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**Abstract:** Before Georgia was colonized by the Europeans, it was inhabited by Creek and Cherokee Native Americans. In 1732, King George II granted by royal charter, to 21 prominent Englishmen as trustees, the land between the Savannah and Altamaha headwaters, west to the Pacific Ocean. Georgia was unique as a colony, because it was established both as a buffer to protect the Carolinas from the Spanish in the south, and as a philanthropic experiment. On January 2, 1788, Georgia became the fourth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution. Fearing that the newly elected President in 1860, Abraham Lincoln, would attempt to limit or abolish slavery, Georgia became the fifth southern state to secede from the Union on January 16, 1861.

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### History of Georgia

Before Georgia was colonized by the Europeans, it was inhabited by Creek and Cherokee Native Americans. The first Europeans to come to the area were the Spanish, in 1540, when Hernando de Soto crossed its interior. For over a century, Spain maintained both military and missionary posts mainly on the coasts, where they were subject to raids by Indians, the French, and the English. After Charleston was established (in what is now South Carolina) in 1670 by English settlers, a series of raids by the English a few years later forced the Spanish to abandon their settlements, and head back south to Florida.

During colonial times, Georgia was the last of the British continental colonies to be established. In 1732, King George II granted by royal charter, to 21 prominent Englishmen as trustees, the land between the Savannah and Altamaha headwaters, west to the Pacific Ocean (though the colony never claimed land west of the Mississippi River).

Georgia was unique as a colony, because it was established both as a buffer to protect the Carolinas from the Spanish in the south, and as a philanthropic experiment. General James Oglethorpe, one of the 21 trustees, who came over with the first colonists, represented both concerns. He organized the defenses of the colony, championed prison reform, and established a refuge for the poor and persecuted.

**Georgia was the only colony not represented at the First Continental Congress in 1774.** However, Georgia did send representatives to the Second Continental Congress after the battles at Lexington and Concord had swayed governmental opinion in their favor. A year later, three Georgians — Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, and George Walton — signed the Declaration of Independence. On January 2, 1788, Georgia became the fourth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In the mid 1800's, many Georgians felt that each individual state had rights more important than the laws dictated by the federal government. Fearing that the newly elected President in 1860, Abraham Lincoln, would attempt to limit or abolish slavery, Georgia became the fifth southern state to secede from the Union on January 16, 1861.

After the Civil War, Georgia ratified the Fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution, which granted American black citizenship and guaranteed them the right to vote. On July 15, 1870, Georgia was at last readmitted into the United States, and allowed full congressional representation.

How many words can you make from OKEFENOKEE SWAMP?

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