



# Student Guide of Nevada Information

## Nevada Facts

An Act of Congress, signed by President James Buchanan, which became effective on March 2, 1861, created the Territory of Nevada. President Abraham Lincoln appointed James W. Nye of New York as Nevada's first Territorial Governor.

On October 31, 1864, President Lincoln proclaimed Nevada's admission to the Union as the 36th state. California and Oregon were the only western states admitted earlier. Nevada's early statehood was the result of a number of factors pertaining to the politics of the Civil War and President Lincoln's reelection campaign. During the next 75 years, many mining towns flourished, if only briefly, all over the state. Since 1931, tourism, particularly entertainment and legalized gaming, have become increasingly important to Nevada's economy. Mining also has rebounded in recent years, and Nevada now produces more gold than any other state. Federal legislation enacted in 1986 created the Great Basin National Park, the first national park in the state, which includes the area around Wheeler Peak and Lehman Caves in eastern Nevada. A small part of Death Valley National Park is located along Nevada's western boundary with California.

## Nevada Nicknames

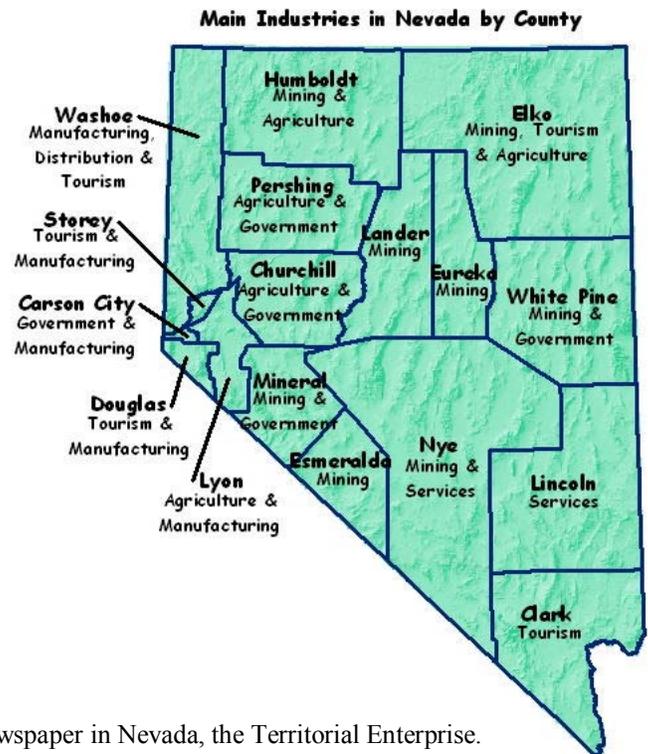
Sagebrush State, Silver State, Battle-Born State  
The origin of the state's name: Spanish, meaning "snow-capped"

## Nevada Almanac

Population: 1,998,257 (2000 census)  
Rank in Population: 35th (2000 census)  
Capital: Carson City, population - 52,457 (2000 census)  
Most populous city: Las Vegas - 478,434 (2000 census)  
Most populous county: Clark - 1,375,765 (2000 census)  
Area: 110,567 square miles, 86 percent federally controlled  
(rank: 7th largest)  
Highest elevation: Boundary Peak in Esmeralda County, 13,140 ft  
Lowest elevation: On the Colorado River in Clark County, 470 ft

## Nevada's Believe It or Not

- ~ Wyatt Earp lived in Tonopah.
- ~ In Austin, a single sack of flour sold for \$175,000.00.
- ~ Mark Twain (Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, etc.) worked for the first newspaper in Nevada, the Territorial Enterprise.
- ~ Goldfield had a lightweight championship fight Labor Day, 1906. Nelson-Gans fought 42 rounds and ended with Gans winning because of a low blow.
- ~ The town of Tonopah may have been found by a burro.
- ~ Captain Truckee, a famous Indian, helped Fremont fight for California independence, helped emigrants cross Nevada and died from a tarantula bite.
- ~ In Pioche, 72 people died violent deaths before anyone died of natural causes.
- ~ Nye County is the third largest county in the United States.
- ~ The average Nevada ranch is 3,000 acres.
- ~ Nevada's average gross farm income is third in the nation.
- ~ Eighty-seven percent of Nevada land is controlled by the Federal government.
- ~ The worst part of the trail west was the 40-mile desert, in Pershing County.
- ~ The silver found in Virginia City helped buy Nevada's way into the Union, helped finance the Civil War, founded San Francisco's Stock Exchange, and built San Francisco's hotels and houses on Nob Hill.
- ~ Many mining towns were hit by fires and floods. In 1923, a fire took 55 blocks of Goldfield.
- ~ The Indians used more than 300 native plants for medicines, teas, salves, and powders.
- ~ In Nye County, there is a 515-acre Ichthyosaur Fossil area. Some fossils of sea serpents are as large as 60 feet in length.
- ~ One winter was so cold that Washoe Lake was frozen solid.
- ~ Pyramid Lake is a prehistoric lake. A strange fish, the Cui-ui, is found there.
- ~ Early Indians believed a serpent lived in the bottom of Walker Lake, another prehistoric lake in Nevada.
- ~ Nevada's first Governor, Henry Blasdel, had trouble going to visit Lincoln County, and had to live on lizards for a while.



# Nevada State Symbols

## NEVADA STATE SEAL

Each state has an official seal, which is carefully described by law and serves functions on the state level of government that are similar to those of the seal of the United States on the federal level. There is an impression seal to stamp the official government documents (like proclamations) and a printed seal for official state publications. The impression seal is usually stamped onto paper over a circle of silver foil and the printed seal is used on the cover or first page of state publications or on letterhead stationary. In 1999 the State Legislature added official colors to the seal when it is displayed in color.



Nevada's state seal was designed during the state constitutional conventions in Carson City in 1863 and 1864 and was officially adopted by the state legislature in 1866. Allison Nightengill, a delegate to the first constitutional convention and later the first State Controller came up with the design, which was sent to the Nahl Brothers of San Francisco who engraved it for \$150 in 1865. Hugo Wilhelm Arthur Nahl and his half-brother Charles Nahl were both well-known artists. They also designed and engraved the California State Seal.

## STATE FLAG

The Nevada State Flag: cobalt blue background; in upper left quarter is a five-pointed silver star between two sprays of sagebrush crossed to form a half wreath; across the top of wreath is a golden scroll with the words, in black letters "Battle Born." The name "Nevada" is below the star and above the sprays in golden letters. Design modified June 8, 1991, original design approved on March 21, 1929.



## STATE ARTIFACT

The **Tule Duck** was created by early Nevadans almost 2,000 years ago. Discovered by archeologists in 1924 during an excavation at Lovelock Cave, the 11 decoys are each formed of a bundle of bullrush (tule) stems, bound together and shaped to resemble a canvasback duck.



## STATE FOSSIL

The **Ichthyosaur** (*Shonisaurus*) fossil was found in Berlin, east of Gabbs. Nevada is the only state to possess a complete skeleton (approximately 55 feet long) of this extinct marine reptile.



## STATE BIRD

The **Mountain Bluebird** (*Sialia currucoides*) lives in the Nevada high country and destroys many harmful insects. It is a member of the thrush family and its song is a clear, short warble like the caroling of a robin. The male is azure blue with a white belly, while the female is brown with a bluish rump, tail, and wings.



## STATE ANIMAL

The **Desert Bighorn** (or Nelson) Sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) is smaller than its Rocky Mountain cousin but has a wider spread of horns. The bighorn is well-suited for Nevada's mountainous desert country because it can survive for long periods without water. The large rams stand about 4 1/2 feet tall and can weigh as much as 175 pounds.



## STATE FISH

The **Lahontan Cutthroat Trout** (*Salmo clarki henshawi*), a native trout found in 14 of the state's 17 counties, is adapted to habitats ranging from high mountain creeks and alpine lakes to warm, intermittent lowland streams and alkaline lakes where no other trout can live.



## STATE REPTILE

The **Desert Tortoise** (*Gopherus agassizii*), the largest reptile in the Southwestern United States, lives in the extreme southern parts of Nevada. It's hard, dome-shaped shell ranges from tan to black in color. This reptile spends much of its life in underground burrows to escape the harsh summer heat and winter cold.



## STATE FLOWER

**Sagebrush** (*Artemisia tridentata*) grows abundantly in the deserts of the Western United States. A member of the wormwood family, sagebrush is a branching bush (1 to 12 feet high) and grows in regions where other kinds of vegetation cannot subsist. Known for its pleasant aroma, its gray-green twigs, and pale yellow flowers, sagebrush is an important winter food for sheep and cattle.



## STATE GRASS

**Indian Ricegrass** (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*), once a staple food source for Nevada Indians, now provides valuable feed for wildlife and range livestock. This tough native grass, which is found throughout the state, is known for its ability to reseed and establish itself on sites damaged by fire or over grazing.



## STATE SOIL

The **Orovada Series Soil** was designated as Nevada's official state soil in 2001. This soil is classified as coarse-loamy, mixed, superactive, mesic Durinodic Xeric Haplocambids, and is found in Northern and Central Nevada. Orovada soil grows most crops common to Nevada and is considered prime farmland because it contains volcanic ash that reduces the amount of water needed for irrigation.

## STATE TREES

The **Single-Leaf Pinon** (*Pinus monophylla*) is an aromatic pine tree with short, stiff needles and gnarled branches. The tree grows in coarse, rocky soils and rock crevices. Though its normal height is about 15 feet, the single-leaf pinon can grow as high as 50 feet under ideal conditions.

The **Bristlecone Pine** (*Pinus aristata*) shares the state tree designation. The bristlecone pine is the oldest living thing on Earth, with some specimens in Nevada more than 4,000 years of age. The tree can be found at high elevations. Normal height for older trees is about 15 to 30 feet, although some have attained a height of 60 feet. Diameter growth continues throughout the long life of the tree, resulting in massive trunks with a few contorted limbs.



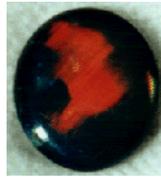
### STATE ROCK

**Sandstone**, in its more traditionally recognized form or as quartzite, is found throughout the state. In areas such as the Valley of Fire State Park and Red Rock Canyon Recreational Lands, both near Las Vegas, it provides some of Nevada's most spectacular scenery. The State Capitol, and the former United States Mint, are built of sandstone.



### STATE PRECIOUS GEMSTONE

Among the many gemstones found in Nevada, the **Virgin Valley Black Fire Opal** is one of the most beautiful. The Virgin Valley in northern Nevada is the only place in North America where the Black Fire Opal is found in any significant quantity.



### STATE SEMI-PRECIOUS GEMSTONE

**Nevada Turquoise**, sometimes called the "Jewel of the Desert," is found in many parts of the state.

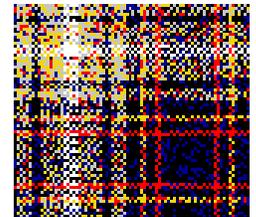


### STATE SONG

In 1933, the Legislature adopted "**Home Means Nevada**" as the official state song. Mrs. Bertha Raffetto of Reno wrote the song to honor the state. The refrain of the song goes as follows: "Home" means Nevada, "Home" means the hills, "Home" means the sage and the pines. Out by the Truckee's silvery rills. Out where the sun always shines. There is a land that I love the best, Fairer than all I can see. Right in the heart of the golden west "Home" means Nevada to me.

### STATE TARTAN

The tartan designed by Richard Zygmunt Pawlowski is designated as the official state tartan. The colors and design of the tartan represent the many features that make Nevada a unique and bountiful state. Blue represents one of the state colors of Nevada, the pristine waters of Lake Tahoe and the mountain bluebird. Silver represents the other state color, and the official state mineral. Red represents the Virgin Valley black fire opal, and the red rock formations of southern Nevada. Yellow represents sagebrush and symbolizes the great basin region of central Nevada. White represents the name of this state meaning snow-covered, which is the translation of the Spanish word "nevada". The crossing of the yellow and red stripes represents the different colors of Nevada sandstone. The white intersection on the silver field stands for the snow-capped peaks of granite mountains, which make up the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The four blue lines represent the four main rivers of Nevada which are the Colorado River, Truckee River, Humboldt River and Walker River. The intersecting blue lines in the silver field represent the Colorado River as it meets Hoover Dam and creates Lake Mead. The small solid "boxes" of silver and blue number 8 by 8, or 64, to signify the year (1864) that Nevada was admitted into statehood. The 13 solid-colored intersections of the small stripes represent Boundary Peak, the highest point in Nevada, which stands at an elevation of 13,143 feet. Finally, the 16 solid silver intersections and the solid white intersection in the center of the tartan represent the 16 counties and the one consolidated city-county government of Nevada.



### STATE METAL

Silver (Ag)

### STATE COLORS

Silver and Blue

## Nevada Officials

**Governor:** Brian Sandoval

### Nevada Senate Members:

Shirley Breeden, Barbara Cegavske, Allison Copening, Mo Denis, Don Gustavson, Elizabeth Halseth, Joseph Hardy, Steven Horsford, Ben Kieckhefer, Ruben Kihuen, John Lee, Sheila Leslie, Mark Manendo, Mike McGinness, David Parks, Dean Rhoads, Michael Roberson, Michael Schneider, James Settelmeyer, Valerie Wiener.

### Nevada Assembly Members:

Paul Aizley, Elliot Anderson, Kelvin Atkinson, Teresa Benitez-Thompson, David Bobzien, Steven Brooks, Irene Bustamante Adams, Maggie Carlton, Richard Carrillo, Marcus Conklin, Richard Daly, Olivia Diaz, Marilyn Dondero Loop, John Ellison, Lucy Flores, Jason Frierson, Ed Goedhart, Pete Goicoechea, Tom Grady, John Hambrick, Scott Hammond, Ira Hansen, Crescent Hardy, Pat Hickey, Joseph Hogan, William Home, Marilyn Kirkpatrick, Randy Kirner, Kelly Kite, Pete Livermore, April Mastroluca, Richard McArthur, Harvey Munford, Dina Neal, John Ocegüera, James Ohrenschall, Peggy Pierce, Tick Segerblom, Mark Sherwood, Debbie Smith, Lynn Stewart, Melissa Woodbury.

### Nevada's U.S. Congressional Delegates:

Senator Harry Reid, Senator John Ensign

### Nevada's U.S. House of Representatives:

Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, Congressman Dean Heller, Congressman Joe Heck

## Famous Nevadans

The following is a partial list of well-known people who were either born in Nevada or lived here for an extended period.

Eva Bertrand Adams, Andre Agassi, Ben Alexander, Henry Fountain Ashurst, Raymond T. Baker, Art Bell, Helen Delich Bentley, James Hubert Bilbray, Kurt Busch, Kyle Busch, Charisma Carpenter, James E. Casey, Hobart Cavanaugh, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Henry Paige Comstock, Abby Dalton, Dat-So-La-Lee, James A. (Jim) Gibbons, Michele Greene, Curtis Hanson, Velma Bronn Johnston, Jack Kramer, Paul Laxalt, Robert Laxalt, Liberace (Wladziu Valentino Liberace), Emma Nevada (Emma Wixom), Wayne Newton, Thelma Pat Nixon, Harry M. Reid, Siegfried and Roy (Siegfried Fischbacher and Roy Horn), David Derek Stacton, Dawn Wells, Jack Wilson "Wovoka," Sarah Winnemucca (Hopkins), Dolora Zajick.

For more information on these famous people of Nevada, please visit: [www.NevadaKidsPage.org](http://www.NevadaKidsPage.org).

## Nevada Timeline

- 1843 – Fremont Expedition and Kit Carson map the area
- 1851 – First permanent settlement established by Mormons in Carson Valley
- 1859 – Gold and Silver discovered
- 1860 – First Pony Express run
- 1861 – Territory of Nevada created by act of Congress
- 1864 – October 31, 1864, Nevada becomes the 36<sup>th</sup> state
- 1869 – Virginia & Truckee Railroad completed
- 1883- Sarah Winnemucca wrote "Life Among the Paiutes"
- 1883- Piper's Opera House rebuilt on B Street in Virginia City
- 1885- September 12, cornerstone laid for Morrill Hall, first building at University of Nevada, Reno
- 1887- Ely designated county seat of White Pine County
- 1887- February 14, first electric street lamps in Reno
- 1888- Wovoka, the Paiute prophet has a vision of the Ghost Dance; Both parties back free coinage of silver
- 1890- June 20, woman hanged in Elko (Elizabeth Potts). Only women ever executed in Nevada
- 1893- Coin minting operations cease at U.S. Mint
- 1893 – George Ferris invents the Ferris Wheel in Carson City
- 1897- Corbett-Fitzsimons heavyweight championship bout
- 1900- Jim Butler discovers gold at Tonopah; "Wild Bunch" robs a Winnemucca bank; Nevada Population: 42,000
- 1902- Congress creates Newlands Project (Fallon, Fernley established); Wyatt Erp arrives in Tonopah
- 1903- President Theodore Roosevelt visit
- 1904- Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad completed
- 1904- Sparks named for Gov. John Sparks
- 1905- Las Vegas townsites auctioned
- 1906- Congress creates National Forests in Nevada; Northern Nevada Railroad completed in Ely
- 1908- The Burning of Chinatown
- 1909- Clark County established
- 1909- First official Governor's Mansion
- 1910- Gambling outlawed; Johnson-Jefferies fight in Reno on July 4; June 23, first Nevada plane flight
- 1911- Last Indian "Uprising." Shoshone Mike and family members killed
- 1914- Nevada women granted vote by state election
- 1916- World's last stagecoach robbery near Jarbidge
- 1917- Carson, Dresslerville and Reno-Sparks Indian Colonies established
- 1919- Pershing County created with Lovelock as county seat; First flight over Sierra Nevada on March 22;  
First woman in State Legislature, Sadie D. Hurst
- 1920- First airmail out of Reno
- 1931 – Casino Gaming legalized
- 1935 – Hoover Dam completed near Las Vegas

NevadaKidsPage.org

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