

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: Ken Burns Joins More Than 1,000 New Jersey Students on Constitution Day to Discuss the American Revolution

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PBS to Release New Classroom Resources for America's Founding Story, to Accompany Broadcast of THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION starting November 16.

Teacher/Student Workshops Led by PBS LearningMedia, NJ PBS, NJ Department of Education, along with RevolutionNJ.

NEWARK – The filmmaker Ken Burns today joined 1,000-plus students from across the state of New Jersey to commemorate Constitution Day and to discuss the importance of New Jersey to the larger story of America's founding, as part of a national tour leading up to the broadcast of his new film, THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. The film, co-directed by Sarah Botstein and David Schmidt, will air and stream on PBS beginning November 16, 2025.

"New Jersey was ground zero for the American Revolution," **said Ken Burns.** "Trenton, Princeton and Monmouth were just a few of the places that saw brutal battles. There were additional skirmishes across the state, as well as encampments in Morristown, Bernardsville and other towns and cities that we still frequent today. We're thrilled to join RevolutionNJ, the NJ Department of Education and so many young people to discuss the importance of this history to the state and our country, as well as its meaning today."

As part of the day-long event, Burns, along with his co-director Sarah Botstein and the historian Christopher Brown, who was an advisor to and appears in the film, will visit with teachers and students involved in history education workshops at Newark Public Library and Newark NJPAC. They will also attend a press conference with New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way and Kevin Dehmer, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education, and participate in a screening at Newark NJPAC hosted by Governor Phil Murphy for the students and other attendees. The screening will be moderated by the journalist Brian Williams.

"New Jersey has been, and remains, a state of revolutionary possibilities," **said Governor Murphy.** "From Washington's daring crossing of the Delaware to the turning-point victories at Trenton, Princeton, and Monmouth, more battles and skirmishes were fought here than in any other state during the Revolutionary War. We are proud of this history and thrilled to welcome renowned documentarian Ken Burns to the Garden State as we explore New Jersey's unique and enduring place in our nation's founding and its future."

"RevolutionNJ is New Jersey's official statewide initiative to plan the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America," **said Lieutenant Governor Way, who oversees RevolutionNJ in her capacity as New Jersey Secretary of State.** "Commemoration activities range from public art series to 5K races through our state's historic parks to a history-mystery podcast, but we are particularly proud of our educational initiatives. By

bringing the legacy of the American Revolution into our classrooms, we can empower the next generation to become better neighbors, citizens, and leaders in the present.”

“Constitution Day is an annual opportunity for all of our students to learn about our shared history, and this year New Jersey students were reminded just how central New Jersey was to the events surrounding the nation’s founding,” **said Department of Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer**. “Through the Revolutionary Schools initiative, the Department is proud to partner with RevolutionNJ to give schools new and innovative ways to bring history to life – helping students to connect with the history that unfolded right in their backyard. These opportunities make the story of our nation’s founding tangible for students, and they help them see their own role in shaping the future.”

The filmmakers will also be joined by representatives of [PBS LearningMedia](https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/jwypwcb>), PBS’ flagship digital platform for the classroom, to release the first set of classroom resources that will accompany the film and co-facilitate a teacher workshop with New Jersey’s public media network, NJ PBS, and Revolution NJ.

PBS LearningMedia creates unique collections of media-centric, curriculum-aligned teaching resources and experiences for all of Burns’s films, offered within the [Ken Burns in the Classroom](https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/ken-burns-in-the-classroom) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/zozpwcb>) hub on the platform. For THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, PBS LearningMedia will offer the most robust initiative to date, thanks in part to a grant from the Kern Family Foundation, to expand classroom outreach around the film and the themes covered, in the lead up to the United States’ 250th anniversary in 2026.

The classroom resources, which are being developed in consultation with educators from around the country and with leading scholars, including University of Virginia History Professor Emeritus Alan Taylor, and chief scholar at the National Constitution Center, Tom Donnelly, will pose thought-provoking questions for students and introduce new ideas, perspectives, and primary sources about the Revolutionary era. Additional classroom resources focusing on George Washington’s life and leadership will be co-created by PBS LearningMedia and George Washington’s Mount Vernon.

“We are excited to preview our new classroom resources collection on Constitution Day in New Jersey, a state so central to the American Revolution,” **said Lori Brittain, VP of PBS LearningMedia**. “These media-rich resources are designed to bring our shared history to life in new ways for students and teachers nationwide, and we’re delighted to have the opportunity to debut them with teachers and students joining the workshops and film screening hosted by RevolutionNJ and the New Jersey Department of Education.”

PBS LearningMedia is developing more than 35 classroom resources for teachers and their students in grades 3-12 drawing on content from the film and organized by commonly taught topics: life in the colonies, causes of the war, key figures and events, and consequences and legacies of the Revolutionary era. Classroom resources will address themes raised in the film, including freedom, opportunity, democracy, and the global nature of the conflict, and are designed to build students’ critical thinking skills, their ability to think in terms of cause and effect, and their ability to analyze primary sources. Resources incorporate video clips from the film, and are supported by teaching tips, discussion questions, activity suggestions, student handouts, and background readings. The collection will include student-facing interactives that use personal narratives from young people of the time to connect students with different wartime experiences, and an interactive map that will allow students to explore major battles, including two in New Jersey, the Battle of Trenton and the Battle of Monmouth.

Starting today, four of these classroom resources are now available to give teachers a preview of the collection. Topics include the Coercive Acts, Thomas Paine’s Common Sense, and military leaders Nathanael Greene and Joseph Brant, also known as Thayendanega. These resources can be found in THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION Collection on PBS LearningMedia at pbslearningmedia.org/americanrevolution.

(<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/fh0pwcb>). The full collection of classroom resources will be released on November 10, just ahead of the film broadcast premiere on November 16. Later this year and next, PBS member stations will also create related classroom resources that emphasize their local histories, native peoples, and enduring questions from the American Revolution.

To further engage students in the Revolutionary era, PBS LearningMedia and PBS member station KQED are co-hosting a national [Youth Media Challenge](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/v90pwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/v90pwcb>) centered around themes drawn from the film. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION Youth Media Challenge invites teachers to explore foundational American principles, such as liberty, self-governance, and democracy through media-making with their middle or high school students. Students will make audio, video or graphics projects to share their knowledge, ideas, and understanding of important revolutionary ideals, and historic events. Teachers can integrate the challenge into their curricula at any point in the school year and work with their students to publish their media to a dedicated online Challenge Showcase.

Continuing from fall 2025 through the semiquincentennial in 2026 and back-to-school in fall 2026, PBS LearningMedia and member stations will present multiple in-person and virtual professional learning sessions with partners, film scholars, and teachers designed to enhance teacher knowledge, skills, and dynamic pedagogical approaches to the American Revolution. Upcoming events include “THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: Connecting Students to Our Shared History, A Live Conversation with Filmmakers,” on November 18, 2025; a workshop on January 13, 2026, “How to Bring THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION Youth Media Challenge Into Your Classroom;” and a springtime virtual event exploring the use of material culture and personal narratives to teach the American Revolution, co-hosted by PBS LearningMedia and The Museum of the American Revolution. Professional learning opportunities and information about all educational activities can be found at pbslearningmedia.org/pbsteach250 (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/b21pwcb>).

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION will be available to stream on all station-branded PBS platforms including [PBS.org](https://pbs.org) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/ru2pwcb>) and the [PBS App](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/7m3pwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/7m3pwcb>), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. The series will also be available to stream on [PBS Passport](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/nf4pwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/nf4pwcb>) and the “[PBS Documentaries Prime VideoChannel](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/374pwcb). (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/374pwcb>)” PBS station members can view the documentary via PBS Passport as part of a full collection of Ken Burns films. For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/j05pwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/j05pwcb>) website. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION will be distributed internationally by PBS International.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION is a production of Florentine Films and WETA Washington, D.C. Directed by Ken Burns, Sarah Botstein and David Schmidt. Written by Geoffrey C. Ward. Produced by Sarah Botstein, David Schmidt, Salimah El-Amin and Ken Burns. Edited by Tricia Reidy, Maya Mumma, Charles E. Horton, and Craig Mellish. Co-Produced by Megan Ruffe and Mike Welt. Cinematography by Buddy Squires. Narrated by Peter Coyote. The executive in charge for WETA was John F. Wilson (who passed away in November of 2024). Executive producer is Ken Burns.

Corporate funding for The American Revolution was provided by Bank of America. Major funding was provided by The Better Angels Society and its members Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine with the Crimson Lion Foundation; and the Blavatnik Family Foundation. Major funding was also provided by David M. Rubenstein; The Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern Family Foundation; Lilly Endowment Inc.; and the following Better Angels Society members: Eric and Wendy Schmidt; Stephen A. Schwarzman; and Kenneth C. Griffin with Griffin Catalyst. Additional support for The American Revolution was provided by: The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations; The Pew Charitable Trusts; Gilbert S. Omenn and Martha A. Darling; Park Foundation; and the following Better Angels Society members: Gilchrist and Amy Berg; Perry and Donna Golkin; The Michelson Foundation; Jacqueline B. Mars; Kissick Family Foundation; Diane and Hal Brierley; John H. N. Fisher and Jennifer Caldwell; John and Catherine Debs; The Fullerton Family Charitable Fund; Philip I.

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ABOUT PBS

PBS (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/zs6pwcb>), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 42 million adults on linear primetime television, more than 15 million users on PBS-owned streaming platforms, and 56 million people view PBS content on social media, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature, and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front-row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS's broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to [PBS LearningMedia](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/fl7pwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/fl7pwcb>) for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. As the number one educational media brand, [PBS KIDS](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/vd8pwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/vd8pwcb>) helps children 2-8 build critical skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high quality content on TV – including a PBS KIDS channel – and streaming free on [pbskids.org](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/b68pwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/b68pwcb>) and the [PBS KIDS Games app](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/ry9pwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/ry9pwcb>), games on the [PBS KIDS Games app](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/7qagwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/7qagwcb>), and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [PBS.org](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/njbqwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/njbqwcb>), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, [Facebook](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/3bcqwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/3bcqwcb>), [Instagram](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/j4cqwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/j4cqwcb>), or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/zwdqwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/zwdqwcb>). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/zwdqwcb) or by following PBS Communications on X (formerly Twitter).

ABOUT PBS LEARNINGMEDIA

PBS LearningMedia, a partnership between PBS and GBH, is a transformative digital media platform for PreK-12 educators, providing free access to thousands of media-centric classroom resources from PBS member stations and esteemed partners. PBS LearningMedia delivers a dynamic mix of national and locally relevant content—including videos, interactives, lesson plans, teaching tips, and primary sources—that elevates classroom teaching and brings learning to life. Designed with teachers and subject matter experts, classroom resources are aligned to state and national standards and are compatible with the tools teachers use most, such as Google Classroom. Learn more at [pbslearningmedia.org](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/fpeqwcb) or by following PBS Teachers on [Facebook](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/vhfqwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/fpeqwcb>) or [Instagram](https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/vhfqwcb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/nrh8gn/nrddit/vhfqwcb>).

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