MICHIGAN

THE GREAT LAKES STATE *Became a state January 26, 1837 (26th)*

Michigan is two big pieces of land with the Great Lakes all around them. It is the state that put America on wheels, and it is also a place of forests, dunes and waterfalls.



Why the Great Lakes State?

Michigan touches four of the five Great Lakes: Superior, Michigan, Huron and Erie. No other state touches more than two. The lakes give Michigan about 3,300 miles of shoreline, the longest freshwater coast of any state. Anywhere you stand in Michigan, a Great Lake is no more than 85 miles away.



Two Peninsulas, One Bridge

Michigan is made of two peninsulas, pieces of land with water on three sides. In the 1830s, Michigan and Ohio quarreled over the city of Toledo. Congress gave Toledo to Ohio and gave Michigan most of the Upper Peninsula instead. For many years, people crossed the water between them by ferry. The Mackinac Bridge, about five miles long, opened in 1957.



Cars for Everyone

Early cars were built one at a time and cost too much for most families. In 1913, Henry Ford's factory in the Detroit area tried something new. A moving line carried each car past workers who each did one job. Building a Model T dropped from about 12 hours to 93 minutes. Prices fell, and Detroit became the Motor City.



Copper in the Ground

Most copper is locked inside other rock and must be melted out. On the Keweenaw Peninsula, it lies in the ground as nearly pure metal. Native people began digging it at least 7,000 years ago and shaped it into tools and jewelry. Miners rushed in during the 1840s. The peninsula's mines produced more than 10 billion pounds of copper before the last one closed in 1968.



The Sleeping Bear

The Anishinaabek, the Native people of the Great Lakes, tell a story about these dunes. A mother bear and her two cubs set out to swim across Lake Michigan. The mother reached shore and lay down to wait for them. She became a great dune, and her cubs became the two Manitou Islands.



An Elevator for Ships

Lake Superior sits about 21 feet higher than Lake Huron. On the river between them, rapids once blocked every ship. The Soo Locks, opened in 1855, fixed that. A ship floats into a long chamber, and water is let in or out until the ship rises or sinks to the next level. Gravity moves the water, with no pumps.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 10.1 million (10th most)
Size	About 96,700 square miles (11th largest)
Highest point	Mount Arvon, 1,979 feet
Counties	83
Neighbors	Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin, with Canada to the north and east

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. What is Michigan's largest city?
2. Which city is closest to Sleeping Bear Dunes?
3. What is the Petoskey stone made of?

Answers: 1. Detroit 2. Traverse City 3. Fossil coral

DID YOU KNOW?

- Petoskey stones are pieces of coral that lived in a warm sea about 350 million years ago.
- The water at Tahquamenon Falls is brown like root beer. The color comes from cedar swamps upstream.
- Scientists have studied the wolves and moose of Isle Royale since 1958. It is the longest study of its kind.
- The name Motown is short for Motor Town, a nickname for Detroit.