

America 250 NC County Flag Challenge

Engaging local students in community, culture,
and heritage



Commemorating
America's 250th
anniversary.

AMERICA
250
NC

To be rather than to seem

Table of Contents

- Basic Information
- Project Phases
- Deadlines
- Communication Template
- Worksheets for Students
- Instructions for Schools
- Permission Slip
- Voting
- Notes and Resources
- Registration & Submission Links

County Flag Challenge

The county flag challenge project is a contest for North Carolina fourth grade students initiated by the America 250 NC team as a way to help our county committees engage with their local audience. This program is free and participation is optional, though encouraged.

Throughout this packet you will find timelines, template communications, worksheets, and various guidelines to organize and complete your competition.

Objectives:

- Build awareness around America 250 NC and local county committees
- Establish relationships for more enriching outreach through collaboration between American 250 NC, county committees, schools, and local families
- Encourage critical thinking in NC fourth graders about local community, history, geography, and culture through symbols
- Support local fourth grade teachers in introducing concepts around community identity and America 250 NC ideals
- Provide a platform for student voices in a meaningful, public-facing project
- Create a lasting legacy of this moment in time through documented artwork

Project Phases

- County committees will use attached communication guides, with any desired edits, to reach out to their local elementary schools **by October 17**. *Note: This competition is for fourth graders.*
- School leadership will send information to teachers.
- Teachers will introduce the contest to their classrooms, allowing students to work at school or home to complete.
- Students will draw their county flag and write a short informative essay about their design and its meaning.
- Teachers will collect their submissions and send them to school leadership to compile.
- School leadership will send all submissions back to the county committee.
- Each county committee will hold their own internal voting process to select a winner.
- County committees will send the winner to America 250 NC. They must also choose at least one runner up submission for social media.
- America 250 NC will make various social media, blog, and newsletter content on winners and runner ups.
- The winner for each county will be highlighted on the America 250 NC website. Each county is also encouraged to use their winning flag in any advertisement or events.

Deadlines

- Let America 250 NC know you will be participating: **September 15, 2025** via this form.
- County committee to contact local schools: **October 17, 2025** (the sooner the better)
- School to send submissions (flags and essays) to the county committee: **February 1, 2026**
- County committee voting: **Anytime between February 1 and March 1, 2026**
- County committee to send America 250 NC the winning flag and essay and at least one runner up: **March 1, 2026** via this form.
 - *Optional: at this time, you may also email your school contacts the winner for your county*
- America 250 NC to put all winning county flags on their website: **April 15, 2026**
- America 250 NC to make a blog post advertising the contest and link to view the winners: **May 1, 2026**
- America 250 NC to make various social media posts highlighting winners and runner-ups: **April 16 - June 30, 2026**

Communication Template

Dear [name],

My name is [name] and I am with the [county] Committee with America 250 NC.

America 250 NC is the official state organization leading the commemoration of the United States' 250th anniversary. As part of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, they educate the public on 250 years of North Carolina history. You can learn more about America 250 NC at <https://www.america250.nc.gov/>

We have recently joined the America 250 NC "County Flag Challenge" and would like to invite your school's fourth graders to participate. I have attached a worksheet, permission slip, and instructions for teachers and students.

This contest, which all county committees have been invited to participate in, aims to engage local school children to think deeply about what their county means to them and how they want people to remember it in the future.

I am happy to answer any questions about the project, America 250 NC, or our county's involvement in the commemoration. Our local committee has events, education, and outreach planned leading up to July 4, 2026.

Please let me know if you decide to participate by **November 15, 2025**. You can collect submissions from your school(s) and send this email address by **February 1, 2026**. A winner will be announced for each participating county on the American 250 NC website on **April 15, 2026**.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

[Name]

America 250 NC: County Flag Challenge

Teacher's Guide

America turns 250 years old in 2026. Let's leave a legacy for future North Carolinians to know what life was like for us! Many cities and counties in North Carolina have a flag that represents their area and what is important to them. Below is an example from Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina. How would your students want your county to be remembered?



Tips: Using the provided templates, have your students design their own county flag for America 250 NC. As they get ready to create their design, have students think about what makes their county special and why they love living there. Have a class discussion about different landmarks, people, colors, and symbols that they feel represents their county. Encourage them to get creative! Students can use as many colors, symbols, scenes, people, animals, food, and places as they want. Their designs will help create a legacy of how North Carolina counties will be remembered in the future, and one winner from each county will have their design displayed on the America 250 NC website for the entire state to admire!

Students will also write a short essay (2-3 paragraphs) explaining their flag's design. Use the "America 250 NC: County Flag Challenge Glossary" to help students describe what their flag represents. **Additionally, refer to the below questions to help your students write their essays.**

- What colors did you add? Why?
- Did you use any symbols? What do they mean?
- Did you include any cultural food, plants, or animals?
- What landmarks or places are on your flag?
- Did you include any dates? Why did you include them?
- How does your flag show what is meaningful to the people of your county?



America 250 NC: County Flag Challenge

Glossary

county	divisions of land within a state
culture	qualities, practices, values, and beliefs within a group of people with a shared location or identity
flag	a piece of cloth, varying in size, shape, color, and design, and used as the symbol of a nation, state, county, city, or organization
historical	related to past events
landmark	building or place of significant historical or cultural value
legacy	the way something is remembered; what is handed down or left from the past
scene	the place where an event occurred
significant	largely important
symbol	an image that represents an idea



America 250 NC: County Flag Challenge Submission

Directions: Design your own county flag for America 250 NC. As you create your design, think about what makes your county special and why you love living there. Get creative! Use as many colors, symbols, scenes, people, animals, food, and places as you want.

Include your name and school on your submission!

First Name:

School:

AMERICA
250
NC



SCAN ME

America 250 NC: County Flag Challenge Essay

Directions: Write a short essay (2-3 paragraphs) explaining why your flag represents your county. Include why you chose certain colors, images, symbols, or words. Make sure to write your answers in short paragraph form. **Include your name and school on your submission!**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

First Name:

School:



America 250 NC: County Flag Challenge

Educator Instructions

Thank you for participating in your county's America 250 NC County Flag Challenge! We are very excited to see how North Carolina's fourth graders chose to represent their individual counties.

To prepare for the contest, please take some time to speak with your students about ideas such as *local history*, *culture*, and *symbolism*.

We also would like students to understand what America 250 NC is and why we are commemorating the 250th anniversary. We have various educational resources on our website in which you are free to plan a lesson around before introducing the flag challenge. Learn more here: <https://www.america250.nc.gov/learn/educators>.

Please have each submission (flag and 2-3 paragraph short essay) back to your school leadership in time for them to send submissions to your county committee by **February 1, 2026**.

Each submission must be returned with a signed media release form from the child's legal guardian granting permission for the child's first name, name of school, and work to be distributed to a public audience.

Your county committee contact can advise you on the process in which they are holding the voting. Each county will vote for their own winner and they will send the winning submission to America 250 NC.

All winners will be displayed on the America 250 NC website, and the winners' page will be highlighted in the America 250 NC newsletter, blog, and on social media.

Please feel free to advertise this contest widely in your school and community. We hope for heavy participation and excitement around deciding how your county should be remembered.

AMERICA
250
NC





Josh Stein, Governor
Pamela B. Cashwell, Secretary

NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY FLAG CHALLENGE RELEASE FORM

I hereby grant the North Carolina Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (DNCR) permission to use my child's first name, the name of their school, and my child's submissions, including their essays and flag designs, to the North Carolina County Flag Challenge, including images of the submissions, on any and all DNCR websites and in publications, promotions, educational materials, and for any other similar purpose without notice or compensation to me or my child. On behalf of my child, I also grant to DNCR the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, and create derivative works from my child's submissions, including their essays and flag designs, in furtherance of DNCR's statutory mission.

I understand and agree that such information and images may be placed on the Internet for

viewing by the general public. I also understand and agree that my child may be identified by first name in print, Internet or broadcast information that might accompany the publication of my child's submissions. I waive the right to approve or inspect the final product.

I hereby hold harmless DNCR and its current and former trustees, agents, officers and

employees from any and all claims, demands, rights, promises, damages and liabilities arising out of or in connection with the use or distribution of said submissions and the accompanying information provided,

including but not limited to any claims for intellectual property rights, rights of publicity, invasion of privacy, appropriation of name or likeness, defamation, or any other right or interest in my child's submissions or the accompanying information provided.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____
I hereby warrant that I am eighteen (18) years old or more, the parent or legal guardian of the

child named _____
Below, Name of Parent/Legal Guardian _____
On me and _____ behalf of the child named below. This release is binding my heirs, assigns and personal representatives.

Printed Name of Child _____

Voting

We intend to allow each county committee to come up with a plan for the voting process and selection of their county's winning design. However, we are here to assist if you need help with the process. We can also facilitate a group meeting if county leads would like to discuss the voting process.

Some suggestions:

- Hold a meeting and allow county committee members to vote on their favorite
- Post each design on social media and allow followers to “like” a photo to vote for their favorite
- Have each photo at a local event and allow members of the public to vote while attending
- Coordinate with another grade level at local schools to allow additional local children to participate by voting
- Create an online album with each submission numbered and create a survey to email out to parents, teachers, and staff at participating schools to allow them to vote for their favorite
- Feel free to reach out to us and let us know the number of submissions you received and we can assist with voting suggestions

Notes and Resources

- Please ensure the school leadership you contact knows they need to have a plan for teachers to submit their students' designs to them.
- How to contact school leadership:
 - County and Local School boards
 - Curriculum Specialists
 - Principles
 - Let us know if you need help locating county resources to reach out to your specific schools
- The submission due date for winners is firm to give our team time to build the website pages needed.
- This contest is for fourth grade students
- When emailing school leadership, ensure you include the media release, instructions, worksheet, and glossary as an attachment.
- Each flag submission must have a short essay (2-3 paragraphs) to be eligible to win and/or be displayed on America 250 NC website, social media, or blog posts. They must also have the signed media release form.
- Each county may make their own prize for winners in your county if you choose to do so
- While you are required to send one winner and one runner up, feel free to send additional "honorable mentions"

Registration & Submission

- Register your county to participate in the challenge
- Submit your winning design

America 250 NC County Flag Challenge

chelsea.kiefer@dn-cr.nc.gov



Commemorating
America's 250th
anniversary.

AMERICA
250
NC

To be rather than to seem