

**Enduring Understanding**

Individuals become United States citizens in various ways.

**Essential Questions**

What qualifies an individual for United States citizenship?

What is the process of becoming a United States citizen?

**Students Shall Be Able To:**

C.5.6.7 — Examine the process of becoming a citizen of the United States

**Materials Needed/Attachments**

*Attachment 1:* Citizenship Test

*Attachment 2:* The Oath of Allegiance

*Attachment 3:* United States Citizenship

*Attachment 4:* The Naturalization Test

*Attachment 5:* The Naturalization Process

**Vocabulary**

*citizen*

*naturalization*

*immigrant*

*resident*

**Teaching Strategies**

1. Have students read Amendment 14, section 1, of the United States Constitution and discuss the meaning of “naturalized” as it pertains to citizenship. (See *Attachment 1*, Lesson 5-2)
2. Explain the process of becoming a citizen of the United States. (See *Attachment 3*, United States Citizenship and *Attachment 5*, The Naturalization Process. Include residency requirements, citizen application and interview and allegiance oath.
3. Organize students into small groups; ask students to create a list of 4-5 questions on topics they believe are important for future citizens to know. Use the student questions to create a citizenship test for the class.

4. Students will take a version of the United States citizenship test. (See *Attachment 1*, Citizenship Test)
5. Compare the questions from the two citizenship tests. Discuss the differences in the two tests; what students thought citizens should know and what knowledge is actually expected.
6. Have students take Oath of Allegiance (*Attachment 2*). Discuss why this is important.

### **Assessments/Rubrics**

Teacher observation of student participation

### **Extension**

Write a letter from the perspective of a non-citizen explaining why he/she would like to become a citizen of the United States.

## A Typical Citizenship Test

1. What are the colors of our flag?
2. How many stars are there in our flag?
3. What color are the stars on our flag?
4. What do the stars on the flag mean?
5. How many stripes are there in the flag?
6. What color are the stripes?
7. What do the stripes on the flag mean?
8. How many states are there in the Union?
9. What is the 4th of July?
10. What is the date of Independence Day?
11. Independence for whom?
12. What country did we fight during the Revolutionary War?
13. Who was the first President of the United States?
14. Who is the President of the United States today?
15. Who is the Vice President of the United States today?
16. For how long do we elect the President?
17. What is the Constitution?
18. Can the Constitution be changed?
19. What do we call a change to the Constitution?
20. How many changes or amendments are there to the Constitution?
21. What are the three branches of government?
22. What is the legislative branch of our government?
23. Who makes the laws in the United States?
24. What is Congress?
25. What are the duties of Congress?
26. Who elects Congress?
27. How many senators are there in Congress?
28. Can you name the two senators from your state?
29. For how long do we elect each senator?
30. How many representatives are there in Congress?
31. For how long do we elect the representatives?
32. What is the executive branch of our government?
33. What is the judiciary branch of our government?
34. What are the duties of the Supreme Court?
35. What is the supreme law of the United States?
36. What is the Bill of Rights?
37. What is the capital of your state?
38. Who is the current governor of your state?
39. Who becomes President of the United States if the President and the Vice President should die?
40. Who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?
41. Can you name the 13 original states?
42. Who said, "Give me liberty or give me death?"
43. Which countries were our enemies during World War II?
44. What are the 49th and 50th states of the Union?
45. How many terms can a President serve?
46. Who was Martin Luther King, Jr.?
47. Who presides over your local government?
48. According to the Constitution, a person must meet certain requirements in order to be eligible to become President. **T** or **F**
49. Why are there 100 Senators in the Senate?
50. Who selects the Supreme Court justices?
51. How many Supreme Court justices are there?
52. Why did the Pilgrims come to America?
53. What is the head executive of a state government called?

54. What is the head executive of a city government called?
55. What holiday was celebrated for the first time by American colonists?
56. Who was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence?
57. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?
58. What is the basic belief of the Declaration of Independence?
59. What is the national anthem of the United States?
60. Who wrote the Star-Spangled Banner?
61. Where does freedom of speech come from?
62. What is the minimum voting age in the United States?
63. Who signs bills into law?
64. What is the highest court in the United States?
65. Who was President during the Civil War?
66. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?
67. What special group advised the President?
68. Which President is called the "Father of our country"?
69. What Immigration and Naturalization Service form is used to apply to become a naturalized citizen?
70. Who helped the Pilgrims in America?
71. What is the name of the ship that brought the Pilgrims to America?
72. What were the 13 original states of the United States called?
73. Name 3 rights or freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.
74. Who has the power to declare war?
75. What kind of government does the United States have?
76. Which President freed the slaves?
77. In what year was the Constitution written?
78. What are the first 10 amendments to the Constitution called?
79. Name one purpose of the United Nations.
80. Where does Congress meet?
81. Whose rights are guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights?
82. What is the introduction to the Constitution called?
83. Name one benefit to being a citizen of the United States?
84. What is the most important right granted to United States citizens?
85. What is the United States Capitol?
86. What is the White House?
87. Where is the White House located?
88. What is the name of the President's official home?
89. Name one right guaranteed by the first amendment.
90. Who is the Commander in Chief of the United States military?
91. Which President was the first Commander in Chief of the United States military?
92. In what month do we vote for President?
93. In what month is the new President inaugurated?
94. How many times may a Senator be re-elected?
95. How many times may a Congressman be re-elected?
96. What are the two major political parties in the United States today?
97. How many states are there in the United States?

# The Oath of Allegiance



“I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.”



## United States Citizenship by Birth or Through Parents

You may already be a United States citizen and not know it.

United States citizenship can be obtained in one of four ways:

- *birth in the United States or its territories*
- *birth to United States citizen parents*
- *naturalization (the grant of citizenship after an application and exam), or*
- *naturalization of one's parents.*

If you were born on United States soil, were born to United States citizen parents, or became a naturalized United States citizen and you have been living in the United States, you clearly have United States citizenship. But many people are United States citizens and don't know it. Most fall into one of three groups:

**People born in the United States who have lived most of their lives in other countries.** If you fall into this category, you may mistakenly believe that your long absence from the country, plus voting or military activities elsewhere, have stripped you of United States citizenship. This is not the case.

**People who have United States citizens in their direct line of ancestry.** If you have direct ancestors who were United States citizens, you may not realize that United States citizenship has been passed down the line, even if you were born elsewhere and your ancestors have not lived in the United States for a long time.

**Children of naturalized United States citizens who were never themselves naturalized.** Children under the age of 18 cannot normally become naturalized United States citizens. However, when parents become naturalized, minor children with green cards gain United States citizenship automatically.

## What to Expect on the Naturalization Test

During the course of the naturalization process, an applicant for United States citizenship will be scheduled for an interview at a local United States Citizenship and Immigration Services office. At the interview, the applicant will be tested on his or her ability to read, write, and speak English, and will also be given a civics test to measure his or her understanding and knowledge of United States history and government.

*Note:* Some applicants may be exempt from all or part of the testing process due to their age or mental condition.

### Language Test

The English proficiency test demonstrates that the applicant will be able to take part in the economic and social aspects of life in the United States. The test has three parts:

*Reading:* To test reading ability, an applicant may be asked to read out loud certain parts of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.

*Writing:* To test writing ability, an applicant will be asked to write one or two simple sentences.

*Speaking:* An applicant's speaking ability will be tested when the applicant answers questions about himself or herself during the course of the interview.

The applicant need not be bilingual to pass this test; basic proficiency is adequate. If you have problems with English, you may want to consider taking an English as a Second Language course prior to naturalization.

### Civics Test

The civics test covers basic United States history and knowledge of government. Applicants may receive a waiver if they have a medically determinable physical or mental impairment that impacts their capacity to learn and/or understand the relevant information. Additionally, applicants who have been living in the United States legally for over twenty years, and who are over 65, may receive special consideration on this test.

Examples of civics questions:

**Q:** What are the first 10 amendments to the Constitution called?

**A:** The Bill of Rights.

**Q:** In what month is the new President of the United States inaugurated?

**A:** January.

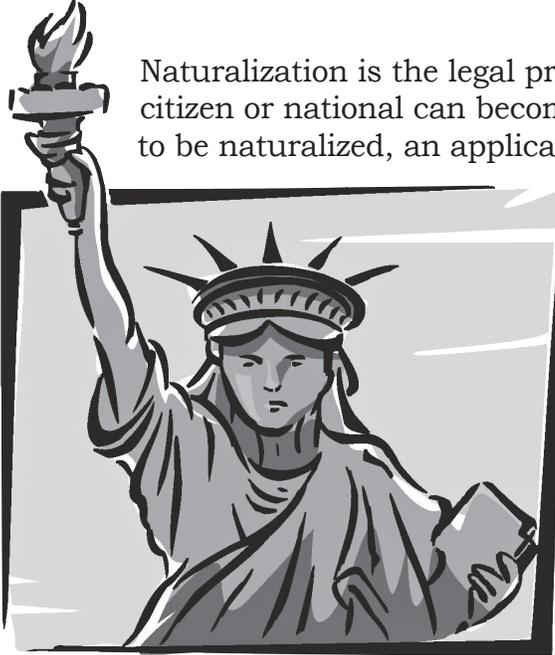
**Q:** Who elects Congress?

**A:** The citizens of the United States.

### Failing a Test

If an applicant fails one or both of the tests, a second appointment will be scheduled, usually within 60-90 days of the first interview. The applicant will be retested at that second interview. If the applicant fails the test for a second time, his or her application for naturalization will be denied.

# The Naturalization Process



Naturalization is the legal process through which a foreign citizen or national can become a United States citizen. In order to be naturalized, an applicant must first be qualified to apply for citizenship. Then, he or she must complete an application, attend an interview, and pass an English and a civics test. Upon successful completion of these steps, the applicant takes an oath of loyalty, and becomes a citizen. These legal requirements help the immigration service ensure that only those people who are sincere in their desire to become Americans become naturalized.

## Who is Eligible?

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) states that applicants for naturalization must be:

- *At least eighteen years old.*
- *A lawful permanent resident of the United States.*
- *Resident and physically present in the United States for at least five years at the time of application.*
- *Of good moral character.*

The residency requirement has some exceptions for time outside the country that your attorney can explain in detail. The USCIS also provides a Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet that helps potential applicants determine if they are able to apply. Your most important resource is an experienced immigration attorney, who can prepare your application and coach you through test and interview preparation.

If you meet these requirements, you may apply for naturalization. The government provides a range of publications to explain the naturalization process in detail. A Guide to Naturalization, available through the USCIS, may be a useful starting point for your inquiries.

## Completing Your Application

Working with your attorney, you must:

- *Complete Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.*
- *Get two photographs of yourself that meet immigration service requirements (pose, size, lighting, etc.).*
- *Collect the necessary documents.*
- *Send your application, documents and fee (\$320 application fee/ \$70 biometric fee for fingerprinting as of August 2004) to the appropriate Service Center.*

## **Getting Fingerprinted**

As part of your application, you will be fingerprinted. You will:

- *Receive an appointment letter from the USCIS.*
- *Go to the fingerprint location.*
- *Get your fingerprints taken.*
- *Mail additional documents if requested.*

This security step ensures that no fraud is perpetrated on the USCIS.

## **Being Interviewed and Tested**

- *The next step is the big one: the interview and tests. You will:*
- *Receive an appointment for your interview.*
- *Go to your local office at the specified time.*
- *Bring identification.*
- *Answer questions about your application and your background.*
- *Take the English and civics tests.*
- *Receive a decision.*

## **Taking the Oath of Allegiance**

If you are successful, you can take the final step: the oath of allegiance. You will:

- *Receive a ceremony date.*
- *Check in at the ceremony.*
- *Return your Permanent Resident Card.*
- *Answer questions about what you have been doing since your interview.*
- *Take the oath of allegiance.*