

The American South is a region with a culture and traditions in many ways distinct from the rest of the USA. In 1861, eleven states started the Civil War when they broke away from the United States to form their own country. Let's take a quick trip around some of these states, where the summers are long and hot. The composer George Gershwin caught the atmosphere of summer in the South in his great song "Summertime", from the opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935):

Summertime,
And the livin' is easy
Fish are jumpin'
And the cotton is high
Your daddy's rich
And your mamma's good lookin'
So hush little baby
Don't you cry

*by George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin
and Heyward DuBose*



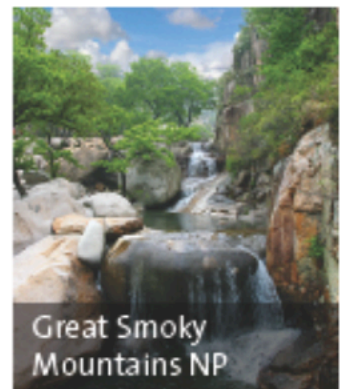
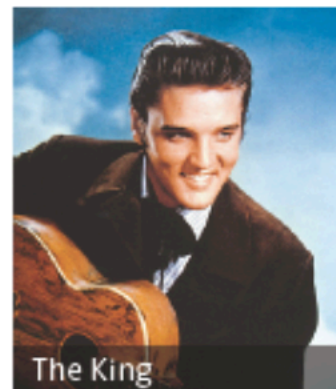
Group puzzle

a) Divide the class into groups of seven (A, B, C, ...) and give everyone a number from 1 to 7. No. 1 from each group works on Tennessee, no. 2 on Louisiana, and so on.

b) Read about your state and research one or two more facts about it. Then join all the students from other groups who are working on your state, (e.g. A1, B1, C1, ...) and exchange information.

c) Report back to your original group (A, B, C, ...) and tell them what you have learned about your state.

1 Tennessee is home to the most popular National Park in the USA, Great Smoky Mountains NP. It is also world-famous for music. Nashville is the capital of country music. In Memphis you can visit *Graceland*, the home of the 'king of rock and roll', Elvis Presley. Another rock and roll singer, Chuck Berry, made the city famous with his hit "Memphis, Tennessee".



2 Louisiana is another state where music is king, from the jazz and blues mecca, New Orleans, to the bayou country with its Cajun music and Zydeco sounds. The French Quarter in New Orleans still draws thousands of tourists every day, even after large parts of the city were flooded and destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. More than 1800 people lost their lives in the disaster.



3 Arkansas played an important role in 20th-century American politics. When, in 1957, nine black kids were chosen to go to an all-white high school in Little Rock, it was the beginning of the end of segregation in American schools. 35 years later, a little-known governor of Arkansas surprised America by winning the election and becoming the 42nd president of the United States. Bill Clinton served two four-year terms as president (1993–2001).



4 Mississippi takes its name from the mighty Mississippi, the largest river in North America. Huckleberry Finn and the runaway slave Jim floated down this river in Mark Twain's famous novel. The famous paddle steamers still go up and down the river today. The Mississippi Delta area of the state is known as the birthplace of the blues, the African-American music which is the source of all Western popular music. And, as Paul Robeson tells us in "Ole Man River", the river just keeps rolling along.



5 Virginia was the first British colony in North America and is named after Queen Elizabeth I, who was known as the Virgin Queen because she never married. The colony was founded in 1607 at Jamestown and played a big role in the American Revolution. Three of the first four presidents of the United States were Virginians: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Virginia was also at the centre of the American Civil War. Its capital, Richmond, was the capital of the Confederate States.



6 Georgia is the economic dynamo of the South and Atlanta is at the centre of it. World-famous companies Coca-Cola, UPS, Delta Airlines and many TV networks such as TBS and CNN – founded by Ted Turner – have their head offices in Georgia. Of course, we shouldn't forget the music industry in the state, with its famous bands like R.E.M. and the B-52s. Tourists come from all over the world to Athens, Georgia, where these two bands grew up. They want to see the tower of the church where R.E.M. lived, recorded and played, or the "Love Shack" the B-52s made famous in their song of the same name.

7 Alabama has seen some of the most important struggles by African-Americans for civil rights, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which started in 1954 when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. In the 1970s, those struggles even became a part of pop music when Neil Young criticized racism in Alabama in his song "Southern Man". The southern band Lynyrd Skynyrd replied with their song "Sweet Home Alabama", in which they told Young to mind his own business.