

# Pinyin States of America

Prep Time: 10-20 min

**Aim:** To practice pronunciation/Pinyin with a focus on meaningful words  
**Level:** Elementary  
**Time:** 5-10 minutes  
**Materials:** A copy of the place names for each student  
**Arrangement:** Whole class

## Description

An activity that gives students a chance to practice pronunciation and tones in the earliest stages while still maintaining a meaningful context.



## In Class

- 1 Hand out a sheet of paper with place names in Pinyin. Do not include English names on the sheet.
- 2 One by one, read the names and have students guess what place it is (**Yīngwén zěnmě shuō?**).
- 3 Finally have students read the names.



## Variations

- ✓ Use names of famous people.
- ✓ Don't hand out the Pinyin, instead use a map of the US and have students point to the state when they hear its name.
- ✓ Use names when teaching location/direction words (**dōngbiān, běibiān, zhōngjiān**, etc.), asking questions such as '**Ālābāmā zài nǎr?**' It's most interesting if you let the students figure out the place names themselves, but with a map ready just in case.



## Notes

The idea of using American names (or whatever is appropriate for where you are) in their Chinese pronunciation to make pronunciation practice meaningful is certainly not one I came up with and has been in use for a long time. Still, I believe this is an under utilized area of vocabulary and we likely underestimate the value of such words for our students here in the US. While US state names will not appear on frequency lists for Chinese used in China, I often find myself reaching for US place names while living in the US.

In the incomplete list below, where I was aware that the mainland and Taiwanese pronunciations of states names differed, I supplied Taiwanese versions of state names in parenthesis. In some cases, I found three or four different versions of names and simply chose what seemed most official—but I didn't spend that much time researching the list. It may well need revisions, if you disagree with it, use your preferred pronunciation.

## American State Names in Pinyin

Ālābāmǎ	Alabama	Fújíníyà	Virginia
Ālāsījiā	Alaska	Fúluólǐdǎ	Florida
Ākěsè	Arkansas	Jiālífúníyà	California
Bīnxīfǎnníyà	Pennsylvania	Kānsàsī	Kansas
Dékèsàsī	Texas	Kēluólādūō	Colorado
Éhàì'é	Ohio	Mǎsàzhūsài	Massachusetts
Fóméngtè	Vermont	Misūlǐ	Missouri

<b>Mìxiégēn (Mìxīgēn)</b>	Michigan
<b>Mìxīxībǐ</b>	Mississippi
<b>Míngnísudá</b>	Minnesota
<b>Nèihuádá</b>	Nevada
<b>Tiánnàxī</b>	Tennessee
<b>Wēisīkāngxīn</b>	Wisconsin
<b>Yī'āhuá (Ài'āhuá)</b>	Iowa
<b>Yīlìnuò</b>	Illinois
<b>Yīndī'ānnà</b>	Indiana
<b>Yóutā</b>	Utah