Click a state or its abbreviation to see the state and the meaning and origin of its name.
Alabama

“thicket cleaners”
(Choctaw)
Alaska
“the great land” (Aleut)
Arizona
“little spring” (Papago), or “dry land” (Spanish)
Arkansas
“downstream people”
(Quapaw)
California

unknown meaning
(Spanish)
Colorado
“red” (Spanish)

Denver
Connecticut
“beside the long tidal river”
(Native American)
Delaware
named for Virginia’s colonial governor, Baron De La Warr
Florida
“feast of flowers”
(Spanish)
Georgia
named for England’s King George II
Hawaii
unknown meaning
(Native Hawaiian)
Idaho
unknown meaning
(Native American)
Illinois
“tribe of superior men”
(Native American)
Indiana
“land of Indians”
(European American)

Indianapolis
Iowa
unknown meaning
(Native American)
Kansas

“people of the south wind” (Sioux)
Kentucky
“land of tomorrow”
(Iroquoian)
Louisiana
named for Frances’s
King Louis XIV

Baton Rouge
Maine
named for an ancient French province
Maryland
named in honor of the wife of England’s King Charles I
Massachusetts
“great mountain place”
(Native American)
Michigan
“great lake” (Ojibway)

Lansing
Minnesota

“sky-tinted water”
(Sioux)
Mississippi

“father of the waters”
(Native American)
Missouri
“town of the large canoes” (Native American)
Montana
“mountainous”
(Spanish)

Helena
Nebraska
“flat water”  
(Native American)
Nevada
“snowcapped” (Spanish)
New Hampshire
named for Hampshire, a county in England
New Jersey
named for Isle of Jersey, a British territory
New Mexico
named for the state’s former colonial ruler, Mexico
New York
named in honor of the English Duke of York
North Carolina
named in honor of England’s King Charles I
North Dakota
named for the Dakota, a Native American group
Ohio
“great river” (Native American)
Oklahoma
“real people”
(Choctaw)
Oregon
unknown meaning and origin

Salem
Pennsylvania

“Penn’s woodland,” named for the father of Pennsylvania’s founder, William Penn
Rhode Island
unknown meaning and origin
South Carolina
named in honor of England’s King Charles I
South Dakota
named for the Dakota,
a Native American group
Tennessee
named for Tanasi, “Cherokee villages” (Cherokee)
Texas
“friends”
(Tejas)
Utah
“people of the mountains”
(Ute)

Salt Lake City
Vermont
“green mountain”
(French)
Virginia
named for the unmarried
Queen Elizabeth I of England,
known as “the Virgin Queen”
Washington
named in honor of
George Washington

Olympia
West Virginia began as the western part of Virginia before becoming a state in 1863.
Wisconsin
“grassy place”
(Chippewa)

Madison
Wyoming

“upon the great plain” (Delaware)
Click a province or its abbreviation to see the state and the meaning and origin of its name.
Alberta
named for the daughter of England’s Queen Victoria
British Columbia
named for Christopher Columbus
and the province’s British heritage
New Brunswick

named for English royal family
of Brunswick-Luneburg
Newfoundland and Labrador

“new found land,” named by explorer John Cabot in 1497; lavrador, “laborer” (Portuguese)
Northwest Territories

named for the lands north and west of Lake Superior

Yellowknife
Nova Scotia
Latin term for “New Scotland,” based on province’s Scottish heritage
Nunavut
“our land”
(Inuktitut)
Ontario
meaning unknown
(Iroquoian)

Toronto
Prince Edward Island
named for the son of England’s King George III
Quebec

“place where the river narrows” (Algonquian)
Saskatchewan
“fast flowing river”
(Cree)

Regina
Yukon Territory

“great river”
(Native American)