



Professional Development Workshops for Educators from the National Archives

For decades civic literacy, individual rights, and historical understanding have been waning in America. As the 250th anniversary of the country's founding approaches, the National Archives programming is putting history to work.



Recent statistics prompt action:

- 68% of Americans can't correctly name all three branches of the U.S. Government
- 33% of Americans can't name any of the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment
- 75% of Americans can't pass the citizenship exam

The National Archives is uniquely positioned to change the trajectory of these statistics by supporting teachers as they inspire students with the knowledge and the skills to be active participants in our national civic life.

The Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives has conducted educator professional development workshops for more than a decade. The National Archives Foundation is working with the Archives to dramatically expand these workshops to provide educators with tools and strategies to teach students about the Constitution and key moments in U.S. history.

The National Archives Foundation seeks to dramatically increase students' understanding of the nation's founding documents through our expanded offerings via partnerships with presidential libraries, state humanities councils, local chambers of commerce, state history museums, federal reserve banks, and other influential institutions.

Each workshop provides teachers with the resources that they request most:

- Access to content apolitical and fact-based information from master teachers (which may also include expert scholars, historians, professors, authors)
- Workshop on how to engage wide range of learners using primary source documents
- Guidance on how to create safe discussions on potentially divisive topics in civic life
- Standards-based materials and activities using primary sources that are ready to plug into their curriculum immediately
- Address topics that teachers have reported having the most difficulty teaching

Professional Development Workshop Offerings

1. *Teaching Six Big Ideas in the Constitution*

Summary: This lesson engages students in a study of the Constitution and the major concepts of government that underlie it. Students collaborate to create a visual “map” of the Constitution and then analyze the Charter’s main ideas in a variety of ways, including analyzing primary sources and debating core constitutional principles.

2. *Digital App: Congress Creates the Bill of Rights*

Summary: This digital app (available for iPad and as a pdf) enables students to explore how the First Congress proposed amendments to the Constitution in 1789. Its core is the Senate Markup of amendments passed by the House. Students study primary sources to learn about the chronology, issues, people, and processes that shaped the Bill of Rights.

3. *The Legislative Process*

Summary: Students collaborate to complete an oversized board game/flowchart in a lesson illustrating the process of how a bill becomes a law, and they analyze historic congressional documents to identify what happens at each step along the way.



4. *What Congress Does and why it Matters*

Summary: Students collaboratively assemble a visual model depicting twenty congressional actions in a lesson that teaches the concepts of representation, separation of powers, and the constitutional role of Congress. They strengthen their understanding by analyzing primary sources and congressional actions.

5. *In Their Own Words: Women’s Petitions to Congress*

Summary: Students analyze women’s petitions to Congress from five eras to identify the issues women petitioned about, place the petitions in the context of their time, and understand the ongoing work of women to achieve full equality under the Constitution.

6. *eBook: Representing Congress: Clifford K. Berryman’s Political Cartoons.*

Summary: *Representing Congress* is an eBook that presents 39 political cartoons and additional learning resources to engage students in discussing Congress’ constitutional role, its processes, and its defining features. It features political cartoons by Clifford K. Berryman who was one of Washington’s best-known and most-admired cartoonists from 1896 to 1950.

In addition, the Archives offers programming for teaching the fundamental principles of Government.

For more information or to become a partner organization, contact Jim Dumas, Deputy Executive Director, at jim.dumas@archivesfoundation.org.