

#23RD
IN
THE 21ST



BENJAMIN HARRISON PRESIDENTIAL SITE

WHAT'S IT TAKE TO CREATE A STATE

ALASKA



THE YEAR IS 1957 AND ALASKA IS APPLYING FOR STATEHOOD!

Read to see if they have what it takes. Then write a postcard in support of statehood!

When it was a Territory: Alaska was a territory for a long time, starting in 1912 and becoming a state in 1959.

Where it is: Alaska is way up north, touching Canada, and it's surrounded by big oceans like the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Ocean. It's very far from the other United States.

What's in the Land (Resources): Alaska has lots of amazing things like gold, fish (especially salmon), and oil. There are also huge forests and beautiful mountains.

Native Tribes: Many different Native Alaskan tribes have lived in Alaska for thousands of years, long before Americans came. These include groups like the Inupiat, Yup'ik, Aleut, Athabascan, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian. They had their own ways of life and land.

How Many People Live There: In 1959, Alaska's population was around 220,000 people.

Territory Congress: Alaska's territorial legislature (Congress) was created In 1912 and met for the first time In 1913.

Constitution: Alaska lawmakers wrote a constitution in 1956



Distance: Alaska was really far from the other states, and some people worried it was too disconnected.

OBSTACLES

Not Enough People?: Even though the population grew, some people thought it still didn't have enough people to be its own state.

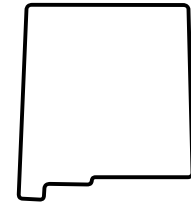
Cold War Worries: During the "Cold War" (when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were in a tense standoff), some people worried about Alaska being so close to the Soviet Union and what that might mean for national safety.



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NEW MEXICO



THE YEAR IS 1910 AND NEW MEXICO IS APPLYING FOR STATEHOOD!

Read to see if they have what it takes. Then write a postcard in support of statehood!

When it was a Territory: New Mexico was a territory for a very long time, from 1850 until it became a state in 1912.

Where it is: New Mexico is in the southwestern part of the United States, next to Texas, Arizona, and Colorado. It has a lot of deserts, mountains, and flat plains.

What's in the Land (Resources): New Mexico has resources like copper, potash (used in fertilizer), and other minerals. Farming and raising cattle were also very important.

Who Lives There: When New Mexico was a territory, many people were Hispanic, whose families had lived there for hundreds of years when it was part of Mexico and Spain.

Native Tribes: Many different Native American tribes have lived in New Mexico for a very long time, including the Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache peoples. They had their own lands and traditions.

How Many People Live There: In 1910, New Mexico's population was around 327,000 people.

Territory Congress: New Mexico had its own elected legislature by 1850. New Mexico had a Delegate who spoke for them in Congress but couldn't vote.

Constitution: New Mexico wrote their own state constitution in 1911.



OBSTACLES

Language and Culture: Many people in New Mexico spoke Spanish, and some people in other parts of the U.S. worried about this.

Not "American Enough"?: Some people in Congress worried if the people in New Mexico would be loyal or if they were "American enough" because of their different history and culture.

Not Enough People (or too many of one kind): Like Alaska, some thought the population was too small, or that too many were Spanish speaking.

Trying to Combine with Arizona: At one point, Congress tried to make New Mexico and Arizona become one big state, but the people in Arizona said no.

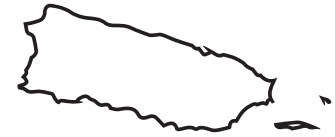
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WHAT'S IT TAKE TO CREATE A STATE

PUERTO RICO



THE YEAR IS 2025 AND PUERTO RICO IS APPLYING FOR STATEHOOD!

Read to see if they have what it takes. Then write a postcard in support of becoming a state or staying a territory!

When it was a Territory: Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory in 1898 after the Spanish-American War. In 1917, people born in Puerto Rico were made U.S. citizens, but it is still a territory today.

Where it is: Puerto Rico is an island in the Caribbean Sea, southeast of Florida and Cuba. It's surrounded by warm ocean waters.

What's in the Land (Resources): Puerto Rico has fertile land for growing crops like sugar, coffee, and tobacco. It also has beautiful beaches and a warm climate, which helps with tourism.

Who Lives There: When Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory, most of the people who lived there were of Spanish and African heritage. They spoke Spanish and had their own unique culture.

Native Tribes: The original native people of Puerto Rico were the Taíno, but by the time the U.S. took over, their population had sadly been greatly reduced by disease and harsh treatment from earlier European settlers.

How Many People Live There: In the early 1900s, when it became a territory, Puerto Rico had a population of around 1 million people. Today, it has over 3 million.

Territory Congress: Puerto Rico has its own elected lawmakers. Puerto Rico has a person (called a Resident Commissioner) who can speak for them in Congress but cannot vote on laws.

Constitution: No, because it is still a territory, it does not have a state constitution, but it has its own local constitution.



OBSTACLES

Different Language and Culture: Most people in Puerto Rico speak Spanish, and some worry about how this would fit with the U.S.

Unincorporated Territory: Puerto Rico is called an "unincorporated territory," which means the U.S. Constitution doesn't fully apply there, and Congress has almost complete power over it. This is a big difference from other territories that were set up to become states.

Not Everyone Agrees: People in Puerto Rico are still divided on whether they want to be a state, stay a territory, or become an independent country.

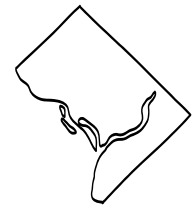
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WHAT'S IT TAKE TO CREATE A STATE

WASHINGTON D.C.



THE YEAR IS 2025 AND D.C. IS APPLYING FOR STATEHOOD!

Read to see if they have what it takes. Then write a postcard in support of becoming a state or staying a district!

When it was a Territory/District: Washington D.C. was created in 1790 to be the capital of the United States. It was never meant to be a state, but a special "federal district" so no state would have too much power over the government. It's still a district today.

Where it is: Washington D.C. is on the East Coast, between Maryland and Virginia. It's a small area, only about 68 square miles!

What's in the Land (Resources): D.C. is mostly a city, so its main "resource" is its government buildings, museums, and national monuments. People who work for the government, or in businesses that support the government, live and work there.

Native Tribes: The land where Washington D.C. was built was originally home to tribes like the Nacotchtank (Anacostan) people.

How Many People Live There: In the early 1800s, when D.C. was still new, its population was much smaller, around 14,000 people. Today, it has over 600,000 people, which is more than some states.

Territory Congress: D.C. has its own elected city council and mayor, which acts like a local government. D.C. has a person (called a Delegate) who can speak for them in Congress but cannot vote on laws.

Constitution: No, because it is a special district, it does not have a state constitution.



The Constitution's Plan: The U.S. Constitution says D.C. should be a special federal district, not a state, so that no single state can control the national government. Changing this would be a very big deal!

OBSTACLES

"Taxation Without Representation": People in D.C. pay federal taxes just like people in states, but they don't have a voting representative in Congress. This is a major reason why many people in D.C. want statehood.

Size: D.C. is a very small area, and some argue it's too small to be a full state.