Some politicians have proposed that prisoners need to have jobs and improve their literacy skills. In a pilot project, prisoners went back to their traditional job of making license plates. To meet the educational goals of the program, prisoners had to look up the capital city of each of the fifty U.S. states and five territories, and make plates with the capital’s name instead of the usual slogan. For instance, they were supposed to replace ALOHA STATE with HONOLULU, HAWAII.

Unfortunately, the prisoners thought it was more fun to rearrange the movable type used to stamp out the plates. Below are given their results, with the full name of each capital and state scrambled at the top of the plate. Can you figure out which belong to which state? For some states, they made it a little easier for you by including the name of the state at the bottom of the plate—but still scrambled.

To make it tougher, the prisoners often found state or capital names hiding in longer names. For example, in a state that sometimes suffers from heavy rains, they could have scrambled the capital and state to FACE ASTRONOMICAL RAIN, but for the plate they chose the more confusing A CAR, A FROLIC, MINNESOTA, hoping the Minnesota clue will mislead you.

Scoring: 55—you deserve a vanity plate, 50-54—you almost to home plate (check an almanac for those territories), 35-49—are you sure you can tell a license plate from a hot-plate?, 20-34—you probably suffer from what stamp collectors call a “plate block”, 10-19—you’ve probably been living on a Petri plate.

3 calming a shining; I’m aching
4 a chic duet for Trenton
5 Alaska yet? cult hit!
6 apex in a horizon
7 Austin: no aural boogie; oil in a U.S.A.
8 barely know any
9 bravery? ha, I spurn Lansing; navy in Naples
10 constructing Hawaii’s bold motif
the jobs and
were back
the educa-
capital city
make plates
instance, they
earrange the
their
abled at the
state? For
ling the name
ed.
upital names
ames suffers
state to
re confusing
lead you.

11 darker upstate Ohio; aha, took dust
12 dawdle over ERA; lewd area
13 Denver: hidden Acropolis; harden, solid
14 disown insomniacs
15 Dover: clean odor; cool road
16 drench Iowa's corn, hemp; her new mishap
17 even Helena isn't less; seen teens?
18 face women in Texas; we mix one
19 forestall, sail ahead; old, fair
20 gee, so normal

21 get Albany aroma, Mom?
22 ha, I'm rediscovering all Atlantis; driving snails
23 hark! trot back, Madison; drank to oath
24 I hid minor craving
25 Inn liaison--Diana paid
26 inspire solid filling
27 interpret novel, Mom
28 it's a sax tune
29 joy if crises, misfortune
30 Ma! Pa! a Macon, Georgia soap

31 Maine: so, so wide
32 no eyeing my wench; on my wig
33 non-liberal snack; a banker's
34 o, I haul, I haul now
35 oh, amoral, bucolic Austin; also no haircut
36 Ohio abides
37 Ohio can arrange thrill; anchor no trial
38 Omaha, cook my hot alkali; look! a ham
39 ouch, mob Louis
40 oust Maine plants; nominates

41 Pop is sick--miss Janis
42 re-entry, no new jets
43 rotate again, gal
44 shake a gala acorn
45 sly, inland panorama; my lad ran
46 sneak past oak
47 so, snob matches status; must stash case
48 sun aura projection; I cue torpor
49 talk, talks, carries on
50 tardy? no vacancies

51 then a man alone; not a man
52 try knock after funk
53 U.S.A., mute again
54 Um, AAA gang?
55 Wisconsin: the great rival; sewing trivia