



The National Endowment for the Humanities: Enriching K–12 Education

Whether teachers are accessing online lesson plans or attending a summer professional development program, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) provides teachers of all disciplines with the tools to create rich educational experiences for their students. And the NEH’s commitment to youth extends outside of the classroom: it supports extracurricular education through exhibition funding and grants for youth programming.

“ Anything that allows students to dig into powerful texts where they can use their voices, use their pens, and write their own stories, is so profound. ... the courses that have the humanities at the core really result in some moving experiences.”

– TERRI GREENE HENNING,
Education specialist, Saint Anselm College

The NEH helps teachers bring high-quality humanities learning to their classrooms.

- With more than 2 million unique visitors per year, the NEH’s educational website—EDSITEment—makes lesson plans and digital resources developed from NEH-funded projects accessible to K-12 teachers.
- National History Day, an NEH-funded initiative, encourages meaningful history and civic engagement for 600,000 students and 20,000-30,000 teachers per year in each state and territory. A 2011 study showed that these students outperformed their peers on state standardized tests.
- *The Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy*, published by iCivics in 2021 and funded by the NEH in partnership with the Department of Education, proposes robust history and civics education structured around seven themes that can be integrated into K-12 education. *The Roadmap* is the product of a collaboration between over 300 scholars, teachers, and parents with different political leanings and suggests techniques and practices that can support a robust exploration of American history.





“ Being able to take my experience of being in another part of the U.S., and making connections with the history there, is priceless when I can share that with my students.”

– PARTICIPANT,
Professional Development Program for K-12 Educators

The NEH supports professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers across the country.

- Nationally, professional development programs for K-12 educators provide teachers with a deeper understanding of history and culture while helping them develop new teaching methods. Since 2012 alone, these programs have reached more than 11,000 teachers, ultimately enriching the classroom experience for an estimated 2 million students.
- Programs such as “From Mesa Verde to Santa Fe: Pueblo Identity in the Southwest,” offered by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, and “American Women in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars,” offered by the New-York Historical Society, offer deep dives into underrepresented American histories.
- Landmarks Workshops such as “The Most Southern Place on Earth: Music, History, and Culture of the Mississippi Delta” and “The Transcontinental Railroad: Transforming California and the Nation” explore the history of iconic American places while instructing teachers in place-based learning techniques they can use to explore their home towns and cities.

Images:

Front: (Left) Participants in a professional development workshop learn archaeological skills. Image courtesy of Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. (Right, Top) Educators visit Dockery Farms in the Mississippi Delta. Image courtesy of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University. (Right, Bottom) Participants in “Teaching Native American Histories” visit the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and learn from tribal leaders. Image courtesy of Five Colleges, Inc.

Back: (Left) Participants in “Teaching Native American Histories” take part in a lecture. Image courtesy of Five Colleges, Inc. (Right) Participants in “The Most Southern Place on Earth” stand next to a cotton field. Image courtesy of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University.

The NEH ensures that students from all backgrounds have access to high-quality extracurricular programs.

- NEH funding helped the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities expand its PRIME TIME Family Reading and Preschool programs to underserved communities nationwide. The programs promote literacy and foster conversation about big ideas.
- With NEH support, St. Anselm College’s Access Academy developed humanities courses for refugee, immigrant, low-income, and first generation high school students in Manchester, New Hampshire. The programs help students move toward graduation while exploring topics like “Writing for Identity and Freedom.”

In 2019, the National Humanities Alliance partnered with fourteen NEH summer professional development programs for teachers to document their impact. Surveys were administered before, immediately after, and one year after the programs.

100%
of participants reported experiencing professional growth as a result of the program.

98%
of respondents said that they would recommend participating in an NEH workshop to a colleague.

86%
of respondents reported sharing resources from the program with other teachers at their school.

