

Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments have been designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about the Colonial era. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical American history class.

★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

Samples are provided for evaluation purposes. Copying of the product or its parts for resale is prohibited. Additional restrictions may be set by the publisher.

*Teacher***INTRODUCTION** *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- *A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of American History*

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- *Based on primary or secondary sources*

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone.

- *Brief tasks promoting historical literacy*

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the student's mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- *Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments*

A *Basic* and an *Advanced* version of each assessment are provided. The *Basic* Assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The *Advanced* Assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the *Basic* version.

- *Easy to use both as learning and assessment tools*

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess student historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- *Evaluating student responses*

Brief but specific suggestions are provided defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

Writing the Constitution Assessment 1

Basic Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8

★ Key Ideas and Details

- 1. (6–8)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

★ Using this Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their American History coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Writing the Constitution: Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should refer to specific details such as Congress's inability to tax the states, its inability to force them to tax themselves and grant Congress funds, its failure to pay creditors and the mistrust that will instill in other potential creditors, etc. As in such phrases as: "Those who lent us money... are defrauded"; "I cannot see that a single state has raised the taxes"; "Confederation has been given no power to compel them to obey." Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should note some of the details in Document 2 that repeat, clarify, or add to Document 1's description of the weaknesses in the Articles. Best responses will also use the biographical details about Morris to help explain his own deep concern about the financial problems Congress faced under the Articles.

*Student Handout***Writing the Constitution: Assessment 1**

Directions: This exercise asks you to read a primary source document and a secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Document 1: A Primary Source

Since we have not provided funding for our debts, the interest on them cannot be paid. Those who lent us money and trusted us in the hour of distress are defrauded. To expect that under such circumstances others will trust the government would be folly. To expect that foreigners will trust a government which has no credit with its own citizens must be madness. The whole cost therefore of the war must be borne in the present moment.

I wish to God that I could say the government had even the appearance of general vigor and exertion. But the truth is very different. The United States called for eight million of dollars early last November. Of that, the first quarterly payment was to have been made on next April one. But I cannot see that a single state has raised the taxes.

Whenever the several states are so negligent, the Confederation has been given no power to compel them to obey. While it confers on congress the privilege of asking everything, it assures each state the right of granting nothing. Since the Congress cannot compel the states to make a grant of money, they must at least take care to prevent the states from making an unnecessary expenditure of those moneys which are in our possession.

Source Information: This document is part of a letter dated February 11, 1782, from Robert Morris to John Hanson, President of the Congress of Confederation. This Congress was the governing body for the United States under the Articles of Confederation, from 1781 to 1789. At the time Morris wrote this letter, he was the nation's Superintendent of Finance. In this passage, Morris discusses problems he sees arising out of weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation. Adapted from the version of the letter on the internet at the National Humanities Center Resource Toolbox: Making the Revolution: America, 1763–1791.

Source: "Founders on the Defects of the Articles of Confederation." *National Humanities Center*. Accessed August 4, 2013. <http://www.nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/makingrev/constitution/text1/foundersdefectsarticlesconf.pdf>.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

By 1786, many of the leaders of the American Revolution, including George Washington, were on the edge of despair. One of those most in despair was Robert Morris. Born in England, he came to America at age 13. He became a very wealthy Philadelphia merchant and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. As a delegate to the Continental Congress, he was in charge of financing the Continental Army. In carrying out his duties, he often spent large sums of his own money. Under the Articles of Confederation, Morris served as Superintendent of Finance. In this office, he often spent his own money to support the government, all the while pressuring the states to contribute their full share. He was therefore aware of the weakness of the central government under the Articles of Confederation, the first constitutional framework for the United States. Under the Articles, each state remained sovereign. Congress had no power to tax. It could ask the states for funds, but could not force them to provide the money. It could not prevent the states from regulating commerce or printing their own money. It had no executive branch able to enforce its own laws. And when Shays Rebellion broke out in western Massachusetts, Congress could not organize a military force of its own to restore order. In this context, it is understandable that Morris became an especially fierce advocate for the stronger federal government created by the Constitution of 1787.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source account about Robert Morris and the Articles of Confederation. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. As a secondary source, this document is not evidence from the time of the Articles of Confederation. It is a later account by someone writing about that time. This particular historical account was written in 2013 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Assessment Questions

1. Robert Morris's central idea is that Congress under the Articles of Confederation is too weak. Underline or highlight at least three sentences or parts of sentences in which Morris details the harm he thinks this weakness causes. Explain these in your own words.

2. What details in Document 2 help you to better understand why Morris is as upset as he is about the Articles of Confederation?

*Teacher***INSTRUCTIONS****Writing the Constitution Assessment 7***Advanced Level***Teacher Instructions***Based on Common Core Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–12***★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas***

- 7. (9–10)** Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

★ *Using this Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their American History coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Writing the Constitution: Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

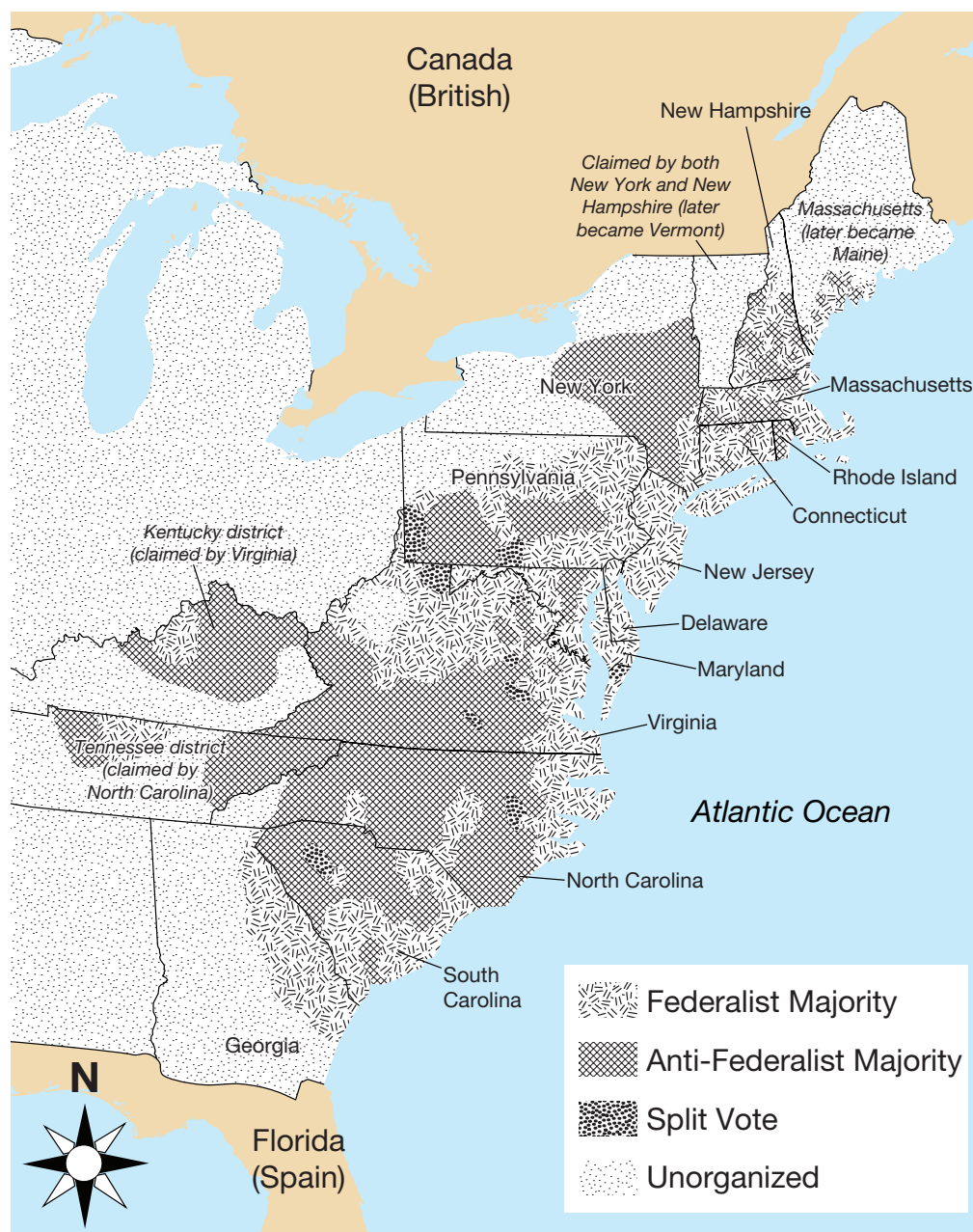
★ *Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment*

Acceptable responses to the assessment question should note that all three offer evidence that Federalists and Anti-Federalists were quite unevenly distributed across geographical regions and among social and income groups. The map (Document 1) shows that support for Federalists was strongest in wealthier and commercial coastal regions and weakest in poorer western frontier regions within many states. The background information about Amos Singletary (a man of modest means from a rural frontier town) as well as his words (Document 2) suggest he saw the wealthy and powerful as the real beneficiaries of the Constitution, as in his references to its supporters as “lawyers, and men of learning, and monied men.” The table (Document 3) shows the vote to have been very close and late in some states, but unanimous and early in others (mainly smaller ones), suggesting again wide geographic differences in support for the Constitution. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should recognize that it is hard to generalize from just one man’s point of view. They should indicate a need for more sources from people of varied backgrounds to make more reliable generalizations about any relationship between a person’s attitude to the Constitution and that person’s social, economic or geographic background.

Writing the Constitution: Assessment 7

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer questions focused on what the sources have in common. In order to better understand these documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 7: (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.



Federalist and Anti-Federalist Voting Strength, 1787–1790

Source: "Anti-Federalists." *United States American History*. Accessed August 4, 2013. <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h374.html>.

Document 1: A Map

Source Information:

The Constitutional Convention finished its work on September 17, 1787. But it was still up to the states to decide whether or not to ratify (that is, approve) the Constitution. They were to make this decision in state conventions organized for that purpose. Eligible voters chose delegates to these conventions who either favored or opposed the Constitution. Those who favored the Constitution were known as "Federalists." "Anti-Federalists" opposed the Constitution. This map shows areas where each side won a majority of votes, as well as areas where the vote was evenly split. In the late 1700s, population was heaviest in the wealthier commercial coastal areas to the east. It thinned out into the poorer frontier regions to the west.

*Student Handout***Document 2: A Written Primary Source**

We contended with Great-Britain, some said for a threepenny duty on tea; but it was not that; it was because they claimed a right to tax us and bind us in all cases whatever. And does not this Constitution do the same? Does it not take away all that we have—all our property? Does it not lay all taxes, duties, imposts, and excises? And what more have we to give? They tell us Congress won't lay taxes upon us, but collect all the money they want by impost. I say, there has always been a difficulty about impost. Whenever the General Court was going to lay an impost, they would tell us it was more than trade could bear, that it hurt the fair trader, and encouraged smuggling; and there will always be the same objection: they won't be able to raise money enough by impost, and then they will lay it on the land, and take all we have got. These lawyers, and men of learning, and monied men, that talk so finely and gloss over matters so smoothly, to make us poor illiterate people swallow down the pill, expect to get into Congress themselves; they expect to be the managers of this Constitution and get all the power and all the money into their own hands, and they will swallow up all us little folks, like the great Leviathan, Mr. President; yes, just as the whale swallowed up Jonah."

Source Information: Amos Singletary was born in 1721 in a small frontier town in central Massachusetts. He ran a gristmill, served as a justice of the peace, was elected to the state legislature, and was a delegate to the Massachusetts ratifying convention of 1788. He opposed ratification of the Constitution. This document is adapted from part of a speech Singletary gave at the convention on January 25, 1788. From Jonathan Elliot's *Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, as Recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia, 1787*, vol. 2, (Philadelphia, 1881) pp. 101-102.

Source: Elliot, Jonathan, ed. 1836. *The Debates in the Several State Conventions of the Adoption of the Federal Constitution*, Vol. II (Mass., Conn., NH, NY, Penn, Maryland). Online Library of Liberty. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/simple.php?id=1906>.

Document 3: A Comparative Table

State	Date of Vote	Vote in Convention	Rank in Population
Delaware	Dec. 7, 1787	Unanimous	13
Pennsylvania	Dec. 12, 1787	46 to 23	3
New Jersey	Dec. 18, 1787	Unanimous	9
Georgia	Jan. 2, 1788	Unanimous	11
Connecticut	Jan. 9, 1788	128 to 40	8
Massachusetts	Feb. 7, 1788	187 to 168	2
Maryland	Apr. 28, 1788	63 to 11	6
South Carolina	May 23, 1788	149 to 73	7
New Hampshire	June 21, 1788	57 to 46	10
Virginia	June 26, 1788	89 to 79	1
New York	July 26, 1788	30 to 27	5
North Carolina	Nov. 21, 1789	195 to 77	4
Rhode Island	May 29, 1790	34 to 32	12

Source Information: This table shows the outcome of the vote in each state's ratification convention. It also shows when that vote was taken and where the state ranks in population. Table adapted from *The American Pageant*.

Source: Kennedy, David M., Lizabeth Cohen, and Thomas Andrew Bailey. *The American Pageant*. 12th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002.

