



How the States Got Their Names pt. 1

Ever wonder how the states got their names? Missouri was named after _____.

- A. Name of a river that flows through the state
- B. Named after the French explorer that founded St. Louis
- C. The first governor's daughter, Miss Uri

D. Native Sioux word meaning 'dugout canoe'

Father Jacques Marquette, the first explorer in Missouri, translated native languages to French. One word, *vemessvrit*, evolved into Missouri. Do you like the name Missouri? Why/why not? Why do you think the word for Missouri was chosen over other native words?

[Correction: Etymology of Missouri](#)

How the States Got Their Names pt. 2

In 1787, Delaware was the first colony to become a state. Before it was an English colony, Delaware was a Swedish colony. Do you know the origins of the name Delaware?

- A. The name of an Ikea table

B. Named after the first colonial governor of Virginia, Lord De La Warr

- C. A type of ship that was commonly built in that specific colony
- D. A strain of grain native to the area

Lord De La Warr was very important at the time and somewhat of a celebrity. Before the state, a bay and a river were named Delaware after him. Do you know 5 places named after historical figures? What do you think you would have to accomplish to have a town named after you?

[List of places in the US named after people](#)



How the States Got Their Names pt. 3

Arkansas has a very unique name. Can you guess where the name came from?

A. The name Kansas was already taken

B. The native word Ugakhopag translated to “people who live downstream”

C. A type of mosquito native to the state

D. The name of a razorback’s home

The native word came from the Quapaw tribe. The Quapaw originated in the Ohio Valley until they relocated down the Mississippi River, “people who live downstream”. What river close by could your class use to relocate? Where would you make your home?

[How Did Arkansas Get its Name](#)

[Origins of the Quapaw](#)

How the States Got Their Names pt. 4

On April 17, 1861, on the cusp of the Civil War, Virginia voted to secede from the Union. How did they choose the name Virginia?

A. A native word meaning “plentiful land”

B. The name of the ship that first made land at Jamestown

C. Named after Queen Elizabeth I

It was only fitting to name the first English colony after the “Virgin Queen” Elizabeth I. Even though the United Kingdom speaks English, why do we spell and pronounce words differently? E.g., Flat/Apartment, aeroplane/airplane. What other words are different across the pond?

[Origin of the name Virginia](#)



How the States Got Their Names pt. 5

California's state animal is the California Grizzly Bear, and it is proudly flown on their flag, but do you know the origin of the name California?

- A. Cauliflower was the main export of the region
- B. Named after psychic spies from China that first explored the area in the 5th century
- C. Named after La Nina, Christopher Columbus' ship

D. Named after a mythical island paradise called "Califia"

The mythical island paradise was described in *Las Sergas de Esplandian* by Garcoa Ordones de Montalvo. He was a popular Spanish romance author in the 1500's who described a land called "Califia". If English explorers found California, what do you think they would have named it? What would you rename California?

[Origin of the "California"](#)