Nigeria

History and Government
People have lived in present-day Nigeria for thousands of years. Artifacts tell us about the people who lived in Nigeria long ago.

Northern and Southern Kingdoms
People began to form kingdoms in Nigeria around C.E. 1000. The Hausa built kingdoms in the north. In the south, the Yoruba formed the kingdom of Oyo, and the Edo built the kingdom of Benin. The Igbo lived in small villages in the southeast.

From Colony to Democracy
Europeans began coming to Nigeria in the late 1400s. Most of them wanted to sell Nigerians into slavery. Later, people from Great Britain searched for natural resources in Nigeria. They took over many parts of the country. In 1914, they made all of Nigeria a British colony.

Independence
By 1960, Nigeria had gained its independence, or freedom, from Britain. The country formed a new government. At first, the new government did not have good leaders. Nigerians had very little freedom, but they worked to become a democracy. In 1999, the people of Nigeria elected a president in a free election.

Government Today
The Nigerian government has three parts—a president, lawmakers, and judges. Nigeria is made up of 36 states. Nigeria’s capital, Abuja, is located in the center of the country.