Leggi e ascolta.

Historic American States

America has its roots in the British colonies of the 18th century. But the British weren’t the only people to settle in the USA. Here, we look at five states with very different histories.
Pennsylvania is in on the north-east coast of the USA. Its biggest city is Philadelphia. Philadelphia was the original capital city of the USA. English settlers first went to Pennsylvania in the early 1600s. George Washington, the first American President, signed the Declaration of Independence, from Britain, in Philadelphia on 4th July, 1776. At that time, there were only 13 states in America.

Today, Pennsylvania is an important industrial and educational centre. It is home to one of the oldest universities in the USA and it’s also one of the richest states in America.
Louisiana is in the south of the USA. New Orleans is its biggest and most famous city. The first Europeans to settle in Louisiana were French. Originally, the state of Louisiana was enormous. It included the valley of the Mississippi River, in the south, and it went all the way to the American border with Canada!

In 1763, Louisiana became a Spanish colony and then, in 1800, it became French again. In 1803, France sold Louisiana to the USA for $15 million! Today, many people in Louisiana still speak French as their first language.
California is on the west coast of the USA. Many cities in California have Spanish names, for example, Los Angeles and San Francisco. This is because California was a Spanish colony and then later it became part of Mexico. In 1846, after the discovery of gold, California became an American state. Hundreds of thousands of people went to California to look for gold. People call this the ‘gold rush’. But even after the gold ran out, people continued to go to California because of its warm and sunny climate.

Today, nearly 40 million people live in California – more than any other American state. California is also home to big technology companies, for example Apple, Google and Facebook, and of course the Hollywood film industry!
Alaska

Alaska is in the north-west of American, above Canada. It’s the largest American state and its biggest city is Anchorage. Alaska was once a part of Russia and some people called it Russian America. The USA bought Alaska from Russia in 1867 for $7.2 million. A lot of Americans thought this was too much money for a lot of snow and ice!

But today, Alaska is an important US state because there’s a lot of oil and gas under the ice. After oil was discovered there in 1968 many Alaskans have become rich and the population is growing quickly.
Hawaii

Hawaii is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and consists of eight islands – many of them are volcanic. Europeans first went to Hawaii in the early 1800s. Hawaii became a US state in 1959. It’s the newest of the 50 states, but it has a long history. Polynesians arrived in Hawaii from the South Pacific more than a thousand years ago. In those days, each island had a different king. In 1810, the islands joined together and there was just one king, Kamehameha.

Today, Hawaii is an important holiday destination and it’s popular with surfers. The biggest city in Hawaii is Honolulu.