

California Senate  
*Legislative  
Activity  
Book*

For Middle School Students



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# California State Senate

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Dear Student,

This activity book has been prepared as a fun introduction to the California State Legislature which is one of the three branches of government: executive, judicial, and the legislative branch. The California Legislature has the task of making state laws. It is divided into two houses, the Senate and the Assembly, and is located in the city of Sacramento.

California is divided into 40 Senate districts, each with 931,349 people who are represented by one Senator. It is also divided into 80 smaller Assembly districts, each with 465,675 people represented by one Assemblymember. These people are referred to as "constituents." Each person, or constituent, is represented by one Senator and one Assemblymember.

California limits the amount of time Senators and Assemblymembers can serve in each house which is otherwise known as Term Limits. They are allowed to serve up to 12 years in the Legislature. Senators run for re-election every four years, Assemblymembers every two.

Legislators write and pass laws that aim to make the state a better place to live for all Californians. The beginning of this process is the idea for a law and that idea is written and published in what is referred to as legislation or a "bill." Each bill is assigned a specific bill number and introduced in its house of origin. Before a bill can be voted on by the entire house, it must be heard and passed by smaller groups of legislators in committee hearings. There are two main types of committees, policy and fiscal. Policy committees specialize in policy issues such as health or education, and fiscal committees hear and opine on legislation that has a fiscal impact on the State budget.

Once a bill has passed through its assigned committees, it is presented to the entire house on either the Senate or Assembly "floor" in what is referred to as "Floor Session." Floor Session is where every legislator has an opportunity to vote on the bill. Senators use a voice vote, answering "Aye" (yes) or "No" when their names are called. The Assemblymembers use an electronic system to cast their votes, pressing an "Aye" or "No" button at their desks. The votes in both houses are tallied and announced. Each house elects a leader to oversee its proceedings: the Senate elects a President pro Tempore and the Assembly elects a Speaker.

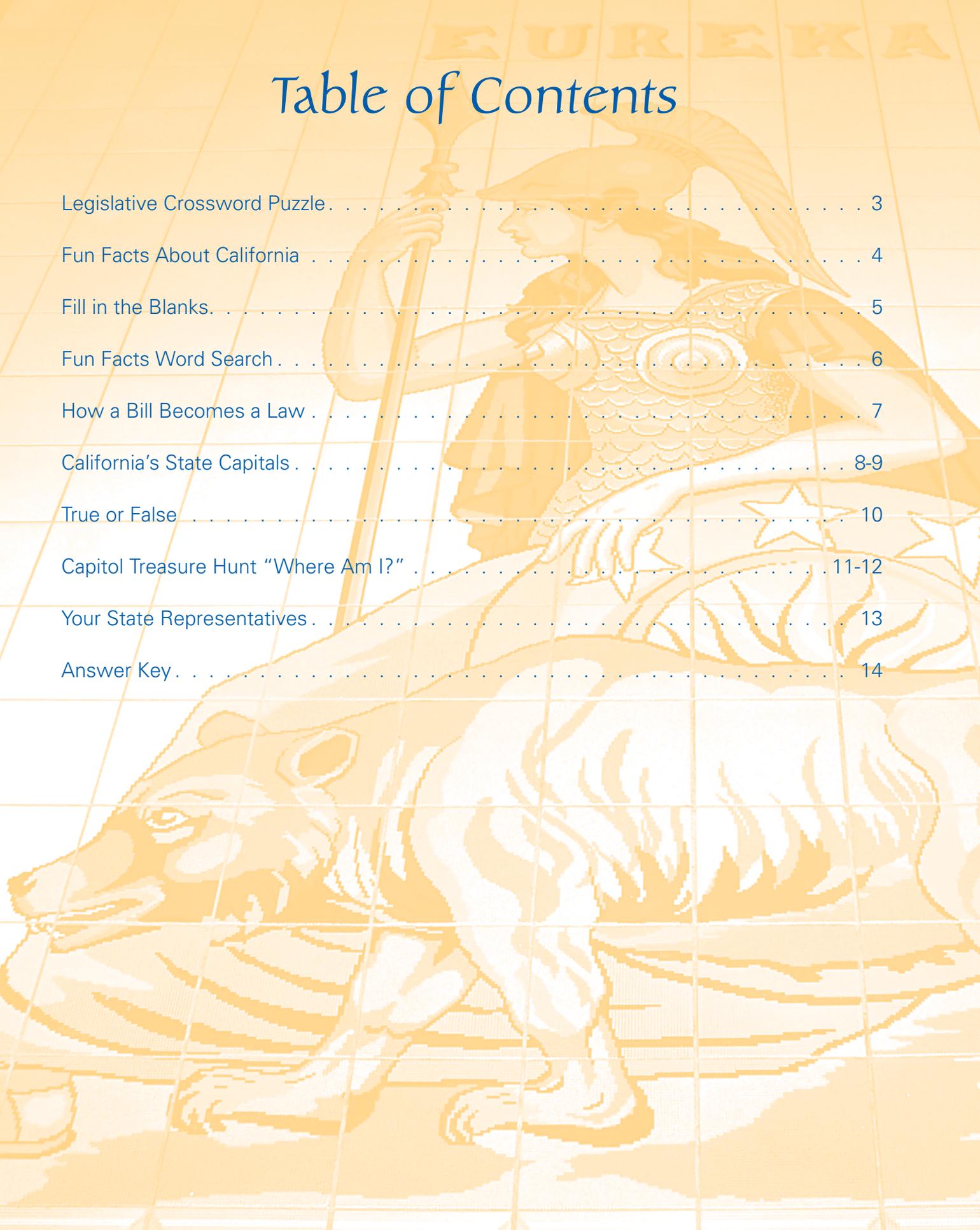
During breaks in the two-year legislative session, legislators return to their districts to meet with their constituents to address district issues, statewide issues, and to gather ideas for new laws or changes to existing laws. Constituents are an important part of the legislative process.

This should give you a head start with this activity booklet. Use the information from this page to get started. Have fun!

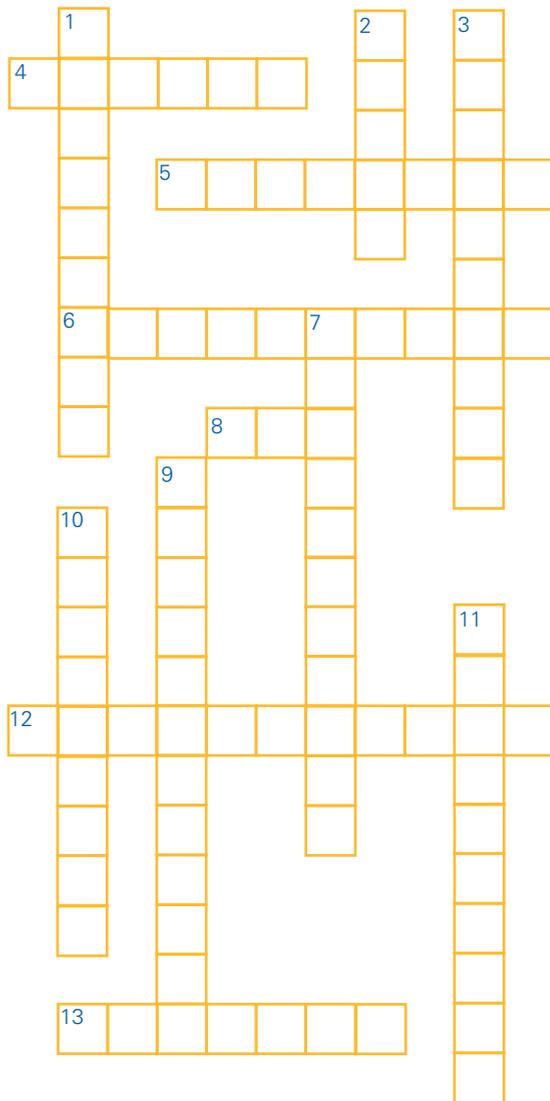
Senator Jeff Stone, Pharm.D.  
Senate District 28

# Table of Contents

Legislative Crossword Puzzle . . . . .	3
Fun Facts About California . . . . .	4
Fill in the Blanks. . . . .	5
Fun Facts Word Search . . . . .	6
How a Bill Becomes a Law . . . . .	7
California's State Capitals . . . . .	8-9
True or False . . . . .	10
Capitol Treasure Hunt "Where Am I?" . . . . .	11-12
Your State Representatives . . . . .	13
Answer Key . . . . .	14



# Legislative Crossword Puzzle



## Across

4. Number of Assemblymembers in California is \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ use a voice vote
6. Policy issues are discussed by \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_ is a positive vote
12. The \_\_\_\_\_ is divided into two houses
13. When the Senate meets on the Senate floor, they are in Floor \_\_\_\_\_

## Down

1. Where Senators go when they are not working in Sacramento; their \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of Senators in California is \_\_\_\_\_
3. The State Capitol is located in \_\_\_\_\_
7. Length of time Senators and Assemblymembers can work in the Legislature \_\_\_\_\_
9. People who live in a Senator's district are \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_ are made by the Legislature
11. The name for the number of years a person can work for the Legislature is \_\_\_\_\_

# Fun Facts about California

**State Motto:** **Eureka**; appears on the State's Great Seal. It is a Greek word meaning *I have found it*, referring to the discovery of gold.

**State Nickname:** **The Golden State** is a good state nickname since modern California's success started with the discovery of gold.

**State Colors:** **Blue and gold** are the colors of the ribbons used on the State Seal. They are also the colors of the University of California.

**State Song:** ***I Love You, California*** was chosen as the state song in 1951.

**State Insect:** The **California Dogface Butterfly** is found nowhere else.

**State Mineral:** **Gold** was designated the official state mineral in 1965. California has produced more gold than any other state and it can still be panned from streambeds today.

**State Gem:** **Benitoite** (also referred to as "blue diamond") was named in 1907 after the river, county, and nearby mountain range where it was found, Benito, and was designated as the official state gem on October 1, 1985.

**State Rock:** **Serpentine** was named in 1965. California was the first state to designate a state rock. It is a shiny, green and blue rock found throughout California.

**State Flower:** The **Golden Poppy**, sometimes known as the flame flower or the cup of gold, became the state flower in 1903.

**State Mammal:** The **Grizzly Bear** appears on the California State Flag and the State Seal.

**State Tree:** The **California Redwood** was designated the official state tree by the State Legislature in 1937. Coastal Redwoods are the tallest trees in the world.

**State Fish:** The **California Golden Trout** is found only in the icy streams of the high Sierra.

**State Bird:** The **California Valley Quail** became the official state bird in 1931.

**State Marine Mammal:** The **Gray Whale**, measuring 35 to 50 feet in length and around 20 to 40 tons in weight, was designated the state marine mammal in 1975.

**California's Gold Rush:** The **Gold Rush** began on January 24, 1849 when James Marshall discovered gold and triggered California's population to increase by 250,000 people by the end of 1852.

For more fun facts, go to [www.library.ca.gov/history/symbols.html](http://www.library.ca.gov/history/symbols.html)

# Fill in the Blanks

Use the clue to figure out the word(s). Write the word(s) in the blanks.

1. Found in the High Sierra streams: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Also the colors of the University of California: \_\_\_\_\_
3. California's official state tree: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Chosen in 1951: \_\_\_\_\_
5. California state insect: \_\_\_\_\_
6. California's official state marine mammal: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Located on the State Seal and the State Flag: \_\_\_\_\_
8. California's nickname: \_\_\_\_\_
9. California's Capital: \_\_\_\_\_
10. I have found it!: \_\_\_\_\_
11. California's official state bird: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Brought many settlers to California: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Named in 1907 after a river, county, and nearby mountain range:  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Sometimes known as the flame flower: \_\_\_\_\_
15. Named in 1965 and found throughout California: \_\_\_\_\_
16. California has produced more of this than any other state: \_\_\_\_\_



# Word Search

Words may be found diagonally and backwards. Good luck!

E E A L L I O I T T R A Y G L O O D P U R  
R L N E H E N T U L D C P M U N T E R E I  
E E S I U S A D A U L L P D I S L R D S U  
T O E A T R U A E E S E O O G P O W F N L  
R C M A C N E R U P O E P G O E O A T T T  
D F A O N R E K D A E D N F D O E L A R L  
I N M P S P A P A L C N E A D N T T L A I  
R E T L I N E M R L O O D C T E A L I E I  
D T E L A T C Y E E N G L E O E T E A B T  
T A T B D L O S T N S U O B N E S F U Y G  
T O R A T L N L F U T E G U G T N L Q L S  
E F L O O R S E S S I O N T M E E E Y Z B  
G O L D E N T R O U T L I T D O D G E Z L  
A I N R O F I L A C U O Y E V O L I L I O  
N O B E N I T O I T E E F R S R O S L R O  
N A C I L B U P E R N S E F G P G L A G N  
O A T R D R T V E S T B F L T D E A V E R  
O T E R M L I M I T S T E Y L A H T G R N  
C S O L E E O E S U L T S I R R T U H C I  
T G T S T R N G A S E L A H W Y A R G P O  
A Y T S E S O N O E U C N Y L B M E S S A

Assembly

Capitol

Dogface Butterfly

Sacramento

Redwood

Senate

Serpentine

The Golden State

Benitoite

Eureka

Democrat

Republican

Gold

Golden Trout

Gray Whale

I Love You California

Term Limits

Valley Quail

Blue and Gold

Constituents

Floor Session

Golden Poppy

Gold Rush

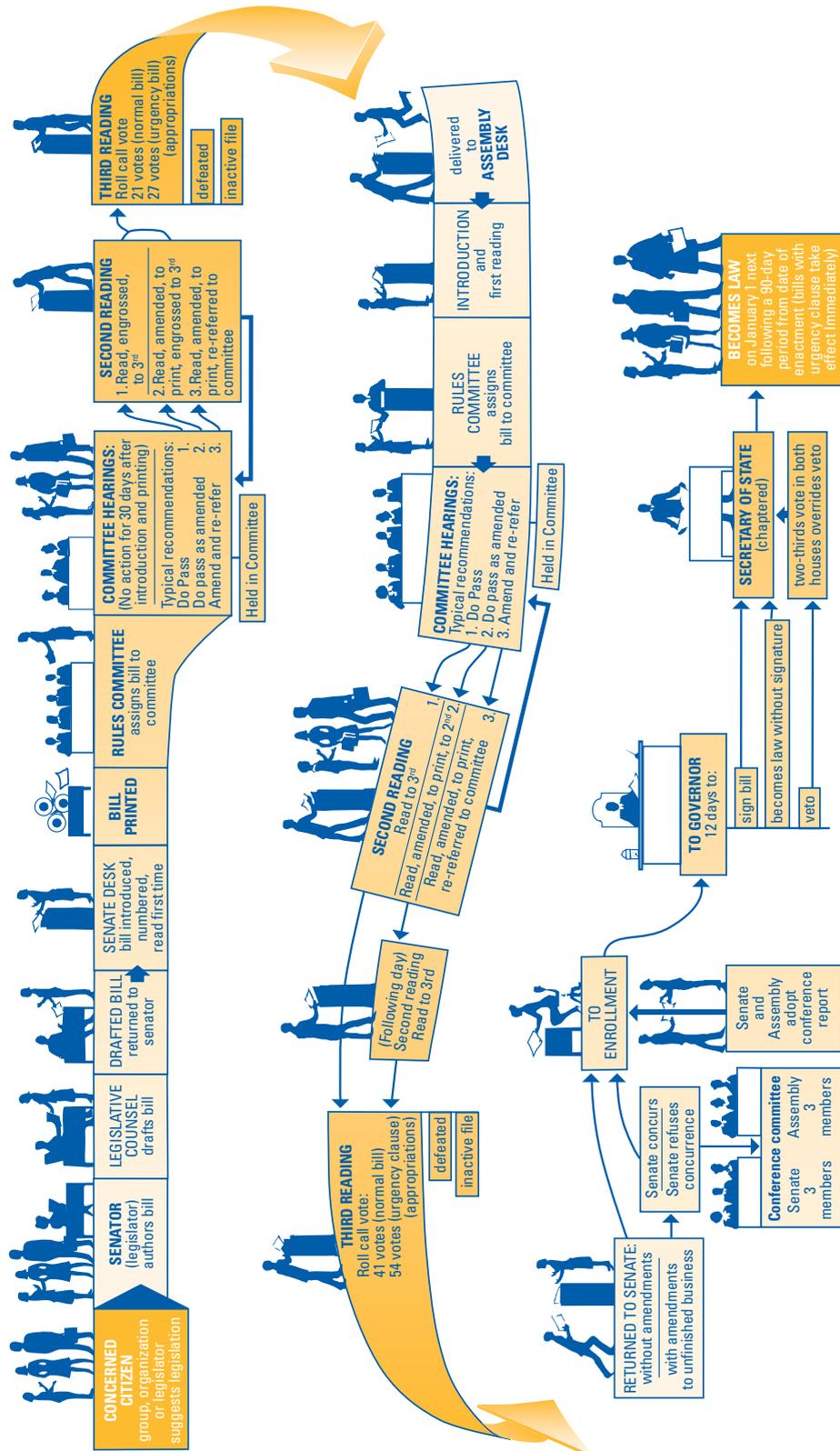
Grizzly Bear

Legislature

Constitution

Independent

# How a Bill Becomes a Law

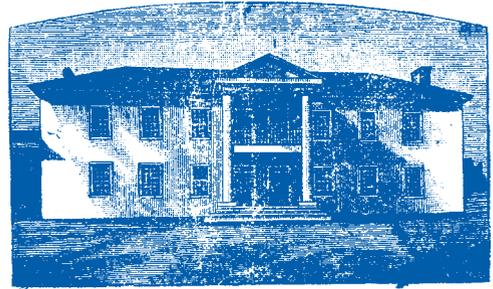


# California's State Capitals

Sacramento was not the original State Capital of California. California has had four different State Capitals from 1849 to present.

## Monterey (September 9, 1849 to October 13, 1849) Colton Hall

Monterey was the site of California's first State Constitutional Convention. During the convention 48 delegates wrote California's first constitution and discussed the need for a suitable seat for California's government. Offers for accommodations poured in from communities of all sizes.



## San Jose (November 13, 1849 to May 1, 1851)

The First and Second Sessions of the Legislature convened in San Jose. The Capitol building was a two-story adobe hotel. The Members disliked the building, as well as the town, and wanted to move the Capital from San Jose immediately. The Senate Committee on Public Buildings reported a bill recommending the relocation of the Capital to the town of Vallejo. The Governor approved the move on February 4, 1851.

## Vallejo (January 5, 1852 to February 4, 1853)

The Third Session opened in Vallejo on January 5, 1852. The scene was hectic and disorganized. Furniture and supplies had not been delivered and few if any of the buildings in town had been finished. A compromise was made that Vallejo would remain the permanent Capital while the legislators went to Sacramento on January 16, 1852, to complete the Session.

The following year, on January 3, 1853, the Legislature assembled again in Vallejo. Conditions were not much better and the Members wanted to leave Vallejo again. Benicia offered free use of its new city hall and a port of call at which all river traffic stopped. So, on February 4, 1853, the Legislature passed a bill ordering the seat of government be moved instantly to the City of Benicia.



## Benicia (February 4, 1853 to February 25, 1854)

The Fourth Session reconvened in Benicia. Bad weather and insufficient accommodations made Sacramento's offer of a free courthouse too good to pass up. On February 25, 1854, a bill was signed naming Sacramento the permanent seat of government.



## Sacramento (February 25, 1854 to present)

The first State House in Sacramento (1854), the new Capitol, was surrounded by no less than 55 hotels. Sacramento was one of the most accessible cities in the state with rapid communications available by telegraph. Soon after the conclusion of Session there was a terrible fire that destroyed the courthouse along with a considerable portion of the city.



Sacramento's second courthouse was ready for occupancy in less than four months. Legislation was neither distracted nor delayed when the building was completed in January 1855. In 1854 land was donated by the City of Sacramento at 9th and 10th, I and J Streets. Construction began in December of 1856 but was soon stopped. Members again wanted to move the Capital. The Supreme Court ruled, and later reversed itself, that San Jose was still the state capital. In 1860 Sacramento gifted four blocks between L and N, 10th and 12th Streets to build a new Capitol building. The Legislature appropriated \$500,000 as a construction fund, and appointed a commission to superintend the building of a capitol. On December 9, 1861, Sacramento was completely flooded. On January 10, 1862, a second flooding occurred in Sacramento. The Legislature decided to temporarily move to San Francisco (January 24, 1862 to May 15, 1862).

Ground broke September 24, 1860, and the first cornerstone was laid on May 15, 1861. Construction took 14 years to complete. On November 26, 1869, the offices of the Governor and Secretary of State were occupied, and on December 6 the Legislature convened in the new chambers. California's Capital finally came to rest. However, in 1958, the historic Capitol building in Benicia was restored to its original condition and rededicated as a State Historic Park. To honor the occasion, the Legislature moved the capital to Benicia for one day, March 15, 1958. Then in the year 2000, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of California statehood, the Legislature adopted SCR 54, calling for the Legislature to convene once again in Benicia to pay homage to California's rich past.



# True or False

True

False

1. Sacramento has always been the location of California's State Capital.
2. Flooding was responsible for relocating the Capital.
3. Benicia was the State Capital for only one year.
4. Sacramento appropriated \$500,000 as a construction fund.
5. Construction for one Capitol building took 12 years to complete.
6. One Capitol building was involved in a terrible fire.
7. The Fourth Session occurred in Vallejo.
8. The scene at the Vallejo Capital was hectic.
9. The current Capitol building is located at 9th and J Street.
10. The site of the 1st Constitutional Convention was Colton Hall.
11. The word "capitol" refers to a building.
12. I know a little more about the State Capitol.

\_\_\_\_\_

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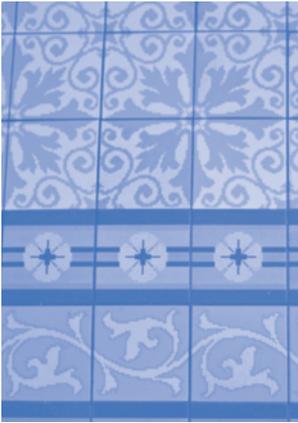
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

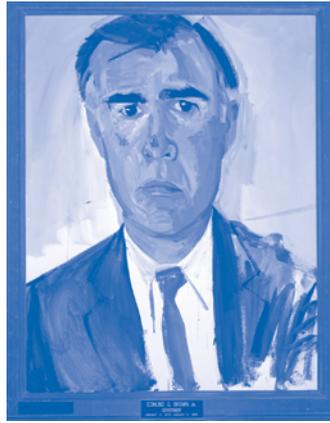


# Where am I?

These pictures are things found inside the California State Capitol. How many can you find? Write in their location.



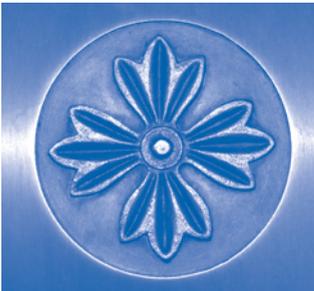
1 \_\_\_\_\_



2 \_\_\_\_\_



3 \_\_\_\_\_



4 \_\_\_\_\_



5 \_\_\_\_\_



6 \_\_\_\_\_

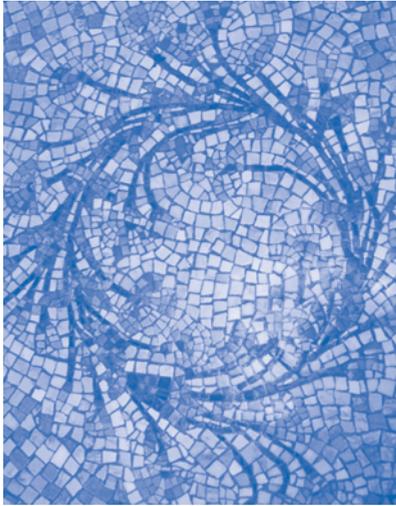


7 \_\_\_\_\_

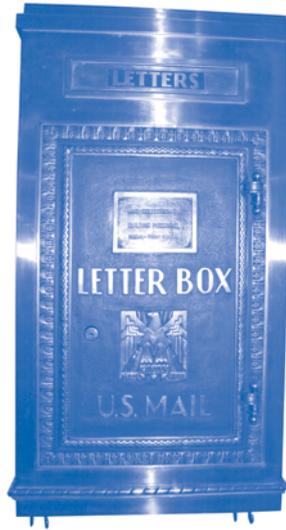


8 \_\_\_\_\_

# Where am I?



9 \_\_\_\_\_



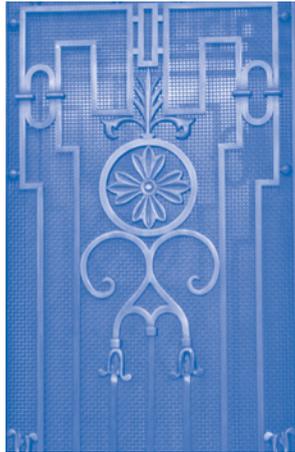
10 \_\_\_\_\_



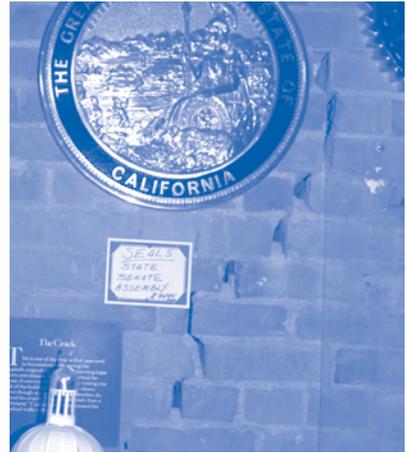
11 \_\_\_\_\_



12 \_\_\_\_\_



13 \_\_\_\_\_



14 \_\_\_\_\_



15 \_\_\_\_\_



16 \_\_\_\_\_

# Your State Representatives

Many constituents write letters and call their state representatives to talk about issues. Find out who the representatives for your community are and how they can be reached.

## California State Officers:

### Governor:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### State Senator:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### State Assemblymember:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## State officials can be found at:

- the front section of the phone book
- the California State Government website: [www.ca.gov](http://www.ca.gov)
- the California Senate website: [www.senate.ca.gov](http://www.senate.ca.gov), and
- the California State Assembly website: [www.assembly.ca.gov](http://www.assembly.ca.gov).



# Answer Key



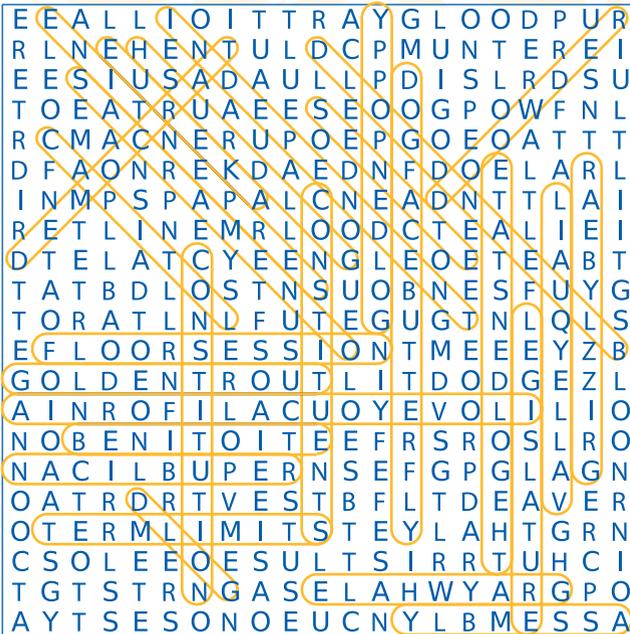
## Fill in the Blanks

1. Golden Trout
2. Blue and Gold
3. California Redwood
4. I Love You, California
5. Dogface Butterfly
6. Gray Whale
7. Grizzly Bear
8. Golden State
9. Sacramento
10. Eureka
11. Valley Quail
12. Gold Rush
13. Benitoite
14. Golden Poppy
15. Serpentine
16. Gold

## Where Am I?

1. 1st Floor
2. 3rd Floor
3. B, 1,2,3 - Staircases
4. B, 1,2,3,4 - Historic Elevators
5. 1st Floor
6. Assembly Chambers
7. 1st Floor
8. 1,2,3 - Wooden Staircases
9. 2nd Floor - Tile Floor Design
10. Basement
11. Senate Chambers
12. Basement
13. 1,2,3,4 - Historic Elevators
14. Basement - Gift Shop
15. Senate Chambers
16. 1st Floor - Historic Treasurer's Office

## Word Search



## True or False

1. False, California's State Capital was located in numerous cities.
2. True, Sacramento was completely flooded in 1861.
3. True, from 1853 to 1854.
4. False, the Legislature appropriated \$500,000, not Sacramento.
5. False, beginning in 1861, construction took 14 years to complete.
6. True, fire destroyed the Capitol building and a large portion of Sacramento.
7. False, the 3rd Session occurred in Vallejo.
8. True, in 1852 furniture & supplies were not delivered and few buildings in the city were even completed.
9. False, the current Capitol building is located at 10th and L St.
10. True, in 1849, Colton Hall, located in Monterey.
11. True, the word "capital" refers to a place.
12. True or false – hopefully true.



## **Senator Jeff Stone, Pharm.D.**

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