



A Message to Parents and Students: Welcome to the 2026 Connecticut Social Studies Summer Challenge!

Be a Social Studies Ambassador this summer! Are you interested in the history of your community and Connecticut? Are you interested in taking civic action in your home, your town, or the state? Join students from around Connecticut in this 2026 Challenge that was created in partnership with the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, Connecticut Democracy Center at Connecticut's Old State House, and CT Public.

This summer you can be an anthropologist, archaeologist, biographer, community activist, curator, investigator, historical designer, kindness ambassador, and/or leader and voter.

Directions: The 2026 Connecticut Social Studies Summer Challenge is designed to help you find answers to questions such as "How are we connected to the past?"

1. Choose at least one category to explore this summer.
2. Gather information and take notes to help you answer the provided question. You can begin your research at your local library, the [Connecticut State Library](#) website, or at [ConnecticutHistory.org](#).
3. Document and/or attach your work in pictures, videos, presentations, written responses, informational posters, exhibits, and/or civic actions.
4. Complete the last page of this packet, include your attached work, and give to your principal in September 2026.

You may work independently or work together with a friend or family member as you research, investigate, and complete a category. Have fun and stay safe!



Categories



Be an Anthropologist (Grades K-12): *How are we connected to the past?*

- Write down all the questions you have about a Native culture that existed in your community or state prior to colonization.
- Work to uncover the answers to your questions through online or text resources, interviews, or visits.
 - Visit Connecticut museums and [historical societies](#), in-person or online, to uncover the history of this culture.
 - Visit the [Smithsonian](#) website to explore artifacts found through the centuries.
 - Visit cultural historic sites such as the [Institute for American Indian Studies](#), the [Tantaquidgeon Museum](#), or the [Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center](#).
- Gather information from your resources and take notes.
- Develop your ideas/claims about how we are connected to the past and use evidence to support your ideas/claims.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format.



Be an Archaeologist (Grades K-12): *Why is an archaeologist's job important?*

- Write down all the questions you have about an archaeologist.
- Work to uncover the answers to your questions through online or text resources, interviews, or visits.
 - Research archeology. What do archaeologists do?
 - Research the science, tools, and methods used by archaeologists.
 - Visit or volunteer at a local dig! Start by [Digging Into The Past](#).
- Gather information from your resources and take notes.
- Develop your ideas/claims about how an archaeologist's job is important and use evidence to support your ideas/claims.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format.



Be a Biographer (Grades K-12): *Who is the greatest historical figure in my community or state?*

- Choose a historical figure from your community or state.
- Write down all the questions you have about your historical figure.
- Work to uncover the answers to your questions through online or text resources, interviews, or visits.
- Gather information from your resources and take notes.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format.



Be a Community Activist (Grades 3-12): *How can I make change happen in my community?*

- Identify a specific issue in your community, state, or country.
- Explain why this issue is an important issue for your community, state, or country.
- Identify ways in which you can take action to make a positive change and do over the summer. For example, you could start a petition, inform others through posters, write a blog about the issue, etc.
- Document your work with pictures, a video, [Flipgrid](#), slide presentation, or via social media.
- If you prefer, write a letter about this issue to your elected official(s) using this [Kid Governor Student Action Resource Center](#).
- Become part of the [national movement](#) for youth to drive change in their communities.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format.



The 2026 Connecticut Social Studies Summer Challenge



Be a Community Curator (Grades 6-12): *What is significant about the history and development of my community?*

- Write down all the questions you have about your selected topic.
- Work to uncover the answers to your questions through online or text resources, interviews, or visits.
- Gather information from your resources and take notes.
- Create a museum exhibit about your community.
- Scan museum and library collections, or other online and local resources to gain context and primary sources to contextualize the history of your community. Check out: [Connecticut Digital Archive](#); [Library of Congress](#); [Newspapers of Connecticut](#); [Smithsonian Learning Lab](#); and [ResearchitCT](#).
- Curate resources and create a digital museum exhibit about your community or draw a map of the exhibit.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format.



Be a Community Investigator (Grades K-5): *How did people and groups make a difference in my community?*

- Using the [My Community and Me: At Home Activity](#) from Connecticut's Old State House, explore your community/state.
- Find something of interest to investigate in your community/state history such as a monument, building, event, story, legend, person, street name, etc.
- Write down all the questions you have about your selected topic.
- Work to uncover the answers to your questions through online or text resources, interviews, or visits.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format.



Be a Historical Designer (Grades K-12): *How and what do we remember about the past?*

- [Research or visit monuments](#) in your community/state.
- Based on your visits or research, what new historical figure would you honor if you could create a new monument in your community/state?
- Explain why this person should be honored and given a significant recognition in your community/state via [Flipgrid](#) or essay.
- Optional: Design a new monument to honor this person.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format.



Be a Kindness Ambassador (Grades K-12): *How can I make a difference in society?*

- Watch the kindness videos by the 2016 Kid Governor, Elena Tipton.
- Put into practice Elena's suggestions for ways in which you can be kind in your own home or community.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format. Consider creating and sharing a Flipgrid on the topic.



Be a Leader and a Voter (Grade 12): *What role do I play in government?*

- Lead a [voter registration drive](#) in your school/community/state
- [Contact your local Registrar of Voters or Town/City Clerk](#) for help.
- [Register to vote](#) if you are at least 17 and will be turning 18 years of age before Election Day.
- Share your learning by developing a presentation, paper, poster, or another format.



The 2026 Connecticut Social Studies Summer Challenge Log

This summer I was:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> an anthropologist | <input type="checkbox"/> a community activist | <input type="checkbox"/> a historical designer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> an archaeologist | <input type="checkbox"/> a curator | <input type="checkbox"/> a kindness ambassador |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a biographer | <input type="checkbox"/> an investigator | <input type="checkbox"/> a leader and voter |

Answer the question attached to your category of choice, and share what you learned. For example, if you chose “Be a Kindness Ambassador,” answer the question: How can I make a difference in society?

**** Attach or provide links to your presentation(s), paper(s), poster(s), etc. ****

Your name: _____

I presented this information to: _____

Signature of person I presented information to: _____