



Hello, California!

A story-based geography unit

Please enjoy this sample from *Hello, California* In it, you'll find an example of one of Thaddeus's journal entries along with the accompanying activity and comprehension questions.

STARRING
THADDEUS



★ HOW TO USE THIS GEOGRAPHY UNIT

The individual state units in *Hit the Road Geography* immerse your students in story, allowing them to follow along with our cat guide, Thaddeus, as he journeys across all 50 states. Our storybased approach helps your students feel as if they have truly visited the state and have a firm understanding of the geography and special points of interest that make each state unique.

Here is some guidance on using this unit with your student.

- **Journal Entries and Activities:** Thaddeus's journal entries are meant to be read aloud by you and/or your student. They are marked Day 1, Day 2, and so on, and each has an accompanying activity. Feel free to split up the entries and activities as you see fit. However, we recommend completing one journal entry, reflection sheet, and activity per day, and then picking up with the next entry and activities the following day. This allows students to absorb what they've read and revisit the state over several days. Repetition is the key to learning and retention!
- **Reflection Sheets:** A reflection sheet is included for each journal entry. Both the speaking and the listening and comprehension prompts should be read aloud to your student. Your student should respond orally.
- **Highlighted Words:** You will occasionally come across green, blue, and yellow highlighted words. Green highlights represent important land locations and blue highlights represent bodies of water. Yellow highlights indicate key vocabulary words. You may wish to expand your student's knowledge by doing internet research, checking out library books, or watching videos about these locations. As you read, jot down any location that is of interest to your student and have fun exploring it together!
- **Sidebars:** The columns on each journal entry offer more fun facts, tidbits, and vocabulary, as well as routes that show Thaddeus's journey. Be sure to point these out so that your student can fully grasp where Thaddeus has been in the state.

We hope you and your student enjoy this unique adventure together. We look forward to seeing you again when Thaddeus embarks on his journey across the next state!

Printing Instructions: This unit works best when printed entirely back-to-back. If you are unable to print back-to-back, you may need to tape or glue some activity pages together as necessary.

Optional Journal Binding: After printing the unit back-to-back, gather the journal pages (pages 3-16) and stack them in order. Punch three holes on the left side of the stack of pages. Loop ribbon or yarn through each hole and tie a loose knot. This will create a binding and present the pages like a journal. Optionally, you can just place the pages in a 3-ring binder.

Hello, California!



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Version 1.0

Hello, California! is Unit 1:2 of the complete *Hit the Road Geography* curriculum.

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Dear Reader,

How do you do? I am Thaddeus. My friends call me ... well, they call me Thaddeus. And since you will be a friend, I hope you will call me Thaddeus, too.

And you? What do your friends call you? Please write it on this line so that I may place my nose on it and inspect it more closely.

Your Name Here

Ah, isn't that a lovely thing to be called! I will try to call you that as many times as possible, though it will most likely always sound like *Meow*. You understand.

I see that you are a person. I, on the other paw, am a cat. I know it is difficult to believe, but it is so.

I am also a world traveler. At this very moment I am in the midst of a trip around the 50 United States and expect to have the time of at least two of my nine lives.

If you'd like to follow along with my adventures, I'll let you peek at my travel journal—and perhaps we can both send postcards home to our friends on Storylark Road.



Speaking of the road ... let's hit it!

Yours in adventure,

 Thaddeus

Hello, California! The Golden State



Temperature

The coastal regions typically experience a Mediterranean climate. This means mild, wet winters and dry, warm summers. Coastal areas often benefit from cool ocean breezes that moderate temperatures year round.



Known For...

The California coast is known for its impressive geological formations. You can find natural bridges in Santa Cruz, sea stacks in Mendocino, and an enormous canyon called the Monterey Submarine Canyon that lies beneath the waves of Monterey Bay.

★ DAY 1 — THE CALIFORNIA COAST

Dear Meow,

I'm writing to you from my perch atop a dramatic cliff high above the Pacific Ocean. That's right—I'm in California, dude! And it is totally RAD!

California is such a vast and varied land that I didn't know where to begin. Luckily my friend Crabby from Hawai'i put me in touch with his cool cousin, Crabster. Now Crabster and I are exploring together, starting with this famously rugged coastline.

(Crabster says *dude* and *rad* are California slang. I'll take his word for it!)

We began our journey in Big Sur, a region of the Central Coast where the Santa Lucia Mountains rise directly out of the ocean. Talk about drama!

Then Crabster revved the engine and we continued north toward Monterey Bay and beyond. And what a ride! All this salt air has frizzed my fur, but who cares when you're surrounded by natural wonders? We spent the whole morning scampering up cliffs, exploring vibrant tide pools full of starfish, sea urchins, and anemones, and investigating sea stacks and natural bridges formed by rocks in Santa Cruz. And yes, I put on my snorkeling gear to dive into the otherworldly ecosystem of the kelp forest!

Traveling in style!



California's coast is full of natural bridges such as this one. Amazing!



Crabster and me exploring a natural bridge in Santa Cruz

Next up? **Tectonic plates**! I thought this was a fancy name for the dish my tuna niblets are served on, but Crabster set me straight. Tectonic plates are actually huge slabs of rock that make up Earth's upper layer. The places where they meet along their edges are called **faults**. These plates can slide, crash, and scrape against each other, which is one of the ways California's mountain ranges and valleys were formed. And when the shifts happen suddenly, you get earthquakes. (Like the rumble I get in my tummy when I think of those tuna niblets!)

Crabster and I explored the **Earthquake Trail** at **Point Reyes National Seashore**, a **peninsula** that sits on top of the San Andreas Fault—the place where the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate scrape together. We even saw a fence that shows the 16 feet (3 meters) of displacement that occurred during the infamous 1906 earthquake!

I was feeling jittery after all the talk about earthquakes, but Crabster had a trick in his claw that he knew would soothe my nerves. We turned back south and the next thing I knew, we were surrounded by the most awe-inspiring trees I have ever seen—the **majestic** redwoods of **Muir Woods**. After all those miles of coastline, it was like stepping into a whole new state—but it's still California!

I can't put into meows how **humbling** it is to stand at the base of a gigantic 1,000-year-old tree that is definitely not a scratching post—oh, the history and people it's seen! Crabster promises many more of these trees in our next adventure. So for now I'll just stretch out under this leafy canopy and ... yaaaawn!



★ Time for a *paws*! ★

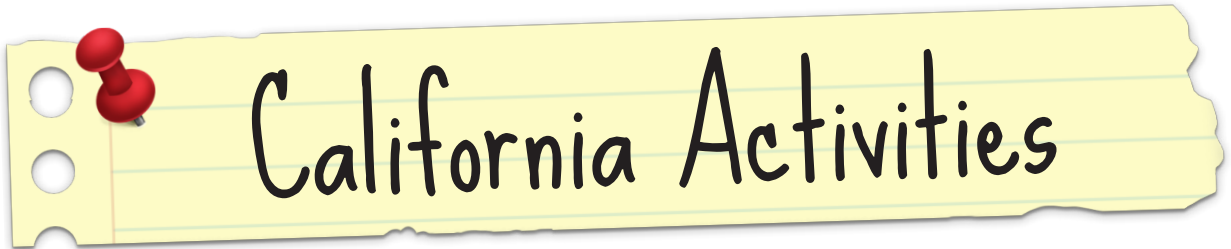
Flip to page 18 and do today's activities.
Pick up on the next journal entry tomorrow!

? Did You Know?

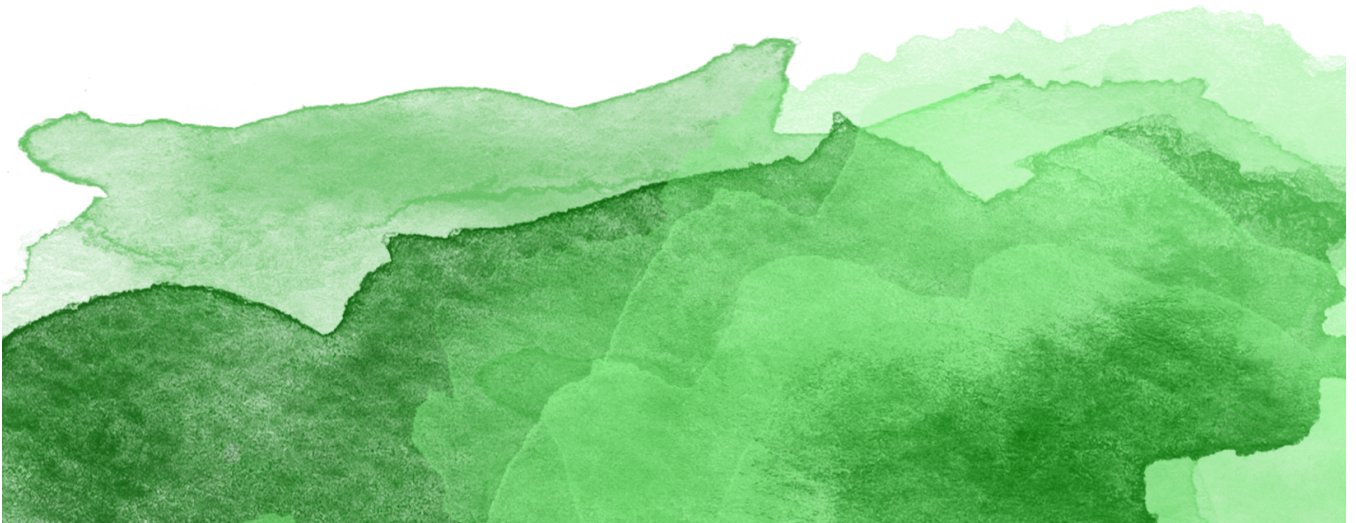
California is particularly prone to natural disasters. The state has about 500 earthquakes a year that are large enough to be felt by residents, and many more that are too small to be detected. Besides earthquakes, California is susceptible to landslides, mudslides, floods, droughts, and wildfires. Some things that contribute to these hazards include the climate, the Santa Ana winds, changing landscapes, and California's position along the Pacific Ring of Fire.

! Travel Route



A yellow sticky note with a red pushpin on the left side. The note has two punch holes and a torn right edge. The text "California Activities" is written in a black, cursive-style font.

California Activities



★ DAY 1 REFLECTIONS

SPEAKING

Thaddeus loves the coast of California! Have you ever been to the ocean or a large lake? Tell about your impressions of that place: what you saw, what you did, and how you felt.

LISTENING AND COMPREHENSION

1. Thaddeus uses two Californian slang words: *dude* and *rad*. Based on how they are used, what do you think those words mean?
2. Do you remember what tectonic plates are? What happens when they scrape together?
3. Why do you think Thaddeus says that the redwood tree is “definitely not a scratching post”?

WRITING

A *five senses* poem is a 5-line unrhymed poem about the senses that the topic evokes. Start with a topic (which is the title of the poem) and then write one descriptive line for each sense (sight, smell, taste, touch, hearing). If desired, a final statement about the topic can be added as a sixth line. Take a look at the example on the right to see how it's done.

TIDE POOL

I see urchins, anemones, sea stars, and snails.
I smell fishiness rising into the air.
I feel shifting sand under my bare feet.
I taste salt when I lick my lips.
I hear waves lapping against rocks.
Tide pools are tiny worlds.

Now write your own five senses poem by adding phrases for each sense. Choose **one** of the topics/titles below or find a different one from Thaddeus's journal entry that inspires you!

Topic Ideas: **Cliffs** **Earthquake** **Ocean** **Kelp Forest** **Redwood Forest**

(topic / title)

I see _____

I smell _____

I feel _____

I taste _____

I hear _____

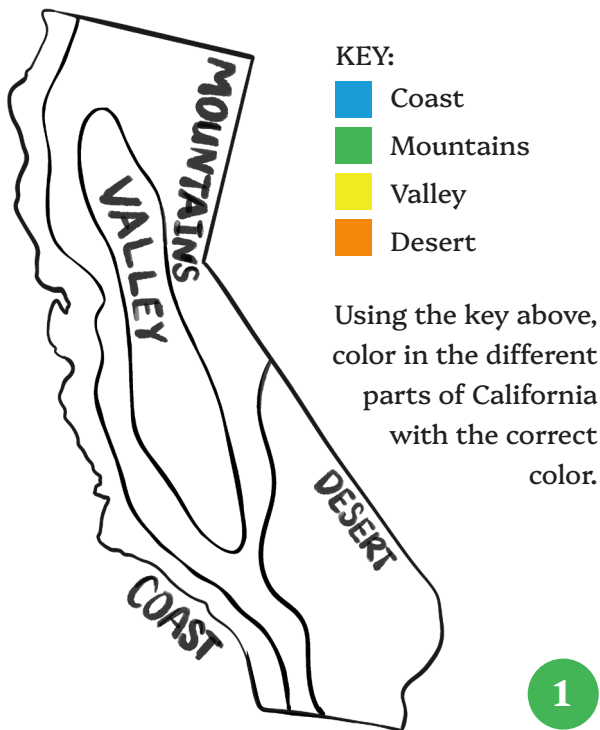
(final statement about topic)

★ DAY 1 ACTIVITY — THE REGIONS OF CALIFORNIA

INSTRUCTIONS

Explore the regions of California! If you haven't done so already, print pages 19-20 back-to-back.

1. Cut out the booklet along the dotted lines.
2. Put the pages in order and staple where indicated to create a booklet.
3. Read through the booklet and follow instructions where indicated.



1

THE COAST



The coast of California is known for its beautiful beaches, cliffs, and ocean views. It's where major cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego are located. The coastline stretches for over 800 miles and is home to marine life such as whales, dolphins, and sea otters.

Fun Fact: Did you know that California's coast is part of the Pacific Ocean?

3

THE CENTRAL VALLEY



The Central Valley is a large, flat area in the center of California. It's one of the most important agricultural regions in the world, producing fruits, vegetables, and nuts. The valley is surrounded by mountains and has a hot, dry climate, perfect for growing crops.

Fun Fact: Over 250 different crops are grown in the Central Valley. That's a lot of food!

5

CALIFORNIA'S 12 REGIONS



California can be divided even further into 12 distinct regions. These are the North Coast, Shasta Cascade, Bay Area, Central Valley, Gold Country, High Sierra, Central Coast, Deserts, Inland Empire, and the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego.

7

THE MOUNTAINS



California's mountains include famous ranges like the Sierra Nevada and the Cascades. The Sierra Nevada is home to Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the contiguous United States. They are also great places for skiing and snowboarding in the winter!

4

Fun Fact: The Sierra Nevada mountains are home to giant sequoias, some of the largest trees in the world!

EXPLORING CALIFORNIA

Welcome to California, the state where you can experience it all! Did you know that California is one of the most diverse states in the U.S.? In just one day, you can go from surfing on sunny beaches to hiking in snowy mountains, driving through lush valleys, and exploring arid deserts.

This amazing variety is due to California's many different **geographical regions**, each with its own climate and landscape.

The state stretches over 800 miles from north to south, so the weather and scenery can change a lot depending on where you are.

2

POP QUIZ!

Fill in the blanks with the correct words:

The _____ region is known for its beautiful beaches and cliffs.

The highest peak in the contiguous United States is located in the _____ region.

The Central Valley is famous for growing _____.

8

Death Valley is located in the _____ region.

THE DESERT



California has several desert regions, including the Mojave Desert and the Colorado Desert. These areas are hot and dry, with unique plants like cacti and Joshua trees. Despite the harsh conditions, many animals still thrive in the desert, including lizards, snakes, and coyotes.

Fun Fact: Death Valley, located in the Mojave Desert, is one of the hottest places on Earth!

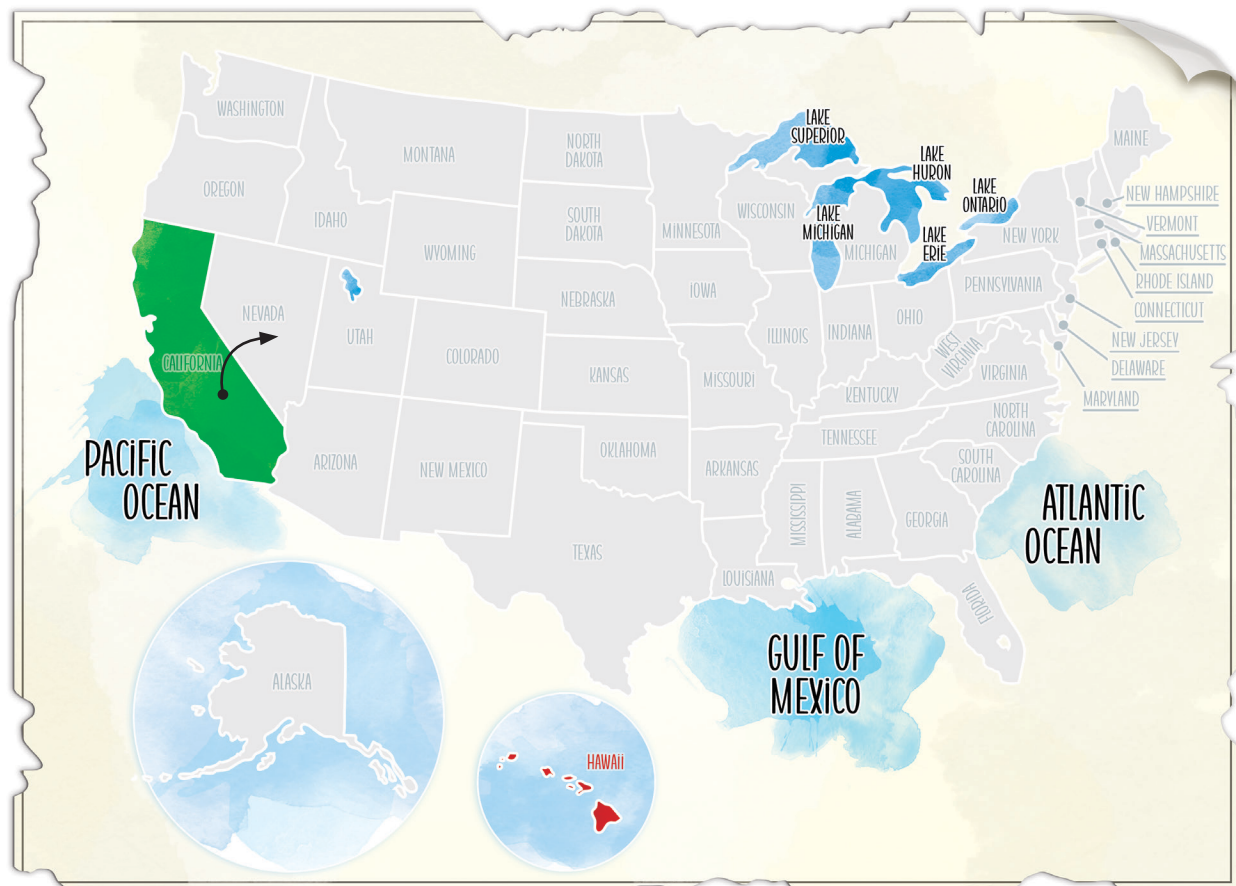
6

★ DAY 4 ACTIVITY — CALIFORNIA WRAP-UP

It's time to create a state report to recap all the things we've learned about California! Fill out the State Report on page 31. Reference the journal entries as needed.

★ THADDEUS'S UNITED STATES TRIP PROGRESS

The colored-in states on this map show where Thaddeus has traveled so far, while the arrow indicates where he's going next. Hope to see you in Nevada!





STATE NAME

STATE CAPITAL

STATE ABBREVIATION

STATE BIRD

STATE FLOWER

STATE TREE

THREE PLACES TO VISIT IN THIS STATE

THREE THINGS THAT GROW IN THIS STATE

MY FAVORITE PART ABOUT THIS STATE

DRAW THE STATE

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing of the state.

STORYLARK ROAD



Did you enjoy this sample?

Here at Storylark Road, we believe that the power of storytelling makes learning fun and memorable. That's why we've made it our mission to help you enrich your child's education through story-based learning that brings knowledge to life.

If you and your student would like to continue Thaddeus's journey through the beautiful state of California be sure to check out the complete *Hello, California!* unit with 35 pages of educational fun that makes geography exciting and memorable.

Ready to purchase the full unit and unlock all of Thaddeus's California adventures?

[Click Here to Purchase!](#)

What's Coming Next

- United States geography enrichment units
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