

Because ME only borders one other state, we know it must be either the first or last state in the path. In fact, because NY isolates New England from the rest of the country, either the first six or last six states must be the New England states. That means NY is either State 7 or 42. The first clue says that all 2 word states have numbers that are either prime or a perfect square so NY can't be 42, which means the path must start in ME.

ME is 1, NH is 2. We can't loop back through MA twice, so VT must be 3, MA 4, RI 5, CT 6 and NY 7.

NY's only remaining bordering states are PA and NJ. NJ can't be 8, so PA must be. If NJ isn't 9, it could only be the final state in the path. That would make its number 48, which doesn't work, so NJ is 9, DE is 10 and MD is 11. WV can't be 12, so VA must be 12.

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Now, let's switch gears and consider clue 2 about AL's number being lower than TN's.

SC only borders two states, NC and GA, so its number will be between the other two states (we know it can't be at the end of the path). Because both of the Carolinas must be either primes or perfect squares, they can only be 16 & 17 or 36 & 37. The only way those two states could be 16 & 17 would be if the path went VA(12)-WV(13)-KY(14)-TN(15)-NC(16)-SC(17). FL only borders AL and GA, so the path would have to continue with GA(18)-FL(19)-AL(20).

Clue 2 says that AL's number is smaller than TN's, so that doesn't work and NC and SC must be 36 & 37. And because the path must go AL-FL-GA-SC-NC-TN, we can see that AL is 33, GA is 34, FL is 35, SC is 36, NC is 37 and TN is 38. After placing those we can also see that MS must be 32.

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Clue 3 says that WI and NV are perfect squares, so they are 16 and 25. Because NV is more than 4 states away from VA, it must be that WI is 16 and NV is 25.

Now, imagine drawing straight lines (forget about states for right now) from VA (12) to WI(16) to NV(25) to MS(32). Because TN(38) borders both VA and MS, the box drawn by these lines shows that the end of the path after TN must only include states in the interior of the country.

Conversely, all the unknown states on the exterior of the remaining shape must be between 12 and 32. Going counter clockwise from VA these are: WV, OH, MI, MN, ND, MT, ID, WA, OR, CA, AZ, NM, TX, LA.

With that in mind, the path between VA and WI must go WV(13)-OH(14)-MI(15).

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There are three two word states left: ND, SD and NM, and seven primes left: 17,19,23,29,41,43,47. None of those states is adjacent to WI, so none of the three is 17.

We learned that NM can't be any of the primes over 40. If NM was 23, the path between it and WI at 16 would necessarily cut off the NM-MS path. NM must be 29, and to connect NM and MS, TX must be 30 and LA must be 31.

If the path between NV and NM excluded AZ in any way (say UT(26)-CO(27)-OK(28)), then AZ would have to be 24 and moving backward, CA would be 23, OR 22, WA 21, ID 20. There would be no way to connect WI at 16 and ID at 20 that would make ND a prime number, so AZ must be between NV and NM.

If the path from NV went next to CA(26), AZ would be 27, and we would have to make one step diagonally across two of the 4 Corner states to get to NM at 29. That is explicitly disallowed, so CA can't be 26. We'd have the same issue if UT was 26, so the path between NV and NM must go AZ(26)-UT(27)-CO(28).

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Now, let's work backward from NV at 25 to WI at 16. CA must be 24, OR 23, WA 22, ID 21. ND must be prime so MT is 20 and ND is 19. That means MN must be 18 and IA must be 17.

There's only one way to finish the remaining states from TN at 38: KY is 39, IN 40, IL 41, MO 42, AR 43, OK 44, KS 45, NE 46, SD 47 (remember it must be prime), WY 48.