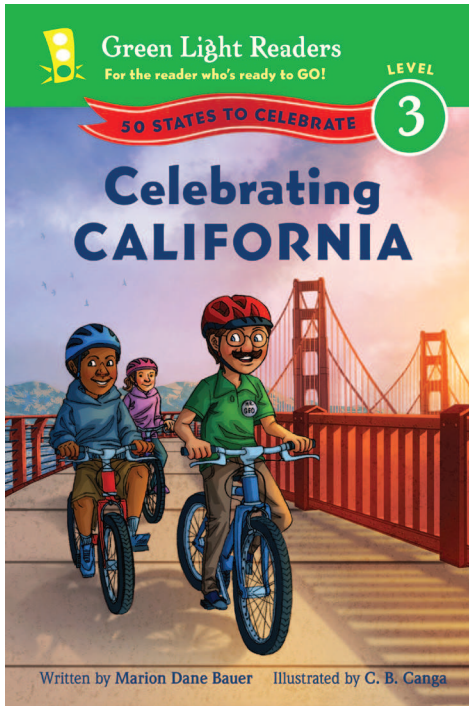


# *Celebrating California* by MARION DANE BAUER

Illustrated by C. B. Canga



## Book Summary:

From the Hollywood Hills to the giant redwoods, from missions built of adobe bricks to the La Brea Tar Pits, Mr. Geo leads readers on a thrilling romp across this beautifully diverse state. Incorporating geographical, cultural, and natural landmarks, *Celebrating California* is a wonderful introduction to the state for children and adults alike.

## Discussion Questions for Read-Aloud

- If you were going to visit California, where would you go first? Why?
- Why do you suppose people used adobe bricks, made from clay and straw, to build the missions? Why didn't they use wood, or stone?
- Why do you think California's state motto is "Eureka . . . I have found it"?
- Which is your favorite California sports team? Why?
- California's landscape is extremely diverse. Can you name some of the different kinds of trees that grow in California? Can you name some of the different animals that live there?
- Why do you think California has environmental problems?
- California's farms produce a huge variety of foods. What are your favorite California-grown foods?
- Why is the computer-producing region in Northern California known as "Silicon Valley"?
- What are some ways that Native Americans contributed to California's growth?
- California might be called a land of extremes. Why is this so? Name a few reasons.

## Teaching Ideas

- **Geography:** Using a map of the United States, ask your students to pretend that they need to give someone directions to California from your area. You may have them give directions out loud, or ask them to write their directions down. They might trade directions and see if they can follow them, using their fingers and the map.
- **Native Americans in California:** A variety of Native American tribes lived in California for many years before European settlers and other immigrants arrived. Mr. Geo tells us that Native Americans did much of the work to build the missions. Ask your students to choose a Native American tribe from California to research and write about.
- **Ecosystems:** California's diverse landscape includes a variety of ecosystems, from the Death Valley deserts to the snowy tip of Mount Whitney. Divide students into groups and ask each group to research a different California ecosystem.

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- **Sports Statistics:** Students will love using California teams' statistics as the basis for math lessons. You might use these statistics to write story problems, for example, that highlight whichever math concepts your class is currently working on.
- **California in Ancient Times:** The La Brea Tar Pits are still offering up fossils of ancient Californian plants and animals. Engage your students in a study of the tar pits. How did the conditions in the tar pits allow so many ancient plants and animals to be preserved? If you have access to genuine fossils from your area, study them together.
- **Fun Facts:** Mr. Geo presents many fun facts throughout the book. Ask students to research and collect even more fun facts together, and then collect them into your class's own "fun fact" book about California.
- **Mapmaking:** As part of a study of maps and mapmaking, ask each student to choose a region of California of which to create a map.

### **A Project: Make a Menu for a California Restaurant!**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- At least one copy of *Celebrating California*
- If possible, some other resource materials for students to use, including books and access to the Internet. You may also want to have a few sample menus.
- Writing and drawing materials, and paper

**Background Knowledge:** Before beginning this lesson, it will be helpful if your students are familiar with the book *Celebrating California*. You will want to have discussed in particular the agricultural products of California to give students background on which foods a California restaurant might feature.

**Set up:** Gather your students together in your class meeting place. Have research materials as well as drawing and writing materials accessible to students from their work areas.

**Introduction:** Tell your students that they will have the opportunity to work together to design and create menus for their own California restaurants, featuring local California-produced food. Using *Celebrating California* and other research materials on hand, they will research California foods and create a menu based around those foods.

**Work Time:** As students work to research and create their menus, you will circulate and help them stay on track. You may want to assign students certain roles within the group to help them stay productive, but this may not be necessary. This project is likely to take more than one class period.

**Share:** Students will be thrilled to share their menus with each other. You may even choose to celebrate their hard work by making a California restaurant in your classroom, inviting families, and serving simple dishes made with California foods that the students are able to prepare themselves in school or with support at home. The menus students create, of course, will be the main feature!