

Mississippi Student Guide



Discover state symbols, government, facts, history, famous people from Mississippi and more.

**Do you know who I am?
The answer is inside.**



**The Governor's Mansion
circa 1841**

The Mississippi Governor's Mansion is the second oldest continuously occupied governor's residence in the United States. Designed by architect William Nichols (1780-1853) of Bath, England, the Mansion was designed in the period's most popular architectural style—Greek Revival. Architectural historians consider the Mississippi Governor's Mansion to be one of the finest surviving examples of the Greek Revival style in the United States.

Welcome and
discover **Mississippi**



**Governor Phil Bryant and
First Lady Deborah Bryant**

Dear Student:

Welcome to Mississippi, where you can experience the heart and soul of southern culture, history and hospitality! Mississippi may surprise you in all it has to offer. As the “Birthplace of America’s Music,” we honor our musical legacy through the Mississippi Blues and Country Music Trails, which each trace major musical milestones and points of interest with historical markers throughout the state. The Mississippi Freedom Trail commemorates the state’s Civil Rights heritage and offers a virtual tour of the sites that played a key role in the Civil Rights Movement. Our Culinary Trail provides a taste of the delicious food we are known for, like fried catfish, hot tamales and Gulf Coast seafood. And for the history buff, Civil War battlegrounds and other historical sites come alive with reenactments, pilgrimages and living history presentations all year long.

Mississippi is bordered on the west by the mighty Mississippi River, where antebellum homes are nestled in communities like Natchez and Vicksburg and where the state’s Delta region cultivates the agricultural sector of our economy. Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, provides a look at today’s state government at the Mississippi State Capitol Building and Governor’s Mansion or a glimpse of yesterday at the Old Capitol Museum.

Literary greats like William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Margaret Walker, Willie Morris, Richard Wright and Tennessee Williams are also a part of our state’s cultural legacy. And musicians like Elvis Presley, Muddy Waters, Jimmie Rodgers, B.B. King and Faith Hill have spread the sounds of Mississippi across the world. Our natural resources are among Mississippi’s greatest assets, as well: from the beautiful Gulf of Mexico to our extensive number of rivers and lakes, fishing and water recreation opportunities abound, and our large white-tail deer population makes hunting a prime sport.

This is only a sample of what Mississippi has to offer. This guide is your resource to delve into all the unique people and places that are a part of our state’s history and culture. Thank you for your interest in learning about Mississippi. We hope that you will visit soon and experience our state for yourself!

Sincerely,

Phil Bryant
Governor of Mississippi

State Symbols

STATE COAT OF ARMS

The committee to design the Coat of Arms was appointed by legislative action on February 7, 1894, and the design proposed by that committee was accepted and became the official Coat of Arms. The committee recommended for the Coat of Arms a "Shield in color blue, with an eagle upon it with extended pinions, holding in the right talon a palm branch and a bundle of arrows in the left talon, with the word "Mississippi" above the eagle; the lettering on the shield and the eagle to be in gold; below the shield two branches of the cotton stalk, saltier wise, as in submitted design, and a scroll below extending upward and one each side three-fourths of the length of the shield; upon the scroll, which is to be red, the motto be printed in gold letters upon white spaces, as in design accompanying, the motto to be "VIRTUTE et ARMIS."



STATE MOTTO

The State Motto of Mississippi, Virtute et Armis, meaning "by valor and arms," was suggested by the Honorable James Rhea Preston, a native of Virginia, who was at the time Superintendent of Education in the State of Mississippi.



STATE FLOWER AND TREE

An election was held in November 1900 to select a State Flower. Votes were submitted by 23,278 school children, with the magnolia receiving the most votes. The Legislature officially designated the magnolia as the State Flower in 1952.

The Director of Forestry started a movement in 1935 to have school children select a State Tree. The Magnolia received the most votes. The Legislature officially designated the Magnolia as the State Tree on April 1, 1938.

STATE FLAG

The committee to design a State Flag was appointed by legislative action on February 7, 1894. The committee recommended for the flag "one with width two-thirds of its length; with a union square, in width two-thirds of the width of the flag; the ground of the union to be red and a broad blue saltier thereon, bordered with white and emblazoned with thirteen (13) mullets or five-pointed stars, corresponding with the number of the original States of the Union; the field to be divided into three bars of equal width, the upper one blue, the center one white, and the lower one extending the whole length of the flag, red-the national colors; the staff surmounted with a spearhead and a battle-axe below the flag to be fringed with gold and the staff gilded with gold."



State Symbols

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

"I salute the flag of Mississippi and the sovereign state for which it stands with pride in her history and achievements and confidence in her future under the guidance of Almighty God."

THE GREAT SEAL OF MISSISSIPPI

The present State Seal has been in use since Mississippi became a state in 1817. It is described in the Laws of the State of Mississippi, First Session, First General Assembly, 1817-1818, as follows: "The seal of this state, the inscription of which shall be 'the great seal of the State of Mississippi' around the margin, and in the center an eagle, with the olive branch and quiver of arrows in his claws."



STATE WATER MAMMAL

An act designating the Bottlenosed Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), commonly called the porpoise, as the State Water Mammal was approved April 12, 1974, Chapter 551, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974.

STATE BIRD

Found in all sections of Mississippi, the cheerful Mockingbird was selected as the official State Bird by the Women's Federated Clubs and by the State Legislature in 1944.



STATE BEVERAGE

The State Legislature designated milk as the State Beverage during the 1984 regular session, Chapter 394, General Laws of Mississippi of 1984.



STATE FISH

The Largemouth Black Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) was designated the State Fish of Mississippi, Chapter 551, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974.

STATE LAND MAMMAL

The Whitetail Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was designated the State Land Mammal of Mississippi by Senate Bill 2324, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974. The Red Fox was also named the State Land Mammal in the 1977 Legislative Session.

STATE SONG

On May 17, 1962, the Legislature designated "Go Mississippi" by Houston Davis as the official song of the State of Mississippi, Chapter 654, General Laws of Mississippi of 1962.



STATE OFFICIALS—2012 - 2016

Governor - Phil Bryant
Lieutenant Governor - Tate Reeves
Secretary of State - Delbert Hoseman
Attorney General - Jim Hood
Auditor - Stacey Pickering
Treasurer - Lynn Fitch
Commissioner of Insurance - Mike Chaney
**Commissioner of Agriculture
& Commerce** - Cindy Hyde-Smith

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The Governor is the chief executive charged with the general administration of the state. In this capacity, the Governor sees that laws are faithfully executed, acts as commander in chief of Mississippi National Guard, and appoints administrative heads and other officials as prescribed by law.

The Governor is responsible for the presentation of a balanced budget to the Legislature and signs or vetoes bills passed by the Legislature. The Governor may call extraordinary sessions of the Legislature and may issue pardons, executive orders and extraditions of fugitives from other states.

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The judicial branch serves as a check to the powers of the executive and legislative branches through its constitutional power of judicial review. The courts rule on the legality of executive policies and the constitutionality of laws passed by the Legislature.

The judicial power of the state is vested in the Supreme Court and other courts such as the Court of Appeals, the Chancery and Circuit Courts and the County Courts.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Legislative Branch is the lawmaking body of the state government. The Legislature is comprised of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

There are 52 Senators and 122 Representatives.

Senators serve four-year terms. Senators must be at least twenty-five years old, residents of the state for four years, and residents of their districts for two years. Representatives also serve four-year terms and must be at least twenty-one years old. Representatives must be residents of the state for four years and of their counties for two years.

The presiding officer of the Senate is the Lieutenant Governor. The presiding officer of the House of Representative is the Speaker of the House.

During each session, the Legislature can be expected to send more than 500 bills to the Governor to be signed. The Legislature meets for 90 days each year and for 120 days every four years.



Exterior of Capitol Building



Capitol Building, Jackson

Mississippi Fun Facts

Established by the French in 1716, Natchez is the oldest permanent settlement on the Mississippi River.

The world's only cactus plantation is located at Edwards with more than 3,000 varieties of cacti. Mississippi has more tree farms than any other state.

The first human heart and lung transplants were performed at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

The first football player on a Wheaties Box was Walter Payton, of Columbia.

The Teddy Bear's name originated after a bear hunt in Mississippi with President Theodore Roosevelt.



The 4-H Club began in Holmes County in 1907.

On April 25, 1866, women of Columbus decorated the graves of Confederate and Union soldiers in Friendship Cemetery. This gesture became known as Decoration Day, the beginning of what we now observe as Memorial Day.

Mississippi University for Women, established in 1884 and located in Columbus, was the first state college for women in the country.

Dizzy Dean, pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals and sports commentator, was from Bond.

Coca-Cola® was first bottled in 1894 in Vicksburg, by Joseph A. Biedenharn.

Mexican plantation workers first brought tamales to Mississippi.

Jefferson County's Alcorn State University is the oldest land grant college for African Americans in the world.

The toilet seat patented for the Space Shuttle was designed and produced in Columbus.

Grits are small broken grains of corn that were first produced by Native Americans. They are a favorite Southern breakfast item and a staple of Mississippi cuisine.

Olive Branch is home to the nation's largest bonsai nursery.

Mississippi produces more than 70 percent of the world's farm-raised catfish.

Peavey Electronics in Meridian is the world's largest manufacturer of musical amplification equipment.

The nation's first Parents-Teachers Association was founded in Crystal Springs, in 1895.

Babe Ruth's last home run was pitched by Guy Bush of Tupelo.

Tupelo is the birthplace of the King of Rock and Roll, Elvis Presley; blues great B.B. King is from Itta Bena, and the Father of Country Music, Jimmie Rodgers, was from Meridian.

Brookhaven native Bob Pittman is the founder of MTV.

Biloxi's Edward Barq, Sr. invented Barq's Root Beer in 1898.

Columbia is home to the world's largest parachute manufacturer.

Ebony and Jet magazines are printed in Corinth.

Born in Greenville and raised in nearby Stoneville, Jim Henson, creator of The Muppets®, said that Leland was the "birthplace of Kermit the Frog."



Kermit The Frog, Leland

Each fall Lucedale is the site of the Wizard of Oz Festival, complete with costumes and contests.

Jackson is the only official U.S. host city for the International Ballet Competition, touted as the "Olympics of Dance".

U.S. Highway 90, known as the "Hospitality Highway," skirts along the edge of the world's longest man-made beach for a total of 26 miles.

Mississippi History

Three major Indian tribes - The Chickasaws in the north, the Choctaws in the central and south, and the Natchez Indians in the southwest along the Mississippi River inhabited Mississippi. Other smaller tribes included the Biloxis, the Pascagoulas, the Tunicas, the Chocchumas, and the Yazoos.

1540-1541 - Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto was the first European to discover Mississippi and the Mississippi River.

1682 - Robert Cavalier de La Salle navigated the Mississippi River and claimed all lands drained by the river for France.

1699 - Frenchman Pierre LeMoyne, Sieur de Iberville, and his brother Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville, established Fort Maurepas (present day Ocean Springs) as the first European settlement in Mississippi.

1716 - Fort Rosalie is founded; the initial settlement for what became Natchez.

1763 - Mississippi and other French territories were given to Great Britain after France is defeated in the French and Indian War.

1781-1783 - After the American Revolution, the Treaty of Paris gave control of the southern half of Mississippi to Spain and the United States gained possession of the northern half.

1798 - Spain withdrew from Mississippi. Mississippi was organized as an American territory with Winthrop Sargent, appointed by President John Adams, as the first territorial governor.

1801 - President Thomas Jefferson named William Charles Cole Claiborne as the second governor of the territory.

1817 - On December 10th, Mississippi was admitted to the Union as the twentieth state by an Act of Congress. Washington, Mississippi, near Natchez, was the first capital. David Holmes was the first governor.

1822 - The state capital was moved to LeFleur's Bluff in the central part of the state and the City of Jackson was founded. The "Old Capitol" (now a museum) and the Governor's Mansion were built in the 1840s.

1830 - The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was signed between the Choctaws and the federal government, giving almost ten million acres of Mississippi.

1832 - The Treaty of Pontotoc Creek ceded north Mississippi Chickasaw land to the federal government.

1861 - On January 9, Mississippi seceded from the Union and becomes part of the Confederate States of America.

1862 - The Battle of Corinth, the bloodiest battle in Mississippi history, was fought on October 3rd and 4th. The Confederates were forced out of Corinth.

1863 - On July 4th, Vicksburg surrendered after a long siege. The "Gibraltar of the Confederacy" fell and gave the Union control of the Mississippi River, separating Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas from the rest of the Confederacy.

1864 - Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forest, his troops outnumbered, defeated Federal troops at the Battles of Okolona and Brice's Crossroads.

1865 - On May 4th, Confederate General Richard Taylor surrendered his forces in Alabama, Mississippi and east Louisiana.



Illinois Monument, Vicksburg National Military Park

Mississippi History

1867 - A military government was established in Mississippi.

1870 - Mississippi was readmitted to the Union. Governor James L. Alcorn gradually restored civil government.

1870 - Senator Hiram Revels became the first African American U.S. Senator.

1876 - Reconstruction began.

1890 - The Constitution of 1890 was adopted. This Constitution is still in use today.

1903 - The "New Capitol" was constructed in Jackson.

1907 - The boll weevil arrived and destroyed most of the state's cotton crop.

1922 - The Legislature authorized a system of junior colleges, the first in the nation.

1927 - The Mississippi River floods almost three million acres and left thousands homeless in the Delta.

1936 - Governor Hugh White established the Balance Agriculture with Industry (BAWI) program to support industrial and economic growth.

1962 - James Meredith integrated the University of Mississippi and became the first black Mississippian to attend one of the state's segregated public colleges.

1964 - Congress passed the Civil Rights Acts, which outlawed segregation in public places.

1969 - Hurricane Camille resulted in extensive property damage, killed 144, and injured 9,472 on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

1969 - Segregation ended in public schools.

1976 - Evelyn Gandy became Mississippi's first woman Lieutenant Governor.

1983 - Lenore Prather became Mississippi's first woman Supreme Court Justice.

1985 - Justice Rueben Anderson became Mississippi's first black Supreme Court Justice.

2004 - 2011 Haley Reeves Barbour became Mississippi's sixty-third and sixty-fourth Governor.

2005 - Hurricane Katrina, one of the nation's most devastating natural disasters, hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

2012 - Phil Bryant became Mississippi's sixty-fifth Governor.

Mississippi Facts

STATEHOOD

December 10, 1817 (20th State in the Union)

ORIGIN OF NAME

From several different Indian words that translate "Ancient Father of Waters," "Great River," "Beyond Age," or "Chief River." The most common translation is "Father of Waters."

NICKNAME

Magnolia State; also known as the Hospitality State

CAPITAL

Jackson

POPULATION

2,978,512 (July 1, 2011)

SQUARE MILES

47,233 (including 42 miles of inland water surface)

Famous Mississippians

THE ARTS

Margaret Walker Alexander* - writer
 Walter Anderson* - artist
 John Butler* - choreographer
 Hodding Carter, III* - journalist
 Ellen Douglas* - writer
 William Faulkner* - novelist
 Shelby Foote* - novelist, historian
 Ellen Gilchrist - novelist
 John Grisham - novelist
 Charlaine Harris - poet, playwright, novelist
 Thomas Harris - novelist, screenwriter
 Beth Henley - playwright
 Greg Isles - novelist
 Willie Morris* - journalist, novelist
 Walker Percy* - novelist
 William Raspberry - columnist
 James Street* - novelist
 Eudora Welty* - novelist
 Tennessee Williams* - playwright
 Richard Wright* - novelist, poet
 Zig Ziglar* - speaker, writer

ASTRONAUTS

Fred Haise, Jr.
 Donald Peterson

SOCIAL REFORMERS

Medgar Evers* - civil rights
 Myrlie Evers-Williams - civil rights
 Fannie Lou Hamer* - civil rights
 Ida B. Wells* - civil rights



Medgar Evers

SPORTS PERSONALITIES

Red Barber*
 Dizzy Dean*
 Brett Favre
 Archie Manning
 Steve McNair*
 Walter Payton*
 Jerry Rice



I am Cassandra Wilson. I was born in Jackson, MS. I am an American jazz musician, singer, songwriter and producer, and the recipient of two Grammy awards.

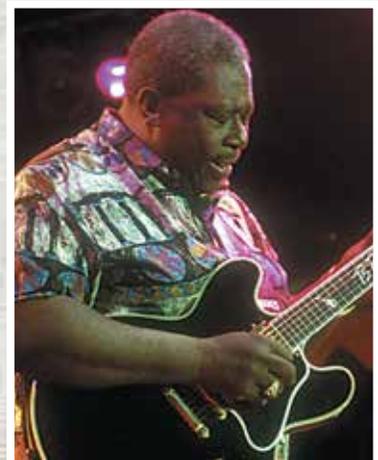
*deceased

ENTERTAINERS

Dana Andrews* - actor
 Jerry Clower* - comedian
 Michael Clarke Duncan* - actor
 John Dye* - actor
 Morgan Freeman - actor
 Vivica Fox - actress
 Sam Haskell - producer
 Jim Henson* - creator of the Muppets
 James Earl Jones - actor
 Dianne Ladd - actress
 Gerald McRaney - actor
 Bob Pittman - founder of MTV
 Parker Posey - actress
 Eric Roberts - actor
 Symba Smith - actress
 Stella Stevens - actress
 Sela Ward - actress
 Ray Walston - actor
 Oprah Winfrey - actress, talk show host

MUSICIANS/SINGERS

Steve Azar	Elvis Presley*
Jimmy Buffet	Leontyne Price
Moe Bandy	Charley Pride
Lance Bass	LeAnn Rimes
Blind Melon	Jimmie Rodgers*
Ace Canon	Three Doors Down
Tena Clark	Marty Stuart
Bo Diddley*	Ike Turner*
Willie Dixon*	Conway Twitty*
Chris Ethridge*	Muddy Waters*
Pete Fountain	Cassandra Wilson
Mickey Gilley	Howlin' Wolf*
Bobbie Gentry	Tammy Wynette
W.C. Handy*	
Faith Hill	
Robert Johnson*	
B.B. King	
Little Milton*	
Dorothy Moore	
Brandi Norwood	
Charley Patton*	



B.B. King

THE BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICA'S MUSIC

From the Gulf Coast to the Delta, Mississippi has produced many of the world's most renowned musical artists of all time. Tupelo, in the northeast, is where Elvis Presley was born. From humble beginnings in a two-room shotgun styled house that was his childhood home, Elvis grew to become one of the legends of the music industry and was known as "The King of Rock and Roll."

Meridian is home to "The Father of Country Music" Jimmie Rodgers, a title recognized by the Country Music Hall of Fame. Meridian is also the birthplace of Hartley Peavey, the founder of Peavey Electronics.

The Delta is the birthplace of blues music. This flat fertile area, along the Mississippi River in the northwest, is rich in cotton, catfish and music. The Mississippi Delta is the place where over 100 blues musicians and singers including B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Charlie Patton and "The King of the Delta Blues" Robert Johnson began their careers.

ADVENTURE

Prepare for adventure in Mississippi. From quiet bird watching to extreme sports, Mississippi's various topographies produce a diverse range for outdoor activities. Our lakes, rivers and streams have more than 175 different species of freshwater fish. Deep-sea fishing in the Gulf of Mexico is spectacular. Equestrian, hiking, and biking trails provide an inspiring journey for the serious outdoors enthusiast. Camping, hunting, golfing, and kayaking are all favorite pastimes in Mississippi.

OUR SPIRIT

Native Americans have made an indelible mark on the state's history. "Mississippi" itself, is Choctaw, and means "Father of Waters." Rich in plants yielding roots, nuts, berries, and herbs, as well as a plentiful population of deer, bear, and fish, Mississippi was a comfortable home to many tribes. At one time, Mississippi had a larger population than any other Southern state. Today, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians still resides near Philadelphia, and is a great contributor to our economy and culture.

Some of the fiercest battles of the Civil War were fought in Mississippi. Many antebellum structures still stand, providing a glimpse of how luxuriously some Mississippians lived before the Civil War.

TRY SOME TREATS

There is no doubt about it: growing, cooking and eating food is a "Southern Tradition." Favorite foods are fried catfish, hushpuppies, and all the trimmings, or a country dinner of crispy fried chicken, farm-fresh vegetables, and crusty cornbread. Then, there are steaks and tamales, spicy boiled crawfish, shrimp and crab served with dressing called comeback sauce. Food is an industry in Mississippi from catfish in the Delta, to seafood on the Coast.



Dockery Farms
Blues Trail Marker



Marty Stuart
Country Trail Marker

Life in Mississippi

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mississippi's 152 public school districts are comprised of 1,047 schools, including but not limited to 440 elementary, 130 secondary, and 306 combined elementary and secondary schools. Approximately 500,000 students attend these schools.

Eight public institutions of higher learning, fifteen community and junior colleges, one graduate medical school and two law schools serve Mississippi. Approximately 136,000 students attended these institutions in the fall of 2004.

UNIVERSITIES

Alcorn State University

Delta State University

Jackson State University

Mississippi State University

Mississippi University for Women

Mississippi Valley State

University of Southern Mississippi

University of Mississippi

University of Mississippi Medical Center

THE ECONOMY

Long recognized as an agricultural state, today's Mississippi is also the nation's largest manufacturer of upholstered furniture, supplies 70 percent of the world's supply of farm-raised catfish, and is home to NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center, where Ares 1 J-2x engine testing is performed for NASA's next generation of rockets for Lunar and Mars exploration. Mississippi is home to the nation's largest Army Corps of Engineers' Waterway Experiment Station, and the Grand Gulf Nuclear Power Station. The state is recognized internationally for its outstanding contributions in the medical research areas of hypertension and organ transplantation.

TRANSPORTATION

Major interstates in Mississippi include I-10 (east/west), I-20 (east/west), I-55 (north/south), and I-59 (southwest/northwest). Either a major or a commuter airline services most major Mississippi cities. Amtrak services several cities and towns; most towns are linked by bus service.

The Natchez Trace Parkway is a historic national highway that runs from Nashville, Tennessee through Mississippi to Natchez. Commercial vehicles are not allowed on this scenic route, which has no billboards and where a speed limit of 50 mph is strictly enforced. The Natchez Trace Parkway is a designated biking route.

Running parallel to the Mississippi River is Highway 61, often referred to as the Blues Highway. Highway 61 partially merges with Highway 1 also called the Great River Road. They begin just below Memphis traveling through Mississippi into Louisiana, following the winding curves of the largest river in North America.

RECREATION/ATTRACTIONS

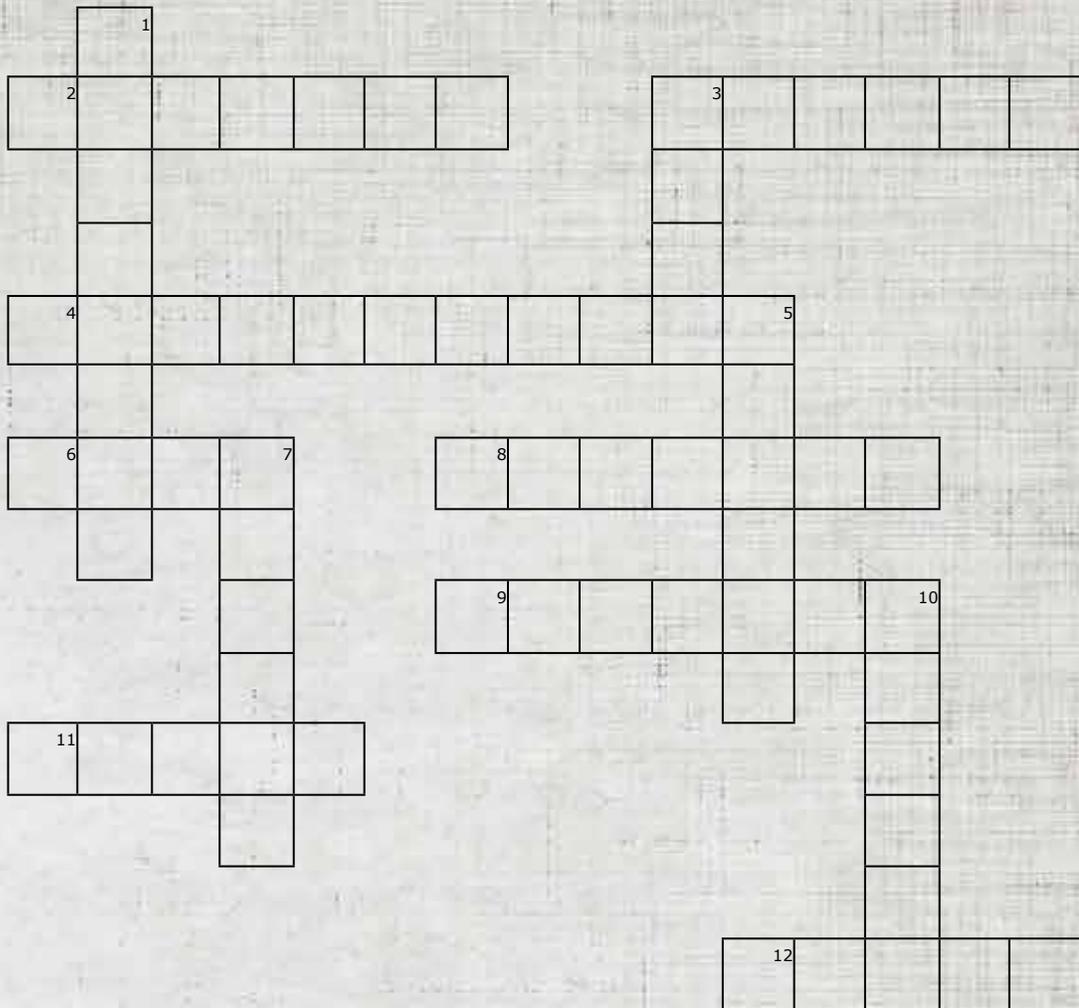
Mississippians may choose from 22 state parks for their recreational activities. Many cities host Spring Pilgrimages, the opening of beautiful antebellum homes to the public. For active fun, we recommend our beach, lakes, reservoirs and water parks. Recreation choices take full advantage of the great Mississippi weather. The Mississippi Gulf Coast has the world's largest and longest man-made beach. Jackson is one of four cities in the world sanctioned by the International Theatre/Dance Committee to host the International Ballet Competition. Mississippi is home to many cultural and musical festivals throughout the year, including Mardi Gras, the Mississippi Delta Blues and Heritage Festival in Greenville, and the Tupelo Elvis Festival in Tupelo.

PROFESSIONAL LEAGUES

Mississippi Braves (baseball)

Mississippi Surge (hockey)

Puzzle



ACROSS

2. Belzoni is the _____ “Capitol of the World”
3. Famous blues musician from Itta Bena
4. State bird of Mississippi
6. State beverage of Mississippi
8. State capital of Mississippi
9. Central Mississippi Indian Tribe
11. Tupelo is the birthplace of _____ Presley, King of Rock and Roll
12. Noted author from Jackson, Eudora _____

DOWN

1. State Flower and Tree of Mississippi
3. Children’s toy made popular by President Theodore Roosevelt’s visit to Mississippi, the Teddy _____
5. First European to discover Mississippi and the Mississippi River.
7. Popular Muppet® character named after Jim Henson’s boyhood friend
10. The boll _____ insect destroys cotton crops

ANSWERS:
 ACROSS: 2. catfish 3. B.B. King 4. Mockingbird 6. Milk 8. Jackson 9. Choctaw 11. Elvis 12. Welty
 DOWN: 1. Magnolia 3. Bear 5. Desoto 7. Kermit 10. weevil

Images of Mississippi

These images are for you to use on your school projects.

MISSISSIPPI





Visit Mississippi
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