



# **PALMETTO CIVICS PROJECT**

**AN INITIATIVE OF THE SC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

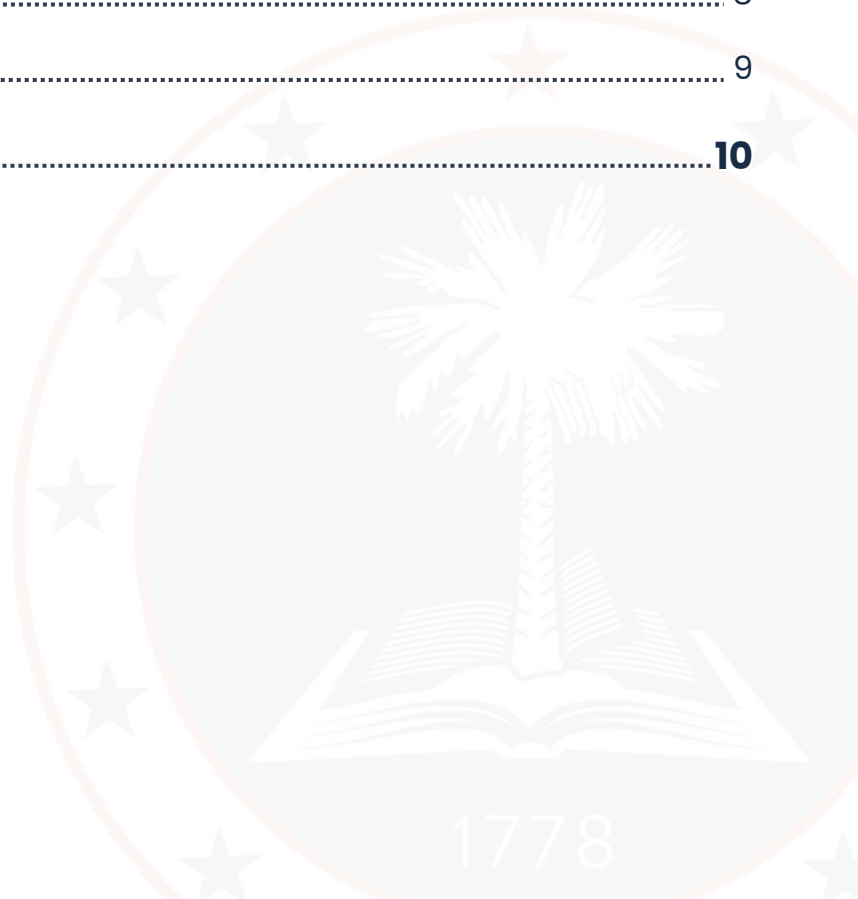
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# **TOOLKIT**

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# Introduction to Summer SC 250 and the Palmetto Civics Project

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The Summer SC 250 activities within the Palmetto Civics Project provide students with meaningful opportunities to explore South Carolina’s critical role in the American Revolution and to better understand the foundations of our nation’s freedoms. As the United States commemorates the 250th anniversary of its independence, it is essential that students recognize how the events, people, and places of South Carolina helped shape the course of the Revolution and the principles that continue to define our democracy.

With more Revolutionary War battles fought on its soil than anywhere else, South Carolina endured years of occupation and conflict and produced leaders whose courage and sacrifice were instrumental in securing American independence. From the pivotal Battle of Sullivan’s Island (Fort Moultrie) to the resilience of Patriots throughout the Lowcountry and backcountry, South Carolinians played an integral role in turning the tide of the war. Learning this history helps students see their state not as a peripheral participant, but as a central figure in the fight for liberty and self-governance.



The Palmetto Civics Project’s Summer SC 250 activities are designed to deepen students’ historical understanding while strengthening civic identity and pride. Through place-based learning, primary source analysis, student-led inquiry, and community engagement, students connect past struggles to present-day freedoms. These experiences encourage students to reflect on the values of liberty, representation, and civic responsibility that emerged from the Revolution and continue to guide our constitutional system.

Celebrating the American Revolution is not simply about remembering historical events; it is about understanding why those events matter today. The freedoms secured during the Revolution—such as self-rule, individual rights, and the rule of law—require informed and engaged citizens to sustain them. By participating in SC 250 activities, students gain a greater appreciation for the sacrifices made to secure these freedoms and a clearer understanding of their own role in preserving them.

Through the Palmetto Civics Project, South Carolina students are empowered to see themselves as heirs to a powerful civic legacy. The Summer SC 250 activities help ensure that the story of the American Revolution is not distant or abstract, but personal, relevant, and deeply connected to the places students call home.

# Purpose of This Toolkit

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This toolkit equips district leaders, curriculum coordinators, and school administrators with clear guidance and practical tools to promote, implement, and engage students and teachers in the Summer SC 250 activities as part of the Palmetto Civics Project. It focuses on translating statewide civic education priorities into meaningful, accessible summer opportunities for students and families, while learning more.

Building on the project's overall mission of celebrating America 250 and enhancing civics education, this toolkit provides key engagement activities and initiatives while also supporting districts in:

- **Promoting consistent, high-quality civic learning experiences beyond the classroom**
- **Increasing student participation through interactive, choice-driven activities**
- **Strengthening family and community involvement in civic education**
- **Providing ready-to-use messaging and communication strategies for broad outreach**

The toolkit emphasizes a coordinated, user-friendly experience centered around a single access point, allowing students, families, and educators to easily explore and participate in all available opportunities.

## Overview of the Palmetto Civics Project

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The Palmetto Civics Project, led by the South Carolina Department of Education, is a statewide initiative designed to strengthen civic literacy, deepen understanding of American history and government, and prepare students to be informed and engaged citizens.

At its core, the project connects academic learning with real-world civic experiences. Through a coordinated set of engagement initiatives, the project encourages students to explore history, reflect on civic values, and actively participate in their communities.



These initiatives include:

- A **Summer SC 250 Essay Contest** that promotes critical thinking, reflection, and student voice
- An **America 250 Reading List** that supports independent and family-based exploration of U.S. history and civics
- A **Superintendent Video Message** that builds awareness and reinforces the importance of civic learning
- The **Summer SC 250 Passport**, which encourages hands-on learning, service, and character development
- Interactive experiences such as “**Who’s Your Favorite Revolutionary War Hero?**”, fostering curiosity and historical exploration
- Additional participation opportunities that invite students to share, reflect, and engage with their communities

Together, these activities create a flexible, accessible framework that supports year-round civic engagement, with a strong emphasis on summer learning and family participation.

All engagement opportunities are accessible through a [centralized webpage](#), making it easy for districts, students, and families to navigate resources and participate at their own pace.

By integrating structured activities with open-ended exploration, the Palmetto Civics Project helps students:

- **Build a deeper understanding of civic principles and American history**
- **Apply learning in authentic, real-world contexts**
- **Develop habits of informed participation and community engagement**

The project ultimately positions civic education as an active, engaging, and shared experience—extending beyond the classroom to include families, communities, and the broader South Carolina educational landscape.



# Key Activities & Initiatives for Engagement

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The Summer SC 250 activities offer a coordinated set of six engagement activities designed to support civic learning, family involvement, and student participation during the summer and beyond. All activities will be accessible through one [link](#) that directs users to a dedicated Palmetto Civics subpage, allowing districts and families to easily explore and participate in each opportunity.

## Summer SC 250 Essay Contest

The Summer SC 250 Essay Contest invites students in grades 6–12 to reflect on civics, American history, or citizenship through a structured writing prompt. The activity supports literacy, critical thinking, and civic reflection while providing students an opportunity to share their voice.

## America 250 Reading List

This curated reading list supports the America 250 commemoration by offering age-appropriate texts that deepen students' understanding of American history, civics, and government. The list is intended for flexible use by students and families.

## Superintendent Video Message

A short video message from the State Superintendent will introduce the Palmetto Civics summer initiatives, encourage student participation, and reinforce the importance of civic learning.

## SC 250 Summer Passport

The SC 250 Summer Passport provides students with optional activities focused on history, community service, and civic engagement. This patriotic summer initiative encourages students to explore American history, practice good citizenship, and serve their communities while building character while promoting hands-on learning and family participation during the summer months.

## Who's Your Favorite Revolutionary War Hero?

Every hero tells a different story of bravery and freedom. This interactive poll invites students to learn about South Carolina–connected Revolutionary War figures and participate in a statewide vote. The activity encourages exploration, comparison, and historical discussion.

# Suggested District Communication Language

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## Short Overview:

Below is a district ready communication blurb that districts can share directly with teachers, students, and families. The tone is inviting, upbeat, and inclusive, while remaining professional and aligned to the toolkit language. It emphasizes student engagement, family participation, and statewide access.

**Subject:** Explore, Learn, and Participate: Summer SC 250 and The Palmetto Civics Project

**Communication Body:** The Summer SC 250 and Palmetto Civics Project invites South Carolina students and families to explore our shared history, strengthen civic understanding, and stay engaged all summer long. Through a variety of interactive activities, students of all ages can learn about American history, practice good citizenship, and connect classroom learning to real-world experiences.

This initiative offers free, optional engagement opportunities available to all students, including a summer essay contest, an America 250 reading list, a student activity passport, and interactive learning experiences focused on South Carolina's role in our nation's founding. Families can participate together, encouraging curiosity, service, and meaningful conversations about history and civic responsibility.

With one easy-to-use access point, students and families can explore each activity at their own pace—whether reading, reflecting, creating, voting, or sharing how they are learning and serving in their communities. The Palmetto Civics Project and Summer SC 250 activities are designed to make civic learning engaging, accessible, and relevant for every student across our state.

We encourage teachers and families to explore these opportunities together and help students discover how history, citizenship, and character shape our shared future.

### Call to Action:

Districts play a critical role in ensuring that students, families, and educators are aware of and engaged in the opportunities offered through the **Summer SC 250** and **Palmetto Civics Project**. To maximize participation and impact, districts are encouraged to communicate these opportunities **early, often, and through multiple channels**, including websites, newsletters, social media, school communications, and direct outreach to families.

The South Carolina Department of Education will provide downloadable PDF resources. Districts are encouraged to create local recognition and incentive structures that reflect community priorities and support student engagement.

To support successful implementation, districts should:

- **Designate a district contact** for civic education resources and summer engagement initiatives
- **Review available activities** and identify alignment with local curriculum, instructional goals, and summer learning plans
- **Share resources with school leaders and instructional staff**, including guidance for classroom- and family-facing communication
- **Communicate opportunities to students and families** using multiple formats (e.g., email, newsletters, social media, automated calls, flyers)
- **Post an announcement**—such as a website banner, pop-up, or homepage feature—on district and school websites throughout the summer. The Palmetto Civics Project logo is provided below.



# PALMETTO CIVICS PROJECT

## AN INITIATIVE OF THE SC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Click Here to Download Logo](#)

By amplifying these opportunities and encouraging broad participation, districts help ensure that all students can engage in meaningful civic learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom and into their homes and communities.



# One-Pager Print Out

[Click Here to Download One-Pager](#)

**SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION** Where American Freedom Was Won

**PALMETTO CIVICS PROJECT**  
AN INITIATIVE OF THE SC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The **Palmetto Civics Project** is a resource-rich initiative aimed at helping students understand and respect our civic institutions. Its goal is for every South Carolina graduate to be **prepared for American citizenship**—embracing both its privileges and responsibilities.

Most resources are **free** and available to all public, private, and home schools in the state, providing educators and parents with tools to bring American history and civic values to life. Lessons focus on liberty, self-government, and the rule of law, linking them to current citizenship duties.

In a time of declining civic literacy nationwide, this project is South Carolina's response to a diminished emphasis on American history and the Constitution. Together, we are **preparing the next generation** to engage in civic discourse, preserve freedom, and strengthen our democracy.

**Palmetto Pioneers** (Free)  
Discover the spirit of American history with the Palmetto Pioneers! Through **leadership, sacrifice, courage, perseverance, and integrity**, they've helped shape a stronger union. Check out this inspiring resource to learn the virtues that can help you succeed and build a better community!

**American Battlefield Trust** (Free)  
Discover how South Carolina Patriots turned the tide of the **Revolutionary War**—from Camden to the Battle of Monmouth. Thanks to our partnership with the American Battlefield Trust, students can explore lessons that **bring these battles to life** and your history.

**Founders Museum** (Free)  
Do you know which four South Carolinians signed the **Declaration of Independence in 1776**? Discover the answer and experience history like never before. Watch our Founding Fathers, Ladies of the Revolution, and key events come to life in this White House resource celebrating **America's 250th birthday**.

**S.C. African American History Calendar** (Free)  
For **over 35 years**, the South Carolina African American History Calendar has highlighted **notable African American role models and contributions** connected to our state. Its resources help educators, parents, and communities teach vital history that uplifts and inspires students.

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lesson Plan** (Subscription)  
From **faith** to **leadership**, Dr. King's life is a lesson from a school student's perspective.

**Summer SC 250 Essay Contest**  
The Summer SC 250 Essay Contest invites students in grades 6-12 to reflect on civics, American history, or citizenship through a structured writing prompt. The activity supports literacy, critical thinking, and civic reflection while providing students an opportunity to share their voice.

**America 250 Reading List**  
This curated reading list supports the America 250 commemoration by offering age-appropriate texts that deepen students' understanding of American history, civics, and government. The list is intended for flexible use by students and families.

**Superintendent Video Message**  
A short video message from the State Superintendent will introduce the Palmetto Civics summer initiatives, encourage student participation, and reinforce the importance of civic learning.

**SC 250 Summer Passport**  
The SC 250 Summer Passport provides students with optional activities focused on history, community service, and civic engagement. The initiative encourages students to explore American history, practice good citizenship, and serve their communities while building character while promoting hands-on learning and family participation during the summer months.

**Who's Your Favorite Revolutionary War Hero?**  
Every hero tells a different story of bravery and freedom. This interactive poll invites students to learn about South Carolina-connected Revolutionary War figures and participate in a statewide vote. The activity encourages exploration, comparison, and historical discussion.

**CELEBRATE AMERICA'S BIRTHDAY**  
**ACTIVITIES**

Explore all of our Palmetto Civics Projects Resources by scanning the QR code



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