Citizenship: Just the Facts

**Time Needed:** One class period

**Materials Needed:**
- Student worksheets
- Teacher materials
- Projector

**Copy Instructions:**
- **Reading** (2 pages; class set)
- **Graphic Organizer** (1 page; class set)
- **Worksheets** (2 pages; class set)

**Learning Objectives.** Students will be able to:
- Define citizenship
- Identify ways to become a U.S. citizen
- Describe loyalty and treason
- Identify the U.S. national anthem and major U.S. holidays, including Independence Day
- List rights and responsibilities of both U.S. citizens and all U.S. residents
- Define the Selective Service System
- Trace the progress of citizenship and voting rights for different groups over time

**Step by Step**

- **ANTICIPATE** by asking students what it means to be a U.S. citizen, what citizens do, and whether there are any expectations of citizens. Write their answers on the board.
- **DISTRIBUTE** the reading and graphic organizer.
- **READ** the first two paragraphs of the reading with the class, pausing to help them fill out the Graphic Organizer.
- **PROJECT** the “Oath of Allegiance” projection master after finishing the second paragraph
- **DISCUSS** the Oath with your class. Refer to their answers from the anticipation activity and help them make any connections between what they said and what’s in the Oath.
- **CONTINUE** the reading and the graphic organizer.
- **REVIEW** the graphic organizer as a class.
- **CHECK** for understanding by doing the true/false informal assessment.
- **DISTRIBUTE** the worksheet activity.
- **ASSIGN** students to complete the worksheet activities. Review answers if you wish.
- **CLOSE** by asking students to think up one “quiz” question based on this lesson and write it down. Have students quiz a partner with their questions, or call on students to ask their questions to the entire class.

This lesson plan is part of the Citizenship & Participation series by iCivics, Inc. a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing civic education. For more resources, please visit www.icivics.org/teachers, where you can access the state standards aligned to this lesson plan. Provide feedback to feedback@icivics.org.

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Already A U.S. Citizen?

Citizenship means being a member of a country and having full rights and responsibilities under that country’s law. Some people are born a United States citizen. People who are born in the United States are automatically citizens at birth. So are people born outside the U.S. to parents who are both citizens. The rules can get a bit complicated for people born outside the U.S. who have only one citizen parent, but generally they are also citizens at birth.

Becoming a U.S. Citizen

What if you weren’t born in the U.S. and neither of your parents are U.S. citizens? You can still become a citizen through a process called naturalization. To qualify, applicants must be at least 18 years old and have been permanent residents of the United States for 5 years. (There is one shortcut: People who serve in the U.S. military for at least one year can become citizens sooner because they have demonstrated their commitment to the United States.) Applicants must also have good character, speak English, and pass a civics test and an interview. As a final step, they must take an Oath of Allegiance swearing loyalty to the United States and our Constitution.

Allegiance: Citizens Owe It

People who go through the naturalization process aren’t the only ones who must be loyal to the United States. All U.S. citizens owe allegiance to our country. Treason is the act of betraying your country, and the U.S. Constitution makes this crime punishable by death! People who were born citizens may not think about allegiance as much as those preparing to take the Oath, but you can probably remember a time when you’ve said this word… Maybe even this morning! Americans often say the Pledge of Allegiance to show loyalty to the United States flag and the nation it stands for.

Love of Country

Beyond owing allegiance to the United States, most U.S. citizens feel a deep bond with their country. We call this feeling patriotism. Many citizens get emotional when they hear the national anthem, which is called The Star Spangled Banner. Every July 4th, Americans celebrate Independence Day—the day the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, when the American colonies declared their independence from Great Britain. Other national holidays, such as Presidents’ Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, honor the lives and sacrifices of important Americans. Memorial Day and Veterans Day are two national holidays honoring those who lost their lives or served in the U.S. military, and they can be very emotional days for many U.S. citizens.
Rights in the United States

The United States is known for the rights and freedoms given to those who live here. The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. They list important rights that are guaranteed to all people in the United States—not just citizens! These are rights like the freedom of expression and the freedom to worship, assemble peacefully, and petition the government, as well as the right to be free from unreasonable searches by government officials. But some rights are only for U.S. citizens. These include the right to vote in federal elections, the right to run for federal political office, and the right to serve on a jury.

Responsibilities, Too!

Along with all these freedoms come some responsibilities. Everyone in the U.S. is responsible for obeying laws. Citizens are also responsible for voting in elections and serving on juries when asked. (Yes, these are both rights and responsibilities!) Male citizens between ages 18 and 26 must also register with the Selective Service System. In a time of national emergency, this agency is authorized to call up these citizens to serve in the armed forces.

1776  You must be a white male and own property to vote!
1791  All white males may vote even if they don’t own property!
1795  “Free white persons” will become citizens after living in the U.S. for five years.
1848  80,000 Mexican residents of the Southwest are granted citizenship after the Mexican-American war.
1857  In Dred Scott v. Sandford the U.S. Supreme Court rules that African Americans who were brought into this country as slaves could never be citizens.
1868  The 14th Amendment overrules Dred Scott v. Sandford, giving citizenship to African Americans.
1870  Laws changed to say that “white persons and persons of African descent” can be citizens. The 15th Amendment gives African Americans the right to vote!
1913  Several states enact Alien Land Laws prohibiting non-citizens from owning property.
1920  The 19th Amendment allows women to vote!
1924  All Native Americans are granted citizenship.
1940's  All laws banning Asians from becoming citizens are overturned.
1947  Native Americans are given the right to vote!
1952  U.S. Congress passes a law that citizenship cannot be denied because of race or gender
1965  The Voting Rights Act gets rid of all barriers to voting, such as taxes and literacy tests
1971  The voting age is lowered from 21 to 18 by the 26th Amendment!
The Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America

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 of 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship</th>
<th>Naturalization</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>Voting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group that always had the right:</td>
<td>List 6 requirements:</td>
<td>Two main ways to be a U.S. citizen by birth:</td>
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<td>Groups given the right in...</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>· 1860:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>· 1920:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>· 1947:</td>
</tr>
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**HISTORY**

**DUTY & HONOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assert Patriotism</th>
<th>Pledge of Allegiance</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Patriotism: The most citizens feel with their country.</td>
<td>U.S. National Anthem:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegiance: All U.S. citizens must be to the U.S.</td>
<td>Independence Day:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treason:</td>
<td></td>
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**ALL ABOUT U.S. CITIZENS**

**RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assert Rights</th>
<th>Assert Responsibilities</th>
<th>Assert Male U.S. citizens must:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 rights only for U.S. citizens:</td>
<td>Everyone in the U.S. must:</td>
<td>Responsibilities for U.S. citizens:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 rights for all U.S. residents:</td>
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**Allegiance**

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- All U.S. citizens must be __________ to the U.S.
- Treason: 
- Independence Day: 

**Patriotism**

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**Citizenship: Just the Facts**

- Birth
- Naturalization
- Voting

**Graphic Organizer**

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*The above content is a graphic organizer designed to teach about U.S. citizenship, including voting rights, naturalization requirements, and the responsibilities of U.S. citizens.*
Informal Assessment: True or False

Directions: After working through the reading pages with the class, read each true/false statement out loud. Have the class respond as a group by...

- Showing thumbs-up for true or thumbs-down for false
- Saying “true” or “false” as a chorus

Watch or listen for wrong or mixed answers. Use each statement as a springboard for quick review/discussion before moving on.

1. U.S. citizens are people who were born in the United States. (T)
2. People who want to become naturalized must meet a set of requirements. (T)
3. When Americans say the Oath of Allegiance, they are swearing loyalty to the flag. (F — Pledge of Allegiance)
4. The crime of betraying your country is called treason. (T)
5. The U.S. flag has one stripe for each state and one star for each year the U.S. has been a country. (F — one star for each state and one stripe for each of the 13 original states)
6. Patriotism is the love or deep bond citizens feel for their country. (T)
7. Each year on July 4th, Americans celebrate Presidents’ Day. (F — Independence Day)
8. The first ten constitutional amendments list which Americans can vote and which can’t. (F — Bill of Rights; lists important rights guaranteed to all people living in the U.S.)
9. Everyone living in the U.S. has the right to freedom of expression and freedom to assemble peacefully. (T)
10. There are some rights and responsibilities that are only for U.S. citizens. (T)
11. The Selective Service decides who gets to become a naturalized citizen. (F — can call up citizens to serve in the military during a national emergency)
12. When the United States began, only white male property owners were allowed to vote. (T)
A. Citizenship Checkup. Decide whether each person is already a citizen, eligible for naturalization, or must wait to apply.

1. ☐ Citizen ☐ Eligible ☐ Wait
   I was born in the Philippines, but I’ve been living in the U.S. as a permanent resident for 6 years. I’m 28 years old.

2. ☐ Citizen ☐ Eligible ☐ Wait
   I’m 20 years old, and I was born in Korea. My parents are both U.S. citizens.

3. ☐ Citizen ☐ Eligible ☐ Wait
   I’m 34 years old. My mother and father are citizens of Russia. I have been a permanent resident in the U.S. for 3 years.

4. ☐ Citizen ☐ Eligible ☐ Wait
   I’m only 17 years old, but I just got to spend a year living in Paris! I was born in Helena, Montana.

B. Which One Doesn’t Belong? Cross out the part of each circle that does not belong. Explain why it’s a mismatch.

1. It’s a mismatch because
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

2. It’s a mismatch because
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

3. It’s a mismatch because
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

C. Citizenship & Voting. This is a lesson about citizenship, so why all the information about voting rights? What does citizenship have to do with voting? That’s the question YOU are going to figure out right here! Read the facts about voting, then explain the connection.

Explain the relationship between citizenship and the right to vote:

Facts About Voting
- The people who vote get to choose who will be part of the government.
- People elected to government make decisions about issues that affect everyone.
- The people’s power to vote is the way change happens in government.
D. Matching. Match each sentence with the correct ending.

1. Male U.S. citizens age 18 - 26 must register with ...
   - A. a crime called treason.

2. People who weren’t born U.S. citizens can still obtain citizenship through a process called...
   - B. allegiance.

3. Someone who has betrayed his or her country might be convicted of...
   - C. the U.S. national anthem.

4. When you are a member of a country with full rights and responsibilities in that country, you have...
   - D. Independence Day.

5. Another word for loyalty is...
   - E. the Selective Service.

6. You can find a list of rights guaranteed to all U.S. residents in the Bill of Rights, which is...
   - F. showing loyalty to the flag.

7. When Americans sing “The Star-Spangled Banner,” they are singing...
   - G. Oath of Allegiance.

8. The final step of becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen is taking the...
   - H. citizenship.

9. When Americans say the Pledge of Allegiance, they are...
   - I. naturalization.

10. Every July 4, Americans celebrate...
    - J. the first ten constitutional amendments.

E. Not So Long Ago. Math? In social studies?? Sure! Use your subtraction skills to find out how long each group has been allowed to vote in the U.S.

    |             | African Americans | Women | People 18 - 20 |
    |-------------|-------------------|-------|----------------|
    | The year right now: |                   |       |                |
    | Year amendment passed: |                   |       |                |
    | Do the math to find out how many years ago it was: |       |       |                |

F. Find That Flag! Solve this puzzle:
- Right now, there are 50 states.
- The last two states to be admitted were Alaska and Hawaii in 1959.
- Before that, no new states had been admitted since Arizona and New Mexico became states in 1912.

What did the flag look like in 1940?
Citizenship: Just the Facts

**Citizenship**

**Birth**
Two main ways to be a U.S. citizen by birth:
- _Born in the U.S._
- _Permanent resident 5 yrs_
- _Good character_
- _Speak English_
- _Pass test & interview_
- _Take Oath of Allegiance_

**Naturalization**
List 6 requirements:
- _At least 18_
- _Parents are U.S. citizens_

**Groups given the right to U.S. citizenship after 1860:**
- _African-Americans_
- _Native Americans_
- _Asians_

**Group that always had the right:**
- _White male property owners_
- _Women_
- _Age 18-20_

**List 6 requirements:**
- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________
- ______________________

**Two main ways to be a U.S. citizen by birth:**
- ______________________
- ______________________

**CITIZENSHIP**

**HISTORY**

**All About U.S. Citizens**

**Rights & Responsibilities**

**Rights**
3 rights only for U.S. citizens:
- _Vote in federal elections_
- _Run for federal political of-
- _Serve on a jury_

3 rights for ALL U.S. residents:
- _Freedom of expression; wor-
- _Freedom of assembly; peti-
- _No unreasonable searches_

**Responsibilities**
Everyone in the U.S. must:
- _Obey the law_

Responsibilities for U.S. citizens:
- _Voting_
- _Serving on a jury_

Male U.S. citizens must:
- _Register w/Selective Ser-

**Duty & Honor**

**Allegiance**

Allegiance: All U.S. citizens must be _loyal_ to the U.S.

Treason: The crime of _betraying your country_

Pledge of Allegiance:
_Said by Americans to show loyalty to the flag & country_

**Patriotism**

Patriotism: The _deep bond_ or love most citizens feel with their country.

U.S. National Anthem:
_The Star-Spangled Banner_

Independence Day:
_July 4_

**Graphic Organizer**

**Birth**

**Naturalization**

**Groups given the right to U.S. citizenship after 1860:**

**Group that always had the right:**

**List 6 requirements:**

**Two main ways to be a U.S. citizen by birth:**

**Graphic Organizer**
A. Citizenship Checkup. Decide whether each person is already a citizen, eligible for naturalization, or must wait to apply.

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B. Which One Doesn’t Belong? Cross out the part of each circle that does not belong. Explain why it’s a mismatch.

1. It’s a mismatch because All the other groups were not allowed to vote at some point in history.
   - African-Americans
   - Asians
   - White male property owners
   - Native Americans

2. It’s a mismatch because The 14th amendment gave citizenship while the others gave the right to vote.
   - 14th
   - 15th
   - 19th
   - 26th

3. It’s a mismatch because All the others are ways to become a U.S. citizen.
   - Birth
   - Selective Service
   - Citizen Parents
   - Naturalized

C. Citizenship & Voting. This is a lesson about citizenship, so why all the information about voting rights? What does citizenship have to do with voting? That’s the question YOU are going to figure out right here! Read the facts about voting, then explain the connection.

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*Answers will vary but should touch on the idea that having a voice is part of citizenship.*
D. Matching. Match each sentence with the correct ending.

1. Male U.S. citizens age 18 - 26 must register with ...
   - A. a crime called treason.
   - B. allegiance.
   - C. the U.S. national anthem.
   - D. Independence Day.
   - E. the Selective Service.
   - F. showing loyalty to the flag.
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   - I. naturalization.
   - J. the first ten constitutional amendments.

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10. Every July 4, Americans celebrate...
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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