

Sample Answer Key for 13 Original States

ELC-5022

Massachusetts

Card 1

- The Mayflower Compact can be analyzed as an early agreement for self-government where people promised to follow rules they helped create; students can point to phrases about forming a government and keeping order.
- Comparing it to later national government ideas help students see continuity: communities needed rules, leaders, and shared promises, but the Constitution scaled that idea up for many states.

Card 2

- Students can explain a cause/effect chain: British tea policy and enforcement increased tension, colonists protested dramatically, and conflict escalated into broader resistance and violence.
- Evidence can include a timeline-style account and museum collections that document what happened and why it mattered, showing how people disagreed about taxes and representation.

Card 3

- Students can identify typical worries: losing local control vs. needing a stronger system to keep order and solve problems, and they can cite recorded debate evidence as proof of disagreement.
- The key thinking skill is inference: using debate notes/articles to connect economic roles (farmers/merchants) to the positions they might take on taxes, trade rules, and rights.

Card 4

- Students can identify typical worries: losing local control vs. needing a stronger system to keep order and solve problems, and they can cite recorded debate evidence as proof of disagreement.
- The key thinking skill is inference: using debate notes/articles to connect economic roles (farmers/merchants) to the positions they might take on taxes, trade rules, and rights.

New Hampshire

Card 1

- Students can link geography to economy: coastal access supports fishing and shipping, while forests provide timber that becomes economically and politically important. ¶
- Using a primary record collection (state/provincial papers) supports claims with evidence that leaders documented disputes, trade, and governance connected to resources.

Card 2

- A strong answer explains that different groups had different goals (land, security, trade, sovereignty), so the same event can look very different depending on the storyteller. ¶
- Students should describe a method: compare at least two sources (e.g., official records + a museum/educator guide) and note whose voice is missing or limited.

Card 3

- Students can show that the Constitution required nine ratifications to take effect and that New Hampshire's approval made that threshold meaningful in practice. ¶
- Timing matters because it affects momentum: early ratifiers influence later debates, and "ninth" ratification signals a turning point from proposal to reality.

Card 4

- Students can argue either side if they justify it: e.g., stronger union helps coordinate defense/trade, while local control protects local interests; the key is evidence-based reasoning.
- The "compromise" piece shows higher-order thinking: students identify trade-offs and explain why some rights/rules might be negotiated to keep the union together.

Connecticut

Card 1

- Students can identify features like structured leadership and rules for decision-making, then infer values such as order, stability, and shared governance.

¶- A high-quality answer explains how wording and structure act as evidence: the document shows what leaders thought government should do and who should have power.

Card 2

- Students should explain the compromise idea: one part of Congress uses population; another gives equal state votes—addressing large vs. small state concerns.

- Using math (e.g., comparing two imaginary “states”) shows why people argued; students can evaluate fairness and identify who benefits in each system.

Card 3

- Students can link river/town geography to trade and local industries, then reason that economic needs influence political preferences (e.g., stable trade rules).

- The key is a chain-of-reasoning: geography creates opportunities/limits, which shapes jobs and trade, which shapes what laws people want.

Card 4

- Students should practice sourcing: identify author, audience, purpose, and bias, then compare agreement/disagreement across documents.

- “Missing voices” analysis shows depth: students note that not everyone’s perspective was recorded equally (e.g., women, enslaved people, many Native voices) and propose what to look for next.

The Thirteen Original States

Rhode Island

Card 1

- Students can cite charter language and explain that it legally supported self-government and freedom of religion, which connects to later American rights debates.
- The cause/effect move earlier local freedoms helped normalize ideas that later appear in national conversations about rights.

Card 2

- Students can explain that some communities feared losing local control or wanted clearer protections (like a bill of rights) before agreeing to new federal power.
- A strong evaluation explains trade-offs: delaying could protect local concerns, but it could also isolate the state politically/economically; students must justify their judgment with evidence.

Card 3

- Students can connect coastlines/ports to trade networks that moved goods and people; this can include both economic growth and harmful systems tied to exploitation.
- The depth expectation is care and evidence: students name what they can prove from sources, acknowledge complexity, and avoid stereotypes or sensational claims.

Card 4

- Students can argue that leaders' ideas helped shape local rules and culture (e.g., approaches to religious disagreement), and they can connect those ideas to modern civic principles.
- A higher-level answer includes critique: students identify what sources celebrate, what sources omit, and what questions remain.

The Thirteen Original States

Delaware

Card 1

- Students can link waterways to movement of people and goods; navigable routes make trade and communication easier and influence where towns grow.

- Using math (approximate travel time by boat vs. road) strengthens the argument by turning geography into measurable evidence.

Card 2

- Students can show that Delaware's settlement story includes multiple European groups and that diversity can influence language, religion, and local governance traditions.

- A strong answer explains historical thinking: many records reflect the creator's viewpoint, so students should compare sources and note missing perspectives.

Card 3

- Students can argue that small states might want stability for trade and security, but they also worry about being dominated—so they may want both union and protections.

- Comparing Delaware's and Rhode Island's timelines/documents helps students see that "joining" can reflect different risk calculations and political cultures.

Card 4

- Students should show how individuals influence events through decisions, speeches, votes, and organizing—and cite documentary evidence for what can be proven.

- Higher-order thinking includes uncertainty: students distinguish between confirmed facts (documents) and reasonable inferences (motives).

Pennsylvania

Card 1

- Students can identify rights and governance structures in the founding/legal documents and explain how they shaped expectations about fair rule and community decision-making.
- A strong answer connects local rights ideas to later national rights debates by tracing themes (religious practice, representation, limits on power).

Card 2

- Students can argue that location, trade connections, and institutions (meeting spaces, printing, civic organizations) help a city become influential in national decision-making.
- Evidence can include maps and official site descriptions showing why important meetings and debates gathered in specific locations.

Card 3

- Students can explain that print spreads arguments quickly and allows wider participation; they should identify persuasion techniques and intended audience.
- Evaluating bias is the key skill: students analyze word choice, emotional language, and what facts are emphasized or omitted.

Card 4

- A deep answer explains that colonies could promote ideals (like fairness or peaceful coexistence) while still participating in conflict or unequal systems; students must show evidence for both.
- Students demonstrate responsible history by naming what sources can prove, identifying who benefits/harmed, and avoiding "hero-only" stories.

The Thirteen Original States

New Jersey

Card 1

- Students can explain that land records and boundary decisions show who claimed land, how towns formed, and how government organized people and property.
- Using official databases/library guides supports evidence-based claims and introduces students to how historians investigate the past.

Card 2

- Students can explain that the New Jersey Plan aimed to protect smaller states from being outvoted by bigger ones, while the Virginia Plan emphasized population-weighted representation.
- A simulation with numbers demonstrates the conflict: different rules change who wins votes, showing why compromise became necessary.

Card 3

- Students can cite the constitution's explanation that government had to be reorganized during war and identify how it structured branches/roles.
- The voter rule ("all inhabitants" meeting property/residency requirements) helps students analyze inclusion/exclusion and predict who was likely to vote and influence laws.

Card 4

- Students can show that early legal wording and later laws shaped who could vote, and that changes often reflected political struggles and power.
- Cause/effect depth: students explain that voting rules are not "natural"—they are choices made by lawmakers, often reacting to who is gaining influence.

The Thirteen Original States

New York

Card 1

- Students can explain that colonial records document government functions, trade, and relations with Native nations, showing how a diverse colony operated.
- Comparison depth: students identify a feature that changed (or stayed) across Dutch → British → U.S. periods and support with evidence.

Card 2

- Students can explain that the essays were written to support ratification and that authors used reasoning plus persuasion to address fears about government power.
- A strong analysis identifies strategies (appeals to safety, unity, fairness) and explains how the words are meant to influence decisions.

Card 3

- Students can argue that economically powerful/strategic states weigh risks: joining strengthens union but could threaten local control—so debates focus on what must be protected.
- A higher-level answer points to ratification language (requests for rights/amendments) as evidence of specific concerns.

Card 4

- Students can explain that different Haudenosaunee nations made different choices during the Revolution and that those choices shaped community outcomes; they should cite an official NPS overview and/or a Native-informed educator guide.
- Depth is perspective-taking with evidence: students compare goals (sovereignty, safety, land) and show how war decisions affected people beyond armies.

The Thirteen Original States

Maryland

Card 1

- Students can cite that the Act is a primary source showing how lawmakers addressed religious conflict; they identify what it protects and what it restricts.
- A deeper answer explains context: toleration in the 1600s often meant limited freedom within a Christian framework, not modern “anything goes” equality.

Card 2

- Students can connect waterways and fertile land to plantation-style agriculture and trade, explaining how geography affects economic opportunities and settlement.
- A strong interdisciplinary response uses a map plus at least one data display to show how a crop economy can shape society and politics.

Card 3

- Students can explain that border regions experience mixed influences and pressures, affecting how communities interpret conflict and cooperation.
- Defending the claim means using evidence: maps show location/contacts; documentary sources show decisions and debates shaped by that position.

Card 4

- Students should explain what influence means (ideas copied, policies debated, language reused) and cite documents showing connections.
- Strong answers distinguish “similar” from “influential” by tracing a plausible pathway (who read it, who copied ideas, where it appears again).

Virginia

Card 1

- Students can cite that settlers chose Jamestown for reasons tied to strategy and geography, but those choices also created problems that affected survival.
- Science thinking means explaining systems: water quality, mosquitoes, nutrition, and location interact; students connect evidence to outcomes.

Card 2

- Students can explain that representative assemblies create a system where elected people make laws, which connects to later democratic expectations in the U.S.
- Higher-order thinking includes comparison: students identify similarities/differences between early restricted representation and modern broader participation.

Card 3

- Students can cite that the Declaration articulated rights principles and was widely copied/influential; they compare key ideas (rights, limits on government) across texts.
- Proof of influence requires more than "they look alike": students track documented claims of influence and show specific idea parallels with evidence.

Card 4

- Students can explain that the Virginia Plan outlined a strong national government structure and influenced the Convention's agenda; they cite an official milestone document summary.
- Comparing plans shows conflict of interests; compromise becomes necessary when states fear being treated unfairly under one plan.

North Carolina

Card 1

- Students can cite that the Halifax Resolves were recorded in provincial congress minutes and were an official authorization step toward independence.
- A deeper answer distinguishes evidence types: official records show what a government authorized, while newspapers or stories may show opinions but not legal action.

Card 2

- Students can explain that North Carolina ratified later and that national debates about rights protections (like a bill of rights) were central to persuading hesitant states.
- Testing the claim means citing evidence from the ratification document and timeline, showing what concerns were stated and when they changed.

Card 3

- Students can use the transcribed constitution to identify rights and governmental structure, showing what leaders viewed as necessary for stability and legitimacy.
- Comparison adds depth: students identify what's similar/different across states and infer why local context shaped different choices.

Card 4

- Students should include both Federalist and Anti-Federalist-style concerns (power vs. rights), and show how reporting choices change public understanding.
- A strong answer demonstrates balance: it separates facts (dates, votes, documents) from opinion (arguments), and cites sources for each.

South Carolina

Card 1

- Students can explain that rice became a dominant staple shaping the Lowcountry economy for a long time; they link this to how land and labor systems developed.
- A deep answer connects environment to human choices: controlling water and land changed landscapes and reinforced economic structures and inequality.

Card 2

- Students can explain what indigo is (a plant-based dye) and show that it became economically significant as an export, second to rice in South Carolina in parts of the 1700s.
- Interdisciplinary depth: students connect natural resources to trade patterns and show how a product can link local farms to global markets.

Card 3

- Students can argue that ports concentrate trade, jobs, and ideas, increasing wealth for some while also connecting to exploitation and unequal systems.
- Depth includes ethics + evidence: students use sources to show both positive (commerce, cultural exchange) and harmful (human exploitation) impacts without oversimplifying.

Card 4

- Students explain that primary sources reveal daily life (work, trade, rules) and that power relationships vary by status, race, gender, and wealth; the key is evidence.
- A strong answer explicitly uses sourcing: who created the record, whose life it represents, and what is missing.

Georgia

Card 1

- Students can explain that Georgia's founding is tied to the 1730s project associated with Oglethorpe and goals for settlement, which shaped early planning and policy choices.
- Evidence-based reasoning means citing the founding timeline and linking stated goals to features such as town design and early regulations.

Card 2

- Students can argue that planned grids can support navigation, defense, and shared public space, and use measured drawings to show how space is organized.
- Comparison deepens analysis: students explain what problems planning solves and what trade-offs it may create (limits, control, who benefits).

Card 3

- Students connect environment to human choices: wetlands/climate affect farming options and health risks, shaping settlement patterns and economic success.
- A strong answer uses science terms appropriately (habitat, drainage, disease vectors) and links them to historical evidence rather than "guessing."

Card 4

- Students can explain that colonial policies often reflected security and economic goals, and that enforcement and resistance shaped whether policies lasted.
- Depth comes from documenting change over time: students identify what policy existed, what pressures challenged it, and what evidence shows the shift.