

# ⑨ The USA (West)

The American Bison (also called the American Buffalo) is America's largest land animal. The heaviest wild bison weighed 1270 kg.

Mount Rushmore, in South Dakota, has carvings of the heads of four American Presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Each head is about 18 metres high.

The name 'cowboy' originally meant 'a boy who looks after cows, especially on horseback', but the name soon represented a whole way of life in the Wild West.

The Grand Canyon in Arizona is one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. It is 446 km long, up to 29 km wide and 1,600 metres deep. The rocks you can see at the bottom are nearly two billion years old.

Texas was once part of Mexico, and then fought to be an independent country. It is called 'the lone star state', to remember the days when it was alone.



Alaska is the largest state, but only about 700,000 people live there. The Americans bought it from Russia in 1867, for \$7.2 million.

The Giant Redwood, which grows in California and Oregon, is the world's tallest tree. These trees can grow to well over 100 metres tall and live for around 2,000 years.

Hollywood is a part of the city of Los Angeles. It is the home of the American film industry. Many famous film stars live in Beverly Hills, a city next to Los Angeles.

Hawaii consists of eight large islands, plus a long chain of smaller islands, which stretch over 2,400 km. The islands are in fact the peaks of a chain of underwater volcanoes.



# 9. The USA (West) – Yellowstone National Park

## Before you read ...

Find Yellowstone National Park on the map and look at the pictures. What state(s) is it in? What do you know about it?

Predict the answers to these questions.

- 1 What can you see and do at Yellowstone?
- 2 What do you think hydrothermal features are? (Clue: *hydro-* = water; *-thermal* = hot).
- 3 Why can it be dangerous to visit Yellowstone?

## Reading

- 1 Read the article to check. Translate the words from the Vocabulary File into Polish.

## Don't run!

Yellowstone is the oldest national park in America, and possibly in the whole world. Most of the park is in Wyoming, but it also includes part of the states of Montana and Idaho.

It covers an area of nearly 9,000 km<sup>2</sup>, including lakes, canyons, rivers and mountains. The centre of Yellowstone is the Yellowstone Caldera, 55 km long and 72 km wide, the largest supervolcano in North America. This is an area where the earth's **crust** is very thin, so hot **liquid** rock is very close to the **surface**. The volcano has **erupted** several times in the last two million years, and may erupt again.

It's best not to be in Yellowstone or in fact anywhere in America, when the supervolcano erupts. People on the other side of the world will hear the explosion, the sky will be dark for many months, and hot, black rain will fall all over the world. But don't worry – it might not happen for hundreds of thousands of years.

This volcanic activity has created some of Yellowstone's most spectacular attractions. You **won't** forget its hydrothermal features such as **geysers** and hot **springs**. The most famous geyser of all is called Old **Faithful**. The name comes from the fact that the geyser is very **reliable**: it erupts every 90 minutes, so it's always possible to **predict** when the next one will be. Tourists can stand in a safe place and take their photos at just the right time. Just make sure you stay on the **paths**: you don't want to fall in!

Yellowstone also has its own Grand Canyon, not as big as the one in Arizona, but still an incredible **sight**. And it has North America's largest mountain lake, Lake Yellowstone, where you can enjoy boating, fishing and walking.

The park is also a wonderful place to see animals, including grizzly bears, black bears, mountain lions, **wolves**, bison, and **elk**. But be careful: these animals are dangerous. If you meet a bear, don't run – it will **chase** you. It's best to walk away **backwards**, very slowly. If a bear chases you, lie on the ground and **pretend** to be dead.

## Vocabulary file

backwards	_____	a path	_____
to chase	_____	to predict	_____
a crust	_____	to pretend	_____
an elk	_____	reliable	_____
to erupt	_____	a sight	_____
faithful	_____	a spring	_____
a geyser	_____	the surface	_____
liquid	_____	a wolf (pl. wolves)	_____

## Vocabulary

- 2 Match the beginnings with the endings.

- 1 We watched a **wolf** catching an **elk** and ...
- 2 She's very **reliable** ...
- 3 The place where a river starts ...
- 4 I didn't want to talk to him, ...
- 5 It's impossible to **predict** ...
- 6 Dolphins live underwater, ...
- a ... is called a **spring**.
- b ... when the volcano will next **erupt**.
- c ... but they have to come up to the **surface** to breathe.
- d ... and **faithful** to her old friends.
- e ... so I **pretended** to be asleep.
- f ... it was an incredible **sight**.

## Comprehension

- 3 Choose the best option to complete these sentences.

- 1 Yellowstone National Park is in *two / three / four* states.
- 2 The supervolcano covers an area of nearly *40 / 400 / 4000* km<sup>2</sup>.
- 3 When the supervolcano erupts, you will be safe *in Yellowstone / in Poland / nowhere*.
- 4 Old Faithful erupts about *6 / 16 / 60* times a day.
- 5 The Grand Canyon in Yellowstone is *smaller than / bigger than / the same size as* the Grand Canyon in Arizona.
- 6 If you meet a bear, the best thing to do is to *run as fast as you can / walk forwards / walk backwards*.



## Be bright

- 1 The hard part of a loaf of bread is called the crust. How is this like the earth's crust?
- 2 Find six types of animal in the article. Which are the most dangerous?
- 3 Why don't bears chase you when you walk slowly or pretend to be dead?

## Speaking

- 4 Work in pairs and answer the questions.
- Would you like to visit Yellowstone National Park?
  - How do you feel about dangerous places? Are they exciting or frightening?

## Up to you

- Option 1: Write a newspaper article about a supervolcano which erupted this morning.
- Option 2: Write a magazine interview with somebody who visited Yellowstone and was either attacked by a bear or injured by an erupting geyser.
- Option 3: What are the most dangerous places for tourists in Poland? Think for example of mountain ranges, rivers etc. Find as many as you can, and make a ranking, providing a short description.