

# STATE NAME OVERLAPS

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In previous issues of Word Ways, attention has been drawn to US towns with names reflecting their position on the border between two states. Ed Wolpow's article "Names on the Border" in May 1984 provides a definitive list, including examples such as Florala (border of Florida and Alabama) and Calneva (border of California and Nevada).

Another way of looking at the borders of states is to consider the 50 state names. Take them in alphabetical order and string them together to form a 412-character string. What words are formed across state boundaries? (Obviously a very different problem to that addressed by Ed Wolpow!)

Below is a list of all the words that can be spelled out from the end of one state name and into the following state name. For the sake of completeness I have added Alabama after Wyoming to ensure that there is a full circle of state names.

Most words are from Official Scrabble Words (International), and a few others have been taken from familiar sources: Webster's Third, Webster's Second, the Oxford English Dictionary, the Random House Dictionary, and Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (8th edition).

Alabama Alaska	maa, maal (OED), aa, aal
Arizona Alaska	aa
Alaska Arkansas	aa
Arkansas California	scal (OED)
California Colorado	Acol (OED)
Colorado Connecticut	doc
Connecticut Delaware	
Delaware Florida	aref (OED), ref
Florida Georgia	dag, age
Georgia Hawaii	ah, aha
Hawaii Idaho	
Idaho Illinois	hoi, hoil (OED), oil
Illinois Indiana	sin, sind
Indiana Iowa	ai
Iowa Kansas	waka, Akan (Web3), Akans (Web3)
Kansas Kentucky	ask, asken (OED)
Kentucky Louisiana	yl (OED)
Louisiana Maine	nam, Nama (OED), am, ama, amain
Maine Maryland	nema, em
Maryland Massachusetts	landmass
Massachusetts Michigan	
Michigan Minnesota	
Minnesota Mississippi	tam, tamis, am, ami, amis, amiss
Mississippi Missouri	



Missouri Montana  
 Montana Nebraska  
 Nebraska Nevada  
 Nevada New Hampshire  
 New Hampshire New Jersey

New Jersey New Mexico  
 New Mexico New York  
 New York North Carolina  
 North Carolina North Dakota  
 North Dakota Ohio  
 Ohio Oklahoma  
 Oklahoma Oregon  
 Oregon Pennsylvania  
 Pennsylvania Rhode Island  
 Rhode Island South Carolina  
 South Carolina South Dakota  
 South Dakota Tennessee  
 Tennessee Texas  
 Texas Utah  
 Utah Vermont  
 Vermont Virginia  
 Virginia Washington  
 Washington West Virginia  
 West Virginia Wisconsin  
 Wisconsin Wyoming  
 Wyoming Alabama

Urim (Web2), rim  
 Montanan (Web3), nan, an, ane  
 skane (OED), kane, an, ane  
 Nevadan (Web3), dan, Dane (Web3), anew  
 hiren (OED), irene (Web3), ren, rene (Web2),  
 renew, ene, enew  
 seyn (OED), seyne (OED), eyne  
 icon, con, cone, on, one  
 knor (Web2)  
 nan, an, anorth (Web2)  
 tao  
 oo, ook (Web3)  
 Mao (OED)  
  
 ar  
 islands, lands, ands, dso  
 Carolinas (RHD), nas, asouth (Web2)  
 tat, tate, at, ate, Aten (Web2)  
 seet (OED), seete (OED), et, ete (OED)  
  
 tv (WNCD8)  
 aw, awa, awas (web3), awash  
  
 aw  
  
 Ngala (Web3), gal, gala

For ten of the 50 statename borders it is not possible to spell out an overlapping word. The longest word stretching across a statename border is the nine-letter CAROLINAS, followed by the eight-letter LANDMASS and MONTANAN, and then the seven-letter NEVADAN and ISLANDS. The border with the most words and names stretching across it appears to be that of New Hampshire New Jersey with seven words. The familiar word AA occurs three times. No word is spellable across three state names (e.g., AIOWAK, TAOHIOO, SUTAHV). There is only one border where the same letter is repeated three times: Hawaii Idaho.