



Business in California



If considered a separate entity, California's economy is usually ranked between the sixth and tenth largest in the world. **California Connections: Business in California** focuses on 13 major products and services that fuel our state economy.

These products are not grown, manufactured, or mined in our state by chance. California, with its vast diversity in topography and natural regions, offers abundant natural resources that make industry possible. As you explore each of these products with your students, they will discover how California's climate, rich soil, abundant land, seafood, timber, minerals, and human hands have helped transform raw materials into a seemingly endless supply of products and economic opportunity.

Cement



Think about the words “cement” and “concrete.” People often use them to mean the same thing. Are they different? Yes, they are! Cement is used to make concrete, along with sand and gravel. Cement is a powder made from materials found in limestone, clay, and other things. To make concrete, water is added to the cement, sand, and gravel. As the concrete dries, the cement holds the sand and gravel together. It makes it as hard as rock. The concrete gets stronger as it gets older.

Companies use concrete to build bridges and sidewalks. They use it for driveways and walls. They even use it to make kitchen and bathroom counters. A bucket of gooey concrete can be hardened into any shape. You can even add color to the mix. Other places cement is produced include Florida, New Jersey, China, and India.

Cotton



Pima cotton is very soft. Clothing manufacturers use it to make fine shirts, pants, and dresses. California farmers plant this cotton early in the spring. Machines pick the cotton and roll it into huge bundles. Then, the farmers take these bundles to a cotton gin. A gin is a machine that cleans the cotton and combs out the sticky seeds. After it is clean, farmers pack the cotton into smaller bales. They take the bales to a mill where the cotton is spun into cloth.

The soft cloth is often shipped across the ocean. People in other countries make the cloth into fine clothing and other goods. They sell this clothing to stores in many parts of the world. Other places cotton is grown include Alabama, Mississippi, Brazil, and China.

Dairy Products



Dairy products are an important part of a healthy diet for many people. They are also an important part of California's economy. Cheese sales are growing even faster than sales of milk, yogurt, or ice cream. Last year, the state sold more cheese than ever before. It sold over two billion pounds! The cheese was delivered all over the United States.

Dairy farmers are always creating new products. They started making cheese right on the farm. Cows and goats are milked daily, and some of their milk is set aside to make cheese. Farmers make this "farmstead" cheese by hand. This cheese is fresh and delicious. People love it! On some farms, you can even watch people make it right before your eyes. Other places dairy products are produced include Idaho, Wisconsin, India, and Switzerland.

Electronics and Machinery



Look around the room. How many computers can you count? How many things in your home or school use tiny computers to make them work?

California has been at the forefront of the computer industry. Computers run our cell phones and laptops. They hold pictures in our cameras so we can look at them later. Computers even run our cars.

Computer manufacturers use plastics and natural resources from Earth to make computers. They use silicon to make computer chips. These chips are the “brains” of your computer. Mercury and lead are also used to make computers. These materials are harmful to people and animals. For this reason, you cannot throw your old computer in the trash. You must take it to a special place to be recycled. Other places electronics and machinery are made include Illinois, Washington, Canada, and China.

Film and TV



It takes a lot of time to make a movie. Filmmakers must find the perfect place to shoot their films. They use light to make the pictures come alive. The long, sunny days and mild weather in Southern California let movie companies make films all year long.

Today, the film industry is big business in our state. It makes many movies, TV shows, and commercials here. The movie stars and film crews who make them provide a service. They give us information or they might make us laugh! People come to Hollywood or Malibu hoping to catch a glimpse of their favorite movie stars. Both film lovers and filmmakers see California as the center of the entertainment world. Other places movies and TV shows are made include Florida, New York, Hong Kong, and India.

Flowers



In the 1870s, there was a woman who loved flowers. She lived in the small town of Ventura. Everyone in the town talked about how beautiful her garden was. The woman had an idea. She would sell her flowers at the outdoor market. The first week, she sold every flower she had picked! Her idea caught on, and soon there were fresh flower markets in cities all over the state.

Today, farmers grow flowers in large fields. Workers pick them by hand, cool them, and put them in boxes. Growers ship the fresh flowers by truck or by air. They reach floral shops and supermarkets in less than one day. Farmers in other countries also sell their flowers to markets in California. Even though things have changed, you can still buy flowers at your local outdoor market. Other places flowers are grown include Hawaii, North Carolina, Australia, and Canada.

Grapes



Spanish missionaries brought the first grapes to California 200 years ago. Around 1849, farmers began growing Muscat grapes to make raisins. The farmers dried the grapes in the sun. The raisins were sweet, but they had large seeds in them. People had to push the seeds out of the dried skins before they could swallow the raisins. This was not much fun!

A farmer from Scotland came to the rescue. His name was William Thompson. He brought seedless green grapevines from his country. Thompson seedless grapes made great raisins! Plus, they are delicious to eat fresh! Today, farmers sell and ship fresh grapes and raisins all over the world. They also grow other kinds of grapes to make world-famous California wine. Other places grapes are grown include Arizona, Texas, Chile, and Argentina.

Lumber



Trees are an important resource in California. When settlers first came to the state, they used trees to build mine shafts, houses, and stores, and to heat homes. They used the huge trees they found on the coast and near the mountains. The people needed so much wood, they cut down the trees faster than they could grow. These trees were giant sequoias and coast redwoods. They are some of the world's tallest trees.

Today, the state protects most of California's redwoods. They grow in state and national parks, and other forests. Lumber companies plant redwoods on land they own. When the trees grow tall, they cut them down. After they cut the trees, they plant the forest with new trees. The lumber companies sell this strong wood for homes, decks, and fences. Other places trees are grown for lumber include Oregon, Washington, Canada, and China.

Oil



Do you know which products are made from oil? If you guessed gasoline, you are right. Paint, plastic, tires, crayons, and even the soles of your shoes are also made from this oily liquid! Crude oil is found in rocks beneath the surface of Earth. Drilling companies pump it out of the ground and bring it up to the surface. The machines that pump this oil look like grasshoppers taking a bow. They call them grasshopper oil pumps.

The crude oil that oil pumps take from the ground is too dangerous to use by itself. It can catch fire very easily. Oil companies refine crude to make usable products, such as gasoline and fuel oil. Other places oil is found include Alaska, Texas, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

Oranges



Many people say that navel oranges are the best eating oranges in the world. Their skin is a deep orange color. These oranges are heavy to hold and have what looks like a belly button at one end. This is why it is called a “navel” orange. Navel oranges are easy to peel and eat. The best part about them is that they do not have any seeds.

Farmers grow most of the navel oranges in the Central Valley. The summer months there are hot. The winters are cool and wet. This weather gives the oranges their perfect taste. Workers pick oranges from the trees in the fall and winter. They ship them to many states and to other countries, where people enjoy their sweet, juicy fruit. Other places oranges are grown include Arizona, Florida, Brazil, and Japan.

Sand and Gravel



Sand and gravel companies dig sand from California's river bottoms, sand pits, and dunes. They mine gravel from rock quarries around the state. Sand and gravel can be added to things to make them stronger. Asphalt is one of these materials.

Asphalt is made from crude oil. The oil is processed at the refinery, and then sand and gravel are added. Workers heat the mixture and dump it onto the road in a steaming hot pile. A raking machine smoothes out the asphalt. Then a heavy steamroller presses it flat. While it is wet, the fumes are very strong. It is not good to breathe them. After the asphalt dries, you can drive your car or ride your bike on the smooth blacktop. Other places sand and gravel are mined include Arizona, Colorado, Australia, and Canada.

Seafood



From the outside, an abalone shell looks like a big ear. Inside, there is a swirl of beautiful blue and green colors. The abalone is a kind of snail that lives in the ocean. It clings to rocks in deep water near tidepools. In the past, people could pull abalone off the rocks at low tide. The meat has a mild flavor and is delicious to eat. In the 1970s, many restaurants served abalone. People loved it. Soon, it was hard to find abalone in the wild.

Today, people raise abalones in abalone farms. They grow the shellfish from tiny eggs in tanks filled with salt water and kelp. The abalones are ready to eat in about four years. Farmers pack them in cooled boxes and ship the abalones to restaurants and markets. California has more abalone farms than anywhere in the world. Other places abalone are raised include Hawaii, Chile, and Mexico.

Tourism



Many people visit California each year. Visitors come from all over the world. However, where do most of California's tourists come from? You may be surprised. They come from California! People who live here love to travel up and down their home state.

California has many workers who serve visitors. Workers prepare food, clean hotel rooms, give tours, and keep our parks and natural areas clean.

Many people love to swim in the summer and ski in the winter. They love to visit California's mountains and beautiful beaches. These beaches are not always at the ocean. You can go to the beach at a river or lake in the mountains or valleys. When you travel to the coast, you can surf the waves or swim in an inland bay. There are many beautiful parks where you can camp for the night. The California sun sets, and the night sky sparkles with millions of stars. Other places people visit for vacations include Arizona, Florida, China, and Mexico.

Cement Today



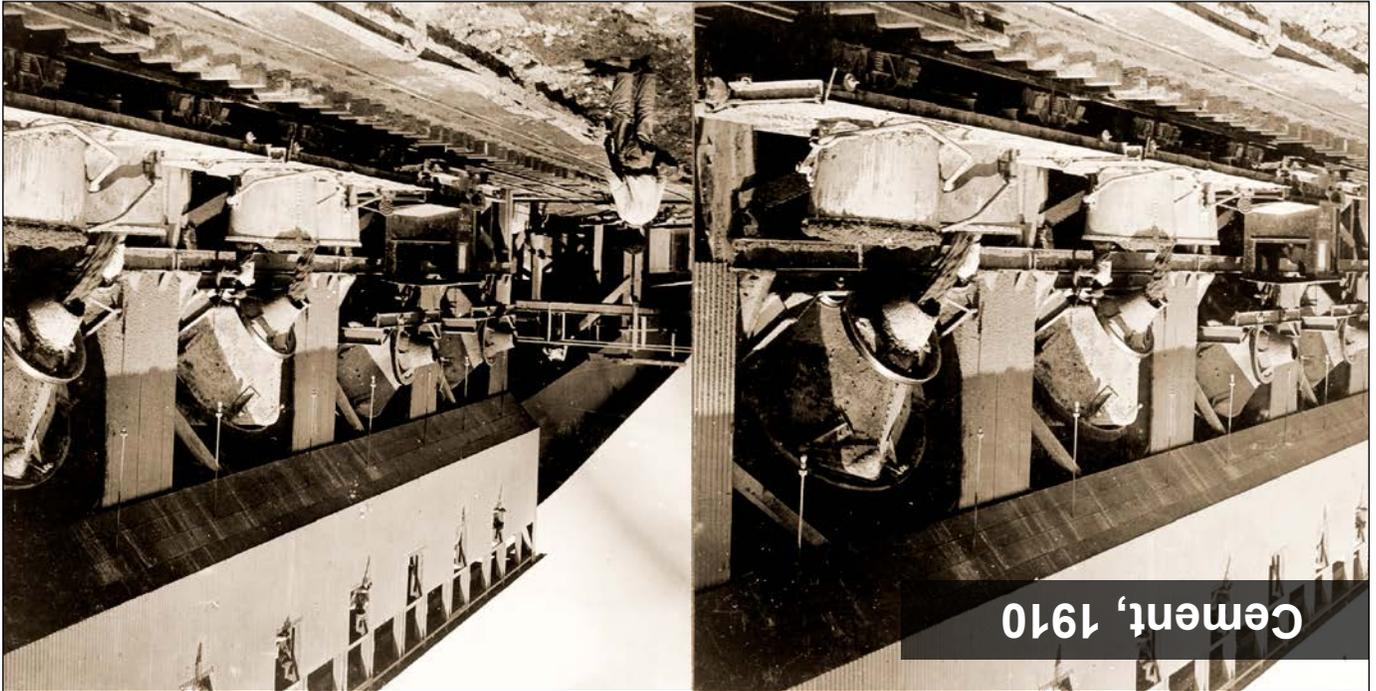
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Cement, 1910

Cotton Today



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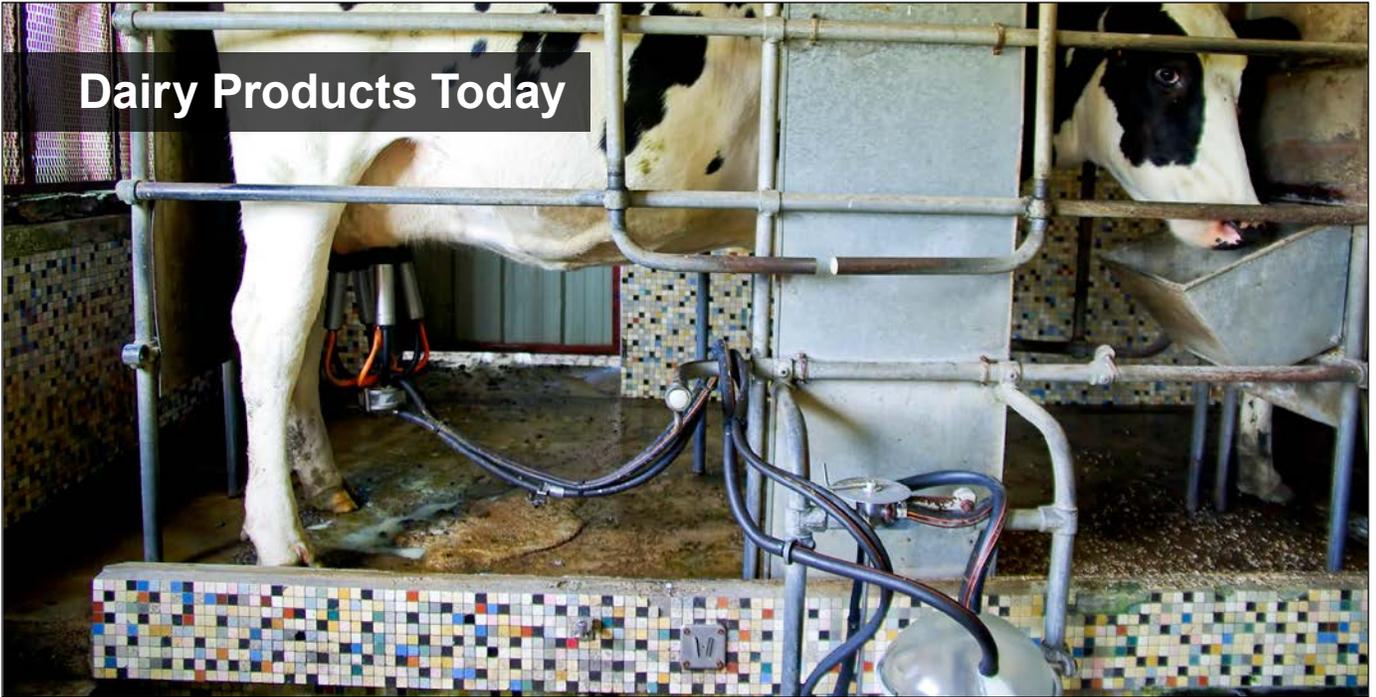


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Cotton, 1940



Dairy Products Today

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Dairy Products, 1940



Electronics and Machinery Today

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Electronics and Machinery, 1922



Film and TV Today

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Film and TV, 1923

Flowers Today



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Flowers, 1900



Grapes Today

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Grapes, 1928

Lumber Today



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Lumber, 1900



Oil Today

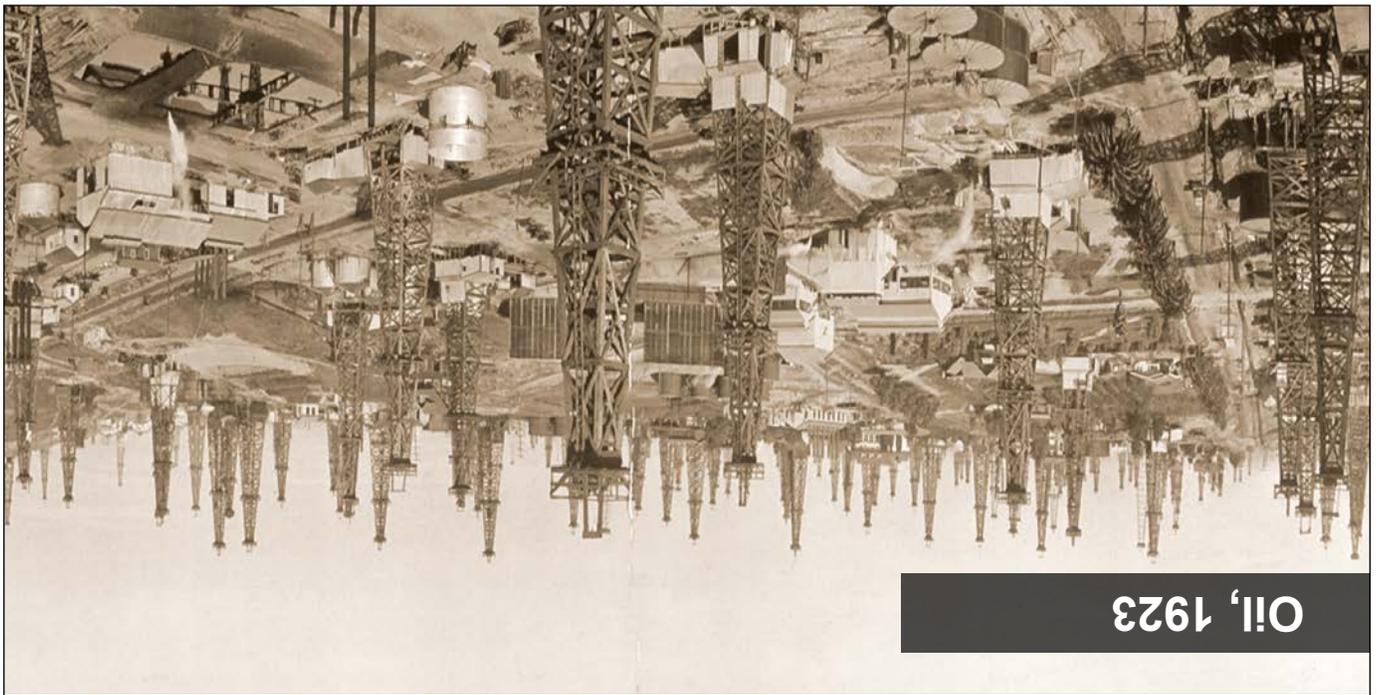
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Oil, 1923

Oranges Today



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Oranges, 1905



Sand and Gravel Today



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Sand and Gravel, 1942

Seafood Today



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Seafood, 1925

Tourism Today



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Tourism, 1930

