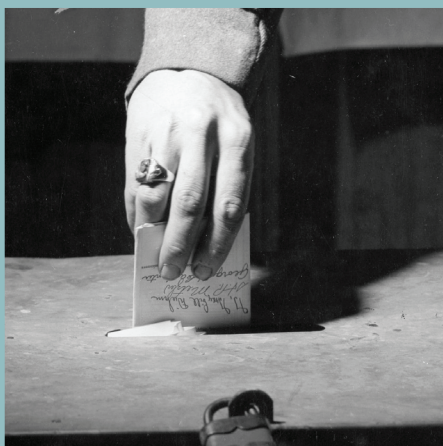




GEORGIA
HISTORY FESTIVAL

EDUCATORS GUIDE

2026-2027 *GEORGIA HISTORY FESTIVAL*



GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1776
2026
250 AMERICA GA



2026-2027
Georgia History Festival
Connecting Classrooms and Community

The *Georgia History Festival* is the signature K-12 educational program of the Georgia Historical Society (GHS), reaching hundreds of thousands of students statewide. Beginning with the new school year in September, a variety of public programs, exhibits, events, and educational resources bring history to life for students of all ages and encourage Georgians to explore the richness of our state's past. In addition to new online and in-person programming, the Festival includes popular annual events, such as the Colonial Faire and Muster living-history program; Super Museum Sunday, the Georgia Day Expo, and the Governor's induction of two modern-day Georgia Trustees at the elegant Trustees Gala.

2026-2027 Festival Focus of Study

**From Town Halls to the National Mall:
Civic Engagement in American History**

Each year, GHS selects a significant topic in Georgia's history as the focus of the *Festival's* educational programs and resources. During the 250th commemoration of the founding of the United States, GHS programs, resources, and publications explore the vital role that democratic institutions play in sustaining a republican form of government.

As part of the Georgia Historical Society's US250 commemoration, the 2026-2027 *Festival* will explore the vital role of citizenship, voting, constitutional amendments, and the history that has shaped them in Georgia and the United States. Students will examine how the right to vote and the meaning of citizenship have expanded, evolved, and been challenged over time, from the founding era through the modern civil rights movement and beyond. We will also examine the role of frequent, free, and open elections and the foundational notion, first established by Washington, that in this self-governing republic those elected hold power in the name of the people, and they must all surrender power peacefully and without violence when the people have spoken. Aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, this study will support students' understanding of the historical struggles, constitutional developments, and civic responsibilities that continue to shape participation at the local, state, and national level in American democracy today.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

An Evening with Alan Taylor

September 10, 2026 | 7:00 p.m. | Savannah

Join the Georgia Historical Society as author and historian Alan Taylor is inducted as the 2026 Vincent J. Dooley Distinguished Teaching Fellow and then discusses his groundbreaking scholarly work and publications.

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From Poll Taxes to Protests to the Presidency: How Civic Engagement Changed America in the 20th Century

October 14, 2026 | 7:00 p.m. | Atlanta

Dr. Kevin Gaines of the University of Virginia will explore how civic engagement changed America in the years following World War II.

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Colonial Faire and Muster

February 6-7, 2027 | Wormsloe State Historic Site, Savannah

This popular living-history programs explores life in eighteenth-century Georgia through cooking, dancing, craft, and military demonstrations. Fees apply on Saturday, but admission is free on Sunday.

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Super Museum Sunday

February 7, 2027 | Multiple sites statewide

Explore history, arts, and culture in communities throughout Georgia as over 100 museums and historic sites across the state open to the public for free during this popular event organized as part of the annual Georgia History Festival.

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Georgia Day Expo

February 2027 (Date TBD) | Savannah

Students explore Georgia history through demonstrations and hands-on activity booths during this commemoration of the founding of Georgia at Savannah.

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Georgia History Festival Savannah Conversation

Date: TBD

Join GHS President and CEO Dr. W. Todd Groce and tGHS Senior Historian Dr. Stan Deaton for an engaging and timely discussion inspired by the 2026-2027 Georgia History Festival theme of civic engagement in American history.

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Trustees Gala

April 24, 2027 | Savannah

Join the Georgia Historical Society and leaders from across the state as we induct the 2027 Georgia Trustees, two exemplary Georgians whose history-making accomplishments and service reflect the original Trustees' ideals.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Civil Conversations with Dr. Stan Deaton

Dr. Stan Deaton, the Dr. Elaine B Andrews Distinguished Historian, discussed civic engagement with community leaders, examining how and why they got involved in public service and why citizen engagement is so important.

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Georgia Day Video

In recognition of the anniversary of Georgia's founding, this short online program is a visual exploration of the colony's founding and early development. Featuring greetings from friends and leaders across the state, this all-ages presentation includes classroom resources for varying grade levels connecting the video to the *Festival* theme.

New educational activities aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence will connect the story of the founding to civic engagement throughout Georgia's history.

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Informational Videos

What is the Georgia History Festival and how can you participate?

Educators will be introduced to the 2026-2027 *Georgia History Festival* theme and activities. The video will highlight specific online and in-person resources and events that utilize GHA's unique collection of archival materials to support classroom engagement around Georgia and American History.

Georgia Day Expo Informational Webinar

December 2026 post Date

An informational webinar for educators, parents, chaperones, etc. to learn about the annual Georgia Day Expo, which will take place in February, 2027 (Date TBD).



Resources about Citizenship and Civic Engagement

Citizenship is more than a legal status, and it is more than voting. Citizenship is the way people participate in their communities, understand their rights and responsibilities, and work with others to strengthen public life. The Georgia Historical Society is honored to present From Town Halls to the National Mall: Civic Engagement in American History. A series of Georgia Standards of Excellence-aligned lessons challenging students explore what it means to be an active and responsible citizen at school, in their community, in Georgia, and in the United States and what the history of civic engagement looks like in the United States and Georgia.

This guide is an overview of this year's GHF materials with a brief description of what they are and how they might be able to be used in the classroom. Links within the text will take you to the resources, and the resources have additional resources such as student PDFs, slide presentations, and assessment tools to aid with the delivery of content linked within the lesson. The goal was to make the content delivery as easy as possible for teachers. The lessons have also been designed as an à la carte model. There is no need to use every element within the lesson—choose what works for your class and your learners.

The lessons throughout this program ask students to think about a central question: What are the responsibilities of citizenship? Students will examine how citizens help democracy work by respecting the rights of others, following laws and rules, staying informed, voting when eligible, volunteering, communicating with public officials, and contributing to the common good. Students should understand that citizenship is not limited to adults or elected leaders. Young people can practice good citizenship by listening respectfully, helping others, learning about public issues, and taking part in community life.

Citizenship in Everyday Life

The citizenship lessons begin with the idea that civic responsibility starts with everyday choices. Students are asked to consider how people help make a classroom, school, neighborhood, city, state, or country work well. For younger students, this may include being kind, helping others, following rules, telling the truth, listening, taking turns, and caring for shared spaces. These actions may seem small, but they help students understand that citizenship is practiced long before a person is old enough to vote.

Access K Lesson - SSKCG1

For upper elementary and middle school students, the lessons build a deeper understanding of rights, responsibilities, and civic participation. Students examine the difference between having a right and carrying out a responsibility. They learn that rights, such as speech, assembly, petition, voting, and due process, allow people to participate in public life. At the same time, responsibilities, such as staying informed, obeying laws, serving communities, and respecting the rights of others, help democracy function.

Access 3-5 Lesson - SS3CG2, SS3CG2.b, SS5CG1, SS5CG1.a

Access Middle School Lesson - SS8CG1.c

Staying Informed and Media Literacy

One of the most important responsibilities of citizenship is staying informed. Citizens need accurate information to make thoughtful decisions, understand public issues, and participate responsibly. In today's information environment, this also means students need media literacy skills.

From a historical perspective, the same skills historians use to evaluate primary sources can also help people understand modern information. Historians do not simply accept a document, photograph, speech, or newspaper article at face value. They ask who created it, when it was created, why it was created, what evidence it provides, what perspective it reflects, and what other sources can confirm or challenge it. Those same questions are just as useful when reading a news article, watching a video, looking at a social media post, or deciding whether an online claim can be trusted.

In both history and modern media, information has a source, a purpose, and a point of view. A primary source from the past may reveal important evidence, but it may also include bias, exaggeration, missing context, or limited perspective. Modern information works the same way. A post may contain a true fact but leave out important details. A headline may be technically accurate but designed to make people angry or afraid. A photo or video may be real but presented in a misleading way. By using historical thinking skills, students can slow down, ask better questions, compare sources, and make more informed judgments about what they see and share.

For middle school students, media literacy should focus on foundational habits. Students should learn how to identify credible sources, separate facts from opinion, recognize emotional language, notice when a headline is designed to get attention, and check information before sharing it. Middle school students should begin to understand that not all information is equally reliable, even when it looks polished or appears online.

Access MS Teacher Guide - Standards: L6-8RHSS5, L6-8RHSS6, L6-8RHSS8, L6-8RHSS9

For high school students, media literacy should move deeper into analysis. Students should compare multiple sources, evaluate evidence, recognize bias and point of view, understand algorithms, examine how images and language shape interpretation, and consider how media messages influence public opinion. High school students should be encouraged to ask who created a message, what evidence supports it, what perspective is included, what perspective may be missing, and why the message was created.

Access HS Teacher Guide - Standards: L9-10RHSS1, L9-10RHSS5, L9-10RHSS6, L11-12RHSS8

Teachers can connect media literacy directly to citizenship. Responsible citizens do not need to know everything, but they do need to know how to ask better questions. Staying informed is not passive. It requires attention, judgment, and care.

The Three Branches of Government and Checks and Balances

The three branches lesson helps students understand how the United States Constitution divides and limits government power. Students learn that the legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch enforces laws, and the judicial branch interprets laws. They also learn that no branch has all the power.

The lesson introduces students to separation of powers and checks and balances. Separation of powers means government authority is divided among different branches. Checks and balances mean each branch has some power to limit or influence the others. This system was designed to prevent

one person or group from becoming too powerful.

For younger students, the lesson focuses on identifying each branch, understanding its main job, and recognizing basic examples of checks and balances. For high school students, the lesson moves further into constitutional reasoning. Students examine why the Framers worried about concentrated power and why conflict between branches was built into the system. Examples may include presidential vetoes, congressional overrides, Senate confirmations, judicial review, executive orders, impeachment, war powers, and congressional oversight.

Access Upper Elementary / Middle School - SS3CGa.a, SS4CG1.c, SS4CG1.d, SS8CG2, SS8CG3, SS8CG4

Access US History, Government Lessons - SSCG3.c, SSCG4.1, SSCH4.b, SSCG8.d

This lesson connects directly to citizenship because citizens need to understand how power works in a constitutional democracy. Knowing how the government is structured helps students understand where decisions are made, who has authority, how power is limited, and how citizens can respond when they want the government to act.

Voting and Voting Rights

Voting remains one of the most important responsibilities of citizenship. Through voting, citizens help choose leaders and shape laws, policies, and public priorities. Students should understand that voting connects citizenship to representation and political power.

At the same time, students should learn that voting rights in the United States did not expand in a simple or steady path. Access to the ballot changed over time through state laws, constitutional amendments, court cases, federal legislation, civic activism, and public debate. In Georgia and across the United States, voting rules have included requirements related to property ownership, taxes, residency, registration, race, gender, age, citizenship, criminal convictions, and other qualifications.

Access The History of Voting in Georgia through the Voting Rights Act of 1965 - US History: SSUSH10.c, SSUSH10.d, SSUSH13.d, SSUSH16.b, American Government: SSCG7, SSCG7.a, SSCG7.c, SSCG7.d

This could also be useful for Georgia Studies Teachers as a refresher on voting history.

The voting lessons help students examine how access to the ballot expanded and contracted over time. Students should understand that the right to vote has been connected to larger debates about citizenship, equality, representation, federalism, and political power. They should also understand that voting rights were not simply handed down from one generation to the next. Many people organized, protested, petitioned, litigated, lobbied, and campaigned to gain or protect access to the ballot.

Camilla Massacre Video

The Women's Suffrage Movement in Georgia Digital Publication

Primus King and the Civil Rights Movement Focused Inquiry

Connecting the Lessons

Together, these lessons show students that citizenship includes knowledge, action, responsibility, and participation. Students learn how people help their communities, how citizens use rights responsibly, how government power is divided and limited, how people communicate with public officials, and how voting rights have shaped American democracy.

The lessons are designed to help students move from simple definitions to deeper understanding. A student may begin by saying that a good citizen follows rules or helps others. Over time, that student should also understand that citizens stay informed, respect rights, follow the laws, participate in public life, communicate with leaders, examine evidence, care for public spaces, and vote when eligible.

The goal of these lessons is not to tell students what to think. The goal is to help students understand how civic life works and how they can participate thoughtfully, responsibly, and respectfully. Citizenship is not a single action. It is a habit of paying attention, asking questions, listening to others, caring for shared places, understanding government, and working toward the common good.

Visit the *Georgia History Festival* Educator Page for full details.

