



Grades: 3-5

Objective: Students will read the essay about Alaska. You can follow up on their reading with the "Get To Know Alaska" PowerPoint.

What's Inside?: "Alaska" essay from Britannica Kids and graphic organizer.

Source: Britannica Kids and CILC Maker Space

CILC Curricular Resources &

MAKER
SPACE

ALASKA

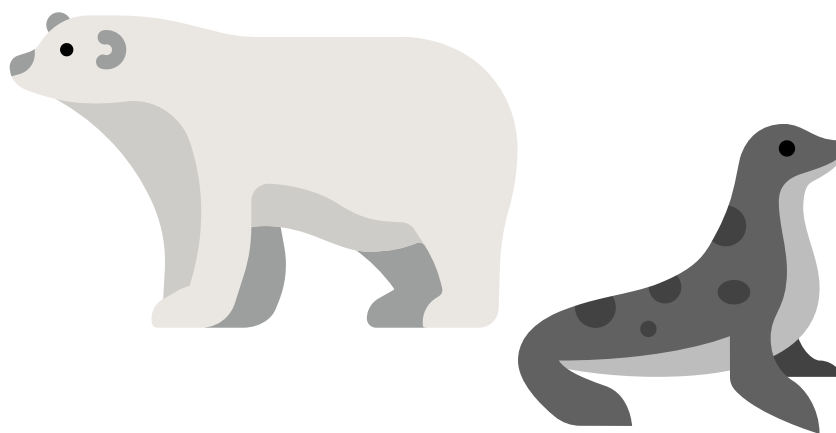
The U.S. state of Alaska is an immense region of great natural beauty but few people. Nicknamed the Last Frontier, Alaska includes rugged coastlines, massive glaciers, and the tallest mountains in North America. The capital is Juneau.

GEOGRAPHY

Alaska is the largest state in the country. When it became a state, the land area of the United States increased by one-fifth. The most northerly state, Alaska is not connected to the other 48 states of the mainland United States. Instead, it juts westward from Canada into the Arctic Ocean and the Bering Sea. The Aleutian Island chain extends southwest from mainland Alaska. To the southeast is a strip of land called the panhandle, which borders the Canadian province of British Columbia.

Northern Alaska lies within the Arctic regions. Along the northern coast is flat, treeless land called tundra. The ground there stays frozen year-round. South of the tundra are the mountains of the Brooks Range. The middle part of Alaska is a vast plain with many forests, marshes, and lakes. The Yukon, Alaska's largest river, flows through this region. Two mountain chains—the Alaska Range and the Aleutian Range—curve along Alaska's southern coast. Denali (also called Mount McKinley), in the Alaska Range, rises to a height of 20,320 feet (6,194 meters). It is the highest point in North America.

Alaska has more than 20 national parks. The state also contains the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a vast area of wilderness protected by the U.S. government.



<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Alaska/345452>

Retrieved 04.14.22

PEOPLE

Alaska's population is spread unevenly throughout the state, with vast areas having few or no people. More than a third of Alaskans live in or around Anchorage, the largest city. Native Alaskans—Inuit, Aleut, and other Native Americans—make up about one-sixth of the population. Common nationalities among the rest of the people include Russian, Filipino, Japanese, and Chinese.

ECONOMY

Alaska's economy is based on oil, tourism, and fishing. Oil has brought Alaska so much wealth that the state has no income tax. In addition, every year the state gives each resident some of the money earned from oil sales. Service businesses such as airlines, restaurants, and hotels cater to tourists. About one-fourth of all employed Alaskans work for the federal, state, or local government. Salmon is one of the state's leading products. Other catches include crab, halibut, herring, and shrimp. The main manufacturing industry is fish and seafood processing.

HISTORY

Hunters and gatherers from Asia first settled in what is now Alaska thousands of years ago. In 1728 a Russian expedition led by the Danish explorer Vitus Bering arrived there. In 1784 Russia established a settlement and fur-trading post on Kodiak Island, off the southern coast. Russia owned Alaska until the United States bought it in 1867. U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward negotiated the deal. Because many Americans thought the purchase was a waste of money, Alaska was sometimes called Seward's Folly.

Gold discoveries in neighboring parts of Canada and in Alaska itself drew people to the area in the 1890s and early 1900s. A half century later, in 1959, Alaska became the 49th state in the Union.

Oil discoveries, especially along the Arctic coast, changed the state's economy. In the 1970s the Trans-Alaska Pipeline was built to transport oil from the Arctic oil fields. The pipeline made Alaska second only to Texas in U.S. oil production. In the early 2000s environmental groups, government officials, and business leaders debated whether to open up more protected land in Alaska, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, to oil exploration.

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Name _____

Taking Notes

Directions: Use this organizer to take notes on the essay.

list of key words

words I need to define

summary of main points

interesting facts

questions I have