

BORDERING STATES

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Although there are just 50 states in the USA, there are 107 borders of states with other states, including the two zero length borders at the quadripoint in the south-western USA where the states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah meet. The two zero length borders are New Mexico – Utah and Arizona – Colorado. The figure of 107 ignores the two borders that exist with the District of Columbia.

Using the US Postal Service’s standard two-letter abbreviations for the states, there are 107 combinations of state abbreviations, or 214 if you count the reverse arrangements (eg AL-FL for Alabama – Florida, as well as FL-AL for Florida – Alabama). Of those 214 arrangements of the postal abbreviations, how many form real words or names?

In the table below, column 1 lists 44 combinations of bordering states. For each of these combinations, there are two ways in which the abbreviations can be ordered – for example, AL-FL and FL-AL for the Alabama-Florida border. Columns 2 and 3 list words and names which are spelled out by the abbreviation pairs – for example, ALGA and GAAL can be spelled out by the Alabama-Georgia border.

Column 1 Abbreviations for bordering states
 Column 2 Items spelled out by the bordering state abbreviations
 Column 3 Items spelled out by the bordering state abbreviations the other way round

Bordering states	Column 2: Postal Abbreviations in Alphabetical Order	Column 3: Postal Abbreviations Reversed
AL - GA	alga (W3)	gaal (OED, @ gyle)
AL - MS	alms (W3)	
AR - LA	Arla (international food company based in Denmark; Wikipedia)	laar (OED, @ lore)
AR - MO	Armo (municipality in Italy; Wikipedia)	moar (blend of ‘more’ and ‘roar’; Wiktionary)
AR - MS	arms (W3)	
AR - OK	aroK (a gene)	Okar (OED, @ subsident in a 1699 quotation)
CA - OR		orca (W3)
CO - NE	cone (W3)	

CO - OK	cook (W3)	
CO - UT	cout (in computer programming jargon, the term used to display something to a screen; Urban Dictionary)	Utco (a district in Peru; Wikipedia)
CO - WY	cowy (W3)	
CT - RI		rict (OED, @ right)
DE - MD	demd (W3)	
DE - PA	DEPA (the public natural gas supply corporation of Greece; Wikipedia)	pade (OED, @ pad)
IA - MN		mnia (<i>Carposina mnia</i> is a moth in the Carposinidae family; Wikipedia)
IA - MO		moia (OED, @ moa)
IA - NE	lane (an old spelling of Jane which occurs many times in illustrative quotations in the OED)	Neia (New England Institute of Art, an American arts college)
IA - WI	lawi (place in Papua New Guinea; Geographical Names)	
ID - OR	IDOR (an abbreviation for the Illinois Department of Revenue; Google)	
ID - UT		Utid (an acronym for Universally Traceable Identifier, a unique identifier for a physical thing or a virtual thing in the world; Wikipedia)
ID - WA		waid (OED, @ wade)
ID - WY		wyid (an obsolete spelling of 'wide', which appears in illustrative quotations in the OED, although not listed as an old spelling at 'wide' itself; OED)
IL - IA	ilia (W3)	
IL - IN	Ilin (a small island in the Philippines, with an area of 18 square miles; Wikipedia)	
IL - KY	ilky (OED, @ rumble ² in an 1866 quotation)	
IL - MO	lmo (a company based in Jacksonville, Illinois, the name almost certainly created from the postal abbreviations of Illinois and Missouri; Google)	moil (W3)
IN - KY	inky (W3)	kyin (OED, @ cow)
IN - MI		miin (a Middle English spelling of 'mine'; OED)
IN - OH	inoh (OED, @ enough in a 1200 quotation)	
KS - MO		moks (OED, @ mock)

KS - NE		neks (OED)
KS - OK		okks (the plural of 'okk', an 18 th century variant spelling of 'oke', a unit of weight; OED)
KY - MO	Kymo (an uninhabited Greek islet, in the Libyan Sea; Wikipedia)	moky (OED)
KY - VA		Vaky (the surname of Viron Vaky, an American diplomat who was United States Ambassador to Costa Rica (1972–74), Colombia (1974–76), and Venezuela (1976); Wikipedia)
LA - MS	lams (W3)	
MA - NY	many (W3)	Nyma (a boutique hotel located on 32nd Street between Fifth Avenue and Broadway, New York City)
MA - RI	mari (W3)	rima (W3)
MI - OH		Ohmi (OED, @ o-muraji in a 1905 quotation)
MI - WI	Miwi (OED, @ Miwok)	Wimi (a project management software package; Wikipedia)
MO - NE	mone (OED)	nemo (W3)
MO - OK	mook (OED)	
NE - WY	newy (OED, @ newie)	wyne (W3)
NY - PA	nypa (OED, @ nipa)	pany (OED, @ penny)
UT - WY		wyut (an acronym for the phrase 'what you up to?'; Urban Dictionary)

Can readers fill in any of the gaps in the above list? Or fill any of the gaps represented by the 63 borders (listed below) for which there are no column 2 and column 3 words?

AL - FL	CT - NY	KY - OH	MN - ND	NC - VA	NV - UT
AL - TN	DE - NJ	KY - TN	MN - SD	ND - SD	NY - VT
AR - TN	FL - GA	KY - WV	MN - WI	NE - SD	OH - PA
AR - TX	GA - NC	LA - TX	MO - TN	NH - VT	OH - WV
AZ - CA	GA - SC	MA - NH	MS - TN	NJ - NY	OK - TX
AZ - CO	GA - TN	MA - VT	MT - ND	NJ - PA	OR - WA
AZ - NM	IA - SD	MD - PA	MT - SD	NM - OK	PA - WV
AZ - NV	ID - MT	MD - VA	MT - WY	NM - TX	SD - WY
AZ - UT	ID - NV	MD - WV	NC - SC	NM - UT	TN - VA
CA - NV	IL - WI	ME - NH	NC - TN	NV - OR	VA - WV
CO - KS					
CO - NM					
CT - MA					