

## United States Physical Political – Lesson 6 Zip Codes

**Materials Needed** A pencil and the ZIP CODE map, which accompanies this lesson.

The United States Postal Service distributes over 100 billion pieces of mail each year. To help speed the delivery of the mail, a special location system was introduced July 1, 1963. This system is called the ZIP Code. ZIP Code means Zone Improvement Plan.

Look at the Zip Code map, which accompanies this lesson. The United States is divided into ten national areas. Each national area is given a number from 0 to 9. This is the first of the five numbers in a ZIP Code.

Important post offices in each national area are designated as sectional centers. These sectional centers are assigned the next two digits. Many major cities have their own large central post office. These large cities would not be served by the sectional centers. In those cases, the second and third digits identify the city.

Each sectional center serves several associate post offices. The associate post offices use the last two digits in the ZIP Code.

Let's follow a letter that is mailed in Seattle, Washington to someone in Alamogordo, New Mexico 88310. The postal worker has never heard of Alamogordo, New Mexico. The worker does know that New Mexico is part of national area 8. She also knows that 883 refers to the Carrizozo, New Mexico sectional center. She puts the letter in the 883 slot and it is sent directly to the Carrizozo, New Mexico sectional center.

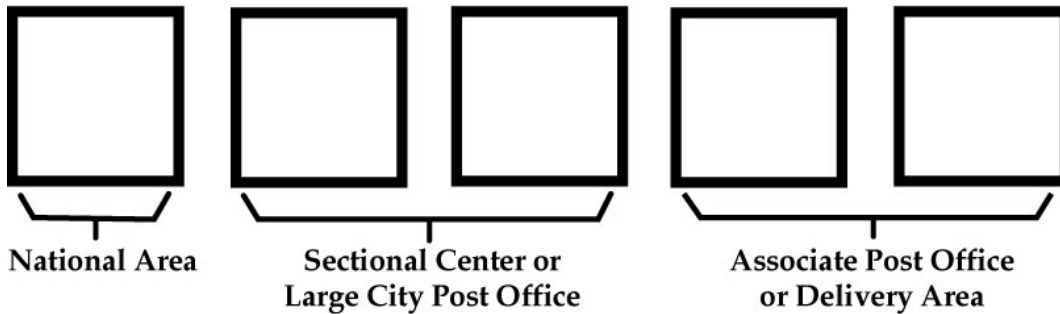
Once the letter reaches the sectional center, it is then sent to Alamogordo, the local post office whose last two digits are 10.

Below is an illustration showing how the ZIP Code for Alamogordo, New Mexico is established



Write your ZIP Code in the boxes shown below.

### ZIP CODE DIGITS

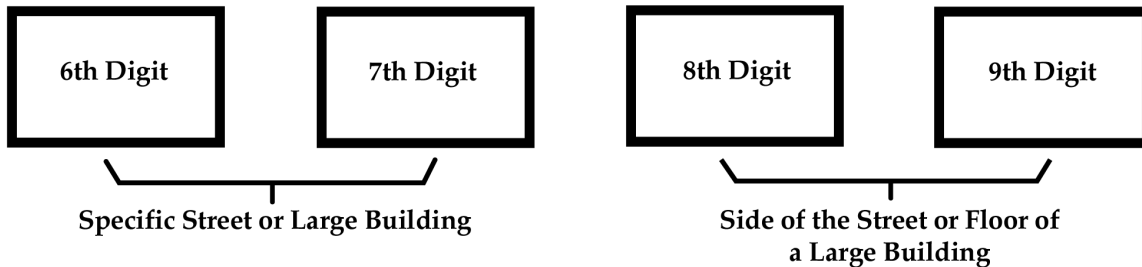


Find the first digit of the ZIP Code for each state listed. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

- |              |       |                |       |
|--------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| 1. New York  | _____ | 6. Alaska      | _____ |
| 2. Montana   | _____ | 7. Maine       | _____ |
| 3. Indiana   | _____ | 8. Tennessee   | _____ |
| 4. Wisconsin | _____ | 9. Wyoming     | _____ |
| 5. Florida   | _____ | 10. California | _____ |

The Postal Service has introduced the ZIP + 4 system. This is the original ZIP Code plus a hyphen and 4 new numbers. This ZIP + 4 system enables the Postal Service to sort your outgoing mail on high speed automated equipment to specific streets, specific buildings or even specific floors within a building. The boxes shown below illustrate how the last four digits of the ZIP Code + 4 work.

### +4 CODE DIGITS



The letter mailed from Seattle, Washington to Alamogordo, New Mexico was mailed to this specific address:

Alamogordo Public Schools  
122 Indiana Avenue  
Alamogordo, New Mexico 88310-6722

We have already traced the letter from Seattle to the associate post office in Alamogordo. Once the letter arrives at this post office, the postal worker looks at the + 4 part of the ZIP Code (88310-**6722**).

In this example, the number 67 indicate the 1200 block. The number 22 means the building is on the side of the street whose address ends in even numbers.

## ZIP CODE NATIONAL AREAS

