

**The Great Seal  
Of  
The United States**



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**The Great Seal of the United States**

- Creating an official symbol of the United States was a collaborative effort by America's Founding Fathers that began on July 4, 1776.
- Finalized on June 20, 1782, the Great Seal is a unique combination of symbols and mottoes that convey their vision of America.

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**The Great Seal's Obverse  
(Front)**

- On the breast of the American bald eagle is a shield with thirteen vertical white and red stripes beneath a blue chief.
- In the eagle's right talon is an olive branch, and in his left a bundle of thirteen arrows.
- In his beak is a scroll inscribed with the motto E Pluribus Unum.
- Over the head of the eagle, a golden glory is breaking through a cloud and surrounding a constellation of thirteen stars on an azure field.

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### The Reverse Side of the Seal

- In the zenith of an unfinished pyramid is an eye in a triangle surrounded with a golden glory. Much speculation has taken place about the meaning of these two symbols. Click on the links above for some information.
- Over the eye are the words Annuit Coeptis (providence favors our undertakings).
- On the base of the pyramid are the numerical letters MDCCLXXVI (1776), and underneath, the motto Novus Ordo Seclorum (new order of the ages).

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### The California Seal

- The Constitutional Convention of 1849 adopted a "Great Seal of the State of California."
- The seal was designed by Major Robert Selden Garnett of the United States Army, and presented to the convention by Caleb Lyon, one of the clerks of the convention.

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**The meaning of the seal**

- Around the bevel of the ring are represented thirty-one stars being the number of states of which the union will consist upon the admission of California.
- The foreground figure represents the Goddess Minerva having sprung full grown from the brain of Jupiter.

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**More about the design**

- She is introduced as a type of the political birth of the State of California without having gone through the probation of a Territory.
- At her feet crouches a grizzly bear feeding upon clusters from a grape vine emblematic of the peculiar characteristics of the country.

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**The State Motto**

- A miner is engaged in a rocker and bowl at his side, illustrating the golden wealth of the Sacramento upon whose waters are seen shipping typical of commercial greatness and the Snow-clad peaks of the Sierra Nevada make up the background while above is the Greek motto 'Eureka' (I have found it) applying either to the principle involved in the admission of the State, or the success of the miner at work.

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**The Seal is Amended**

- An amendment adding the words, "The Great Seal of the State of California," to the design was adopted on October 11, 1849.

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