animal walks across the California state flag?
   A. A grizzly bear
   B. A mountain lion
   C. A California condor
   D. A gray wolf
   Correct answer: A. A grizzly bear
   The California grizzly is pictured on the Bear Flag. The state also recognizes it as the official state animal.

2. Which flower represents California as its official state flower?
   A. Mariposa lily
   B. Coast sunflower
   C. California golden poppy
   D. California wild rose
   Correct answer: C. California golden poppy
   California designated its golden poppy as the official state flower in 1903.

3. Which pair is designated as California’s official state colors?
   A. Red and white
   B. Blue and gold
   C. Blue and silver
   D. Green and gold
   Correct answer: B. Blue and gold
   Blue and gold are the state colors listed by the California State Capitol Museum.

4. Which mountain range contains Yosemite National Park?
   A. Transverse Ranges
   B. Cascade Range
   C. San Gabriel Mountains
   D. Sierra Nevada
   Correct answer: D. Sierra Nevada
   Yosemite lies in the Sierra Nevada, the same range that contains Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks.

5. Which California headland has a lighthouse that first shone in 1870 to warn ships near the approach to San Francisco Bay?

A. Battery Point
B. Point Reyes
C. Point Pinos
D. Point Sur

Correct answer: B. Point Reyes
The Point Reyes Lighthouse helped mark the projecting headlands for vessels traveling north of San Francisco Bay.

6. Which island’s immigration station opened in 1910 and processed people arriving from China and many other countries?

A. Angel Island
B. Alcatraz Island
C. Treasure Island
D. Yerba Buena Island

Correct answer: A. Angel Island
The station on Angel Island processed immigrants, including many arriving under federal laws that restricted entry from China.

7. Anacapa, San Miguel, and Santa Rosa are three of the five islands in which California national park?

A. Lassen Volcanic National Park
B. Redwood National Park
C. Pinnacles National Park
D. Channel Islands National Park

Correct answer: D. Channel Islands National Park
Channel Islands National Park includes those three islands as well as Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz.

8. Which Death Valley salt flat contains the lowest elevation in North America?

A. Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes
B. Devils Golf Course
C. Badwater Basin
D. Racetrack Playa

Correct answer: C. Badwater Basin
The National Park Service places Badwater Basin at 282 feet below sea level.

9. California preserves the buildings and furnishings of which Gold Rush ghost town north of Mono Lake?

A. Bodie
B. Coloma
C. Old Sacramento
D. San Juan Bautista

Correct answer: A. Bodie
Bodie was a mining boomtown in the eastern Sierra. The state protects the buildings that survived as a state historic park.

10. Which tree forms the old-growth forest that Muir Woods National Monument was established to protect?

A. Joshua tree
B. Giant sequoia
C. Bristlecone pine
D. Coast redwood

Correct answer: D. Coast redwood
Muir Woods protects coast redwoods in Marin County. California’s native giant sequoia groves grow in the Sierra Nevada.

11. At Point Reyes, movement across which fault carried part of the landscape northwest on the Pacific Plate?

A. Cascadia Subduction Zone
B. Garlock Fault
C. San Andreas Fault
D. Wasatch Fault

Correct answer: C. San Andreas Fault
The National Park Service identifies the San Andreas Fault as the transform boundary along which Point Reyes moved relative to the rest of North America.

12. Chinese workers helped build the Summit Tunnel near Donner Pass as part of which transportation project?

A. The Panama Canal
B. The first transcontinental railroad
C. The Pacific Coast Highway
D. The California Aqueduct

Correct answer: B. The first transcontinental railroad
The Summit Tunnel carried the Central Pacific Railroad across the Sierra Nevada as part of the transcontinental connection.

13. At Sutter’s Mill in modern-day Coloma, the 1848 discovery that drew widespread attention occurred on which river fork?

A. East Fork of the Carson River
B. North Fork of the San Joaquin River
C. Middle Fork of the Feather River
D. South Fork of the American River

Correct answer: D. South Fork of the American River
James Marshall found gold at the mill on the South Fork of the American River in 1848.

14. Why are there 31 stars on the California Great Seal?

A. California was the 31st state admitted to the Union
B. California began with 31 counties
C. The state constitution had 31 original articles
D. The seal was adopted on the 31st day of the year

Correct answer: A. California was the 31st state admitted to the Union
The stars represent California’s place in the admission order. It entered the Union in 1850 as the 31st state.

15. On California’s Great Seal, what does the Greek motto Eureka mean?

A. Through difficulties to the stars
B. Ever upward
C. I have found it
D. By perseverance

Correct answer: C. I have found it
Eureka means “I have found it.” The motto also recalls the discovery of gold that helped shape the state’s history.