

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.

★ *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.

The Colonial Era 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

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The Colonial Era: 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

[This section is not available for review on sample pages.]

The Colonial Era: 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

After this they chose, or rather confirmed, Mr. John Carver (a godly man well approved of by them) as their Governor for that year. They then provided a place for their commonly held goods and began some small cottages for their habitation. From time to time, they met and consulted about laws and orders, both for their civil and military government as the necessity of their condition called for. Later they added to these as urgent occasion at several times and cases did require.... But what was most sad and lamentable was, that in two or three months' time, half of their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth of winter, and lacking houses and other comforts, being infected with the scurvy and other diseases which this long voyage and uncomfortable condition had brought upon them.

Source Information: This document is a primary source. That is, it is a document with evidence about past events by someone who experienced or took part in those events. The document is from William Bradford's famous history *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647*, edited by Samuel Eliot Morison (Knopf, 1952). Bradford was one of the original English settlers who landed in Massachusetts on the Mayflower in 1620. He was governor of the colony from 1621 to 1657, except for five years. Just before landing, the settlers signed the famous Mayflower Compact. In it, they agreed to form their own society and government. In this passage, Bradford described what happened next.

Source: Bradford, William, and Samuel Eliot Morison, ed. *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*. New York: Knopf, 1952.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

The Pilgrims settled in a good place. It was on high ground near a stream. Indians had already stored some corn there, but the Indians themselves were gone. This helped the colony by leaving it with empty fields of fairly rich soil. The first thing the colonists did was build a structure to store supplies from their ship. This “Common House” was also a good place to meet, and it later was used as a hospital. Small lots along a main street were divided up among the families, and they built several cottages or simple huts for themselves. The colonists also brought a cannon ashore, which they could use along with their muskets to protect themselves against Indian attacks. The first months of the colony were difficult. It was winter, and the cold and lack of food made life miserable. Half the colonists died. In the spring of 1621, two Indians appeared, Samoset and Squanto. They helped the colonists plant corn and learn how to survive in this new land.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source account of the beginnings of Plymouth colony. A secondary source is an account written about past events 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 Pilgrim settlement. 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. Compare Bradford’s account to the secondary source account. What specific details about the Pilgrims’ first year are included in both accounts? List as many as you can.
2. What key differences do you see in these accounts? In a sentence or two, explain the most important way in which the two accounts differ.

The Colonial Era 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*

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The Colonial Era: 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*

[This section is not available for review on sample pages]

The Colonial Era: Assessment 7

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three primary source 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.

Document 1: A Written Primary Source

It being one chief project of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times by keeping them in an unknown language, so in these latter times by persuading people not to read any language, so that at least the Scripture's true sense and meaning might be clouded and corrupted with false explanations of the text by saint-seeming deceivers; and to the end that learning may not be buried in the grave of our forefathers, in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors.

It is therefore ordered that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to fifty households shall forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read.... And it is further ordered, that when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families or householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university.

Source Information: Massachusetts Bay Colony was founded by a large Puritan migration from England in 1629. In a brief time, many new towns were founded in the colony. This document is part of the text of the Massachusetts School Law of 1647. The law was enacted by the Massachusetts General Court, which was the colony's governing assembly. This School Law reflects the high regard Puritans had for literacy. It also reflects the deep religious thinking that guided all public decisions in the colony, especially in its early decades.

Source: Shurtleff, Nathaniel Bradstreet, ed. 1853. *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England: Vol. II, 1642–1649*. Google Books. <http://books.google.com/books?id=ND8OAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Document 2: A Visual Primary Source

Source Information: This close-up photo is of the colonial New England tombstone of John Foster, Dorchester, dated 1681. The tombstone carving is attributed to the Stone Carver of Boston. On the right in the image is an angel holding an hour glass. The sun shines above, and the angel is fighting to stop death from putting out a flame. That flame stands for a person's spiritual life.

Source: Ludwig, Allan, photographer. "[Detailed Close-up of Colonial Tombstone: John Foster, Dorchester, Mass. 1681—Attributed to the Stone Carver of Boston.]" Photograph. N.d. From Library of Congress, Miscellaneous Items in High Demand. Accessed August 1, 2013. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2005681040/>.

Document 3: A Visual/Written Primary Source



Courtesy of the Library of Congress. Accessed at: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006685814/>

A—In Adam's Fall We sinned all.

B—The life to mend, this Book attend.

C—The Cat doth play, and after slay.

D—A Dog will bite a thief at night.

E—An Eagle's flight is out of sight.

F—The idle Fool is whipt at school.

G—As runs the Glass, man's life doth pass.

H—My Book and Heart shall never part.

J—Job feels the rod, yet blesses God.

K—Proud Korah's troop was swallowed up.

L—The Lion bold the lamb doth hold.

M—The Moon gives light in time of night.

Source Information: This page from a New England primer was used to teach the alphabet to very young children in the so-called “dame schools” run by young women in most New England villages in the 1600s and 1700s. Above is the text for the letters shown in the primer.

Source: McGuffey's Eclectic Primer (Cincinnati, 1849). Woodcut print. From Library of Congress, Miscellaneous Items in High Demand. Accessed August 1, 2013. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006685814/>.

Student Handout

Assessment Questions

1. The New England Puritans believed strongly that spiritual matters must be central for each individual and for society in general. How do these three documents illustrate the nature of this belief? In your response, refer specifically to features in all three documents.
2. Notice the visual features in Documents 2 and 3. What, if anything, do these features add to your understanding of Puritan spiritual views as expressed by all three documents?