

## Celebrate the Semiquincentennial

America's Semiquincentennial, the 250th anniversary of the signing of our Declaration of Independence, provides a rare opportunity to deepen your school and community's understanding of America's founding all year long. Consider the following ideas as you plan your school's celebration of our nation's Semiquincentennial.

### In the Classroom

- **The Hillsdale American History & Civics Curriculum.** Hillsdale College's American History and Civics Curriculum takes the scope and sequence from the K-12 Program Guide, and rounds it out with a full teachers guide, authored by our own team here in Hillsdale and teachers in Hillsdale affiliated schools. The curriculum is available for [free download](#) and includes the following:
  - American history lessons from pre-European Exploration through Reconstruction for K-12 teachers
  - American history lessons from the Gilded Age to present day for middle and high school teachers
  - Complete civics and government courses for middle and high school teachers
  - Hillsdale College-vetted book, online course, and resource recommendations
  - Student-ready primary sources
  - Sample assignments, activities, and assessments
  - An Introduction that includes the principles of the curriculum, pedagogical guidance, and advice for adopting the curriculum
- **Free pocket U.S. Constitution & Declaration of Independence booklets.** [Order these from Hillsdale College](#) for your students learning about early American history.
- **"The Story of America" videos.** Hillsdale College partnered with the White House to create ["The Story of America,"](#) a video series highlighting the characters and events leading to independence. This series is not only beautiful to watch, but it may be helpful in approaching the topics in the classroom, especially in upper grades.
- **Encourage your students to participate in the America's Field Trip national contest.** Students in grades 3-12 who share their perspectives on what America means to them — either through artwork or an essay – will have the chance to earn a once-in-a-lifetime field trip experience at one of 16 different iconic American landmarks or cultural sites, including Mount Rushmore, the National Archives Museum, Kennedy Space Center, and Yellowstone National Park — just to name a few. Learn more about [America's Field Trip contest here.](#)

## In your School

- **Organize a Hillsdale Online Courses Club.** Invite parents, faculty, and staff, to watch a [Hillsdale College online course](#) on their own time and then gather, either in person or virtually, on a regular basis to discuss what they've learned as they move through the sessions of the course. Choose from a variety of early American History topics, such as "[Colonial America: From Wilderness to Civilization](#)," "[Constitution 101: The Meaning and History of the Constitution](#)," "[The Great American Story: A Land of Hope](#)," and "[American Heritage: from the Colonial Settlement to the Current Day](#)." Other courses coming in 2026: "The American Revolution" and "The Declaration of Independence"!
- **Create a permanent display of classical and American art in your school.** Ask parents or donors to sponsor a framed print—including paintings of our American founders, meetings, and scenes—that can be displayed in your school's hallways and/or classrooms.
- **Create a temporary Founders Museum.** The virtual [White House Founders Museum](#) includes pictures, descriptions, and videos in which the [paintings comes to life](#) for the 56 Signers of the Declaration, six Ladies of the Revolution, and 20 Key Events. We invite you to visit the website [here](#) to print the Founders portraits and other images to create a dedicated exhibit for your classrooms. There is a [detailed installation guide](#) (under Create Your Own Founders Museum) to make it as easy as possible.
- **Host America 250-themed music performances.** For your spring band, orchestra, and choir concerts, work with students to perform songs from American composers and songwriters.
- **Organize America 250-themed dress-up days.** Designate certain Red, White, and Blue days, encouraging students to wear these colors on those select casual days; and/or organize a day in which students can dress up as their favorite historical figure or literary character from the American Founding period.
- **Host an "America 250 Fine Arts Night."** As a part of regular art instruction, consider having your art teacher(s) work with students to create works related to early American history, such as the American flag of 1776 for elementary students, paintings of American landscapes for middle school students, and copies of iconic American paintings or sculpture for high school students. Display this artwork in your school hallways or gym and also have band and/or orchestra students perform patriotic music throughout the evening.
- **Host an "America 250 movie night" at your school.** In the spring, invite school families, donors, and members of the community for a movie night at your school in which you show "[The Story of America](#)" video series. Kick the evening off with some patriotic music performed by your students and some quick remarks from your school leader. Invite your PTO to sell hot dogs, popcorn, and apple pie! Order [free pocket copies of the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence](#) from Hillsdale as a party favor for your guests!
- **Start an American History Book Club for parents.** Encourage your PTO to organize a parent-led book club to read and discuss books that deepen their knowledge of American History.

Recommended reading (part of the Hillsdale College K-12 curriculum) include books such as *Land of Hope*, by Hillsdale College professor, Dr. Wilfred McClay.

### In your Community

- **Host an America 250 Speaker Series.** Invite local historians, authors, local attorneys, or think tank representatives who focus on free speech, etc. to present various topics regarding the American founding.
- **Throw a birthday party for the nation.** As your younger students are learning about the American Revolution, invite your school and local community to an America 250 birthday party (school assembly) in which students perform recitations and patriotic music, highlight the accomplishments made possible by the Declaration of Independence, and serve birthday cake!
- **Commemorate Memorial Day.** Consider implementing [The Grateful Nation Project](#), which utilizes “Hero Cards” of soldiers, sailors, and airmen who died while in service to our country with biographical details for those interested in learning more about these fallen heroes. Sharing their stories is both an honor to those who served and an enrichment for your students, helping them to connect with the individual narratives and sacrifices of these men and women.
- **Commemorate Veterans Day.** Invite veterans to school to talk to classes and/or the entire student body about their experiences serving our nation. Have your K-6 students recite the intro to the Declaration of Independence.
- **Participate in the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade in your community.** Ask your PTO or a group of upper school students to create an entry/float for your local Independence Day parade. Consider having students and/or teachers dress up like the founding fathers and stage a reenactment of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Also consider 1<sup>st</sup> graders recite the first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence every 10 minutes or so, and hand out little American flags or pins to the crowd.
- **Form an after-school Civics Club.** If your school doesn’t already have a way for students to volunteer in your community, consider forming a civics club for both lower and upper school students. Identify opportunities in which students can give their time and energy to helping others and making their community a better place. In line with America 250, consider partnering with a local VFW to rake leaves or pull weeds for elderly veterans, mail care packages to troops overseas, or create thank you cards for veterans, thanking them for their service.
- **Sponsor family-friendly community events.** Have a school presence at well-attended community events that attract families with school-aged children, such as kid festivals, farmers markets, art fairs, etc. Offer free America 250-themed activities (crafts or games) to attract young families to your booth where they can learn more about your school and enrollment opportunities.

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