

- ① **Read the text, then work on the tasks on the second page. You can highlight important facts or make notes to help you!**

### **Alcatraz - The Rock**

A rocky island north of San Francisco, California, Alcatraz was once the site of a notorious maximum-security prison. The island occupies an area of 22 acres (9 hectares) and is located 1.5 miles (2 kilometers) offshore in San Francisco Bay. Both the island and the prison are known by the nickname "The Rock."

Alcatraz Island was a seabird habitat when it was explored in 1775 by Lieutenant Juan Manuel de Ayala of Spain, who named it Isla de los Alcatraces ("Isle of the Pelicans"). Sold in 1849 to the U.S. government, Alcatraz became the site of the first lighthouse on the coast of California in 1854. The U.S. Army built fortifications on the island and began holding military prisoners there in the late 1850s. Alcatraz housed a diverse collection of prisoners in its early years, including 19 Hopi Indians from the Arizona Territory. In 1907 the island was designated the Pacific Branch of the United States Military Prison, and the modern prison building was completed four years later.

From 1934 to 1963 Alcatraz served as a federal prison for some of the country's most dangerous civilian convicts. Among them were Al Capone and Robert Stroud, the "Birdman of Alcatraz." Although the Alcatraz prison was able to house 450 convicts in cells that measured about 10 feet by 4.5 feet (3 meters by 1.5 meters), no more than 250 prisoners ever occupied the island at one time.

Alcatraz was considered to be the most impenetrable prison in the United States, and escape attempts were rare. During its 29 years as a federal prison, 36 inmates took part in 14 escape attempts. Thirty-one of the escapees were either captured, killed, or known to have drowned in the bay; the other five were never found and are believed to have drowned. Although most escapees relied on secrecy, six inmates participated in a violent escape attempt in May 1946. The 48-hour incident, remembered as the "Battle of Alcatraz," began when prisoners overpowered their guards and obtained guns and keys to the cell block. Frustrated by a locked door, the prisoners exchanged gunfire with the remaining guards, and order was restored only when U.S. Marines stormed the cell block under a hail of grenades and rifle fire. Two guards and three escapees were killed, and more than a dozen guards were wounded in the firefight.

Another daring escape took place in June 1962. Three inmates slipped out of their cells through air vents that they had enlarged with makeshift tools. After escaping the building, they used a raft to cross the bay. Although the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) concluded that the three men drowned, their fate remained the subject of speculation for decades.

Eventually the cost of maintaining the prison, particularly the cost of transporting fresh water to and waste away from Alcatraz, resulted in its closing in March 1963. In 1972 Alcatraz became part of the newly created Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It remains one of San Francisco's most popular tourist attractions with 1.4 million sightseers visiting the museum and walking the old cell blocks every year.

(source: <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Alcatraz/316004>)

② **What's the nickname of Alcatraz?**

/ 1

- ☐ Isle of Pelicans  
☐ The Prison  
☐ The Rock  
☐ The Block

③ **Who wasn't imprisoned ?**

/ 1

- ☐ military prisoners  
☐ Native Americans  
☐ civilian convicts  
☐ prisoners of war

④ **How many inmates could Alcatraz house?**

/ 1

- ☐ 450  
☐ 250  
☐ 350  
☐ 550

⑤ **How long was the Battle of Alcatraz?**

/ 1

- ☐ 36h  
☐ 2 days  
☐ a week  
☐ 72h

⑥ **Sort these stages of Alcatraz' history. Start with the earliest event! (1-6)**

/ 6

- Alcatraz becomes a US Military prison.  
 Alcatraz becomes the „Isle of Pelicans“.  
 The Battle of Alcatraz takes place.  
 The Rock becomes too expensive.  
 A lighthouse for the San Francisco Bay  
 Alcatraz becomes a tourist attraction.

⑦ **Name two famous inmates of Alcatraz!**

/ 1

⑧ **Fill in the gaps with the correct information from the text!**

/ 7

Alcatraz is a former prison near the American city of .

It is situated on an  that was first explored by a Lieutenant from

. Today, Alcatraz is a  that 1.4 million people visit

every year. Alcatraz is famous because lots of inmates tried to

from the prison. Some of them were successful, but others were never seen again.

People think that they  in San Francisco Bay. The prison was

in March 1963.

Note	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pkt.	17	14	11	7	4	0

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/ 18

Note