

The United States of America

Listen to information about several US landmarks and fill in the missing words (1-2 words) or numbers.

Niagara Falls

This group of 1 [] waterfalls is on the Niagara River, which marks the border between the United States and Canada. The falls are in the center of two cities: the Canadian city of Niagara Falls in 2 [] and the American city of Niagara Falls in 3 []. The land right next to the falls on the US side is Niagara Falls State Park, the 4 [] state park in the US. A similar park protects the Canadian side. Magnificent though they are, the falls are 5 [] than they used to be: between 50% and 75% of the water of the river runs through huge pipes to generate 6 [].

The Great Lakes

The northern center of the US is known as the Midwest. Many states here have names beginning with the letter I, such as 1 [], Illinois and Iowa, or the letter M, including Michigan, Missouri and 2 []. This area is home to the five largest lakes in the US, which are all along the border between the US and Canada. These are the Great Lakes: Lake Huron, Lake Erie, Lake Michigan (which shares its name with the US state), Lake Ontario (which shares its name with a Canadian 3 []) and Lake Superior, which is the largest of them all, and the largest 4 [] lake in the world. Put together, these five lakes are bigger than the 5 [].

Yellowstone National Park

There are 1 [] national parks in the US, including one in every US state, except for one. The small US state of Delaware, home state of President Joe Biden, does not have a national park. The 2 [] US National Park is Yellowstone, which stretches across three different states. Most of Yellowstone is in Wyoming, but a tiny bit crosses over into both 3 [] and Idaho. One of the most famous sights in Yellowstone is Old Faithful, a geyser that shoots water from 4 [] into the air around 17 times a day. It's sort of like a volcano of 5 [].

NOTE These texts (with different tasks) are also available as an online quiz. See the magazine for details.

The Grand Canyon

One of the most beautiful US sights is an enormous hole in the ground. The Grand Canyon in the US state of Arizona is 1.6 km deep, 1 [] long and up to 29 km wide. It's inside a national park with just three entrances. Most people visit the 2 [] side, as getting to the higher northern side means either a hike across the canyon (a total of 34 km) or a 354 km drive that takes 4½ hours. In addition, the north side is closed for half the year. Around 3 [] million people visit each year. Most are happy to keep to the visitor areas and viewpoints, but more 4 [] visitors can get a permit to hike through the canyon, which is exciting but difficult due to the lack of 5 [] and extremes of heat and cold.

Mount Denali

The 1 [] mountain in the US, Denali (6,190 meters tall), is in the most northern US state of Alaska. This mountain has had multiple names. Denali, which means "the 2 [] one", comes from the language of the local native people. In 1896, long before Alaska became the 49th US state, an English-speaking man looking for 3 [] in the area renamed it Mount McKinley, after US 4 [] William McKinley. The name Mount McKinley stuck around for decades. Locals preferred the original name, however, and the state of Alaska officially changed it back to Denali in 5 []. It took the US government another 40 years to finally agree.

Hawaiian Islands

The 50th US state is the only one made up completely of islands. The state of Hawaii includes 1 [] islands, large and small. The largest island is called Hawaii, also known as "the Big Island". Some other popular tourist 2 [] are the islands of Maui, Oahu and Kaua'i. The natural beauty of Hawaii includes waterfalls, 3 [], sandy beaches and surf, which gives it a very different 4 [] than most of the mainland United States. It's also far from all of the other states - it takes about 5 [] to fly from the western US state of California to Hawaii.