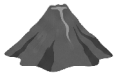
HAWAII

THE ALOHA STATE *Became a state August 21, 1959 (50th)*

Hawaii is a chain of islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, more than 2,000 miles from the nearest mainland. It is the newest state and the only one made entirely of islands.



Islands Built by Volcanoes

Deep under the Pacific is a hot spot where melted rock pushes up through the sea floor. Lava piles up until it rises above the waves as an island. The sea floor slowly slides northwest and carries each island away, and a new one forms behind it. Kauai is about five million years old. The Big Island is still growing.



Guided by the Stars

The first Hawaiians came from islands far to the south about a thousand years ago. They sailed more than 2,000 miles in double-hulled canoes, finding their way by the stars, the waves and the flight of birds. They carried the plants and animals they would need. One was the kukui tree, whose oily nuts they burned for light.



The Palace of a Kingdom

Hawaii was once its own country. Kamehameha the Great joined the islands into one kingdom by 1810. In 1882 King Kalākaua finished ʻIolani Palace, which had electric lights before the White House did. It also had flush toilets and telephones for calling from room to room. Today it is a museum, known as the only royal palace on American soil.



The Morning of December 7

Early on Sunday, December 7, 1941, planes from Japan made a surprise attack on the American navy base at Pearl Harbor. The next day the United States entered World War II. The war ended in 1945 with a signing on the deck of the battleship Missouri. That ship is now a museum at Pearl Harbor.



Stories Told in Dance

Long ago Hawaiians had no written language. They kept their history in chants and in hula, a dance in which the hands and body act out the words. In 1830 a queen who had become a Christian banned hula in public. King Kalākaua proudly brought it back in the 1880s. A big hula festival in Hilo honors him each spring.



A Goose Back from the Edge

The nene is a goose found only in Hawaii. Its ancestors were geese much like Canada geese that reached the islands long ago. By the 1950s, hunting and animals brought by people had left only about 30 nene alive. People raised chicks in safety and set them free. Now there are more than 3,000.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 1.4 million (40th most)
Size	About 10,900 square miles (43rd largest)
Highest point	Mauna Kea, 13,803 feet
Counties	5
Neighbors	None. No state touches Hawaii.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Measured from its base on the sea floor, Mauna Kea is more than 33,000 feet tall. That is taller than Mount Everest.
- The Hawaiian alphabet has only 13 letters. Five are vowels and eight are consonants.
- Haleakalā means house of the sun. A legend says the hero Māui caught the sun there to slow it down.
- The state fish is the humuhumunukunukuapuaʻa. Its Hawaiian name means triggerfish with a snout like a pig.

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. Which city is closest to Waimea Canyon?
2. Which island was once known as the Pineapple Island?
3. Which fish on the map can make a grunting sound?

Answers: 1. Lihue 2. Lanai 3. Humuhumunukunukuapuaʻa