

### Important facts

#### California

##### Human Geography

- Due to the long coastline California is home to many harbours and piers including the famous Santa Monica Pier.
- Well-known universities include the University of California and Stanford
- Other notable landmarks include Alcatraz Island (a former prison) and the Santa Barbara County Courthouse
- Just under 39.5 million people live in California (California is the 3rd largest state by area, putting its population density at **251.3 per square mile**, which ranks 11th in the country)

##### Physical Geography

- The state's diverse geography ranges from the Pacific Coast and metropolitan areas in the west to the Sierra Nevada mountains in the east, and from the redwood and Douglas fir forests in the northwest to the Mojave Desert in the southeast
- The Central Valley, a major agricultural area, dominates the state's centre
- Although California is well-known for its warm Mediterranean climate and monsoon seasonal weather, the large size of the state results in climates that vary from moist temperate rainforest in the north to arid desert in the interior, as well as snowy alpine in the mountains
- California has a long coastline, including cliffs and bays
- **Death Valley** is a National Park in the U.S. state of California. It is the hottest, driest, and lowest place in North America. It is a desert southeast of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Death Valley is a part of the Mojave Desert. It is the most important part of Death Valley National Park. It is an endorheic basin, which means that the rivers in it do not flow to the sea.

### Key Vocabulary

climate	The general weather conditions that are typical of a place.
colonisation	A group or community settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.
coastal	An area close to the sea.
compass points	Any of the main points of a compass e.g. north, south-east, etc.
equator	An imaginary line around the middle of the earth at an equal distance from the North Pole and the South Pole.
population	The number of inhabitants of a particular place
temperate	A place which is never extremely hot or extremely cold.
tourist	A person who is visiting a place for pleasure or interest, especially when they are on holiday.
tropics	Part of the world that lie between two lines of latitude. The tropics have a humid climate, where the weather is hot and damp.
vegetation	Plants, trees or flowers.
Northern hemisphere	The top half of Earth that is north of the Equator.

Alcatraz Island



Santa Monica Pier



Santa Barbara County Courthouse, exterior



The mountains around Death Valley