A state is an organized political community acting under a government, but a state can be classified as sovereign if they are not dependent or subject to any other power or state. Thus states can be considered as subject to external ruler or sovereignty. Thus, when explaining the term states to someone, the key features to look at include sovereignty and whether it is subject or dependent on other states or any other power. Other factors are that states may differ in governance, interests, and geography. Other features that can differentiate states include federal states and the ruling other states under the rule of law.

The state capacity is the ability of the government or a given sovereign to accomplish its goals to its people. This can be general or in reference to specific aims and rules. On the other hand, the scope of the state is the function a given state needs to function. These functions can be domestic or foreign-based on the rule of law. These concepts are essential since a state needs to understand what I can do (capacity) and how or what to do it (scope)