



This content package contains thematic content related to September’s monthly theme: Back to School. Resources are at a variety of levels English language levels and may be used as part of English language learning activities. We have split the content by the type of media or usage: Activities & Lesson Plans; Videos, Images & Podcasts; Articles & Blog Posts. For additional content from the Smithsonian, please visit americanspaces.state.gov. Please share any feedback with Liz Tunick (TunickL@si.edu).

Activities & Lesson Plans

[Online Classroom Activities](#)

These American Art Museum online features contain interactive or media-rich assets that can easily be used by educators in the classroom or in an American Space. Students can learn by viewing media or taking part in various online activities. For example, [Picturing the 1930s](#) is an immersive multimedia experience that provides a vision of what life was like during the Great Depression. Browse a virtual movie theater where you can watch interviews with artists working during the period, view artwork, listen to radio programs, watch short films and even create a documentary movie of your own.

[Smithsonian Quests](#)

Get back into school mode by introducing Smithsonian Quests, which inspire students to explore their own ideas and interests online, in school, at home – or in an American Space. Using digital badges (like certifications), quests connect and reward learners of different ages and in different regions as they learn through reading, writing, videos, and more. Students can keep their digital badges in a portfolio, share them on social media, or print them out. Use these quest activities as part of an ongoing program for your American Space, where visitors/participants spend each visit earning a different badge by completing a particular quest. Recommended quests would include:

- Diplomat
- Oral Historian
- Eco-Journalist
- Symbols Spotter

[Environmental Research Center's Education and Outreach Programs](#)

This site offers a host of hands-on science programs and activities that foster learning experiences in the field as well as in the classroom – or American Space. You can encourage college undergrads or graduate students to check out the Environmental Research Center's [professional training programs](#).

[Smithsonian Folkways – Tools for Teaching](#)

Smithsonian Folkways—the Institution's nonprofit record label—offers a Tools for Teaching website that promotes cultural understanding through a series of [lesson plans](#) and [education kits](#). Through studying music, students can enhance their understanding of other subject areas, such as history, geography, language arts and social studies.

[History Explorer](#)

This resource for teachers, students and their families from the National Museum of American History invites you to investigate the museum's artifacts and the stories they have to tell. For teachers, there are [lesson plans and activities](#), as well as [interactive media](#), designed to enhance the learning experience.





[Separate is Not Equal](#)

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* marked a turning point in the history of race relations in the United States. On May 17, 1954, the Court stripped away constitutional sanctions for segregation by race, and made equal opportunity in education the law of the land. *Brown v. Board of Education* reached the Supreme Court through the fearless efforts of lawyers, community activists, parents, and students. Their struggle to fulfill the American dream set in motion sweeping changes in American society, and redefined the nation's ideals. As students get ready to go back to school, use this online exhibition to discuss the value of education and the opportunities that come with being in school.

Videos, Images & Podcasts

[Choosing to Participate](#)

This poster series encourages youth to become active in promoting social change in their schools and communities. The message of this campaign is that little actions can make a large difference and that everyone should partake in aiding their community. These relatable, yet powerful, images should incite conversations about everyday participation, the importance of inclusion, and using a respectful dialogue to create awareness and change. Have participants create locally relevant posters for your space.

[Invention Podcasts Listening Guide](#)

The start of a new school year can be a great time to try new things! These downloadable podcasts from the National Museum of American History's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation feature contemporary entrepreneurs and inventors. Use accompanying podcast activity guide, which includes questions that can be used to direct listening and guide further discussion.

Recommended podcasts:

- o Ashok Gadgil inspires future inventors
- o Walter Isaacson explores Benjamin Franklin's legacy
- o Stan Winston makes robots smart
- o Deanne Bell believes engineering is for girls
- o Michael Callahan ties invention to social entrepreneurship
- o Norman Winarsky taps into Silicon Valley's culture of innovation

[Student Podcast Series](#)

This resource page discusses how to lead a podcasting project with your Space audience. Use this resource as a guide for your own podcast-recording activity, to practice vocabulary and speaking skills with intermediate-advanced English language learners. [These podcasts](#) are written and recorded by students to provide their own interpretation of works in the Smithsonian American Art Museum's collection.

Articles & Blog Posts

[Skip the school bus: Our tips for planning a virtual field trip](#)

Use this guide on creating a virtual field trip to plan a program based on a field trip American school students might take.

[The List: Seven "Back to School" Artifacts](#)

Use this list of interesting school-related objects at the Smithsonian Institution to talk about similarities





and differences of schools in Americas and your country.

[The Business of American Business Is Education](#)

From corporate donations to workplace restrictions, what's taught in the classroom has always been influenced by American industry. Use this article to lead a discussion on what influences education around the world.

[The History of the Lunch Box](#)

From a working man's utility product to a back-to-school fashion statement, lunch boxes have evolved with technology and pop culture. Use this article and the information in the "What's in Your Lunchbox?" series of articles listed below, and the ["Taking America to Lunch"](#) online exhibition to talk about the American lunch and the culture of the lunch box.

[What's in Your Lunch Box - Part 1](#)

[What's in Your Lunch Box – Part 2 – Prohibition and the Great Depression](#)

[What's in Your Lunch Box – Part 3 – War and the Suburbs](#)

[What's in Your Lunch Box – Part 4 – The 1960s and 70s](#)

[What's in Your Lunch Box – Part 5 – The 80s Through Today](#)

